

“Not Equals but Men”: Du Bois on Social Equality and Self-Conscious Manhood

EMMA RODMAN

ABSTRACT

While recent scholarship has argued for the utility of W. E. B. Du Bois’s thought for democratic theory, his career-long emphasis on the problem of social equality—and the solution of self-conscious manhood—has gone largely unnoticed. In this article, I argue that while Du Bois’s emphasis on social equality powerfully situates racial oppression as a social and epistemic problem, his solution of self-conscious manhood paradoxically reproduces the very conditions of social inequality he seeks to combat. Open to people of all races, genders, and classes, the path of self-conscious manhood consists in radical truth-telling, a free anarchy of the spirit, a will to strive and act, and the purity of isolation. However, through a close reading of Du Bois’s biographies, editorials, and fiction, I show that self-conscious manhood centers an exclusionary and atomized ethic of self-creation rather than producing a democratic political and social order.

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of his presidency in 1921, Warren Harding gave a pathbreaking speech supporting Black political and civil rights in Birmingham, Alabama. The first address in the South on race by a sitting president, Harding asserted to his audience of nearly 100,000 people that economic and political discrimination against Black Americans was incompatible with their status as citizens. Such discrimination in public life, he argued to the stunned white section of

Emma Rodman is a postdoctoral research associate at Princeton University in the University Center for Human Values and the Center for the Study of Democratic Politics, 304 Louis Marx Hall, Princeton, NJ 08544, USA (erodman@princeton.edu).

For their thoughtful comments on this article at various stages of its development, I thank Jack Turner, Lisa Gilson, Philip Yaure, Aziz Khan, Ainsley LeSure, George Lovell, Michael McCann, Lois McNay, Chandan Reddy, Liz Taylor, Rebecca Thorpe, and the editors here at *APT*. Audience members at the Oxford Graduate Conference in Political Theory and the Western Political Science Association annual meeting also gave valuable feedback, as did attendees at talks and workshops at Bard College, Claremont McKenna College, Princeton University, SUNY Oswego, the University of California San Diego, the University of Massachusetts Lowell, and Washington University in St. Louis.

his audience, was a problem for democracy, “if we mean the things we say about democracy as the ideal political state.” Democracy demanded serious national attention to race.

Yet while Harding was in the vanguard on economic and political rights, he did not leave the lectern that day without carefully clarifying the racial distinctions he felt were compatible with democracy as the ideal political state: those distinctions in private life that prevented interracial friendships, intimacies, and other relationships tending to produce “racial amalgamation.” To that end, Harding was careful to clarify that he remained “uncompromisingly against every suggestion of social equality.” Indeed, he noted, “it would be helpful to have that word ‘equality’ eliminated from this consideration” of social relations between the races (*New York Times* 1921).

In December of 1921, W. E. B. Du Bois responded to President Harding’s speech in the *Crisis*, the magazine he edited for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). While giving Harding “every ounce of credit” for making a “braver, clearer utterance” on racial discrimination than previous presidents, Du Bois also directly attacked Harding’s distinction between the political and the social, the public and the private. Eliminating social equality from consideration, Du Bois argued, was akin to rejecting the basic manhood of Black people: it was a blanket, racialized refusal to recognize them as individuals who might merit respect and friendship. This refusal, he asserted, was inextricably linked to political and economic rights because social inequality was the foundation of all other forms of racial oppression.¹ As he wrote, with emphasis, “let us henceforward frankly admit that which we hitherto have always known; that *no system of social uplift which begins by denying the manhood of a man can end by giving him a free ballot, a real education and a just wage*” (Du Bois 1921, 55).

In *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), Du Bois famously asserted that the chief problem of the twentieth century was the problem of the color line. As his attack on Harding makes clear, for Du Bois the color line did not consist merely in racially discriminatory political and economic arrangements. The existence of the color line was, rather, the product of a deeper failure of recognition: an inability or refusal to “give due and just consideration to culture, ability, and

1. In 1910, Du Bois described the political consequences and institutionalization of social inequality, writing that “most people when asked about their prejudices as to race say simply: it is a matter of personal like or dislike . . . the difficulty is, however, that human antipathies between men and men seldom remain at this comparatively harmless stage. The preferences take on a vitality and warmth, a value and importance that makes us not satisfied to indulge our likes and dislikes, but to wish to force them on our neighbors . . . to use three weapons of offence, which are in the world history of tremendous import. These are: personal insult, persecution, and repression” (1910/1986, 90).

moral worth, whether they be found under white or black skins” (Du Bois 1897/2008, 187). The color line is a manifestation of the condition Stanley Cavell (1999) calls “soul-blindness.” Blindly, one sinks all individuals into a racialized mass, judging their merit uniformly and peremptorily. Correspondingly, Du Bois’s political project highlights the importance of social and interpersonal relationships, seeking a world where “men will judge men by their souls and not by their skins” (1903/2008a, 175).

For Du Bois, the color line typically does manifest in deeply unjust political and economic arrangements, but the operating pathology lies elsewhere: in the shallowness of our relations with one another, in our refusal to know one another as individuals. Democracy, for him, requires the interracial relationships and knowledge that make up social equality. Thus, while it is certainly true that Du Bois is deeply concerned with how white supremacy is structured and maintained through the denial of state-based liberal rights, as well as in the organization of capital and labor, social questions are the true heart of his democratic theory.² To a degree which scholars have not yet recognized, Du Bois agrees with theorists like Michael Hanchard who argue that theorizing and addressing “black subordination in Western societies and polities require[s] the reconfiguration of the actual boundaries between the public and private, the political and the social” (Hanchard 2010, 511). By centering social equality, Du Bois’s gaze moves beyond the state and economy and into the private and the social.³ In this way, when Nick Bromell writes that Du Bois “was not in any obvious sense a political theorist” (2018b, 1), he captures a defining component of Du Bois’s political theory: an attention to the social and epistemic origins of the problems of democratic political life.

In this article, I argue that while Du Bois fruitfully analyzes the importance of social equality for democracy, his prescriptions for how to achieve social equality paradoxically undermine his democratic commitments. This argument contains two main claims. First, I argue that Du Bois makes a major contribution to American political thought in his recognition and mapping of racism as a social and epistemic problem. Du Bois frames social equality as the central problem of the color line and formulates a solution to it that he calls “self-conscious manhood” (1903/2008a, 5). An orientation toward the self and the world, Du Bois’s concept of self-conscious manhood is a response to the racialized refusal to recognize individuals as individuals and as potential

2. On Du Bois as a contributor to the study of racial capitalism, see, e.g., Robinson (2000); see also Douglas (2019).

3. Even scholars focused on excavating Du Bois’s “politics of rule” have noted that Du Bois takes a less nation-centered view of politics, one concerned with questions of society and culture, and therefore with analyzing the broader “regimes of white supremacy that have operated apart from or in close alliance with the nation-state” (Gooding-Williams 2009, 3).

social equals. Responding to the imperative of “a society organized around individuality,” self-conscious manhood demonstrates one’s status as an individual in the full sense (Reed 2018, 87).⁴ Du Bois gives us a blueprint for how to live in democratic community with others, and how to do so as an individual, as oneself.

As I develop in the sections that follow, this individualist enactment of Du Bois’s concept of self-conscious manhood involves four things: radical truth-telling, a free and anarchic spirit, an ethic of isolation, and the manifestation of will through action. These capacities shape our relations with each other, as well as with ourselves. In unearthing Du Bois’s prescription for how we should live together democratically, I draw on his less studied novels, biographies, autobiographies, and editorials, as well as better-known works like *The Souls of Black Folk*.

The second major claim of the article is that Du Bois’s analysis of the problem of social equality—and his prescription of self-conscious manhood—produces unexpectedly antidemocratic effects. Despite its appeal as a solution to the epistemic dimensions of racial antipathy, the individualism of self-conscious manhood raises democratic concerns. My main argument here is that Du Bois’s social equality is haunted by its profound isolation from others, centering an exclusionary ethic of self-creation. By focusing on the self, Du Bois’s framework does not challenge the structural bases of social inequality. It not only fails to instantiate a democratic political and social order but also actually naturalizes existing inequalities and undermines our capacity to democratically challenge them. The individualist limitation of Du Bois’s theory emerges most clearly in two cases that I develop: first, I offer a gender analysis of the unintelligibility of self-conscious women within his framework, and second, I show how his thought on social equality leads to anti-political isolation, focusing particularly on his advocacy of self-segregation.

These two cases reveal that Du Bois’s social-equality-focused democratic theory unwittingly reproduces new forms of the very social inequality it seeks to combat. In essence, his theory of social equality fails on its own terms. These findings also complicate recent general characterizations of Du Bois as a democratic theorist and raise broader concerns about the challenges that democratic theorists considering social equality may face.⁵

4. Recalling Frederick Douglass’s famous fight with the slave breaker Covey, the self-conscious manly individual is aggressively self-assertive, declaring their merit in such a way that demands the recognition of others (Yaure 2020). Douglass described his successful fight with Covey as “the turning point in my career as a slave,” rekindling in him “the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood” (1845/1995, 43).

