

**The Evolution of a Reform Plan**  
**W.E.B. Du Bois's Sociological Research 1896-1910**

by

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## **Table of Contents**

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. “The Challenge”</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2. “Reform”</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>3. “From Self-Help to State Help”</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Vita</b>	<b>111</b>

### ***Abstract***

This study evaluates the place of W.E.B. Du Bois in the progressive movement in early-twentieth century America. Through his sociological works, including The Philadelphia Negro and the Atlanta Conferences, Du Bois tried to create an intellectual blueprint to reform of America. Initially his plan had a self-help foundation, and he identified churches, schools and secret societies as institutions that should lead this effort. Du Bois compiled an overwhelming amount of data which suggested that black poverty and suffering was due not to racial inferiority, but a negative social environment. As his work progressed, Du Bois assigned increasing blame to whites for helping create the negative social environment that blacks faced.

The first chapter outlines the challenges Du Bois faced in attempting to create his reform program. In post-Reconstruction America, blacks saw an erosion of their civil rights which undercut their efforts to improve their standard of living. Languishing as the poorest people in society, many blacks fled the rural South to start over in the urban industrial centres. Du Bois endeavoured to study the new environment blacks faced while seeking to challenge white racism. Most Americans, including academics, clergymen and physicians, believed blacks inferior and lacking the potential to improve. The study's second chapter evaluates The Philadelphia Negro, a work of critical importance, in which as Du Bois tried to educate reform-minded whites about the true nature of the black community. Throughout his work, Du Bois encouraged blacks to undertake self-help programs that would improve the negative social conditions they faced. The final chapter demonstrates that the Atlanta Conference studies allowed Du Bois to expand on the

themes he introduced in The Philadelphia Negro. Over time his views evolved, and he came to argue that greed inherent in laissez-faire economics motivated whites to exploit poor blacks. Slowly, Du Bois modified his reform plans, envisioning an expanded role for government in reform efforts. Although Du Bois influenced many settlement workers and reformers, and joined the NAACP in 1910, he never saw his ideas gain widespread acceptance.

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## ***Introduction***

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was one of the greatest campaigners for civil rights in American history. We remember him favourably for his role in promoting higher education as a solution to racial tension. He also helped to found the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, arguably the most successful civil rights organization in the history of the movement. This organization, established in 1909, was a clear expression of the progressive sentiments popular in America during the first two decades of the twentieth century. The progressive movement featured efforts by many Americans to reshape their society. Progressive endeavours include larger political campaigns, municipal reform, settlement house programs, and even efforts to solve the nation's race problem. The social conscience exhibited by many Americans during this period gave him hope that America would finally address the plight of African-Americans. In the previous decade, Du Bois had been more critical of American culture, as he pursued a career in academics.

Du Bois benefitted from an education that few other black men obtained because of the powerful racial and economic barriers they faced. After showing considerable academic merit in high school, he left his home in Great Barrington, Massachusetts to attend school in the South. He initially enrolled at Fisk University in Tennessee, although he had dreamed of going to Harvard.<sup>1</sup> After two worthwhile years at Fisk, he soon left to

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<sup>1</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept. New York: Schocken, 1968. p.22.

pursue his education at Harvard, the centre of intellectual life in America at the time, where he would eventually earn his doctorate.<sup>2</sup> There Du Bois met several notable scholars, including philosophers William James and George Santayana and historian Albert Bushnell Hart. He excelled academically, and in 1892 the University of Berlin offered him a visiting scholarship which lasted two years.<sup>3</sup>

Because of academic regulations, Du Bois did not receive a degree from the University of Berlin but still found his time in Germany exciting and productive. For the first time in his life he was free from the stigma of being a black man in America, and most Germans treated him warmly. While at the university, he received lessons from several innovative instructors. Gustav Schmoller, Heinrich von Treitschke, Max Weber and Adolf Wagner all sought to apply scientific principles to social situations in the hope that such methods of observation would allow them to generalize more accurately about society. Du Bois left Germany in 1894 determined to integrate their methods into his own work.<sup>4</sup>

W.E.B. Du Bois conducted his early sociological research during a dynamic period of American history. During the 1890's many Americans felt that large, unseen corporations or forces were controlling their economic affairs, and they became so desperate that they fought to regain control of their lives. Protesters sought the security of

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<sup>2</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois. A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its First Century. New York: International, 1968. p.125.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.133-4, 143,153.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.159-160,163-167.

larger organized groups within which to pursue their struggle. Rural Americans, for example, especially faced constant economic difficulty in the decades following the Civil War. They found a potential solution to their problems in the National Farmers Alliance and Industrial Union. The Alliance gave thousands of American farmpeople the hope that they could change their situation. The rural organization petitioned merchants to give fairer compensation for crops, railroad companies to end discriminatory transportation policies and rates, and the government to look at alternative money policies.

Urban Americans also organised for protest by joining labor unions. Following the Civil War, American industry underwent a dramatic transformation with small workshops being replaced by large-scale manufacturing. Traditional artisans had controlled the workplace with their irreplaceable ability to follow a project from start to finish. Industrialization removed the skill from production, leaving workers responsible for only a few simple functions that represented one small part of the process. Production changes, coupled with cheap labour, forced workers to form unions to protect their rights. Tensions between workers and management often escalated into confrontation. For example, the Pullman strike of 1893 virtually stopped traffic around Chicago, the centre of America's railroad system. Eugene V. Debs led workers of the American Railway Union in an orderly boycott against the Pullman company, to give the workers a higher standard of living.

The reform impulse, however, was not just limited to group endeavours. Feeling the energy of the period, individuals began to conduct smaller municipal reform projects to shape their environment. The Progressive experience included more people than just

farmers, artisans, and labourers. An emerging middle class tried to exert its influence by changing society for the better. With the growth of American cities, reformers focused on the social problems evident in such urban centres as Philadelphia, Atlanta, New York, and Boston. Muckraking journalists helped publicize society's problems, highlighting the plight of poor children in the cities, or the unfair working conditions that many blue collar men and women faced. New publications spread the belief that American cities were in decline, as the newly formed ghettos strained community morals and resources. Not surprisingly, many settlement workers or other reformers focused their attention on black slums.

Du Bois was keenly aware of both the reform impulse in society and the low status most Americans assigned to his race. Early in his academic career he decided that he would devote his efforts to advancing the black race in America. At first he envisioned a great scientific study that would chart the development of African-Americans. Over time, however, his sociological work took on a much more practical tone, as he tried to provide the theoretical framework behind reform efforts in the black community.

In preparation for his academic career, Du Bois attended and graduated from Harvard University. Two years later, after Du Bois accepted employment at the University of Pennsylvania, he soon embarked on his first major work as a sociologist. The study examined the growing ghetto in Philadelphia's Seventh Ward. Despite the poor living conditions in the area, Du Bois decided to live in the ward as he carried out his research; spending countless hours moving from dwelling to dwelling collecting

demographic information.<sup>5</sup> To ensure objectivity he employed the most modern, rigorous scientific methods in collecting his data. The results of more than a year of thorough research were illuminating. The text touched a wide range of community issues such as basic demographic information, important community institutions like churches and schools, and other important elements of everyday life. Du Bois managed to articulate that even within a very limited model the black community was not a homogeneous mass, but diverse and stratified.<sup>6</sup>

The book that resulted from his study, The Philadelphia Negro, represented the first application of modern principles of social science to the black urban experience. Modern academics often cite the work as the beginning of a new genre of African-American sociology. According to John H. Bracey, Jr., August Meier, and Elliott Rudwick, The Philadelphia Negro, began, “the golden age in the sociology of blacks in America.”<sup>7</sup> Such Scholars as George Edmund Haynes, Ira D. Reid and Allison Davis soon began studying the black community. By the mid point of the century the University of Chicago housed a sociology department concerned with the study of blacks in the United States. The department featured the work of E. Franklin Frazier, Bertram W. Doyle, Horace Cayton, Charles S. Johnson and St. Clair Drake, men who molded modern

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<sup>5</sup> David Levering Lewis, W.E.B. Du Bois. Biography of a Race 1868-1919. New York: Holt, 1993. p.186-190.

<sup>6</sup> Elijah Anderson in his introduction to W.E.B. Du Bois, The Philadelphia Negro. A Social Study. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, 1996. p.xviii-xx.

<sup>7</sup> John H. Bracey, Jr., August Meier, Elliot Rudwick, The Black Sociologists: The First Half Century. Belmont: Wadsworth, 1971. p.1.

sociology.<sup>8</sup> Du Bois would have been heartened by the University of Chicago's efforts to promote the study of the black community on such a wide scale. For years he tried with little success to convince university administrators to fund what he saw as essential projects charting the progress of African-Americans.<sup>9</sup>

Du Bois intended The Philadelphia Negro to help the African-American community advance. Although dismayed by community vices such as drinking and gambling, he did not fully blame blacks for these problems. While he noted that blacks had to do more to improve their lot, he also recognized that white prejudice was a major obstacle.<sup>10</sup> His conclusion may not have seemed revolutionary, but it signalled a shift in African-American reform thought. Through his research Du Bois reached conclusions contrary to prevailing black civil rights philosophy. At the turn of the century most Americans were most comfortable with the policy of accommodation voiced most dramatically by Booker T. Washington who felt that by acquiring basic agricultural and hygienic skills blacks would earn the respect of whites and eventually win their rightful place in society.<sup>11</sup> Through his academic research Du Bois became increasingly critical of Washington and of accommodation. The Philadelphia Negro marked Du Bois's first step away from Washington's program.

Du Bois's key conclusion in the Philadelphia study noted that the living conditions

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 1-5.

<sup>9</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois. p.200-202.

<sup>10</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Philadelphia Negro. A Social Study. p.389-397.

<sup>11</sup> Booker T. Washington, Up From Slavery. New York: Airmont, 1967.

blacks faced caused the poverty they endured. His view opposed those of most white Americans, who felt that blacks were, as E. Franklin Frazier states, “an inferior race because of either biological or social heredity or both; that the Negro because of his physical characteristics could not be assimilated; and that physical amalgamation was bad and therefore undesirable.”<sup>12</sup> Du Bois challenged the prevailing academic thought in place since the Civil War. Many American scholars readily believed that blacks were inferior and their views, although subjective, helped to justify the position of blacks within capitalist America. Political disenfranchisement, segregation and the constant threat of mob violence were difficulties that blacks faced at the turn of the century. Meanwhile, the elites in America developed the Gospel of Wealth ideology claiming that the strongest and most virtuous of men would assume their place at the head of society. This philosophy encouraged society to measure a man’s worth by his material wealth.<sup>13</sup> Through basic social observation people believed in Social-Darwinism which seemed to assign blacks the lowest rung in the social ladder.<sup>14</sup> In Dusk of Dawn, Du Bois openly declared his disdain for these unrealistic ideas which banished African-Americans to a lower social status.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> E. Franklin Frazier, “Race Contacts and the Social Structure,” American Sociological Review, xiv February 1949 p.2.

<sup>13</sup> Gail Kennedy ed., Democracy and the Gospel of Wealth. Boston, D.C. Heath, 1949. p.v-ix.

<sup>14</sup> Robert H. Wiebe, The Search for Order 1877-1920. New York: Hill & Wang, 1967 p.40., Alan Dawley, Struggles for Justice. Social Responsibility and the Liberal State. Cambridge: Harvard, 1991 p.50, 107., Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought. New York: George Braziller, 1955. pp.170-173.

<sup>15</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, Dusk of Dawn. An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept. p.51.

White academics had spent decades developing this social philosophy to explain their society and justify the poor social condition of blacks. The Philadelphia Negro marked W.E.B. Du Bois's first attempt to question the American system. Du Bois's work challenged American academia which had been justifying racist practices for decades.