5. Recent work by democratic theorists has urged Du Bois’s utility to their work, citing his emphasis on the political contributions of the *demos* to public understanding (Bromell 2018a), his broad importance as a theorist of democratic possibilities (Balfour 2011; Bromell

SOCIAL EQUALITY AND SELF-CONSCIOUS MANHOOD

The tragedy of the age, Du Bois wrote at the outset of the twentieth century, is not poverty, wickedness, or ignorance; the great tragedy is “that men know so little of men” (1903/2008a, 152). In his view, America’s racial pathology is fundamentally epistemic: it is a problem of knowing and assessing others superficially, as mere members of racial groups, rather than as individuals. As we choose our acquaintances, friends, neighbors, romantic relations, business partners—all the relations that make up our social world—we should not do so merely on the basis of race. Instead, we must take the time to get to know others in order to judge whether there is a deep equivalence, a social equality, between ourselves and them. While Du Bois is deeply interested in the criteria by which we make these kinds of judgments, he is also interested in the inverse: how individuals can act in the world to be more visible as individuals to others. Du Bois’s concept of self-conscious manhood attacks the problem of social inequality from both directions and thus serves as a guide for how individuals on both sides of the color line should live.

Du Bois’s self-consciously manly individual engages in four practices: radical truth-telling, free anarchy of the spirit, a will to strive and act, and the purity of isolation. Self-conscious manhood is an orientation toward the self and the world that positions an individual to demand social equality and recognition, overcome internalized racial pathologies, see the social equality and merit of others clearly, and aid in the construction of a more just world. Du Bois’s vision of self-conscious manhood is firmly embedded in a broader American ethos of manhood, but in taking it up he made it his own, contributing an original vision of self-conscious manhood.⁶

The first element of Du Boisean self-conscious manhood is truth-telling. It is hard to overstate the primacy of this practice in his vision of manliness. Raised on a New England diet of truth-telling, for Du Bois truth in all things is the hard demand of manhood; we must have the skill to discern it, the courage to pronounce it, and the willingness to revise it in light of new evidence. As he said in an 1897 speech, “there is but one coward on earth, and that is the coward

2013), and his espousal of democratic commitments including broad participation, criticism of leaders, and persuasion via democratizing rhetoric (Rogers 2012).

6. In America in the late nineteenth century, as Kim Townsend (1996) observes, the currency of social equality—the merit perceived in another that generates respect, friendship, and intimacy—was manhood. In postbellum America, “what separated the manly from mere men was their willingness to fight and, if necessary, to die for the ‘Truth’”—in themselves, in their communities, in society, or on the imperial battlefields of the emerging American empire (17–18; see also Hoganson 1998). Drawing on threads of transcendentalism and social Darwinism, American manhood meant the possession of an internal, individual power that would be able to thrive within the demanding and alienating forces of modernity.

that dare not know.”⁷ The demand is that we tell both the truth of ourselves and the truth about others and about society—indeed, we cannot do the latter without the former. The imperative is to follow “those great watchwords of human energy—know thyself!” (Du Bois 1903, 414). We will receive scant and “meager encouragement to honest self-expression,” but it is imperative that we express the truth of ourselves (Du Bois 1940/1971, 203). Grounding what we might call our being-in-the-world in honesty rather than mere sycophancy or mimicry is the basis on which we have a self at all to assert. And by expressing the truth of ourselves, we give others the chance to know us, and we gain training in the courage needed for candor.

While knowing ourselves is a question of courage, not skill, knowing others is more complex. This is because, as Du Bois puts it in *Darkwater*, “in fact no one knows himself but that self’s own soul” (1920/1999, 81). As scholars have argued (Bromell 2018a; Williams 2018), Du Bois sees the other as largely unknowable, as an alterity; each individual feels his own sorrows and passions, and knows his own mind, in ways that no one else can. Yet while Du Bois recognizes the existential isolation of the individual, he is also sanguine that this gap can be reduced, that we can discern the truth of the other. As he observed in *Dusk of Dawn* about his visit to Africa, “African life with its isolation has deeper knowledge of human souls. The village life, the forest ways, the teeming markets, bring in intimate human knowledge that the West misses, sinking the individual in the social.” Africans know fewer folks, Du Bois observes, but they know them “infinitely” better (1940/1970, 128–29). We will never have a final or complete knowledge, but we can do better if we look carefully at individuals as individuals. By courageously stating how our own individuality transcends the mere labels and groups we might be assigned, we will be better prepared to see such individuality and complexity in others: to constantly pull our souls back from the general to the specific.

Manly truth-telling, trained on the self and individual others, can then take up the challenging pursuit of discerning and pronouncing wider truths in the world. This task is urgent. Du Bois writes that the deepest pathology of the white world, “the greatest and most immediate danger of white culture, perhaps least sensed, is its fear of the truth” (1940/1970, 151). White supremacy is sustained by its destruction of deviant truths; for Du Bois, this dishonesty is not only morally appalling but also deeply dangerous because it blinds us in our ability to navigate the world and live well and meaningfully. The scholar’s task—a task Du Bois takes up again and again—is to study the world animated by “an earnest desire for the truth despite its possible unpleasantness” (1899/1996, 3). Awake to

7. “The Study of the Negro Problems,” speech to the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, Philadelphia, PA, November 19, 1897, quoted in Du Bois (1940/1971, 63).

the difficulty of maintaining this position, Du Bois writes in *Black Reconstruction* that he wants “to be fair, objective, and judicial,” exercising great care “to let no searing of the memory by intolerable insult and cruelty make me fail to sympathize with human frailties and contradiction, in the eternal paradox of good and evil” (1935/2007, 725). This detached pursuit of the truth is not an innate human capacity but must be hard won against our more parochial instincts. Formal education and scientific training will do much, but as Du Bois writes in a letter in 1896, “of the greatest importance was the opportunity which my wander years in Europe gave of looking at the world as a man and not simply from a narrow racial and provincial outlook” (quoted in Gates 2007, xiv). Similarly, Du Bois describes his study of philosophy as a means of “open[ing] vistas,” of widening his view (1940/1971, 33). The pursuit of truth about the world requires one to abstract from oneself, to view broadly and dispassionately.

Truth-telling, then, is courageous because it is a difficult and paradoxical practice: a deep inhabitation of self-knowledge coupled with an abdication of the self in pursuit of the general. From the strength of self-knowledge and the respect of specific others comes the hardihood to suspend the self in pursuit of broader truths. Armed with self-knowledge and the knowledge of other souls, Du Bois issues a clarion call to “all persons who love the truth and dare to hear it” to unflinchingly investigate the real conditions of the world.⁸ Resisting the urge to be the “final arbiter” of “desired and desirable truth,” those who aspire to self-conscious manhood must constantly and untiringly revise their truths in light of what they find, supplicant to no dogma (quoted in Bromell 2013, 120).

The refusal to bow before dogma or prescribed truths defines the second element of Du Bois’s conception of self-conscious manhood: an anarchic spirit that celebrates radical freedom. It is one thing to tell the truth about oneself; it is another to fully celebrate that truth, to deify it, and yet to unceasingly revise our truths. True manhood is defined by a rejection of stasis and an embrace of dynamism and possibility. As Du Bois puts it, “the desire of all consciousness,” of all creatures who will, is “to enjoy that anarchy of the spirit” that recognizes the contingency and arbitrary nature of all human arrangements and the unpredictable preeminence of human will (1940/1971, 134). Individuals who act unpredictably, freely, and outside the bounds of control represent the fullest flower of manhood. Manhood celebrates the fact that humans possess “human forces which no human hand can hold” (Du Bois 1909/1996,

8. This quote is from an advertisement for a public meeting Du Bois held with others, after nonwhite delegates were excluded from the National Conference of Charities and Correction in Memphis, Tennessee, in May 1914; quoted in Du Bois (1940/1971, 283).

290). In "Sociology Hesitant," Du Bois describes this view fully, with an eye to demanding that the sociologists of his day recognize its truth. He writes that "among physical forces stalk self-directing Wills, which modify, restrain, and re-direct the ordinary laws of nature . . . out from some unknown Nowhere bursts miraculously now and then controlling Energy" (Du Bois 2000, 41). The world we inhabit, he continues, is one "peopled by beings capable in some degree of actions inexplicable and uncalculable" (42). As a sociologist Du Bois saw more clearly than many of his contemporaries that "there were no universal laws mechanistically governing human behaviors" (Morris 2017, 27).

Manhood not only acknowledges but also glories in and celebrates this anarchy. The natural anarchy of the spirit is not a lamentable truth but the glory of self-assertive manhood. Thus, for Du Bois it is a high compliment to call someone a "natural anarchist of the spirit," as Du Bois describes his closest white friend Joel Spingarn (1940/1971, 290). The liberty and freedom of an anarchic spirit is the fullest expression of human nature. As Du Bois writes in a note to himself in the 1920s, all who see the full sweep of the human soul, "all men of vision, are anarchists."⁹ As he imagines a future toward which civilization should strive, Du Bois describes the pinnacle as "that great and final Freedom which you so well call Divine Anarchy" (1928/1995, 285).