Many historians who have examined Du Bois's early sociological work fail to recognize the practical reform intentions that Du Bois had for his work. Most evaluations of Du Bois as a reformer focus on his work with the N.A.A.C.P. Earlier critiques of Du Bois, including Francis Broderick's W.E.B. Du Bois. Negro Leader in a Time of Crisis (1959), and Elliot Rudwick's W.E.B. Du Bois. A Study in Minority Leadership (1960), focused on the high academic quality of his work in an attempt to establish his reputation, as he had become a somewhat forgotten American scholar. They tried to prove that Du Bois's early works enhanced his reputation as a scholar without evaluating his evolving ideas on race and reform. They placed a great deal of emphasis on the conflict between Du Bois and Booker T. Washington, clearly outlining their over voting participation and education.<sup>16</sup>

In her book, The Unbridgeable Gap: Blacks and Their Quest for the American Dream, 1900-1930 (1972), June Sochen argued that there was a conservative element to Du Bois's research. Downplaying the conflict between Washington and Du Bois, Sochen felt that Du Bois was a conservative because he demanded the right of blacks to pursue the American dream. Sochen noted that both worked within the system, for

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<sup>16</sup> Francis Broderick, W.E.B. Du Bois. Negro Leader in a Time of Crisis. Stanford: Stanford University, 1959. pp.32-89., Elliott M. Rudwick, W.E.B. Du Bois. A Study in Minority Group Leadership. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia, 1960. pp.15-76.

improvements in education to help blacks achieve the American dream. Sochen makes an interesting argument, but her work would benefit from a further examination of the complexity of Du Bois's ideas on reform.<sup>17</sup> Du Bois commented on many issues, not just those on which he disagreed with Washington. Although he was not a revolutionary, Du Bois advocated some changes which held radical implications. Nevertheless, Du Bois and Washington agreed on many reform issues, particularly during Du Bois's tenure in Philadelphia. Over time the two men gradually grew apart as Du Bois adopted a more demanding reform program.

Challenging conservative views on Du Bois's early politics, Dan S. Green and Edwin D. Driver produced a different view of Du Bois's early sociological research with their study, W.E.B. Du Bois on Sociology and the Black Community (1978). They claimed that Du Bois's early research was radical because he believed black inferiority was caused by a poor social environment, not by heredity. Unfortunately, Green and Driver were content simply to reprint large portions of The Philadelphia Negro without adequately explaining the nature of Du Bois's departure from more traditional civil rights thinking. They fail to detail the evolution over time of his ideas on reform and do not explain how he differed from the majority of academics and professionals of the period. Nevertheless, Green and Driver's book inspired several other studies noting the radical nature of Du Bois's work. For example, in his work Black&Red: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War 1944-1963 (1986), Gerald Horne states that

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<sup>17</sup> June Sochen, The Unbridgeable Gap: Blacks and Their Quest for the American Dream, 1900-1950. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1972. Chapters 2 and 3.

Du Bois was a political radical earlier than most scholars recognize. Horne claims that Du Bois showed signs of openness to alternative political ideas during his early work with the NAACP<sup>18</sup>

Starting with S.P. Fullinwider's book, The Mind and Mood of Black America (1969), more recent studies of Du Bois have recognized that his ideas could be considered radical or conservative depending on the context in which they are considered. Like any great thinker, Du Bois altered his views over time. Fullinwider's book is notable, as it explains that Du Bois had a practical reform goal during his early career. Fullinwider believes that through his work Du Bois argued that blacks had a "christ-like image" because they had managed to maintain their spirituality while enduring a racist context which at various times featured slavery, disenfranchisement, segregation and mob violence. Du Bois portrayed whites as "devils", because of their greed, prejudice and hatred toward blacks. Fullinwider feels that Du Bois advocated a religious "mission," with reformers working to save America. The key to this plan was religion and Du Bois envisioned a large role for the spiritually strong blacks in the reform of the nation. Fullinwider states that Du Bois dismissed conservative notions of social Darwinism, arguing that spirituality, not wealth were signs of higher evolution. Du Bois believed that the black community was the spiritual center of American society, and the key to the

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<sup>18</sup> Dan S. Green and Edwin D. Driver, W.E.B. Du Bois on Sociology and the Black Community. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1978. pp.10-20., Gerald Horne, Black & Red. W.E.B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944-1963. Albany: State University of New York, 1986. pp.2-10.

nation's salvation.<sup>19</sup>

Although Fullinwider provides an interesting framework for the analysis of Du Bois's sociological research, other areas need to be addressed. While much of his research focused on spirituality, Du Bois also examined other themes which deserve attention. Initially, Fullinwider correctly argues that Du Bois proposed a highly spiritual program, but over time his emphasis shifted to a program that was less spiritual and more pragmatic in nature. Du Bois eventually called for cooperative economic ventures, educational reform, and heightened government involvement and funding in programs to aid blacks. Du Bois became sceptical about the place of black churches in his reform program even though he admitted that the churches were the spiritual centre of the black community. Noting that spirituality was a large component of Du Bois's sociological research is important, but it is equally important to examine the other elements of his plan.

The constant evolution of Du Bois's ideas encouraged other historians to also evaluate his ideas against the backdrop of the events surrounding them. In W.E.B. Du Bois, Biography of a Race 1868-1919 (1993), David Levering Lewis attempts to examine Du Bois's early career without arguing that he was either radical or conservative. Lewis seeks a complete picture of Du Bois's character, important events in his private life, and his motivation for undertaking each project. Du Bois, Lewis notes, sought to create a reform plan designed to guide wealthy reform-minded citizens or settlement house

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<sup>19</sup> S.P. Fullinwider, The Mind and Mood of Black America. Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey, 1969. pp.54-64.

workers.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately Lewis does not note the strong connections between The Philadelphia Negro and the Atlanta conferences and as a result he neglects to trace the development of Du Bois's reform blueprint over time.

Recently in, W.E.B. Du Bois and American Political Thought (1997), Adolph L. Reed, Jr. investigated the theoretical elements of Du Bois's political views. Like Lewis, Reed was not preoccupied with arguing that Du Bois was a radical or a conservative. Instead, Reed tries to find the more consistent features of Du Bois's political thought. He argues that Du Bois's faith in a scientific approach led to a lasting commitment to elitism and collectivism. Reed states that while Du Bois expressed interest in Pan-Africanism or socialist ideas, he never abandoned his collectivist or elitist ideas. Although Reed's study is interesting, he fails to explain fully how Du Bois's research shaped his political ideas. Unfortunately Reed, like many others, focuses on politics which was just one piece of a complex, involved reform plan. Reed is correct in his assertion that The Philadelphia Negro was central to the development of Du Bois's ideas, but he fails to acknowledge that Du Bois developed the same ideas further in the Atlanta conference studies.<sup>21</sup>

August Meier, in Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915 (1964), also examines Du Bois's career within the context of the progressive reform movement. Although he never states it explicitly, Meier assumes that Du Bois was a full-fledged member of the progressive movement prior to his days with the N.A.A.C.P. It would have been helpful

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<sup>20</sup> David Levering Lewis, W.E.B. Du Bois. Biography of a Race, 1868-1919. New York: Henry Holt, 1993. Chapters 8-9.

<sup>21</sup> Adolph L. Reed Jr., W.E.B. Du Bois and American Political Thought. Fabianism and the Color Line. New York: Oxford University, 1997. pp.47-51, 69-70, 89.

had Meier explained where Du Bois fit within the movement. Du Bois produced his reform blueprint with a specific motive in mind. He wanted to educate all progressive reformers, urging both whites and blacks into reform programs more suitable than segregation or forced migration. Unfortunately, his race kept Du Bois from being fully accepted by political reformers of the South. At the same time, his academic arrogance, radical beliefs and his conflict with Booker T. Washington kept him from being fully accepted by many black reformers.

Ultimately, Du Bois found acceptance among a few like-minded settlement house workers and academics. According to Dewey Grantham, in Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition (1983), there existed three main elements to Southern progressivism. The first group of Southern progressives, whom Du Bois wanted to educate and direct, encouraged state control of any problem area in society. Many reformers came to believe that political disenfranchisement and segregation were viable programs to limit racial difficulties in the South. Grantham claims that the second component of the Southern reform movement was concerned with economic development. Members of this group were concerned with economic issues, such as problems with agriculture, protective labor measures and the application of scientific method to the workplace. While Du Bois commented on all of these themes, he did so from a black perspective, which kept him from fully participating in these campaigns to any great extent. The third and final element of the Southern progressive movement, Grantham states, were efforts to achieve social justice. These initiatives usually focused on

charitable concerns, child labor laws or social issues facing the black community.<sup>22</sup> Clearly Du Bois belonged to the third group as he was primarily concerned with improving the quality of life for blacks in America. Although Du Bois fit most easily into this third category of Southern reform efforts, it is clear that he desperately wanted to be involved in a leadership role with the other elements of southern progressive reform. His race and his focus on the problems of the black community kept this from ever happening.

In The Philadelphia Negro and later in the Atlanta Conferences Du Bois tried to influence and inform reform-minded citizens including settlement workers, educators, philanthropists and politicians. The purpose of this paper is to examine Du Bois's attempt to contribute to the progressive reform movement. Du Bois's research gave him the opportunity to form ideas on racial reform, preparing him for the hands-on role he would take upon joining the N.A.A.C.P. in 1910. While the Philadelphia study focused on one specific neighbourhood, the Atlanta studies were much broader in scope. Instead of investigating all aspects of life in one community in depth, Du Bois decided that each year conference participants would examine one specific aspect of black life. After ten years the cycle would begin again with conference organizers reviewing the original topics. By adapting this format, Du Bois hoped to amass a comprehensive body of data describing the development of the black race in America.<sup>23</sup> Clearly, the Philadelphia study was a

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<sup>22</sup> August Meier, Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915. Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1964. pp. 182-207., Dewey W. Grantham, Southern Progressivism. The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983. pp.xviii-xx.

<sup>23</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois. A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its First Century. p.198-201, 215.

prelude to the larger idea of the Atlanta Conferences. The Atlanta Conferences gave Du Bois the opportunity to expand on many of his ideas more fully. In particular, he became increasingly convinced that the destitute conditions blacks faced were not the result of heredity but rather the social environment forced upon blacks. As the conferences progressed from year to year, Du Bois's language became increasingly more militant and critical. The Philadelphia Negro serves as the starting point in a process of examination that questioned years of academically supported beliefs. Considering the importance of The Philadelphia Negro and the Atlanta conference papers, little critical analysis greeted them when they first appeared. The few popular journals which reviewed the material approved the work but ignored the author's emphasis on environment over heredity. The Journal of American Sociology disdained both the Philadelphia study and the larger Atlanta conferences.<sup>24</sup> Considering Du Bois's credentials, and the obvious thoroughness and merit of this work he was doing, this snub was inexcusable. It is likely that the author's skin color and radical views may have prompted the association to neglect his work, a far more effective form of suppression than an open challenge. To have launched an attack on his work would have given it instant credibility. Throughout his academic career Du Bois had difficulty funding his work and group projects.<sup>25</sup> Eventually these barriers contributed to his decision to leave academia and become more involved politically by helping form the N.A.A.C.P.

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<sup>24</sup> David Levering Lewis, W.E.B. Du Bois. Biography of a Race 1868-1919. p.206-207.

<sup>25</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois. A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its First Century. p.223.

## *Chapter 1:*

### *“The Challenge”*

Upon imagining the racism confronting blacks in late-nineteenth century America, one immediately thinks of mob violence, lynching, and Plessy vs. Ferguson. With his entry into academics, however, William Edward Burghardt Du Bois noticed a different sort of racism. American racism was comprehensive and reached into all aspects of society. During the “Gilded Age” period, many American educators and professionals believed wholeheartedly in black inferiority. Academics and professionals wrote volumes on racial development, providing theoretical background justifying various racist programs. Du Bois countered that blacks were potentially equal to whites. The assertion made him a radical, because he challenged the results of decades of slavery and racial injustice.