But while the highest expression of self-consciousness is this anarchic assertion of will, true anarchy of the spirit is not an inevitability but a capacity, one vulnerable to circumstance. It is precisely this capacity of the spirit, for instance, that slavery destroys when it puts men "with no sparing of brutality into one rigid mold: humble, servile, dog-like devotion, surrender of body, mind and soul, and unaspiring animal content" (Du Bois 1909/1996, 60). As Anthony Reed puts it, Du Bois understood race more broadly "as a process of creating de-individualized subjects" (2018, 87). Like Tocqueville and Mill before him, Du Bois also sees a threat to the anarchy of the spirit in the softer tyranny of democratic majorities, which seek to curb individual capacity and impulse. As he writes in *Darkwater*, "the doctrine of the divine right of majorities leads to almost humorous insistence on the dead level of mediocrity. It demands that all people be alike or that they be ostracized . . . that any one of these should simply want to be himself is to the average worshipper of the majority inconceivable" (Du Bois 1920/1999, 89). Against the constraints of a heritage of slavery, racial conformity, and tyranny of the majority, Du Bois voices unqualified support for the full expression of the spirit, even as it extends to the freedom and "human right to swagger and swear and waste" (19). He advocates the ultimate virtue of "an independent manhood which cannot and will not rest in bonds," even if its

9. W. E. B. Du Bois, "All men of - are anarchists," W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312), Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

anarchic expressions create chaos (Du Bois 1903, 409). What is essential is that men should be able to “stretch their arms and souls” (Du Bois 1920/1999, 2).

Manhood also celebrates and glories in free human action. “Just as though God really were dead,” it is only the possibility for self-directed and unpredictable human action that gives meaning to human life and generates change in the world (Du Bois 1903/2008a, 102). On the one hand, Du Bois understands manliness to be a quality of the soul that demonstrates its presence by appearing as the worldly phenomenon of striving and action. Action “hails” other humans irresistibly, forcing them to recognize one’s manhood. As Du Bois writes, in his youth he had “the vision of a glorious crusade where I and my fellows were to match our mettle against white folk and show them what black folk could do” (1940/1971, 130). Striving to match his mettle against white folk would, through the greatness of his actions, force them to recognize his manhood. On the other hand, acts of striving are also necessary to produce the inward quality of the soul that is manliness. In “ceaseless agitation and insistent demand” for what it believes to be right, acts of striving generate internal conditions of strength and character (193).

In his depiction of the necessity of action to manliness, Du Bois occasionally veers toward self-made machismo, as when he writes in “The Conservation of Races” that “a little less complaint and whining and a little more dogged work and manly striving would do us more credit and benefit than a thousand Force or Civil Rights bills” (1897/2008, 186). Yet his demand for manly action in the face of great difficulties avoids the arguably worse pitfalls of pessimistic stoicism or eschatological resignation. Manly individuals “cannot stand still” or permit themselves “simply to be the victims of exploitation and social exclusion,” regardless of the daunting structural hurdles they face (Du Bois 1940/1971, 192). Though they know that dangers and obstacles lurk ahead, “the traveler girds himself, and sets his face toward the Morning, and goes his way” (Du Bois 1903/2008a, 177). The human being who would live a meaningful life has no choice; if one chooses not to strive, one risks one’s very soul. Especially in realms where success is highly unlikely, the act of striving demonstrated a prioritization of character over comfort, possession of *thumos*, and moral strength: “There is demanded an extraordinary moral strength, the strength to endure discrimination and not become discouraged; to face almost universal disparagement and keep one’s soul; and to sacrifice for an ideal which the present generation will hardly see fulfilled” (Du Bois 1940/1971, 209). The ability to strive in the face of these terrible challenges of the world demonstrates manhood—and forces the recognition of others—because it is a daunting realm of exceptionalism.

This exceptionalism renders the actions of manhood intrinsically lonely. The rare manly figure who would unflinchingly see the truth, liberate their

spirit, and act for their ideals will find themselves isolated from the mass of individuals who do not or cannot choose this path. In their quest, manly figures will necessarily travel far, literally and spiritually, from their origins. In the chapter of *Souls* on Alexander Crummell, Du Bois describes the long travels both abroad and psychologically that Crummell took to find his path, and he expects that a fellow man "will not wonder at his weird pilgrimage—you who in the swift whirl of living, amid its cold paradox and marvelous vision, have fronted life and asked its riddle face to face" (1903/2008a, 151). The isolation of such a pilgrimage is even more compellingly summed up in a later chapter, "On the Coming of John," where Du Bois's protagonist grows commensurately more isolated and melancholy as he grows in self-knowledge and experience; upon returning to his small Southern hometown, "somehow he found it so hard and strange to fit his old surroundings again, to find his place in the world about him" (162). In sum, Du Bois describes manhood as a quest laced with "an element of danger and revolution, of dissatisfaction and discontent" born of its very exceptionality (27).

Yet even if the world should suddenly see an abundance of manhood, the very anarchy of spirit that defines it also prescribes a certain distance and freedom from the ties and constraints of relationality. Even among other manly individuals, we are to some degree necessarily alone. Du Bois evokes this sense of virtuous, even desirable isolation wonderfully when he writes that "I think I never before quite realized the place of the Fence in civilization" (1903/2008a, 83). The tidy fenced yard of a snug home evokes a private haven, and this aligns with Du Bois's view that "our one haven of refuge is ourselves" (1897/2008, 185). Freedom and isolation in the self is not necessarily negative, as Du Bois wrote in notes to himself in the 1920s decrying the "intolerable interference of everybody in everybody's affairs."¹⁰ And while isolation might be a consequence of manliness, it might also be a necessary condition for it. The refuge of the self allows us to form independent judgments about truth, to remain existentially free, to rest, and to cultivate the strength from which to act. The hard truth of Du Bois's vision is that, for better or for worse, manhood in the world is a lonely thing.

Self-conscious manhood, in Du Bois's sense, is the individual cultivation of a set of capacities and orientations toward truth, anarchy, action, and isolation. So armed, the self-consciously manly individual is better able to enact social equality within a racialized polity. Such individuals are better able both to judge the merits of others as individuals and to demand such social recognition for themselves.

10. Du Bois, "All men of - are anarchists."

DOUBLE-CONSCIOUSNESS AND SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

Self-conscious manhood also serves a third function within a racialized society, in that it helps to clarify one's relation to oneself. As Du Bois observed, the externalities of racism also generated complex internal psychological challenges for those living within racialized social structures. Du Bois describes how the experience of living in a racialized society generates an internalized conflict that he terms double-consciousness:

The Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideas in one dark body. (1903/2008a, 8)

The “twoness” of double-consciousness is of warring identities within the individual: one's identity as an American and one's identity as a Black person. It is a battle between two social identities that are incompatible because of the racist conditions of American society: because of what each identity means in America, one cannot be both an American and a Black person, nor collapse one identity into the other. As Lawrie Balfour puts it, for ordinary people such crippling “inner turmoil can destroy their motivation to seek better lives, and it can lead to a variety of social ills” (2011, 34). The conflict represents, in fact, a profound alienation from a stable self.

In the face of the existential adversity of double-consciousness, there are several ways to act in response. As Du Bois puts it in an earlier description of double-consciousness, the question at first appears to boil down to a duality: “Am I an American or am I a Negro? Can I be both? Or is it my duty to cease to be a Negro as soon as possible and be an American? If I strive as a Negro, am I not perpetuating the very cleft that threatens and separates black and white America? Is not my only possible practical aim the subduction of all that is Negro in me to the American?” (1897/2008, 184). Reclaiming one's blackness, one can engage in “a feeling of revolt and revenge” against America, or one can make “an attempt to adjust all thought and action to the will of the greater group” (Du Bois 1903/2008a, 40). A feeling of revolt or revenge would constitute a retreat into blackness and a rejection of Americanness—perhaps even through physical removal like the Garveyites, or as Du Bois himself undertook

in his eventual emigration to Ghana. Yet, as Lewis Gordon describes, the blackness found in double-consciousness is at least initially the awareness "of oneself as negative . . . seeing the self through the perspective of those who despise what one is" (2018, 63). It remains an open question to what degree blackness is a problematic white artifact, a white construction.

The second option—of adjustment or assimilation to Americanness—is not a practical solution. One can never successfully jettison one's blackness, either physically or socially, in a race-conscious society defined by what Marc Black calls "imposed contempt" (2007, 394). Du Bois's rejected attempt to claim membership in the Massachusetts Society of the Sons of the American Revolution—hamstrung because he could not produce the birth records of his ancestor who was captured in Africa—is a literalization of this impossibility. Assimilation as the solution to double-consciousness, then, would only paradoxically increase the disjoint between the self and the world. It seems clear that Du Bois problematizes both of these responses when he writes that double-consciousness "must give rise to double words and double ideals, and tempt the mind to pre-empt or to revolt, to hypocrisy or to radicalism" (1903/2008a, 165).

As a partisan for self-conscious manhood, however, Du Bois sees this internal conflict as not merely something unresolvable that exists to be endured—it is an opportunity. Drawing on "the determination to prove ability and desert" (Du Bois 1940/1971, 219), Du Bois offers a third way—neither revolt nor capitulation—to respond to double-consciousness. He describes this third way as "a determined effort at self-realization and self-development despite enviroing opinion" (Du Bois 1903/2008a, 40). This is a kind of sovereign individual freedom from "enviroing opinion," from social forces. I read this as a broader longing for self-mastery and self-making, a "longing to achieve self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self" that exceeds—rather than chooses from among—the given and warring identities present in double-consciousness (9). The conflict between Americanness and blackness at the heart of Du Bois's double-consciousness ultimately leads, in this third way, to the refusal to choose any preexisting identity group. It leads to a retreat into the incommensurable self, a third self that is neither monolithically Black nor American. Choosing this third way is an act of bravery, a possible answer to Du Bois's despairing question in *Darkwater*: "Whither? North is greed and South is blood; within, the coward, and without, the liar. Whither? To death?" (1920/1999, 16).