For most blacks, life in late-nineteenth century America was extremely difficult. In the rural South blacks found that freedom from slavery did not end their difficulties. Many blacks found themselves trapped in exploitative labour arrangements as the crop lien system became prevalent.<sup>1</sup> Along with their difficulties in agriculture, blacks, particularly

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<sup>1</sup> Under the crop-lien system many farmers were forced to obtain their supplies on credit from merchants who charged huge rates of interests on these accounts. Following harvests, farmers had to sell their crops to the merchants with proceeds being subtracted from earlier purchases. If the farmer’s crop was considered of less value than the interest-inflated goods, the merchant would only carry the farmers with certain financial considerations. Usually, the farmer had mortgage his farm or future crops to the merchant, who could not be trusted to give fair value for anything the farmer produced. This system existed in many states and was nothing more than a legalized form of slavery for many blacks and poor whites. Please see, Lawrence Goodwyn, The Populist Moment. A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America. New York: Oxford, 1978. pp.20-25.

in the South, faced the continual threat of violence. In an effort to restrict black political and economic power, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan emerged as a force in 1867, carrying out threats against black leaders in positions of responsibility. Despite numerous efforts to limit the power of the Klan, and following the relinquishment of black political gains during the radical reconstruction period, blacks were still intimidated and attacked. The most damaging form of white intimidation came in the form of lynching. Although the Ku Klux Klan denied any involvement in violent affairs it is commonly assumed that they were not-too-secret proponents of mob violence.<sup>2</sup> Even if blacks were merely accused of crimes, they might be murdered by white mobs. These mobs were rarely persecuted, and local officials often seemed to encourage their actions. As the century progressed, lynching became more common and by the 1890s approximately 120 to 160 people were murdered each year in this fashion. Along with the victims of these killings many more blacks felt terror because of the practice.<sup>3</sup> Although lynching clearly violated defendant's rights, little was done by any level of government to prevent mob violence.

Along with the deterioration of their civil rights, blacks also saw political advancements they had gained with radical reconstruction disappear. Whites stripped African-Americans of the right to vote in most southern states, either through legislation or violent intimidation by angry whites. Grandfather clauses provided one of the more

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<sup>2</sup> John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss Jr. From Slavery To Freedom. A History of Negro Americans. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1988. pp.226-227,229., Thomas F. Gossett, Race in America. New York: Schocken, 1965. pp.259-260.

<sup>3</sup> Crisis. Issue 2, January 1911. p.26., W. Fitzhugh Brundage, Lynching in the New South. Georgia and Virginia 1880-1930. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1993. pp.7-8.

common legal devices used to prevent blacks from voting. According to this type of rule, voters might register to vote only had their grandfathers voted in the area. The tactic, known as "the grandfather clause," effectively eliminated most blacks from voting because their ancestors had not been permitted political participation during slavery. A variety of other devices were also employed to keep blacks from voting, including rules about literacy, property holding, and tax requirements. Southern whites also used more direct techniques to exclude blacks from voting, as they placed voting stations out of the reach of blacks or forced them to vote in separate boxes which were conveniently lost when the votes were counted.

Together with political disenfranchisement, there also emerged a powerful reform movement for the segregation of blacks which effectively curtailed of their personal rights. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century a steady stream of laws ensured segregation in both the North and the South. In 1871, for example, the Supreme Court of Ohio ruled that segregation in the school system was acceptable as long as educational conditions were "equal". The key segregation decision came from the Supreme Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) which allowed a railroad in Louisiana to continue segregating passengers by race. Through these rulings whites established African-Americans as second-class citizens throughout the United States.<sup>4</sup> While the country moved into a dynamic period of change and progress, blacks languished because of these rulings.

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<sup>4</sup> John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., From Slavery to Freedom. pp.235-238., Thomas F. Gossett, Race: The History of an Idea in America. p.274., For a strong account of the South's adoption of Jim Crow legislation, please see C. Vann Woodward, The Strange Career of Jim Crow. 2d ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1960.

The harshness of the rural Southern experience prompted many blacks to leave the area in search of a better life. By the end of the century many African-Americans had fled to industrial centres in the North. Not surprisingly, this change in context did little to help blacks. They found themselves crowding into the few neighbourhoods available to them in cities like Atlanta, Boston, Philadelphia, and New York. In the black wards of these cities, overcrowding, sanitation, and health problems were common.<sup>5</sup> White manufacturers inspired racial hostility by using blacks as cheap strike breakers, angering their previous employees. A dramatic example of blacks acting as strikebreakers occurred during the Chicago stockyard strikes in 1894 when blacks competed with recent European immigrants for employment as strikebreakers at the stockyards. This conflict turned violent as striking workers clashed with United States troops and strikebreakers. Hungarians, Romanians, and Russians fought with one another and with blacks, with the latter often bearing the brunt of these violent confrontations.<sup>6</sup> Blacks were abused in both the rural and urban settings because whites believed that they were inferior and the cause of America's decline.

Before the Civil War, southern whites used various techniques to establish the inferiority of the black race in order to justify the institution of slavery. Legislatures and courts exhibited a constant preoccupation with passing laws that limited the rights of

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<sup>5</sup> John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss Jr., From Slavery to Freedom. pp.279-280.

<sup>6</sup> Alma Herbst, The Negro in the Slaughtering and Meat Packing Industry in Chicago. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1932. p.19., David Montgomery, The Fall of House of Labor. p.27.

blacks.<sup>7</sup> Southern whites claimed that various biblical passages asserted that whites were naturally superior to blacks and therefore had the right to own black slaves. Whites claimed to follow a code of paternalism which led them to care for their black slaves. The real motivation for this care, when it occurred, was that slaves were valuable chattels. Slave owners enjoyed a variety of economic, social, and sexual privileges at the expense of their slaves.<sup>8</sup> Over the years, whites came to believe that blacks were-- among other things-- lazy, childlike, barbaric, weak, and sexually threatening. These contradictory beliefs changed daily, depending on which argument suited white needs. Following the Civil War, people relied much less on biblical and mythical justifications for racial inferiority. Instead, they looked to more modern sources to buttress their beliefs.

Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, social scientists seemed to do little more than trumpet black inferiority. Occasionally they disagreed on method and structure, but they rarely pictured blacks in anything but negative terms. Theories on African-American inferiority were given more structure in 1859 when Charles Darwin published his The Origin of Species. Darwin's ideas were immediately opposed by people who felt that his ideas contradicted biblical ideas expressed about creation. People felt that evolutionary ideas tarnished the belief that man was superior to the animal world.

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<sup>7</sup> John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., From Slavery to Freedom. p.115., Audrey Smedley, Race in North America. Origin and Evolution of a Worldview. Boulder: Westview, 1993. p.216.

<sup>8</sup> Lawrence W. Levine, Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought From Slavery to Freedom. New York: Oxford University, 1977. p.114.

Devout Christians recoiled from the notion that somehow man was related to apes.<sup>9</sup> As time passed, this controversy eased as religious bodies found ways to reconcile religion and science. Darwin's key idea was that of natural selection, which proposed that successful species would adapt to their environment over time, acquiring or jettisoning characteristics as they needed them. Although Darwin said little about applying evolutionary theory to racial development, social commentators soon applied these ideas to the American racial situation, deeming blacks inferior. The evolution of species ended with whites as the most highly evolved, and blacks occupying a far lower rung on the evolutionary ladder.

Although his name was included in the term "Social Darwinism," Charles Darwin was less responsible for the application of evolutionist ideas than Herbert Spencer, the first to apply evolutionary theories to humans. Spencer believed that competition between biological organisms applied to social arrangements. Spencer argued society was in fact a battleground of competition between organisms for survival. He developed the term, "survival of the fittest," and asserted that over time the weaker elements in society would eventually be destroyed by more adaptive beings, hence helping to advance humanity.

Spencer argued that primitive peoples were not as biologically evolved as whites and that nothing could be done to advance these races, as they were destined to be dominated. He argued against government interference through education or welfare,

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<sup>9</sup> For effective discussions on the religious reaction to Darwin's ideas please see Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought. pp.24-30, and Peter J. Bowler, Evolution. The History of an Idea. Berkeley: University of California, 1989, Chapter 7.

claiming that natural laws ensured the elimination of the inferior races.<sup>10</sup> Many Americans were immediately attracted to Spencer's ideas as they sought potential answers to the questions they asked about race. Sociology featured a number of practitioners who sought to apply Spencer's ideas on evolution to the American racial situation. The most famous proponent of Social Darwinism in American sociology was William Graham Sumner of Yale University. Sumner, from his position at one of the nation's leading schools, influenced dozens of students. Sumner defended the concentration of wealth into the hands of a few claiming that these men represented a higher level of evolution, and as a result they had the greatest ability to influence society. He also felt that certain natural laws governed society and that these guidelines were best left unregulated. F.W. Blackmar of the University of Kansas and Charles Ellwood at the University of Missouri, were other prominent sociologists who applied Spencer's ideas to the American racial situation.<sup>11</sup> John Bates Clark enthusiastically applied the ideas to economics. He felt that competition forced businesses to become more efficient. Large-scale production would benefit everyone, as even the lowliest workers would eventually get jobs. In addition,

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas F. Gossett, Race: The History of an Idea in America. pp.150-153.

<sup>11</sup> Please see, William Graham Sumner, Social Darwinism. Selected Essays of William Graham Sumner. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1963. pp.155-156., F.W. Blackmar, "Indian Education," American Academy of Political and Social Science. Annals. May, 1892. pp.813-814., F.W. Blackmar, The Elements of Sociology. New York: Macmillan, 1905., Charles A. Ellwood, "The Theory of Imitation in Social Psychology," American Journal of Sociology. VI, May, 1901. p.735., John Bates Clark, "The Society of the Future." The Independent. July 18, 1901 n.53. pp.1649-1651. Gail Kennedy ed. Democracy and the Gospel of Wealth. Boston: D.C. Heath, 1949. p.vii., Thomas F. Gossett, Race the History of an Idea in America. pp.153-154., John S. Haller, Outcasts from Evolution. pp.140-143.

academics like Nathaniel Shaler and Joseph Leconte, professors of natural sciences at Harvard University and the University of California, respectively, worked to spread their own notions of evolution.<sup>12</sup> Clearly, Spencer's ideas became an important component of American academics following the Civil War.

According to historian Richard Hofstadter, American society applied Darwinian ideas to justify the inequities of American capitalism. Notions of evolution helped explain the incredible gaps between rich and poor. The country's economic system featured rugged individualism and frowned upon government regulation. Unfortunately for blacks, the laissez-faire economic system favoured the wealthy. Using Darwinian ideas, adherents measured morality and intelligence by one's material wealth and this yardstick clearly excluded all poor blacks. Hofstadter argues that social reformers used Social Darwinism to explain their often radical plans for reforming minority communities.<sup>13</sup> Eugenacists did not believe that the development of humanity would follow the course set out by a series of unseen natural laws. Instead, they believed that through proper intervention, human evolution could be influenced or altered. Embracing racial notions prevalent in science, eugenacists proposed radical biological solutions to society's problems that were often sinister in nature. Some eugenacists promoted segregation, selective breeding, and even castration.

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<sup>12</sup> Please see, Nathaniel S. Shaler, "The Future of the Negro in the South," Popular Science Monthly. LVII, June 1900. p.147., Nathaniel S. Shaler, "The Negro Since the Civil War," Popular Science Monthly. LVII, May 1900. pp.29-30., Joseph Leconte, "The Race Problem in the United States," Brooklyn Ethical Association. n.28. 1893. pp.352-375. Audrey Smedley, Race in North America, pp.242,271.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought. pp.161-169, 201.

Most white Americans believed that if they worked hard and lived moral lives, they too could achieve the American dream. As Du Bois noted, however, most people believed that, lagging in the evolutionary process, blacks were destined to economic failure. Sexual immorality, gambling, alcohol, laziness, and stupidity all indicated black inferiority. Historian Thomas F. Gossett, divides proponents of Social Darwinism in America into two camps. The first, "Social Darwinist individualists," embraced laissez-faire economics and argued against any regulation of economics. Government interference would hinder the natural laws of society which led to progress. The second were eugenicists who felt society was divided into groups based on genetic strength or weakness. Through a variety of techniques, they sought to weed out persons deemed weaker in order to protect and strengthen the rest of society.<sup>14</sup>

According to historian Eric F. Goldman, a third category of thinkers promoted "Reform Darwinism." Reform Darwinists attacked the status quo, as they clamoured for changes in the institutions that governed the nation. Reform Darwinists emphasized the importance of environment, and they embraced the notion of adaptive change a major component of evolutionary theory. Following the economic depression of 1873 such writers as Henry George, David Graham Phillips, and Stephen Crane published works that promoted the importance of change in order to keep up with a constantly changing environment. For reformers, change did not take generations to occur, as conservatives claimed. Instead, reform would occur rapidly if measures were taken to shape environmental variables. People began to apply the concept of environmental evolution to

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<sup>14</sup> Thomas F. Gossett, Race. The History of an Idea in America. pp.158-160.

many areas of American life. Lester Frank Ward, the chair of Sociology at Brown University, argued for government regulation of monopolies, as he felt their existence was harmful to society in certain situations. He also believed that education was an important tool that could solve the inequalities he saw in society. Richard T. Ely, for example, professor of economics at the University of Wisconsin, joined social critic Thorstein Veblen in arguing for the reform of economics along evolutionary lines. Sociologist Edward A. Ross, Richard Dugdale, an instructor in the New York Prison Association, Judge Ben Lindsey of Denver, and the famous criminal defence lawyer, Clarence Darrow, also tried to change society's perceptions about morality and crime, claiming that poverty rather than heredity caused immoral behaviour. In the field of anthropology, Franz Boas developed an argument that a person's physical characteristics would change over their lifetime depending on the environmental factors they faced.<sup>15</sup> Although reform Darwinists

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<sup>15</sup> See such examples as Henry George, Progress and Poverty. New York: Modern Library, 1929., David Graham Phillips, The Hungry Heart. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1909., David Graham Phillips, Susan Lennox. Her Fall and Rise. New York: Appleton, 1917., Stephen Crane, Maggie: A Girl of the Streets. A Story of New York. 1893. New York: W.W.Norton, 1979., Lester Frank Ward, Dynamic Sociology v.2 p.539., Lester Frank Ward, Glimpses of the Cosmos. v.2. pp.164-171, 336-345. Richard T.Ely, The Social Law of Service. New York: Eaton & Mains, 1869. p.140., Thorstein Veblen, "Why is Economics not an Evolutionary Science?" Quarterly Journal of Economics. July 1898 xii. pp.382,388-389., Edward Alsworth Ross, Sin and Society: An Analysis of Latter-Day Inequity. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1907. pp.viii,14-15,40., Richard Dugdale, The Jukes. Study in Crime, Pauperism, Disease, and Heredity. New York: G.P. Putnam, 1910. p.65., Ben B. Lindsey and Harvey J. O'Higgins, The Beast. Seattle: University of Washington, 1909. pp.78-83. pp.78-83., Clarence S. Darrow, Resist Not Evil. Chicago: Charles Kerr, 1902. pp.177-178., Franz Boas, The Mind of Primitive Man. New York: Macmillan, 1938.

were not numerous, they set off ambitiously to change their world.<sup>16</sup>

The unrestrained capitalism that dominated America favoured a few men who managed to accumulate fabulous amounts of wealth. To fortify their positions against those who criticized their greed, they often used evolutionary ideas to enhance their reputation as the nation's elite. One of the more prominent industrialists, Andrew Carnegie described his "discovery" of these theories declaring:

Light came in as a flood and all was clear. Not only had I got rid of theology and the supernatural but I found the truth of evolution, all is well since all grows better, became my motto, my true source of comfort. Man was not created with an instinct for his own degradation, but from the lower he had risen to the highest forms. Nor is there any conceivable end to his march to perfection. His face is turned to the light; he stands in the sun and looks upward.<sup>17</sup>

Carnegie placed the theories of men like Darwin and Spencer in the American context. He blended his belief in evolution, rugged individualism, and survival of the fittest to explain his admiration for laissez-faire capitalism. He clearly articulated his economic attitudes in an article titled, "wealth." Although Carnegie admitted that the transition to unrestrained industrialism was difficult on the individual he saw it as the most efficient way for society to progress. He argued that to regulate economic changes would hamper the survival of the fittest climate which he optimistically believed advanced white society.<sup>18</sup> The leading

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<sup>16</sup> Eric F. Goldman, Rendezvous With Destiny. A History of Modern American Reform. New York: Vintage Books, 1952. pp.73-123.

<sup>17</sup> Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought. p.45.

<sup>18</sup> Andrew Carnegie, "Wealth" North American Review. June 1889, no.cccxci. pp.653-664.

industrialists, like Carnegie, found their beliefs supported and developed by individuals in other sectors of society including the clergy and academics.

The “Gospel of Wealth,” as it became known, proved popular among more than rich industrialists, as most members of society supported these ideas. For example, the Reverend William Lawrence, Episcopal Bishop of Massachusetts, argued that the accumulation of wealth signified moral purity. He claimed that while most Christians distrusted great wealth, their anxieties were misplaced because, “it is only to a man of morality that wealth comes.” The Reverend Lawrence helped to establish the belief in society that wealth proved moral strength.<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately for blacks their belief in the morality of wealth helped banish impoverished blacks to inferiority for decades.

A related group of Social Darwinists were the eugenicists, men devoted to “the science of improving the qualities of a breed or species, especially the human race, by the careful selection of parents.”<sup>20</sup> American eugenicists did not disagree with the basic concept of evolution; instead, they took issue with part of it. They did not believe that evolution was a slow biological process that they could not influence. Like other Social Darwinists, eugenicists believed that the poor in America were poor because of their genes. Society might be improved if proper controls were placed on reproduction in society. An influential early eugenicist was the Englishman Francis Galton, one of

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<sup>19</sup> The Right Reverend William Lawrence, “The Relation of Wealth to Morals.” The World’s Work. January 1901.v1.n.3. pp.286-292., Gail Kennedy ed. Democracy and the Gospel of Wealth. p.vii.

<sup>20</sup> Stuart Berg Flexner, The Random House Dictionary. Concise Edition. New York: Random House, 1983. p.298.

Darwin's cousins. Galton believed that in order to improve society the upper classes had to be encouraged to have more children and the lower levels of society fewer children. Eugenists in the United States worked to enact reforms which they felt would advance society. They developed a fascination with the link between biology and current success or failure. They seemed most concerned with maintaining or improving racial stock. G. Stanley Hall, for example, a prominent eugenicist, criticized efforts at social uplift, claimed that helping the unfit would hinder the process of natural selection. Instead, he felt that segregation and sterilization were more useful reform tools.<sup>21</sup>

Conservative Darwinist attitudes were further validated by the popularity of anthropometry which developed after 1840. Some early examples of scientific racism featured whites trying to measure and compare the physical characteristics of the races. Practitioners such as Peter A. Browne, Jacques Quetelet, and Anders Retzius cited differences they noted between the races as proof that blacks were inferior to whites. Browne, was one of the first Americans to conduct such a study. In his work, that was released in 1852, he asserted that hair determined the level of mental health and found that blacks were more likely than whites to suffer from insanity. This theory was initially well received, but the classification of hair types soon became less important as scientists turned to other, more complex physical measurements. Nevertheless, Browne's work inspired a wave of studies focusing on physical measurement which helped to transfer white justification of racial superiority from religion and myth to science. Soon, nascent science progressed to the measurement of facial angles, head size, and phrenology, the

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<sup>21</sup> Thomas F. Gossett, Race: The History of an Idea in America, pp.155-160.

study of bumps on the skull. Although most of these types of studies were eventually discredited they helped to promote the belief that African-Americans were physically and intellectually inferior to whites.<sup>22</sup>

The Civil War gave bogus physical anthropology a boost. The United States Army organized troops into units and concentrated them in specific areas, which made comparative studies easier for scientists to conduct. Two major studies emerged during this period, first from the U.S. Sanitary Commission, and second from the Provost Marshal's Bureau. The sanitation study included measurement of physical characteristics of thousands of enlisted men, both white and black. The researchers who worked on this study sought certain hygienic and physiological truths to improve the welfare of American soldiers, making them more effective in combat. Researchers felt that this study might illuminate the development of man and the differences between the races.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, this report banished blacks to inferiority for decades because of the bias of the researchers and the relative poverty they lived in. The man in charge of the project, Benjamin A. Gould, with assistance from Louis Agassiz, Jeffreys Wyman, William H. Holmes, and J. H. Douglas, helped ensure negro inferiority for years to come.<sup>24</sup> Sanford Hunt submitted

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<sup>22</sup> John S. Haller, Jr., Outcasts from Evolution. pp.8, 14-18., Audrey Smedley, Race in North America, pp.14-18.

<sup>23</sup> Charles J. Stille, History of the United States Sanitary Commission. Being the General Report of Its Work During the War of Rebellion, Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1866. pp.457, 452-467.

<sup>24</sup> The influence of these men on American racial attitudes was significant. Aggasiz became a prominent professor at Harvard University and helped to found the museum of comparative zoology. He taught Nathaniel Shaler and Joseph Leconte, both of whom were known for their belief in the inferiority of the Negro. Both men became prominent

one of the more important sections of this study as he detailed physical measurements made on Negro soldiers. Races, he argued, could be ranked in order of superiority by measuring heads and weighing brains, post-mortem, to locate the relationship between the brain's cubic volume and intelligence. He claimed that a higher volume suggested a larger, more intelligent, brain. This study pushed brain examinations and comparisons to the forefront of racist thought, as several postwar studies placed a great deal of emphasis on brain weight and skull size. The Provost Marshal's General's Bureau released its study shortly after the sanitary report, making similar arguments. Released by J. H. Baxter, this study argued that blacks were significantly inferior to whites in physique and intelligence, but still made good soldiers because of the construction of their feet which enabled them to march over great distances.<sup>25</sup>

In the decades following the Civil War many Southern physicians continued to emphasize the importance of physical measurement. Assuming from evidence from war studies that blacks were weaker than whites, these doctors argued that in freedom blacks were dying at even greater rates. They felt that without the protection offered under slavery, African-Americans would eventually face extinction. National census figures for the decade between 1880 and 1890 revealed that the black population had only increased

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educators in their own right as Leconte taught natural history at Columbia University, the University of Georgia and the University of California. Shaler remained at Harvard as a Professor of Geology and later became the dean of the Lawrence Scientific School. For information on this connection see Smedley, Race in America, pp.242,271.; Haller, Jr., Outcasts from Evolution, pp.20-30,155.