Thus, while Du Bois describes double-consciousness as, originally, a conflict between social identities, his search for a resolution ultimately leads him to implicitly reformulate double-consciousness as a conflict between the self and social perceptions of the self. The coward capitulates or retreats; the man asserts his sovereign self against daunting odds. In this third way, the individual retreats from the world of appearances, of social groups, and withdraws into that

“transfigured spark of divinity which we call Myself” (Du Bois 1903/2008a, 178). Kathleen Marie Higgins suggests that this is Du Bois’s Nietzschean moment, in which self-transformation is centered. In the retreat toward the self, one becomes “a pioneer, an adventurer, or a legislator of new values” (Higgins 2006, 67). The pursuit of self-conscious manhood is the pursuit of single-minded consciousness whose essential quest is truth, action, and freedom. Du Bois evokes this link between self-consciousness and manhood when he writes in *Souls* that “with dawning self-consciousness, self-realization, self-respect . . . he began to have a dim feeling that, to attain his place in the world, he must be himself, and not another” (1903/2008a, 11).

To be one’s self is, of course, no easy task. Late in his life, Du Bois would pen reflections on fear and manhood, scrawling on a sheet of paper that “We have no originality—We are afraid of ourselves.”¹¹ Yet our fear is not entirely the baseless and cringing fear of the coward. The achievement of such manhood is deeply inflected with loss. Inhabitation of the sovereign self alienates the individual from others and from the settled regularities of normal social intercourse and groups. As Robert Gooding-Williams describes, Du Bois’s conception of race “leaves open the possibility that a human being could . . . discard her socio-historical racial identity by turning her back on the traditions or impulses or strivings without which one cannot be a socio-historical Negro” (2009, 52).¹² Yet the wrenching difficulty of this act, as well as the isolation it would entail, is clear. Manhood, it would seem, is not costless.

MODELS OF SELF-CONSCIOUS MANHOOD

Du Bois’s most unified visions of the costs and challenges—as well as the benefits and virtues—of self-conscious manhood are to be found in the characters of his fiction, biographies, and autobiographies. Alongside Emerson, Du Bois believed in the aid of the exemplary man, the example of heroes, if only because “other men are lenses through which we read our own minds” (Emerson 1850/1892, 11). Du Bois read Thomas Carlyle, who wrote that a great man was “a flowing light-fountain . . . of native original insight, of manhood and heroic nobleness,” whose life and deeds would illuminate principles more clearly

11. W. E. B. Du Bois, “Notes, 1950?,” W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312), Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

12. There is scholarly debate on whether Du Bois views race as biological or historical and cultural. I take up Gooding-Williams’s (2009) view here and refer readers to his excellent discussion of the debate on this point between, among others, Kwame Anthony Appiah and Lucius Outlaw (see 37–54).

than any dry moralizing or scientific tome (1840, 1).¹³ Thus, his fictional characters and his biography of abolitionist John Brown embody his theory of manhood. They make the theory palpable, allowing us to view it complete and in the field. That Du Bois intended his fictional or biographical works to convey his political theories seems clear; in "Criteria of Negro Art" he wrote that "all art is propaganda and ever must be . . . whatever art I have for writing has been used always for propaganda" (1926, 296).

Du Bois's first novel, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* (1911), is set in the South amid the ruin of the cotton aristocracy and the rising debt peonage system. The main characters are two young Black children, Zora and Bles, and the story follows both their romantic relationship and the complex web of relationships that they have with white folks as neighbors, teachers, and employers. The central drama of the story is generated by the effort of both Zora and Bles to struggle against racial oppressions—social, sexual, economic, and political—while attempting to retain meaning, virtue, and manhood.

As they emerge into adulthood, Bles goes North and becomes a politician, while Zora, estranged from Bles, finds work and sanctuary in the home of a wealthy white woman. Bles, who now "carried himself like a man and bowed with gravity and dignity," finds himself in a situation where he must choose between worldly success and his manhood (Du Bois 1911/2017, 96). On the one side stands his attractive fiancée and the chance to become the first Black treasurer of the United States; on the other hand, to keep his fiancée and get the post, he must publicly repudiate his principles and speak what he knows to be untruth. The choice contains all the elements of manhood: truth, action, freedom, and isolation are all promised if he does not repudiate his principles, while falsehoods, passivity, and wealthy social success will follow if he is willing to sell his soul.

Zora, now highly influential with her white patron, asks her help to make Bles "Treasurer of the United States without sacrificing his manhood or betraying his people" (Du Bois 1911/2017, 93). At the same time, Zora sends Bles an anonymous note:

Within lay four lines of writing—no more—no address, no signature;
simply the words:

"It matters now how strait the gate,
How charged with punishment the scroll;

13. We know that Du Bois deeply appreciated Carlyle, as an unpublished piece he wrote on Carlyle's views of work and striving makes clear. See W. E. B. Du Bois, "Carlyle, ca. 1890," W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312), Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.” (100)¹⁴

Although Zora’s patron had “promised Zora that Bles would receive his reward on terms which would not wound his manhood,” avarice and greed prevented the patron from following through on the promise (100). Bles gives a speech in which he preserves his manhood and stands by his principles, and his fiancée leaves him. As she puts it, “Bles Alwyn, the Fool—and the Man. But by grace of the Negro Problem, I cannot afford to marry a man” (102). Du Bois, however, has greater rewards laid by for Bles’s manhood: a return to the South, successful striving with Zora to build an economic cooperative, recognition and a large bequest from a white landowner to fund the school after some Black men are killed for manfully trying to defend their property from a mob, and—finally—marriage with Zora.

The novel presents a straightforward dilemma of manhood: is it possible to succeed in the face of racial oppression while at the same time retaining a commitment to truth and freedom? The forces of the world, both white and Black, conspire against Bles’s manhood, seeking either to destroy his will through violence and debt or to tempt him into servitude with the promise of worldly successes. Against both threats, Zora provides the answer: manhood requires accepting responsibility for captaining one’s soul. As the master of one’s own fate, one must act to preserve the manhood that gives life meaning and that is the basis of social equality and recognition. To be respected as a self-conscious man, one must act for truth and freedom even at the cost of isolation or poverty. As Du Bois described, with manhood comes, “to be sure, not perfect happiness, but plenty of good hard work, the inevitable suffering that always comes with life; sacrifice and waiting, all that—but, nevertheless, lived in a world where men know, where men create, where they realize themselves and where they enjoy life” (1926, 292).

Du Bois’s second novel, *Dark Princess* (1928), revisits these themes of manhood from *Quest*. Although critics of the time expressed minimal enthusiasm for the novel, Du Bois declared in *Dusk of Dawn* that it was his favorite book (1940/1971, 270). Whatever its merit as art, it is, as Claudia Tate asserts, “an important work for reconstructing Du Bois’s conceptions of black male heroism” (1995, xxv). The story follows Matthew Towns, a Black medical student, who is refused entrance to the white hospitals necessary to finish his degree and consequently flees to Europe in anger and disappointment. While there, he meets

14. These lines are drawn from William Ernest Henley’s Victorian-era poem “Invictus” (1888), although Du Bois has either changed or misquoted the first two lines, which in Henley’s original read, “It matters *not* how straight the gate / How charged with *punishments* the scroll.”

the beautiful Princess Kautilya from India. In the twists and turns of Towns’s relationship with her, and in their shared activism, Du Bois develops the themes of manhood—truth, anarchy, action, and isolation—that he opened in *Quest*.

Though these themes are all developed in *Dark Princess*, perhaps the most notable contribution of the novel to Du Bois’s concept of self-conscious manhood is its consideration of the question of isolation. Midway through the novel, Matthew is involved in a complex plot to blow up a train carrying KKK members. The judge, while expressing sympathy for Matthew’s situation and the racial oppression he has faced, pronounces that “you are to blame if you have let this drown the heart of your manhood” and sentences Matthew to prison for his involvement (Du Bois 1928/1995, 101). When he emerges from prison, Matthew appears to be hollowed out inside. Brought out of prison early by the machinations of a Black politician, he quietly accepts a role in the political machine in Chicago and works mechanically as directed. Eventually elected as a state representative, Matthew muses that “it seemed somehow that he was always passive—always waiting—always receptive. He could never get to doing. There was no performance or activity that promised a shining goal. There was no goal. There was no will to create one. Within him, years ago, something—something essential—had died” (148).

With the death of striving and freedom has come the nadir of Matthew’s life. At a dinner party, however, Kautilya reemerges into Matthew’s life. She literally calls him back to his manhood, stepping into his study, where “she said, ‘Matthew, my Man!’” (Du Bois 1928/1995, 210). Responding to this call to him as Man, Matthew leaves his political life hand in hand with her, intoning, “I am free!” (211). After a brief period of amorous idling, however, both Matthew and Kautilya realize they must get to work on their great cause of racial justice. At this point, the story asserts that manhood calls for an anti-political isolation. In contrast to his life as a politician, Matthew now lives alone and works as a laborer in Chicago, following Kautilya’s injunction to strive for the truth in free solitude. As she writes to him, “In my land, you know, men often, in their strong struggles with life, go out and leave life and strip themselves of everything material that could impede or weight the soul, and sit naked and alone before their God. Perhaps, Matthew, it would be well for you to do this. A little space—a little space” (263). While alone, Matthew ruminates on the challenges of manhood, wondering if he has “that great resolve,” that “iron for suffering,” and that “seed of greatness,” and worrying that his previous “servility shriveled it and disappointment chilled it” (268).