<sup>25</sup> John S. Haller, Jr., Outcasts from Evolution: Scientific Attitudes of Racial Inferiority 1859-1900. pp.29-34.

by roughly a third of that of whites. The conclusion they drew from this type of evidence was that blacks could not survive in freedom because they were a weaker race. As a result of these statistics, many physicians argued that society had to protect whites from any transportation of illness from blacks. This view was echoed by Frederick Hoffman, a statistician with the Prudential Insurance Company of America and an active member of the American Statistical Association and the American Academy of Medicine. He published numerous works on black inferiority in medical and statistical journals. An avid proponent of Social Darwinism, Hoffman's work was heavily based on the anthropometrical studies produced during the war. Hoffman felt that according to the census blacks were dying out, leaving humanity stronger. He consistently argued in his publications against programs designed to help uplift the black race.<sup>26</sup>

Late-nineteenth-century physical measurement took the argument for black inferiority even further. Such Physicians as Dr. Thomas P. Atkinson of Virginia, Dr. W.J. Bert, a representative of the Texas state medical commission, Dr. J.F. Millar of North Carolina, the Dean of Medicine at the University of Richmond, Dr. J. Allison Hodges, Dr. E.T. Easley of Texas, Dr. Eugene R. Corson of Georgia, Dr. R.M. Cunningham, noted penitentiary physician in Alabama, and Dr. D. Kerfoot Shute of Washington, D.C., argued that blacks were physically inferior to whites. They argued that heightened death rate, a greater need for corrective surgery, and an increase in mental illness since emancipation all proved African-American inferiority. Unfortunately, these physicians were content that

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<sup>26</sup> John S. Haller, Jr., Outcasts from Evolution: Scientific Attitudes of Racial Inferiority, 1859-1900. pp.29-30, 60-65.

racial differences accounted for these problems and did not search for alternative causes. It was common for physicians to promote the belief that blacks were undergoing retrogression to a more barbaric stage following their freedom from slavery. For African-Americans to survive, physicians argued, they needed social controls not unlike those that existed during the slave period.<sup>27</sup>

As the century progressed, many physicians became occupied with studying the sexual nature of blacks. Most of these studies argued that blacks exhibited less discipline and were more animal-like in their sexual attitudes because they were less evolved than whites. Proof of this belief, Dr. William Lee Howard, a prominent Baltimore physician, and Dr. Eugene S. Talbot claimed, appeared in black promiscuity, an obsession with sex at a younger age, and a natural urge to rape white women. Dr. R. M. Cunningham, and Dr. William T. English of Pittsburgh promoted the belief that black males had enlarged genitalia, illustrating their preoccupation with sex. Dr. Frank Lystrom of Chicago College wrote that black men were raping white women as a response to the strain of freedom. This violence prompted people to clamour for some form of segregation to protect white women. These studies painted the black man as a sexual predator and convinced white Americans to fear blacks and legislation limiting the rights of blacks became common.<sup>28</sup> These beliefs also led to a resurgence in the white patrols that had policed the South before the Civil War. Eventually, these patrols transformed into the Ku Klux Klan, under Nathan Bedford Forrest, who had served as a Confederate general during the war. As the

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp.45-50.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp.51-57.

organization grew, the respectability of the early membership deteriorated and the Klan became much more violent. The Klan provided a banner under which angry whites tried to maintain control over their society.<sup>29</sup>

The emphasis that Southern white society placed on black sexuality distracted people from confronting the exploitative sexual liberties that white men took with black women. The slave owner's motives in pursuing these relationships has been the subject of much speculation. Historian Lillian Smith argues that white men feared that because they were left alone for long periods of time their wives would seek black lovers. White men also felt inadequate because of the rumoured superiority of the black man's genitalia. Smith claims that Southern white men pursued black women because they felt guilty that society would not allow them to properly honour the black mother figure that many of them had grown up with.

Another historian, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, argued that interracial sexual relations were seen as a violation of evolutionary rules, proving the weakness rather than strength of white men. This social pressure did not keep whites from pursuing black women; rather, it prompted society to view black women as Jezebels, seeking to corrupt white men.<sup>30</sup> In their relationships, white men demonstrated personal power by exploiting

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<sup>29</sup> Thomas F. Gossett, Race: The History of an Idea in America. p.260.

<sup>30</sup> Lillian Smith, Killers of the Dream. New York: W.W. Norton, 1961. pp.121-122,133., Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, Gender and Jim Crow. Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1996. pp.70-71.

their black slaves, hypocritically ignoring the rules of marriage.<sup>31</sup> To protect white women, southerners combined legislation with the threat of mob violence to prevent miscegenation.<sup>32</sup> Sex equalled power, and whites zealously defended their superiority in this area. Whites claimed that lynching was a method for protecting white women from the uncontrollable sexual urges of black men. In actual fact, lynching was a brutal tool they used to maintain their control over all aspects of life in the South.

In his classic The Mind of the South, W.J. Cash argues that in the South racial pride centered on white women whom men viewed as the key to the survival of the race. Southern white men honoured white womanhood to such an extent that they could not enjoy sex with white women. In order to attend to their desires, Cash claims, whites played out their fantasies with black slave women who had no choice but to comply. The nature of these relationships changed after the South's defeat in the Civil War, as many white Southerners felt stripped of personal power. They feared that Reconstruction would encourage blacks to seek relations with white women. These insecurities, Cash argues, prompted whites again to try and regain their personal power through secret sexual couplings with black women.<sup>33</sup>

The studies that physicians conducted following the war did more than merely

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<sup>31</sup> Gary B. Nash, Red, White and Black: The Peoples of Early America. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1982. p.283.

<sup>32</sup> Phillip R. Reilly, The Surgical Solution. A History of Involuntary Sterilization in the United States. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1991. p.72., Thomas F. Gossett, Race: The History of an Idea in America, pp.263-264.

<sup>33</sup> W.J. Cash, The Mind of the South. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941. pp.84-86, 128.

demonstrate black inferiority: they transformed blacks into a threat against society. Consequently, white Americans who thought about the subject of improving black intelligence rejected intermarriage because they feared the consequences for their race. They believed that a person of pure blood would be physically stronger and healthier than racially mixed offspring, so they passed numerous anti-miscegenation laws. As the century progressed, a movement grew, advocating measures against race amalgamation. Racists passed legislation in several Southern states forbidding interracial marriages. Consequently, few whites married blacks because of the tremendous social pressure against miscegenation.<sup>34</sup>

One characteristic of "Gilded Age" American society was the willingness of Americans to translate their scientific theories into social policy. Pseudo-scientific theories had strengthened the view held by many Americans that blacks were at once inferior and threatening. After 1900 many states passed legislation that severely curtailed the civil rights of blacks. Most of these laws, such as the grandfather clauses, stripped African-Americans of their voting rights, leaving the people without a political voice.<sup>35</sup> While blacks found these discriminatory policies damaging, another result of white prejudice was worse--mob violence used to terrorize the black community. Often before legal officials could conduct a trial, angry mobs hung or burned suspected felons. Officials rarely mobilized the power of the law against lynchers, who invariably claimed to be defending their community's values, traditions, and women from a heinous black menace.

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<sup>34</sup> John S. Haller, Jr., Outcasts from Evolution, pp.55-60.

<sup>35</sup> John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., From Slavery to Freedom, pp.235-238.

Some African-Americans, recognizing that whites saw them as inferior, accepted this verdict in an effort to help their race. Booker T. Washington, who influenced many whites and blacks, provides one example of this accommodationist approach. Washington was an early leader in the movement for education in the black community, and he believed that because African-Americans occupied an inferior position, seeking to emulate whites was foolish and dangerous. The founder of the famed Tuskegee Institute, he dissuaded blacks from aiming at such lofty goals as voting and achieving post-secondary education. Washington proposed a program where blacks would learn basic skills and trades that were most applicable in vocational and agricultural fields. He dreaded the impact of white violence, so he sought to help blacks advance in ways that would invoke as little notice as possible. As he worked to help his race in the best way that he knew, Washington put aside any notion of equality. He rose to a position of prominence serving as the black community's most vocal spokesman, largely since his views were inoffensive to whites and encouraging to blacks. Many politicians and powerful men consulted Washington, and rarely was an appointment made in the African-American society without his consent.<sup>36</sup>

African-Americans were consigned by most social commentators to an inferior status and their studies hurt W.E.B. Du Bois. While they argued that blacks were physically weaker and more likely to suffer from illness, he grew to maturity as a healthy

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<sup>36</sup> John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss Jr., From Slavery to Freedom, pp.244-250., Louis Harlan, Booker T. Washington, pp.255-271., August Meier, "Toward a Reinterpretation of Booker T. Washington." Journal of Southern History, pp.221-226., Booker T. Washington, Up From Slavery, New York: Airmont, 1967. pp. 122-162.

black man. Du Bois proved many racists wrong by completing his degree at Harvard. Indeed, he did more than just complete his studies; he managed to excel and outdo many of his white counterparts. Yet racial mores prevented relationships with white women because of the taboo that these values reinforced. While studying in Germany, he fell in love and considered marrying a Dutch girl named Dora Marbach. Unfortunately, the girl's mother ended the relationship when visiting white Americans exhibited shock at a white girl and black man having a public relationship.<sup>37</sup> Du Bois faced constant reminders that he was an exception to the myths reinforced by pseudo-scientific study. In a sense, his pursuit of the truth in his sociological works aimed not merely to help his people, but also to justify his own worth.

Like most students in the late-nineteenth century, W.E.B. Du Bois believed in human evolution. He felt that slavery had restricted blacks to an artificial environment where they were kept from developing their talent. Emancipation catapulted blacks into a rapidly changing world, and despite many difficulties many progressed and improved their situation. Du Bois believed that American academics had a tremendous opportunity to chart the rapid development of a race without venturing across the globe to do so. Of his work he stated: "No such opportunity to watch and measure the history and development of a great race of men ever presented itself to the scholars of a modern nation."<sup>38</sup> The Philadelphia Negro and the Atlanta University Conferences represented his efforts to measure empirically the changes in the evolving African-American community. He hoped

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<sup>37</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois, pp.159-162.

<sup>38</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois, p.198.

this data would prompt reformers to focus their efforts on initiatives that challenged segregation and disenfranchisement. Like his fellow Reform Darwinists, he concluded that heredity did little to cause the poverty and despair many blacks faced. Blacks often faced insufficient access to adequate nutrition, health care, housing, and sanitation. Few blacks found jobs that paid well and most lacked the capital necessary to start businesses.

Most academics, scientists, and physicians of the era believed that blacks were inferior to whites. After 1865, white social scientists turned to science for answers about structuring their world. They subjectively used “science” to support their belief system which had already judged blacks inferior and potentially dangerous. Supported by these academic justifications, whites felt little remorse at passing laws restricting blacks. Many blacks fled the rural south in search of improvement, but most found that life was no easier in the cities. Du Bois, a black who managed to prove his intelligence, could no longer stand whites labelling him inferior, so he set himself the task of convincing Americans about the potential of the black race. Armed with a degree from Harvard and some German training in sociology, he sought to undercut an entire body of established “fact”. He wanted to use his Philadelphia study to act as the conscience of the reform movement by educating reformers about the true nature of the black community. Ironically, like his opponents, he subjectively turned to science to prove his beliefs. Unwilling to accept the conclusions they drew from statistics on black mortality, morality, and health, he conducted more thorough, modern examinations of these issues, uncovering information that he hoped would help push reformers to work in a more positive, progressive way. Du Bois did not want to participate in practical reform programs, instead, he wanted to act as

the brains of the progressive movement, exposing flaws in established academic and professional thought. The challenge proved daunting.

## ***Chapter 2:***

### ***“Reform”***

After teaching just one year at Wilberforce college, a small black college in Ohio, Du Bois accepted a one-year position which the University of Pennsylvania offered him. He soon realized that he was not expected to participate in university life to the same extent as at Wilberforce. The president of Wilberforce had asked Du Bois to teach and help with the administration of the school. At the University of Pennsylvania, a white school, the trustees kept Du Bois from teaching. He had little contact with students or faculty members, and the school’s administration did not even assign him an office or a listing in the school catalogue. Despite these adverse working conditions and limited responsibilities, he accepted the offer, as finally it gave him the chance to engage with sociology. Although Du Bois was initially grateful for the opportunity to practice sociology, he soon became angry over the university’s attitude toward him.<sup>1</sup>

In 1895, Susan P. Wharton a rich, reform-minded white women, suggested to Charles Harrison, provost of the university, the idea of a study of black ghettos in Philadelphia. When they mentioned the project to Samuel McCune Lindsay of the sociology department, he recommended that they hire Du Bois for the project. All three had definite opinions on the role of blacks within society and thoroughly anticipated that Du Bois would unearth evidence supporting their beliefs. Wharton, Harrison, and Lindsay believed that Philadelphia’s problems could be traced to the city’s poorest class, the blacks

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p.58.

living in the seventh ward. Greatly influenced by eugenic thought, these upper-middle class reformers viewed the African-American community as a menace threatening the productive whites of the city. They felt black poverty had to be contained and isolated from the rest of the city. Blacks, they believed, lived lives of poverty because their heredity destined them to it. Lindsay felt that the presence of a first-rate black scholar would make their conclusions seem more objective.<sup>2</sup>

Du Bois claimed that he had little awareness of his employers' biases when he was hired. Indeed, he had hoped to educate reform-minded Philadelphians, including his benefactors, by producing a study that would teach them about the true character of the city's black community. He was optimistic that reform-minded whites would be more willing, and better able to improve that community, if they could just see the obstacles facing blacks in the city.<sup>3</sup>

Although Du Bois claimed not to have realized the motives of his benefactors at the university, his work in The Philadelphia Negro suggests otherwise. While most people blamed heredity for the plight of the black community, Du Bois argued that social factors like prejudice helped to shape the situation.<sup>4</sup> Despite the attitudes espoused by many of his contemporaries, Du Bois managed to compile a study that was unrivaled in quality for decades to come. The biggest problem facing Philadelphians, he found, was popular

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<sup>2</sup> David Levering Lewis, W.E.B. Du Bois. Biography of a Race 1868-1919. New York: Holt, 1993. pp.188-189.

<sup>3</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, Dusk of Dawn. pp. 58-59.

<sup>4</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Philadelphia Negro. A Social Study. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1899. pp.394-397.

ignorance about the problems facing the black communities. Du Bois believed that the first step in solving the city's problem was to educate upper-class Philadelphians about the true nature of the poor black community living in their midst. The Philadelphia Negro was his attempt to educate them.

Philadelphia, the location of Du Bois's study, had changed following its famous revolutionary days. In early America, Philadelphia served as a leader in all aspects of American life, including religion, politics, commerce, and culture. By the end of Reconstruction, the city was surpassed by other American cities in several sectors. Following the Civil War, the city's character became associated most closely with industry and technology. The catalysts in the city's transformation were two of the nation's leading railroads, the giant Pennsylvania Railroad and the smaller Reading Railroad. The railroads stimulated growth in the iron, steel, oil, sugar and coal businesses, contributing to Philadelphia's prosperity and industrial reputation. Other industries, like the manufacturing of textiles, cigars, carpets, and a variety of household goods flourished in the city because they had easy access to the railroads, and a well developed seaport.<sup>5</sup>

Like other large American cities, Philadelphia saw a great influx of European immigrants by the end of the century. Prior to 1880, the majority of immigrants tended to come from England, Ireland or Germany, with the Irish comprising a third of the city's foreign born population by 1900. Following 1880, however, immigrants from less traditional sites such as Italy, Russia, and other Eastern European countries, arrived in the

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<sup>5</sup> Nathaniel Burt and Wallace E. Davies, "The Iron Age 1876-1905" in Russell F. Weigley, ed. Philadelphia. A Three Hundred Year History. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982. pp. 471-483.

city. European immigrants were forced to compete for facilities, resources and employment with a growing number of black arrivals to the city. Blacks were the largest minority group in the city and their numbers grew from approximately 25,000 in 1876 to 40,000 in 1896.<sup>6</sup> Obviously, blacks found this situation difficult as they had to struggle to find adequate housing, and were often the last people employed. Within two decades Philadelphia changed from a mainly white, Protestant center to one with a more multicultural flavour, as people were attracted to the city as the manufacturing sector grew.

Not surprisingly, this massive immigration caused many social problems. Recent arrivals to the city often lived in squalor as they fought for jobs, housing, healthcare, and respect. Unfortunately the city's corrupt municipal government often rejected plans for reform, choosing to blame the situation on the poorest citizens of the city.<sup>7</sup> Competing with European immigrants were blacks who fled North in search of employment while escaping lynch mobs and exploitative sharecropping arrangements. Between 1860 and 1890, approximately seventeen thousand blacks came to Philadelphia in search of work, but most found themselves excluded from industrial jobs. Most blacks found work as laborers, or if lucky, as house servants, so they required housing in the city's core. Du

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp.488-492.

<sup>7</sup> One example of the corrupt city government hindering reform is provided by efforts to improve the area's drinking water. Joseph Wharton offered to supply the city with fresh water from land he owned in New Jersey. He saw his plan defeated by corrupt councilmen who chose to spend 12 million dollars on a more elaborate system of water delivery built by the brother of one of the councilmen. Built under political pressure due to cholera and typhus epidemics, the system proved a costly failure. For details see *ibid.*, p.496.

Bois argued that cheap housing was located close to factories that lay on the outskirts of town, far away from sites where blacks commonly found employment.<sup>8</sup>

Along with the difficulties caused by the massive influx of immigration, Du Bois also emphasized the negative impact of race riots in Philadelphia. In response to the rise of the abolitionist movement, racial tensions sparked riots in 1829, 1833, and most notably in 1842. The riots injured many people and destroyed thousands of dollars worth of property. Du Bois felt that the hatred revealed in these riots poisoned race relations in Philadelphia. He argued that successful blacks were unable to integrate themselves into society because of the residual hostility from these violent confrontations.<sup>9</sup>

In a mere fifteen months Du Bois collected, compiled, analyzed, and described this data while living in Philadelphia's seventh ward. He assessed detailed information about how almost nine thousand individuals lived their daily lives.<sup>10</sup> In his introduction to The Philadelphia Negro, he carefully listed the ways in which his study might be flawed. He

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<sup>8</sup> For information on the increased population of Philadelphia, see The Philadelphia Negro, p.47. Refer to the same source pp.296-297 for information on limited housing and pp. 108-110 for information on the types employment blacks secured.

<sup>9</sup> Following a speech by an abolitionist leader, a Scottish woman named Fanny Wright Darusmont, riots broke out in 1829 as whites feared that large numbers of freed African-Americans would be roaming in their midst. In 1833 the violence erupted again as several people were injured and black homes and businesses were burned. Finally in 1842 riots erupted again and were so serious that authorities were forced to call in the militia to restore order. Please see, W.E.B. Du Bois, The Philadelphia Negro, pp.25-32., Leonard L.Richards, Gentlemen of Property and Standing. Anti-Amalgamation Mobs in Jacksonian America. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970. Pp.15-16,69., David Grimstead, American Mobbing 1828-1861. Toward Civil War. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. pp.35-36.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2.

noted that there could be mistakes in the general data collection or errors because of the statistical methods he used. Du Bois also discussed the factor most likely to damage the study's objectivity, his own personal bias. He stated that "convictions on all great matters of human interest one must have to a greater or less degree, and they will enter to some extent into the most cold-blooded scientific research as a disturbing factor."<sup>11</sup>

Obviously, Du Bois wasted little time in identifying the hostile environment blacks faced. The emancipation of slaves in Philadelphia began with an act passed in 1780 for the gradual abolition of slavery. Slavery in the region was limited by this act and provided for the gradual release of slaves beginning in 1808. Not surprisingly, the new freedom many ex-slaves faced was just as confusing and stressful as it was encouraging. Many ex-slaves had to make life choices for which slavery had not prepared them. Du Bois argued, that this lack of experience combined with factors such as white prejudice and a negative social environment to slow the improvement of the African American community.<sup>12</sup>

In The Philadelphia Negro, Du Bois uncovered detailed demographic information about the community. In discussing the conjugal status of blacks he stressed that black single women suffered the greatest economic difficulties of all. He blamed this situation on the community's moral weakness and a general lack of respect for the institution of marriage. He criticized blacks for having casual sexual relationships which could lead to children being born out of wedlock. Although not a proponent of organized religion, Du Bois had high moral standards. He believed that marriage was a serious institution and he

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.3.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp.16-17.

criticized many blacks for forming unions before they were emotionally and financially stable. Although his arguments on marriage placed responsibility for the situation on the shoulders of blacks, he also suggested that social institutions, like marriage, might help remedy their ills.<sup>13</sup> At this stage in his text Du Bois seemed unwilling to assign much blame to any other group than blacks for their social degradation. He still voiced his criticism in a subtle and indirect way, but he believed that by changing the social environment the race would be uplifted. Du Bois's optimism about the malleability of society contradicted those social commentators who believed that blacks could not improve. By the end of the book, however, he made his arguments bolder and more controversial.

Du Bois wanted to counter the argument that the heightened death rate African-Americans faced proved they were a weaker race. Du Bois acknowledged that higher death rates for blacks were definitely a cause for concern, but that facile interpretations of these statistics also damaged the community. Obviously, he claimed, their disproportionate death rate proved that blacks were not the hearty race of barbarians that many racists claimed. Instead, Du Bois counseled the need to monitor carefully mortality figures which were not always complete and reliable.<sup>14</sup> Some people, especially Southern physicians, felt that the race had prospered when cared for by slave owners. Without this protection blacks were doomed. Prominent physicians who argued this point of view included, Dr. J. Allison Hodges, Dean of the College of Medicine in Richmond Virginia;

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp.67-72.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp.147-148.

Dr. E.T. Easley, a respected physician in Dallas, Texas; Dr. J.F. Miller, the superintendent of Eastern Hospital in Goldsboro, North Carolina; and Dr. Eugene R. Corson of Savannah, Georgia, who published his views in the New York Medical Times.<sup>15</sup> Du Bois disputed this claim by identifying other causes of mortality more closely related to the social environment.

Du Bois concluded of the difference between white and black death rates that blacks, “have in the past lived under vastly different conditions and they still live under different conditions: to assume that, in discussing the inhabitants of Philadelphia, one is discussing people living under the same condition of life, is to assume what is not true.”<sup>16</sup> He published a list of diseases that commonly affected the community. These included cholera, consumption, heart disease, pneumonia, and typhoid fever. He noted that such factors as inadequate housing, poor sanitation, substandard nutrition, and bad water and air made more probable the occurrence of such diseases. In explaining the onset of consumption, for example, he suggested that genetic predisposition combined with such social factors as poor ventilation, damp and cold climate, and a lack of medical services. Proving to be years ahead of his time, he suggested that a high fat diet and poor nutritional practices were both key causes of disease. Clearly, Du Bois assigned heredity a less prominent role in causing illness and death. He also found that wealthier blacks had health

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<sup>15</sup> John S. Haller Jr., Outcasts from Evolution Scientific Attitudes of Racial Inferiority 1859-1900. Urbana: University of Illinois press, 1971. pp.41-47.

<sup>16</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Philadelphia Negro. p.148.

rates and mortality levels that seemed to mirror that of their white counterparts.<sup>17</sup>

Du Bois nonetheless accorded some blame to blacks for their poor health level and high mortality rate, as he noted that they were much less likely than whites to seek professional assistance for medical difficulties. Unfortunately, he argued, blacks often needed medical advice but were unable to pay for consultations or treatments. Many blacks were apprehensive about visiting clinics or hospitals staffed with white officials. Du Bois believed that, because of the poor treatment they received, blacks had developed an almost “superstitious fear” of white hospitals and doctors. Considering that numerous physicians were proponents of Negro inferiority, one may assume that blacks were treated with indifference or even cruelty by many health care professionals.<sup>18</sup>

Du Bois followed his arguments on health care by assessing two other afflictions facing the black community-- alcoholism and crime. Although research indicated that blacks engaged in more criminal activity and drinking than whites, he assigned only partial responsibility for these vices to blacks. Rather, several other factors pushed blacks to drinking and misbehavior. The three main factors which he felt promoted black social disorder included the strain of emancipation from slavery, the intense competition from immigrant workers, and the despicable social environment in which most blacks were forced to live. He felt that the transition from slavery to freedom had been incredibly difficult and stressful, as blacks were forced to fend for themselves in a world they were ill equipped to handle. In his examination of African-American crime he came to several

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp.158-163.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp.159-162.

important conclusions. First, fluctuations in black crime rates seemed to mirror those of white crime rates. The overall crime rate was always slightly higher in the black community than in the white community, he concluded, because blacks were the poorest class of citizens. Du Bois also found that the rates of the most violent crimes, such as rape or murder, had remained constant or actually dropped during the ten years after 1885. On the other hand he noticed that the rate of thefts and burglaries had increased steadily. He believed that the frequency of these offences had increased over the last decade because of the economic hardships blacks faced.<sup>19</sup>

In examining the problem of alcohol in the black community, Du Bois discovered fewer hard statistics. He kept track of the number of whites and blacks who patronized certain taverns on particular evenings. He noticed that more blacks than whites frequented these taverns, but that was not surprising as these watering holes were located close to black neighborhoods. Upon observing the bar patrons, he attempted to judge how many people were clearly intoxicated. Despite his limited information, much of it intuitive, Du Bois concluded that the rate of alcohol consumption had risen for whites and blacks alike. While drunkenness had moral consequences for blacks, Du Bois evinced more concern for the economic drain the habit forced on families. Clearly, he felt poor blacks should spend their money on far more useful things than drink.<sup>20</sup>

According to Du Bois, middle class urban blacks did not do enough to help their poor black brothers and sisters. He felt that they could become more involved with

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp.250-259.,282-286.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp.278-282.

institutions already conducting efforts for reform within the community.<sup>21</sup> Successful blacks he argued, should act as leaders of the community helping others to improve their lot in society. He devoted three chapters to self-help efforts, including education, suffrage, and organized life within the black community.