Dark Princess presents a fully developed portrait of Du Bois’s vision of manhood. While it fleshes out the vision of self-conscious manhood that he first attempted in *Quest*, it is particularly vivid in its depiction of the moments in Matthew’s life when he does not choose the manly way. The hollowness and

stillness that define his time as a Chicago politician are particularly chilling; amid the activities of political organizing and the splendors of fine houses, cars, a fancy wife, and tremendous power, Matthew's inner life is a void. Although released from jail, he appears more effectively imprisoned than ever. In reuniting with Kautilya, he throws off everything he has and rises into a glorious isolation in which his soul is saved. In their meeting, Kautilya tells him frankly, "I came to save your soul from hell," and that the only chance of saving him lies in "tell[ing] all men the truth" (Du Bois 1928/1995, 209–10). As they leave together, Matthew tells her that her "Soul and Body spell Freedom to my tortured groping life!" (210). Despite the rigors of manhood—particularly for those facing racial oppression—the alternative is a tortured life that is barely human, devoid of true action and meaning.

Du Bois did not confine his discussion of self-conscious manhood to his fiction. In 1909, he wrote a biography and account of the exploits of abolitionist John Brown. In his second autobiography, *Dusk of Dawn*, Du Bois wrote that he regarded his biography of Brown "as one of the best things that I had done" (1940/1971, 269). Though Nat Turner had been his first choice for a subject, he had a deep fervor for Brown; at the second Niagara Movement meeting, held in 1906 at the site of John Brown's raid in Harpers Ferry, Virginia, Du Bois had enthusiastically voiced his admiration: "We do not believe in violence, neither in the despised violence of the raid nor the lauded violence of the soldier, nor the barbarous violence of the mob, but we do believe in John Brown, in that incarnate spirit of justice, that hatred of a lie, that willingness to sacrifice money, reputation, and life itself on the altar of right. . . . Thank God for John Brown!" (172). For Du Bois, John Brown represented the pinnacle of an ideal: Brown was, as Du Bois wrote in *Souls*, the ultimate representative, the ultimate example, of the logic of self-assertion and self-development. In describing the third way of responding to racial injustice and double-consciousness—self-conscious manhood—Du Bois asserted that "John Brown's raid was the extreme of its logic" (1903/2008a, 38). In his biography of Brown, Du Bois would elaborate on this point, placing John Brown at the head, "above all," in "the score of heroic men whom the sorrows of these dark children called to unselfish devotion and heroic self-realization" (1909/1996, 15). For Du Bois, Brown's stance against slavery—defined by a lifetime of racial justice work capped by violent revolts in "bleeding" Kansas and at Harpers Ferry—was the ultimate expression of heroic and self-conscious manliness.

Brown was, in Du Bois's words, a man possessed of a "peculiar consciousness of strength and quiet self-confidence" (1909/1996, 26). Du Bois variously described him as a genius, a patriarch, a prophet, and a Sphinx, and he was said to make "a profound impression on all who came within the sphere of his moral magnetism" (157). Nor was Du Bois the only American to see John Brown in

this light. Emerson called him "the most ideal of men" (1850/1892, 157), Thoreau described him as a heroic representative of "truth and manhood" (1859/2000, 147), and Bronson Alcott confided to his diary that "I think [Brown] equal to anything he dares—the man to do the deed, if it must be done, and with martyr's temper and purpose. . . . I think him the manliest man I have ever seen" (quoted in Du Bois 1909/1996, 157). Even the governor of Virginia, who ultimately put a noose around his neck, described Brown as "a man of truth" (quoted in Thoreau 1859/2000, 149). Brown possessed all those qualities that defined Du Boisean manliness: truthfulness, isolation, anarchy of the spirit, and a will to action.

For Du Bois, one of the most striking facets of John Brown's character was his ability to interact with Black Americans as human beings, without a veil of race drawn between their souls and his own. As Du Bois described in the preface to the first edition of the Brown biography, "John Brown worked not simply for Black Men—he worked with them; and he was a companion of their daily life, knew their faults and virtues, and felt, as few white Americans have felt, the bitter tragedy of their lot . . . the man who of all Americans has perhaps come nearest to touching the real souls of black folk" (1909/1996, 10). Brown actively sought out the intimate friendship and counsel of Black men and women, both well known—Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman, among others—and unknown. "From his earliest interest in Negroes," Du Bois writes, Brown sought to know them intimately, to know their souls; "he invited them to his home and he went to theirs. He talked to them, and listened to the history of their trials, advised them and took advice from them" (185). Du Bois emphasizes how Brown "came to them on a plane of perfect equality," repeatedly describing how he ate at their tables and had them to dinner at his own (76). Brown's commitment to equality was at the same time a commitment to truth: he saw, assessed, and valued the merit in souls without regard to the trappings of their race. When he found souls of merit, he valued them as such and sought their company on a plane of social equality.

Despite this social magnanimity, Du Bois depicts Brown's manliness as both of the world and beyond the world. On the one hand, Brown is dedicated to "taking my place as a man, and assuming the responsibilities of a man, a citizen, a husband, a father, a brother, a neighbor, a friend" (Du Bois 1909/1996, 77). A devoted, stern, and loving patriarch, his two wives—the first died of complications from childbirth—bore him 20 children, 11 of whom survived to adulthood. Du Bois notes his gentle nursing of sick wives and children, attention to the needs of neighbors, and support of intimate friends. Yet Brown also appears to remain somehow aloof from these earthly ties of affection, to be always just a little bit apart from others. A solitary child, "his soul grew apart and alone and yet untrammelled and unconfined, knowing all the depths of secret self-abasement

and the heights of confident self-will” (20). As an adult, Du Bois describes him as moving “with a long, springing, race-horse step, absorbed by his own reflections, neither seeking nor shunning observation” (80). John Brown himself wrote that “I have permitted nothing to be in the way of my duty, neither my wife, children, nor worldly goods” (143).

His devotion to higher ideals was only possible in an atmosphere of freedom—freedom from ties of feeling that might entangle him, as well as freedom from external authorities that might condemn what his conscience would demand. When captured at Harpers Ferry after his failed raid, Brown was asked who sent him. With scorn, he replied that “no man sent me—I acknowledge no master in human form!” (Du Bois 1909/1996, 261). While supplicant to God and ideal, Brown was in every other way a free anarchist of the spirit. Though his “lawlessness was in obedience to the highest call of self-sacrifice for the welfare of his fellow men,” it was nevertheless deeply disobedient to the laws of men (267). Even as he sat in jail and awaited his trial and execution, Brown wrote that he remained free, for try as they might to exert power over him, “men cannot imprison, or chain, or hang the soul” (280). For Brown, the anarchic violence of his acts was an expression of manly will that, while horrifying to some in the short term, would ultimately prove just over the broader arc of time.

Finally, Du Bois figures John Brown as the consummate man of will and action. In his biography of Brown, Du Bois lays out copious “evidence of a striving soul” and a “masculine mind which demanded ‘Action! Action!’” (1909/1996, 37). Brown wrote that one should “maintain a cheerful self-command while we are tossing up and down” and that the “motto” of one’s life should be “action, action—as we have but one life to live” (35). Self-discipline and principled action were the two watchwords of Brown’s life, which was an archetype of the manhood that would act in accordance with its own highest principles, despite the cost. The cost of liberty, as Brown had noted, was less than the cost of repression, even if those weaker souls vacillating in expediency could not bring themselves to act on this truth. Thus, what distinguished Brown for Du Bois, Thoreau, Emerson, and countless others was, as Jack Turner describes, “not simply his principles, since others voiced and shared them, but rather his readiness to live those principles,” to act on them (2005, 451). This willingness to act imbued Brown with tremendous power; his actions spoke thunderously. Neither an orator nor a writer, Brown “did not use argument, he was himself an argument” (Du Bois 1906/1996, 256). Brown’s actions, even his failed actions, “made the mightiest Abolition document that America had known” (274).

It is important to recognize that, for Du Bois, John Brown—a white man—epitomized the kind of self-conscious manhood and corresponding interracial intimacy that would resolve the problems of social equality for both white and Black Americans. Brown is important both as an agent of manly action and

because of his ability to perceive and appreciate manly action and merit in others, regardless of race. The heroic biography of Brown allows Du Bois to make the case that manhood was needed on both sides of the color line to promote our relations with one another and to untangle America's psychological and socio-structural racial pathologies. The kind of self-conscious manhood that Brown epitomizes is necessary in each of us to allow us to see one another and to overcome the racialized alienation of modernity.