The illiteracy rate among blacks also concerned Du Bois. He was mildly heartened by the fact that only eighteen percent of Philadelphia blacks were illiterate. This rate was relatively low because many people within the community took pride in learning to read and write. The news, however, was not all positive, as he believed that it was possible that many subjects lied about their level of literacy, suggesting weaknesses in the study method.<sup>22</sup> Rather than using a rigid interview style to determine literacy, Du Bois might have asked his subjects to read a test passage or two. The overall level of education in the community was low, Du Bois felt, because many blacks who read did so at a basic level. Statistics proved that most literate blacks had been educated only at grammar school level and did not receive any secondary school education, let alone make it to college or university. Du Bois noted that “most of them can read and write fairly well, but few have training beyond this. The leading classes among them are mostly grammar school graduates, and a college bred person is very exceptional.”<sup>23</sup> To an educated man as himself, this was a community failure.

Du Bois believed that too many blacks abandoned education at too early an age,

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp.177, 317-318.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp.92-96.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p.95.

not because of an inherent inability to learn, but to find employment to support themselves and family members. School made little sense to people who were excluded from most jobs. Why put in the effort to learn when blacks were unlikely to find work beyond menial labor? In Du Bois's eyes the solution to the community's educational problems was twofold. First, black families had to try to keep their sons and daughters in school for as long as possible. Second, society had to take measures to address the social difficulties blacks faced, so that graduates would have jobs.<sup>24</sup>

Biased by his own experience, Du Bois argued that higher education was necessary for the improvement of the race. His research suggested weaknesses in the industrial education curriculum favored by most blacks.<sup>25</sup> Du Bois felt it unfortunate that the more popular vocational education platform produced artisans, masons, and blacksmiths with skills that were increasingly irrelevant in the modern manufacturing sector.<sup>26</sup> In order to educate the black population, university-educated blacks were needed to provide the race with political, educational, and health leadership.

Along with schools, Du Bois paid particular attention to African-American churches. Churches were more than just places of worship, for they served as community social centers. Many black self-help efforts began in the churches, which were catalysts for moral uplift, distributors of aid, and meeting places for social groups and secret societies. The organizational quality and popularity of these houses of worship varied from

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p.95.

<sup>25</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Philadelphia Negro, pp.94-95, 329-350.

<sup>26</sup> John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss Jr., From Slavery to Freedom, p.250.

denomination to denomination, with blacks being most likely to attend Methodist and Baptist services, while a smaller number of blacks frequented Presbyterian churches. More than other black institutions, churches held significant financial holdings. Du Bois felt that for the good of society, churches should channel these funds into reform efforts. The prime functions of the churches included "the raising of the annual budget, the maintenance of membership, social intercourse and amusement, the setting of moral standards, the promotion of general intelligence, and efforts for social improvement."<sup>27</sup> With such a wide range of activities, the churches were clearly the fulcrum of the African-American community. The churches needed to find a significant amount of capital that was not merely profit but mobilized for reform.<sup>28</sup> Clearly people were not just drawn to the churches because of their faith, but because they felt a need for community improvement.

In addition to churches, Du Bois found several other institutions that he felt might help the community. He discovered a variety of organizations that usually had financial goals in mind. The members of these secret lodges and insurance companies sought to protect their economic interests in times of need. These organizations would financially help sick members or would cover funeral expenses. The largest secret society in Philadelphia was a national organization with over 200,000 members called the Odd Fellows. In Philadelphia there were nineteen branches of this club with 1188 active

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<sup>27</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Philadelphia Negro, pp.201-217.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p.220., For information on the importance of churches as self-help institutes, please see, John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss Jr., From Slavery to Freedom, pp.258-259.

members. The Philadelphia branches of the club had assets of \$46,000. The Odd Fellows club provided health and death benefits to member's families. Often blacks formed these kinds of organizations and businesses as a direct result of white prejudice. For example, black cemetery companies were commonly established because white cemeteries refused to bury blacks with whites. Although intrigued by the formation of companies, lodges, and societies, Du Bois criticized the ways in which these groups used their funds. Many of the societies were based mainly on their founders' greed and exploitation. These organizations had tremendous potential to aid the community and, Du Bois argued, should unselfishly devote their efforts to helping other blacks. After all, they had only been free for a brief period while whites had enjoyed centuries in which to put these arrangements to work.<sup>29</sup>

Du Bois also blamed whites for helping to create the negative social environment. Rather than voicing a moderate message of self-help, Du Bois fingered white prejudice as a major cause of black poverty. He claimed that "it is not today responsible for all, or perhaps the greater part of the Negro problems, or of the disabilities under which the race labors; on the other hand it is a far more powerful social force than most Philadelphians realize."<sup>30</sup> The author then listed ways in which prejudice hurt blacks in their efforts to find, maintain, and advance in employment. Du Bois argued that blacks had a tougher time starting and running businesses as they couldn't depend on the patronage of white

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<sup>29</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Philadelphia Negro, pp.222,231-234., John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss Jr., From Slavery to Freedom, pp.259-260.

<sup>30</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Philadelphia Negro, p.322.

customers. Instead, they were forced to rely on the poorest class of citizens in the city to support their endeavors.<sup>31</sup>

In Du Bois's view, white prejudice underlay the social segregation of blacks. He bemoaned this separation, as it kept both races from learning about each other and working together to alleviate the problems that plagued their society and he cited several specific examples to prove his point about the damaging impact of prejudice. One specific example Du Bois provided was that of a tailor who earned compliments on his efforts during the first few weeks he was on the job, but once his employer discovered he was colored, the man was fired. Rather than suffering outright dismissal, however, blacks were usually kept from advancing in the workplace despite their merit. Du Bois discussed the case of a carpenter who had been allowed to learn the skills of a machinist. When the employer discovered the training the man was getting, he immediately put a stop to it. Du Bois provided numerous examples of worthy blacks being passed over for jobs or promotions because of their skin color.<sup>32</sup>

Du Bois voiced another controversial argument when confronting the issue of interracial marriage. In examining Philadelphia's Seventh Ward, he realized that such marriages comprised less than two percent of the population. He felt that because of the infrequency of such marriages people should not generalize about the positive or negative effects.<sup>33</sup> This conclusion contradicted the views of such social commentators as Walter

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp.324, 346-347.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp.325,334-344.

<sup>33</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Philadelphia Negro. p.366.

Ashby Plecker, a notable physician and administrator from the University of Maryland. Plecker spent his career trying to impose restrictions on those of mixed heritage. He argued that people of mixed heritage, particularly those with Negro blood, posed a threat to society.<sup>34</sup> Du Bois noticed that interracial couples faced great disdain from both white and black citizens of Philadelphia. He condemned this discrimination, arguing that people should marry whomever they wished, regardless of race. Du Bois also identified a glaring paradox in American society. Many whites spoke negatively about private relations between blacks and whites as they were proud of white accomplishments and condemned any action that they felt weakened the purity of their race. At the same time, many white men had taken advantage of their lofty social status to take liberties with black women, especially during the period of slavery. The result of these liaisons, he argued, was that there were no pure Africans left in America, and that before whites argued for segregation they should address their own tendency to engage in interracial sex.<sup>35</sup>

Du Bois concluded with a brief commentary followed by messages for Philadelphia's white and black citizens. Although he did not specifically identify any racists or Social-Darwinists, he challenged their theories on several levels. Boldly he disdained the pretentious attitudes of adherents to Social Darwinists, stating:

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<sup>34</sup> Walter Ashby Plecker eventually sought and received the help of Madison Grant, a wealthy New York eugenicist in his efforts to reform the function of the census bureau. They wanted the bureau to identify the heads of each American family since 1800 in order to determine their racial background. He felt this measure would make limits on race mixing easier to legislate. For information on Plecker please see, Philip R. Reilly, The Surgical Solution. A History of Involuntary Sterilization in the United States. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1991. p.73-74.

<sup>35</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Philadelphia Negro, pp.359-360.

Not that we have discovered, as some hoped and some feared, that all men were created free and equal, but rather that the differences in men are not so vast as we had assumed. We still yield the well-born the advantages of birth, we still see that each nation has its dangerous flock of fools and rascals; but we also find most men have brains to be cultivated and souls to be saved.<sup>36</sup>

Du Bois deemed it unfair to assume that social position was fixed and predetermined by race. In order create a more positive environment he felt the need for cooperation, not segregation between the races.

Some white segregationists even believed that black emigration provided the best solution for both races. By 1911 this view became so popular that an important government official voiced his belief that forced emigration might be the best solution to the race question. Secretary Jacob M. Dickinson of the War Department argued that the voluntary removal of the majority of blacks to their own country would aid in the development of the race and would ease tensions in America.<sup>37</sup> Du Bois dismissed arguments for emigration, stating, “nor is the thought of voluntary or involuntary emigration more than a dream of men who forget that there are half as many Negroes in the United States as Spaniards in Spain.”<sup>38</sup>

Du Bois’s appeal to blacks featured a criticism of African-Americans for their weakness, and a renewed call for self-help programs. Although he acknowledged the

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p.386.

<sup>37</sup> The Crisis. April 1911. p.13., Several blacks also began to feel that emigration would solve the race problem in America. Noble Drew Ali and Marcus Garvey were both prominent black leaders that promoted this view. For information on their views please see, David Noble, The Progressive Mind, 1890-1917. Minneapolis: Burgess, 1981. p.129.

<sup>38</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Philadelphia Negro, p.388.

problems caused by prejudice and slavery, he still felt that blacks had to take specific steps to improve their social situation. The black community, he noted, had to reduce its members' delinquent behavior. Du Bois argued that a reduction in crime, drinking and gambling would help win white respect and remove some negative stereotyping of the black community. Despite the best efforts of the black churches, young people preferred to socialize at casinos or saloons, wasting money on extravagant clothes, household luxuries, gambling, and alcohol. Du Bois expressed alarm at the appeal these forms of entertainment held for young blacks who often spent what little money they had on frivolous activities rather than upgrading their nutrition, housing, and education. Not unlike his contemporary, Booker T. Washington, Du Bois stated that blacks had to live the purest and most worthwhile lives they could because it was the only way to change society's perception of the race. He emphasized the need for upper-class blacks to lead the reform effort through established institutions like schools, churches, and secret societies.<sup>39</sup>

In an address entitled, "The Duty of Whites," Du Bois made it clear that whites could not stand aside and let existing problems continue. Through this section, he summarized many of his more controversial arguments. He again questioned negative social attitudes toward interracial marriages, claiming that these unions were rare and would continue to be so even if society removed barriers. Consequently he did not feel that people should spend so much time and effort on preventing such arrangements. Indeed, Philadelphia had a history of passing laws against interracial unions. As early as

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp.389-393.