GENDER AND ISOLATION

Self-conscious manhood, for Du Bois, is an individualist project enacted at the level of the self. It is a way of living with ourselves and with others that he believes will solve the epistemic problem of American racism: the problem of failing to know and correctly judge racialized others as social equals. Du Bois believed that this individualist project of self-conscious manhood was a solution to social inequality that was open to all people. It was something closer to free self-actualization rather than synonymous with masculinity. Despite his use of the facially gendered language of "brotherhood" and "men," at many points Du Bois explicitly makes it clear that women are included in the sphere of individuals who have the possibility of such self-actualization. Talent, he writes, emerges "from the great Reservoir of All Men of All Races, of All Classes, of All Ages, of Both Sexes," de-sexing the concept of "Men" (Du Bois 1928/1995, 285), while at other points he writes that "no nation, race, or sex has a monopoly of ability or ideas" and that "there is not the slightest scientific reason for assuming that a given human being of any race or sex cannot reach normal, human development if he is granted a reasonable chance" (Du Bois 1920/1999, 89, 86). For Du Bois, the possibility of self-conscious manhood is open to all.

Self-conscious manhood, however, faces a dilemma. The concept promises recognition from others, and so it is necessarily hamstrung by entrenched patterns of language and existing structures of power and social norms that govern and delimit such individual recognition. Put another way, beyond his emphasis on truth-telling, Du Bois does not deeply reckon with the problem of judgment: the problem of how we make assessments of each other and come to understand one another. Judgments are necessarily formed within existing linguistic and social structures, forms of power that operate at a level higher than the individual. Since Du Bois's analysis of social inequality stays firmly rooted in the individual and interpersonal, it fails to grapple with these conditioning forces that shape our judgments.

While such structural inequalities might conceivably hamper everyone in their pursuit of recognition from others, the limitations of Du Bois's manly individualism are especially clear in the case of women, and particularly women of color. Focusing his analysis on the characteristics of the self that manly

individuals ought to cultivate, Du Bois ignores and even naturalizes the background structural and linguistic conditions within which they are operating. As women run up against these conditions, their achievement of self-conscious manhood is often not intelligible to others as such. Or, put another way, to gain manly self-consciousness, it appears that one can often no longer also be categorized coherently as female.¹⁵

These limits of intelligibility become clear, for instance, in Du Bois's discussion of abolitionist hero and Underground Railroad conductor Harriet Tubman. In a positive valence, Tubman is described as a remarkable and manly figure. Du Bois describes how in her youth as a slave Tubman did "the rudest and hardest men's work" (1909/1996, 187). Later, she served as a "crude Moses" to escaping slaves, and then she hastened to join the Union Army at the front, where she served as a commander of men and where "always in the camps the Union officers silently saluted her" (1920/1999, 97, 102). It is only a severe illness, Du Bois writes, that prevented her from joining John Brown in his raid of the arsenal at Harpers Ferry. Her courage, martial valor, and masculine strength make it impossible, in Du Bois's account, for her to be described as anything other than a man. In a letter to his son that Du Bois quotes, John Brown praises Tubman by saying "he (Harriet) is the most of a man, naturally, that I ever met with," while to Wendell Phillips, Brown introduces Tubman as "one of the best and bravest persons on this continent—General Tubman" (quoted in Du Bois 1909/1996, 187), giving her an officer's rank in an era when military service was deterministically gendered.

That Tubman is a laudably manly figure seems uncontested. Yet while such self-conscious manhood is a socially intelligible route for men to achieve recognition and social equality, a woman like Tubman who displays self-conscious manhood is more awkwardly received. In accounts of her, the eye is drawn not primarily to her merit but rather to her strangeness. To resolve this unintelligible manly woman into coherence, the viewer seeks some means by which the spectacle can be recast into something other than what it is. Tubman's efforts to secure a pension for her service in the Civil War exemplify this dynamic. While she worked as a scout, commander of men, spy, nurse, and cook during her three years of service, she received only the widow's pension of her late husband Nelson Davis, who had been a private in the Union Army. In 1898, Tubman submitted an affidavit detailing her war activities and requesting a pension in her own right. In 1899, Congress passed H.R. 4982, "granting a pension to

15. The challenge of category coherence occurs frequently in Du Bois's work. Harriet Beecher Stowe is included in a list of "heroic men" who fought for abolition, for instance, while in Du Bois's short story "The Call" the king summons a lone nameless Black woman to fight against evil, sending her into battle with the rather confusing promise of "O maid, made Man, thou shalt be Bride of God" (1920/1999, 93–94).

Harriet Tubman Davis, late a nurse in the United States Army," recasting her in the gender-acceptable role of nurse and making no mention of her other activities.¹⁶

Du Bois himself cannot resist this impulse; while lauding the bravery and courage of Tubman, for instance, he also describes her as a teller of "strange stories," "absolutely illiterate," with "her upper front teeth gone," and "perhaps to some degree mentally unbalanced by a blow on the head in childhood" (1920/1999, 102). It is important, moreover, to note that Du Bois never describes John Brown in similarly undermining language, despite frequent questions raised as to Brown's sanity then and since. The effect of Du Bois's description of Tubman is devastating: a towering figure of female manhood is rendered literally toothless, reduced to a marginal, half-human, potentially mad aberration.¹⁷

As the example of Tubman makes clear, misrecognition by others and isolation—not social equality and respect—are the likely lot of those few daring women who take up self-conscious manhood. Tubman is left in a strangely liminal position, celebrated but perhaps primarily as an aberration or curiosity, and in any case left narratively unsettled. The overall impression is one of unintelligibility, with Du Bois (and presumably his readers) seemingly unsure how to characterize or judge Tubman. Is she the social equal of other self-conscious men? Or are her capacities meretricious, reflecting some strange madness, some departure from the human?

These questions about Tubman raise broader concerns about Du Bois's ideas: do existing gendered understandings—or, we might also ask, raced or class-based understandings—limit who can meaningfully achieve social equality by way of self-conscious manhood? This question haunts the ostensible universality of Du Bois's concept of self-conscious manhood, mirroring the patriarchy of society and undermining the capacity of women to take up the concept as a means to recognition and social equality. Moreover, Du Bois's insistence on the

16. RG 233; <https://www.archives.gov/legislative/features/claim-of-harriet-tubman>.

17. As Annie Menzel (2018) has shown, Du Bois's gender politics are perhaps best characterized as polyvocal and profoundly ambivalent. That his political stances were often feminist can be countered by his often disconcerting emphasis on female chastity and traditional marriage and his failures to acknowledge the work of prominent Black female intellectuals and activists. As Hazel Carby observes, however, such bean-counting attempts to discern his gender politics elide the fact that "there is, unfortunately, no simple correspondence between anyone's support for female equality and the ideological effect of the gendered structures of thought and feeling at work in any text one might write and publish" (1998, 12). Here I argue that the ideological effects of Du Bois's gendered structures of thought and feeling are profoundly problematic. For other excellent treatments of gender in Du Bois's thought beyond Menzel and Carby, see Gillman and Weinbaum (2007), Balfour (2011, chap. 5), and Threadcraft (2016, chap. 3).

language of universal opportunity serves to naturalize this disparately gendered attainment, rendering manhood—the pursuit of a “sovereign human soul that seeks to know itself and the world about it”—to men as their natural domain (1903/2008a, 76). The ideological effect of Du Bois’s concept of self-conscious manhood is to produce, naturalize, and sustain social differentials of power and recognition.

ANTI-POLITICAL INDIVIDUALISM

Du Bois’s individualist program of self-conscious manhood leaves structures of inequality largely intact, and they continue to shape the individual judgments that we make about one another. In other words, social inequality seems to be not merely a product of individuals relating to one another but also a manifestation of the broader structures of social, economic, and political life that shape our judgments about one another. If we turn our thoughts to dismantling those broader structures, we are led to ask, what kind of political actors are self-consciously manly individuals? Are they the kinds of citizens who work to dismantle structural inequalities and participate in democratic political life?

Jennie Ikuta has argued, in the context of Nietzsche, that we cannot separate an ethic of self-creation and self-assertion—something that bears a family resemblance to Du Bois’s self-conscious manhood—from an antidemocratic politics. In Ikuta’s reading, manly “creativity is irreducibly the activity of an individual will, while democracy is the activity of a collective will that is constituted by individuals who view their wills as having equal moral importance” (2017, 41). An ethic of self-assertion, therefore, will always be fundamentally at odds with democracy’s ethic of moral equality, each orientation seeking the primacy of a value that would undermine the other. Although Nietzsche’s *ubermensch* and Du Bois’s self-conscious man are not identical, Ikuta’s careful reading of Nietzsche is a useful frame for thinking about how Du Bois’s project of manly individualism translates into a politics of manhood that is in tension with democratic equality.

When Du Bois discusses democracy, his primary concern is negative: a Tocquevillian or Millian fear of the tyrannical power of a democratic majority to suppress the self-conscious manhood of the minority of its members. On the problem of such tyranny, Du Bois writes, “Insane, wicked, and wasteful as the tyranny of the few over the many may be, it is not more dangerous than the tyranny of the many over the few . . . the spiritual losses from suppressed minorities may be vast and fatal and yet all unknown and unrealized because idea and dream and ability are paralyzed by brute force” (1920/1999, 89). Du Bois’s primary concern is that institutions and majorities “paralyze by brute force” the free play of manly powers. Du Bois is notably silent about a positive

prescription for the right kind of government to house his manly individuals, a fact that reflects his hierarchy of concerns: he is more attentive to the individual conditions for developing manliness than to the government of manly individuals. Developing self-conscious manhood appears to require the right to be free from "brute force"—the right to be left alone. Drawing on the latent or open anarchism of some of his intellectual forbearers, Du Bois often appears to have an anti-political bent.

This anti-political bent emerges not just as a skepticism about majoritarian democracy but also as a broader skepticism about the possibilities of political leadership. Against recent scholarship (Reed 1997; Gooding-Williams 2009) that has described him as a theorist of leadership and rule, I read Du Bois as fundamentally skeptical about the ultimate efficacy of elite political rule. The reason for his skepticism lies in the following paradox: although self-conscious manhood is his primary political goal, manly individuals are uniquely unsuited for political power and rule. In both *Quest* and *Dark Princess*, the protagonists take up political careers only to find that ruling corrodes one's manhood. As I described in discussing those works, effective political rule does not appear to be compatible with manhood's injunctions on truth-telling, anarchy, free action, and isolation. Du Bois shows that pursuit of those manly qualities renders one unfit for the active superintendence of other souls. John Brown, for instance, is described as an ineffectual political actor because "he did not know or recognize the subtler twistings of human nature. He judged it ever from his own simple, clear standpoint . . . [of] its kinks and prejudices, its little selfishness and jealousies and dishonesties, he knew nothing" (Du Bois 1909/1996, 54).

Yet Brown and other manly exemplars do have a role to play for the rest of us: the exemplars of successful self-conscious manhood serve a broadly democratic educational function. By their very mode of living, they passively teach something to the rest of us about how to live. Recall Du Bois's description of John Brown: "he did not use argument, he was himself an argument." In his early essay on the Talented Tenth, Du Bois frames the influence of the cultured and educated elite in the same way. The elite are "living examples of the possibilities," whose mere example "said silently more than all the drawn periods of orators" (Du Bois 1903/2008b, 192). Du Bois's doctrine of educative exemplarity is a doctrine of *res ipsa loquitur*—"the thing speaks for itself." The educative power of manly individuals is silent and passive; the observer takes in the totality of an exceptional life and extracts a moral from it for themselves. As Balfour observes, Du Bois's use of "exemplarity engages the reader, eliciting judgment" about the example before them (2011, 73). Similarly, Rogers describes Du Bois's persuasive efforts in *Souls* and other texts as fundamentally concerned with affirming the reflective agency of the reader (2012, 196–98). In this way, manly elites do not lead us through active imposition of will

or training but provide a kind of mirror in which we can more clearly perceive our own latent capacities and higher ideals.¹⁸

At the same time, such a project of self-development, grounded in human will and agency, will not reach the same heights in all individuals. The freedom in which we strive will enhance, not mute, natural differences in talent and will. There will be a “surging forward of the exceptional man,” while his “duller brethren” will take up manhood “slowly and painfully” (Du Bois 1903/2008a, 67). Although Du Bois is himself ambivalent on this point, it may even be that the “rule of inequality” will prevent some from ever achieving manhood: that “some were fitted to know and some to dig” (59). Like the transcendentalists before him, Du Bois does not appear to “expect that all will ever be individuals in the full democratic sense” (Kateb 1984, 388). In part, this is a testament to the breadth and grandeur of how Du Bois conceives of self-conscious manhood. As Rogers describes, “Du Bois’s democratic vision aspires to affect a transformation at the deepest levels of the self” (2012, 192); it is a bold, exhausting, ongoing, and risky effort, where success, rather than broad and democratic, will be limited to exceptional individuals.

But perhaps the most profound challenge that self-conscious manhood poses to democratic political life is that it seems to prescribe—as a solution to racialized refusals of social equality—a retreat from politics into the self. In a world where people see one another’s race rather than each other’s merit, the manly individual is one who works to self-actualize, to live freely, to devote oneself to truth, and to strive and act toward freedom. In doing this, the figure of self-conscious manhood draws all eyes to him; he illuminates himself. He is a towering figure whose merit is aggressively present to others. When Du Bois describes John Brown as “a great white light—an unwavering, unflickering brightness” (1909/1996, 255), he casts Brown’s manhood as something so brightly illuminated that it is difficult or impossible to avoid seeing it.

Yet, on the other hand, manhood respects the agency and alterity of the recognizer. Even the brightest light may not necessarily pierce the Veil. Self-conscious manhood thus also develops within the individual a certain liberation from the psychological vulnerability to others that is the beating heart of recognition. Du Bois’s manly individual contests the gloss on Hegel—that “the struggle for recognition can find only one satisfactory solution and that is a regime of reciprocal recognition among equals”—by exceeding equality, occupying a pinnacle of exceptionality far above those who would deny him recognition (Taylor

18. My reading of Du Bois’s elitism as compatible with democratic agency and the autonomy of self-actualization is indebted to, though distinct from, Arash Davari’s (2018) insightful analysis of the compatibility of Du Bois’s elite vanguard with a democratic ethos of reciprocity, unscripted transformation, and agency in the masses.

1992, 50). If needed, self-conscious manhood appears able to jettison the dream of social equality altogether and take responsibility for its own ongoing, isolated striving toward meaning and self-development. The project of resolving double consciousness into a "better, truer self" is, at core, a solitary project that can be separated from the broader pursuit of social equality.

Du Bois's emphasis on this isolated individualist project—the project left to us when recognition is refused—offers a new way of making sense of Du Bois's turn, in the second half of his career, toward questions of political economy and the material conditions of sufficiency for an individual's life. If racism remained—if recognition was not forthcoming—Black Americans would need to turn their attention to securing the material conditions for their own isolated pursuit of self-conscious manhood. So while an individualist pursuit of self-conscious manhood remained the goal, he increasingly turned his attention to an analysis of the racialized economy. He becomes keenly aware of the hollowness of unsupported freedom; in thinking about the position of Southern freedmen after the Civil War, for instance, he writes, "What did such a mockery of freedom mean? Not a cent of money, not an inch of land, not a mouthful of victuals—not even ownership of the rags on his back. Free!" (Du Bois 1903/2008a, 100). Partisans of freedom, he argues, must be attentive to the substantive conditions of freedom, "the essential material and moral conditions requisite to self-realization" (Holt 1990, 320). Du Bois sketches out this dynamic in *Black Reconstruction*, where he describes and then attacks the "American Assumption" that anyone can achieve economic stability through sheer will and hard work (1935/2007, 182–83). Will alone cannot triumph over entrenched inequalities; material sufficiency is a necessary backdrop to the development of self-conscious manhood. In America, as Du Bois increasingly recognized, this opportunity for material sufficiency was racialized and seemed likely to remain so.

In the early 1930s, in response to this realization, Du Bois began to advocate for the development of independent collectives of "self-sustaining and self-guiding economic activity" for Black Americans, a position that he provocatively termed "voluntary segregation."¹⁹ Such self-segregation was necessary because, he wrote, "there seems no hope that America in our day will yield in its color or race hatred" (Du Bois 1933, 200). By 1935, Du Bois would argue that Black Americans must plan for a long siege and must see that "the Negro group itself does not suffer in income and education, in self-respect and self-assertion, in happiness and ideal, because of the discrimination which it

19. W. E. B. Du Bois, "Voluntary segregation" (1935), W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312), Special Collections and Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries, 5.

suffers and which it will be compelled to suffer for many, many years.”²⁰ As he describes in *Dusk of Dawn*, his writings on segregation “stressed the economic discrimination as fundamental and advised concentration of planning here” because he had come to recognize that the economic question was a necessary precondition to individual manhood and the continued campaign “for political, civil and social equality” (Du Bois 1940/1971, 197).

While it is still self-conscious manhood that stands as the goal of reform, Du Bois grew more aware of the racialized material impediments to such manhood. Thus, Du Bois should be read not as a liberal who becomes a socialist but as an individualist who broadens his view of the context in which individual capacities are developed. He says as much in *Dusk of Dawn*, when he asserts that his emphasis on self-segregated economic cooperatives is in no way inconsistent with his earlier emphasis on manhood and self-assertion: they are “not antagonistic ideals but part of one ideal” (Du Bois 1940/1971, 304). His new vision, he writes, “is indeed a part of that same original program; it is its natural and inevitable fulfillment” (311). Du Bois describes his economic plans as an emphasis and restatement of “certain implicit aspects of his former ideas” rather than a shift away from his primary commitment to manhood (304). But manhood remains the goal toward which economics—and everything else—is directed, for “it would not do to con-center all effort on economic well-being and forget freedom and manhood and equality. Rather, Negroes must live and eat and strive, and still hold unfaltering commerce with the stars” (7).

Du Bois’s commitment to self-conscious manhood generates several forms of anti-political isolation and antidemocratic hierarchy: structural limits to who can be judged and recognized as social equals, a hierarchical acceptance that few people will ever achieve the rigors of self-conscious manhood, a fundamental skepticism about democracy given its tension with individual self-development, and an emphasis on individual and group retreat from political life in order to preserve the conditions for such self-development. Though Du Bois theorized that social equality was the core operating pathology of American racism, his pursuit of an individualist solution—the pursuit of recognition from others as a meritorious individual—sets up a deep tension with democratic political commitments. Self-consciously manly individuals remain prey to the structural inequalities that shape their judgments of one another, nor are they suited to the democratic political action that might undermine such structures. If we owe Du Bois a debt for his insight that racism has political effects but originates outside politics, his efforts also highlight the dangers and dilemmas of theorizing an individualist response to the pathologies of the social world.

20. Du Bois, “Voluntary segregation,” 4.

CONCLUSION

In an 1895 speech, Booker T. Washington assured his audience that “the wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly” (1895/1974, 586). Yet Du Bois unhesitatingly entered this field of “folly,” making the problem of social equality and the solution of self-conscious manhood a central preoccupation of his long and complex career. Recognizing social equality as the pathology that undergirded and justified other forms of racial oppression, Du Bois became a passionate advocate for the manly self-consciousness that he saw as its solution.

Du Bois’s political theorizing around the problem of American racism put the question of social equality at the center, contesting nearly a century of mainstream American political thought that had argued that social equality was epiphenomenal to racism. Abolitionist and Reconstruction-era thinkers, as well as those capitulating to white pressures during the ascendancy of Jim Crow segregation, had argued that political and economic changes either were sufficient or, less commonly, would catalyze later changes in American social attitudes. Du Bois, however, accepted neither this view nor a related pessimism about the very possibility of social equality across racial lines. His diagnosis of racism as an epistemic problem of our relations with ourselves and others, one particularly compounded by modernity, represents a major contribution to American political thought. His solution of self-conscious manhood is also unique, even as it is grounded in the tradition of nineteenth-century American manhood endemic to institutions like his alma mater, Harvard College. His emphasis on a complex vision of truth, his recognition of the role of isolation, and his celebration of anarchic freedom all augment and enrich a vision of American manliness as action in the face of adversity. Most importantly, Du Bois theorizes the pursuit of self-conscious manhood as a consummately political act, one that would grant such individuals recognition by other members of the polity as social equals.

But Du Bois’s vision, taken seriously as a prescription for American society, is also riven with paradoxes. Though Du Bois sees self-conscious manhood as the sovereign strivings of souls toward social recognition on a plane of deep equality with others, it instead results in the production of lonely and isolated individuals, embedded in antidemocratic and socially unequal hierarchies. Self-conscious manhood is an aesthetically beautiful ethic when enacted at the level of the self, emphasizing courageous action, thoughtful and rejuvenating solitude, divine anarchy, and a deep understanding of ourselves and each other. But the politics of self-conscious manhood—a world of self-conscious men—betrays this vision, naturalizing hierarchy, cutting against democratic politics, and profoundly isolating us from each other. In this way, Du Bois’s

quest for social equality by way of self-conscious manhood fails on its own terms. Self-conscious manhood, in my reading, is not a route to relations of mutual recognition, nor to egalitarian political and economic structures.

The failures of self-conscious manhood in Du Bois's thought mirror larger tensions in liberal democracy between self-assertion and egalitarianism, or between a politics of individualism and a politics of recognition. Du Bois's effort to source racial pathologies in social equality—in inter- and intrapersonal dynamics—diagnosed a problem that his corresponding commitment to individual self-development left him unable to address. A commitment to individual self-assertion dominates Du Bois's political theory, while his egalitarian political commitments go unrealized.

REFERENCES

- Balfour, Lawrie. 2011. *Democracy's Reconstruction: Thinking Politically with W. E. B. Du Bois*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Black, Marc. 2007. "Fanon and Du Boisian Double Consciousness." *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 5 (3): 393–404.
- Bromell, Nick. 2013. *The Time Is Always Now: Black Thought and the Transformation of U.S. Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- . 2018a. "'Honest and Earnest Criticism' as the 'Soul of Democracy': Du Bois's Style of Democratic Reasoning." In *A Political Companion to W. E. B. Du Bois*, ed. Nick Bromell. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.
- . 2018b. Introduction to *A Political Companion to W. E. B. Du Bois*, ed. Nick Bromell. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.
- Carby, Hazel. 1998. *Race Men*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Carlyle, Thomas. 1840. *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1091/1091-h/1091-h.htm>.
- Cavell, Stanley. 1999. *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Davari, Arash. 2018. "On Democratic Leadership and Social Change: Positioning Du Bois in the Shadow of a Gray To-come." In *A Political Companion to W. E. B. Du Bois*, ed. Nick Bromell, 241–70. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.
- Douglas, Andrew. 2019. *W. E. B. Du Bois and the Critique of the Competitive Society*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Douglass, Frederick. 1845/1995. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. Repr. New York: Dover.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. 1897/2008. "The Conservation of Races." Repr. in *Souls of Black Folk*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- . 1899/1996. *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*. Repr. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- . 1903. "The Training of Negroes for Social Power." *Outlook*, November 1903.
- . 1903/2008a. *Souls of Black Folk*. Repr. New York: Oxford University Press.
- . 1903/2008b. "The Talented Tenth." Repr. in *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- . 1909/1996. *John Brown*. Repr. New York: International.
- . 1910/1986. “Race Prejudice.” Repr. in *Pamphlets and Leaflets*, ed. Herbert Aptheker, 88–91. White Plains, NY: Kraus-Thomson.
- . 1911/2017. *The Quest of the Silver Fleece*. Repr. CreateSpace.
- . 1920/1999. *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil*. Repr. Mineola, NY: Dover.
- . 1921. “President Harding and Social Equality.” *Crisis* 23 (2).
- . 1926. “Criteria of Negro Art.” *Crisis* 32:290–97.
- . 1928/1995. *Dark Princess: A Romance*. Repr. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- . 1933. “On Being Ashamed of One’s Self: An Essay on Race Pride.” *Crisis*, September 1933.
- . 1935/2007. *Black Reconstruction in America 1860–1880*. Repr. New York: Oxford University Press.
- . 1940/1971. *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept*. Repr. New York: Schocken.
- . 2000. “Sociology Hesitant.” *Boundary 2* 27 (3): 37–44.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. 1850/1892. *Representative Men*. Repr. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin.
- Gates, Henry Louis. 2007. “The Black Letters on the Sign: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Canon.” Preface to the *Oxford W. E. B. Du Bois Series*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gillman, Susan, and Alys Weinbaum, eds. 2007. *Next to the Color Line: Gender, Sexuality, and W. E. B. Du Bois*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gooding-Williams, Robert. 2009. *In the Shadow of Du Bois: Afro-Modern Political Thought in America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gordon, Lewis. 2018. “An Africana Philosophical Reading of Du Bois’s Political Thought.” In *A Political Companion to W. E. B. Du Bois*, ed. Nick Bromell, 57–84. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.
- Hanchard, Michael. 2010. “Contours of Black Political Thought: An Introduction and Perspective.” *Political Theory* 38 (4): 510–36.
- Higgins, Kathleen Marie. 2006. “Double Consciousness and Second Sight.” In *Critical Affinities: Nietzsche and African American Thought*, ed. Jacqueline Scott, A. Todd Franklin, and Robert Gooding-Williams, 51–73. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Hoganson, Kristin. 1998. *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Holt, Thomas C. 1990. “The Political Uses of Alienation: W. E. B. Du Bois on Politics, Race, and Culture, 1903–1940.” *American Quarterly* 42 (2): 301–23.
- Ikuta, Jennie. 2017. “‘Nothing Is Really Equal’: On the Compatibility of Nietzsche’s Egalitarian Ethics and Anti-democratic Politics.” *Constellations* 24:339–55.
- Kateb, George. 1984. “Democratic Individuality and the Claims of Politics.” *Political Theory* 12 (3): 331–60.
- Menzel, Annie. 2018. “‘Awful Gladness’: The Dual Political Rhetorics of Du Bois’s ‘Of the Passing of the First Born.’” *Political Theory*, 1–25.
- Morris, Aldon. 2017. *The Scholar Denied: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Birth of Modern Sociology*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- New York Times*. 1921. “Harding Says Negro Must Have Equality in Public Life.” *New York Times*, October 27, 1921.

- Reed, Adolph. 1997. *W. E. B. Du Bois and American Political Thought: Fabianism and the Color Line*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Reed, Anthony. 2018. "Alightings of Poetry: The Dialectics of Voice and Silence in W. E. B. Du Bois's Narrative of Double-Consciousness." In *A Political Companion to W. E. B. Du Bois*, ed. Nick Bromell. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.
- Robinson, Cedric. 2000. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. 2nd ed. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Rogers, Melvin. 2012. "The People, Rhetoric, and Affect: On the Political Force of Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk*." *American Political Science Review* 106 (1): 188–203.
- Tate, Claudia. 1995. Introduction to *Dark Princess: A Romance*, by W. E. B. Du Bois. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Taylor, Charles. 1992. "The Politics of Recognition." In *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutmann, 25–74. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Thoreau, Henry David. 1859/2000. "A Plea for Captain John Brown." Repr. in *Thoreau: Political Writings*, 137–58. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Threadcraft, Shatema. 2016. *Intimate Justice: The Black Female Body and the Body Politic*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Townsend, Kim. 1996. *Manhood at Harvard: William James and Others*. New York: Norton.
- Turner, Jack. 2005. "Performing Conscience: Thoreau, Political Action, and the Plea for John Brown." *Political Theory* 33 (4): 448–71.
- Washington, Booker T. 1895/1974. "Atlanta Compromise Speech." Repr. in *The Booker T. Washington Papers*, ed. Louis R. Harlan, 3:583–87. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.
- Williams, Robert. 2018. "A Democracy of Differences: Knowledge and the Unknowable in Du Bois's Theory of Democratic Governance." In *A Political Companion to W. E. B. Du Bois*, ed. Nick Bromell. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.
- Yaure, Philip. 2020. "Declaration in Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom*." *American Political Thought* 9 (4): 513–41.

Copyright of American Political Thought is the property of The Jack Miller Center and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.