1726, a law forbade marriage between two people of different racial background.<sup>40</sup> During the eighteenth century many states passed anti-miscegenation laws, which persisted virtually unchallenged for decades. These laws were rarely challenged, and courts upheld their constitutional validity in Indiana (1871), Arkansas (1875), Alabama (1877), Texas (1877), and Louisiana (1907).<sup>41</sup>

Du Bois identified two types of racial prejudice which plagued society, one conscious and malicious, the other unconscious. Whites who deliberately acted in a vicious way toward blacks exhibited the first type of prejudice, and most blacks encountered this discrimination in the workplace, as whites excluded them from all except menial work. The second type of prejudice, he argued, was more subtle, but equally damaging. To Du Bois unconscious prejudice meant that during daily affairs whites ignored or avoided blacks completely. An example of this prejudice could be as simple as two childhood acquaintances meeting on the street with the white party ignoring his/her black counterpart. People did not act out of maliciousness, but because they feared what other whites would think of them for fraternizing with blacks. Such acts of cowardice convinced blacks from an early age that they were second-class citizens, which, according to Du Bois, undercut self-respect and formed a critical barrier for blacks to overcome. Du Bois portrayed white prejudice as the key force undermining the confidence and motivation of blacks in Philadelphia. To combat this situation, he pleaded with whites to recognize the accomplishments of successful blacks. If whites acknowledged these

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp.360, 393-394.

<sup>41</sup> Philip R. Reilly, The Surgical Solution. p.25.

achievements, they would realize that the two races were not very different. Self-awareness in the African-American community would inspire confidence, motivation, and racial cooperation, and lead to the uplift of Philadelphia.<sup>42</sup>

Du Bois criticized the efforts of prejudiced whites attempting to disenfranchise the Negro through such laws as the Grandfather Clauses passed by the states of Mississippi, South Carolina, Louisiana, North Carolina, Alabama, Virginia, Georgia, and Oklahoma.<sup>43</sup> He attacked the movement to uphold laws against interracial marriages and fought bitterly the drive toward segregation throughout the country. Du Bois asked that whites realize their responsibility for helping to shape the racist world which kept blacks in continual struggle. Certainly his arguments against these established rules and beliefs of inferiority made him a radical for his time. With The Philadelphia Negro, Du Bois created a different blueprint for progressive reformers to use in efforts to change society.

Initial public reaction to The Philadelphia Negro was mixed. Despite being one of the more modern, thorough and relevant pieces of sociology published during the period, The Philadelphia Negro was mentioned only briefly by the foremost journal in the discipline, The American Journal of Sociology. A possible reason for this omission was Du Bois's youth, as he was only 31 years old. He had just commenced his career and was not well known, and perhaps these academic journals did not feel that his work merited discussion. Racism also may have been a factor in his work being ignored, since he had graduated from an excellent university and his project was conducted at the prompting of

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<sup>42</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Philadelphia Negro, pp.393-397.

<sup>43</sup> John Hope Franklin and Alfred A Moss Jr., From Slavery to Freedom, p.237.

influential benefactors. The Philadelphia Negro was reviewed by several other publications including The Nation, The Yale Review, Outlook, and The American Historical Review. These reviewers took the time to examine the text of The Philadelphia Negro.<sup>44</sup>

Although most reviews were generally superficial, an unsigned review in The Nation was negative. The author contested Du Bois's views on menial labor, claiming that white employers often valued their black house servants. But the anonymous reviewer argued that such jobs should not be viewed as demoralizing or degrading. The reviewer, however, did not admit that few other jobs were available to blacks. The reviewer illustrated his bias when he voiced his doubts that life really was more difficult for blacks. He claimed correctly that other minorities, such as recent immigrants, also confronted difficulty and discrimination.<sup>45</sup> Other reviews were not nearly so harsh in their reviews of The Philadelphia Negro. All of the other reviews praised Du Bois for his objectivity. They noticed the criticisms that he leveled at blacks more than they noticed his more controversial findings. The American Historical Review praised Du Bois for identifying the faults and weaknesses of the black community.<sup>46</sup> Each reviewer emphasized the findings contained in the study with which he agreed. These reviews showed no support for the author's radical critique. Possibly, reviewers did not discuss the study in depth because they did not understand or did not want to address the points

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<sup>44</sup> John H. Bracey, Jr., August Meier, Elliot Rudwick ed., The Black Sociologists: The First Half-Century, p.4., David Levering Lewis, W.E.B. Du Bois. Biography of a Race 1868-1919, pp.206-207.

<sup>45</sup> Nation, LXIX. 1899. p.310.

<sup>46</sup> American Historical Review, VI. 1900. pp.162-164.

he made. Instead, they probably played up points their readers found comfortable. It is also possible that reviewers only read portions of the book, as Du Bois made most of his more controversial arguments in the body of the text where he displayed his findings. After all, The Philadelphia Negro was a thick volume with many charts, graphs, and statistics. It was not an easy read and one may imagine a reviewer on a tight schedule skimming the work rather than treating it with the thoroughness it deserved. Even Du Bois admitted that his work was not user friendly, stating that “few persons ever read that fat volume on The Philadelphia Negro, but they treat it with respect and that fact consoles me.”<sup>47</sup>

That few people read his work on the black community in Philadelphia proved disappointing to Du Bois. He had hoped that the production of an informative, thorough, and objective study would prompt people to reconsider their views on the race problem in Philadelphia and elsewhere. Unfortunately, though, society generally ignored his arguments, and Du Bois no doubt felt frustrated at how few people he reached. If he left the University of Pennsylvania encouraged that he had found a field of study which offered hope for ameliorating social problems focusing on race, he knew that he had to find a way to get his message across to a larger audience.

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<sup>47</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois, p.198.

**Chapter 3:**  
***“From Self-Help to State Help”***

The Atlanta conferences gave Du Bois the chance to continue developing a blueprint for the reform of America. Initially, The Philadelphia Negro and the Atlanta conferences shared much in the way of form and focus, but over time Du Bois’s ideas evolved. Through the early conferences Du Bois continued to promote a moderate reform plan based on self-help. Over time, however, he argued for government intervention for the African-American community. Although Du Bois already had identified white prejudice as one of many negative social factors that blacks faced, he came to believe that it was the most prominent hurdle African-Americans had to overcome. In The Philadelphia Negro, Du Bois was concerned with objectivity, but in the Atlanta conference he began to use his data subjectively, not unlike his racist rivals. He used his findings to continue his criticism of Social-Darwinism, pseudo-scientific studies on race, and any reform plan based on the assumption that African-Americans were inferior.

In 1897 Du Bois received an interesting offer of employment from Horace Bumstead, the president of the University of Atlanta, who was impressed with the thoroughness of the Philadelphia study. Having just started a series of conferences at the University of Atlanta, a large black school, Bumstead felt Du Bois was a scholar with the vision and ability to make the meetings a more valuable resource for reformers. Not unlike Wilberforce, Atlanta university had a religious, albeit nondenominational tradition. Apparently, some faculty members were concerned with Du Bois’s expressed disdain for

organized religion on campus. Others were concerned about hiring a Fisk graduate rather than one of their own students. Bumstead ignored these concerns because he felt that Du Bois's superior postgraduate record negated these worries. In answering these concerns Bumstead claimed that, "Dr. Du Bois was the one man white or black far and away best fitted for the position."<sup>1</sup>

Upon accepting the position at Atlanta, Du Bois initiated a plan to upgrade the conferences. He noticed that other schools, chiefly Hampton and Tuskegee, already conducted annual conferences. The meetings brought together labourers or farmers to experience inspirational speeches and seminars led by successful workers or other experts. Organizers hoped that these meeting would inspired people to improve and achieve while following the programs advocated by the two schools. Du Bois adopted this format, hoping that the conference participants would then educate others about the ideas discussed. The Tuskegee and Hampton conferences devoted themselves to promoting social reform within the framework of an accommodationist platform. Du Bois was not comfortable with the emphasis placed on social reform by these meetings.<sup>2</sup> Instead, he sought to use the Atlanta conferences to create a thorough body of data on blacks to develop appropriate programs for change. There was a need for more liberal ideas on race considering that few settlement houses in northern states were integrated because most settlement workers were worried that a black presence at the houses would discourage

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<sup>1</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois. pp.209-211.

<sup>2</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, Dusk of Dawn. p.63., David Levering Lewis, W.E.B. Du Bois, Biography of a Race 1868-1919. New York: Holt, 1993. pp.218-220.

white immigrants who needed help. Commonly, settlement house workers believed evolutionary ideas which placed blacks at the bottom of society. In Philadelphia, a settlement house for blacks claimed that blacks were not as intellectually motivated as other settlement house clients because the, “race was at the sensation stage of its evolution and the treatment demanded is different.”<sup>3</sup> Du Bois felt that the Atlanta conferences provided opportunities to teach people about the actual causes of black poverty and despair. The conferences did encourage several important social projects that helped both whites and blacks, including the city of Atlanta’s kindergarten system, the formation of a Negro business league, and various projects designed to improve the general level of health or combat crime.<sup>4</sup>

The Atlanta conferences involved far more help from other people than Du Bois’s other projects. He recruited several graduate students and interested volunteers to help survey information on various urban centres in the United States. The research assistants then returned these surveys to Du Bois who compiled the results. Graduates from Atlanta, Fisk, Howard Universities, Meharry Medical College, and Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes, these volunteers worked long hours for no compensation because they believed in the project. In using researchers on the project, Du Bois ensured that more people felt a part of things. He hoped that they would then spread the word about the reports, further increasing awareness of the work. Also, by using volunteers from around the country he

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<sup>3</sup> Allen F. Davis, Spearheads for Reform, pp.94-96, Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn, Black Neighbors. Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement Movement, 1890-1945. Chapel Hill: U.N.C. Press, 1993.p.6.

<sup>4</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois. pp.205-214.

was able to create a national study, rather than just focusing on one city. Admitting more people into these experiments did cause some problems, as it was difficult at times to ensure consistency in the validity of the returned surveys.<sup>5</sup>

Du Bois released the results of the studies at the annual conferences. By presenting the finished studies at the meetings, he ensured that a larger audience would hear his results than if he just published them. In addition to the presentation of the annual study, each conference featured different experts or reformers presenting their research on similar topics. The published compilation which followed each conference included, the annual study, the minutes of the conference, and space permitting, some of the other presented papers. Du Bois began his association with the conferences in 1897 and headed the third annual study which was presented at the conference which took place on May 25-26, 1898. He quickly left his mark on the conferences as he designed and oversaw the annual studies and edited the conference papers.<sup>6</sup>

Du Bois initially participated in the third annual conference on “Some Efforts of American Negroes for Their Own Social Betterment,” which took place on May 25-26, 1898. The published conference papers included the annual study prepared by Du Bois, a summary of proceedings at the two day conference, and several papers presented for discussion. Du Bois was very active at the conference, as he presented the study and

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<sup>5</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, ed., Some Efforts of American Negroes for Their Own Social Betterment. Atlanta: Atlanta University, 1898. p.3., Elliott M. Rudwick, W.E.B. Du Bois. A Study in Minority Group Leadership. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1960. p.41.

<sup>6</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois, pp.213-216.

helped other conference members draft resolutions. Equally important, Du Bois served as the editor of the conference papers.<sup>7</sup> In several parts of The Philadelphia Negro, he undertook bold criticism of American society as he sought alternative reasons to explain why blacks were suffering so much. This criticism was not as apparent or frequent in the first conference study in which Du Bois was active in, but his radical criticism did appear. As the conferences progressed, Du Bois became bolder in voicing his belief that blacks were equal to whites in their potential to achieve success. Not surprisingly, he attacked the views of racist Social Darwinists. During a discussion on cooperative business ventures, for example, he avowed that slavery kept blacks from acquiring the necessary business skills. He believed that the authoritarian plantation system had stripped African-Americans of the decision-making skills necessary to flourish in an unrestrained capitalist society. Although blacks made some progress acquiring knowledge, capital and organization, there still existed an economic gap between the races.<sup>8</sup> Clearly, Du Bois reasserted the claim he first made in The Philadelphia Negro that a negative social environment, not heredity, caused the inferior position of blacks.

Du Bois further emphasized several ways in which blacks might improve their economic situation. He applauded the work the churches had done to acquire wealth and help people, recommending that blacks continue their efforts to organize and form cooperatives. Pragmatically, he realized that blacks had little power to change their

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<sup>7</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, ed., Some Efforts of American Negroes for Their Own Social Betterment, p.46.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p.21.

situation, but they could win respect in America acquiring capital and organizing successful businesses. Blacks, he argued, had to educate themselves about business practices to build successful organizations.<sup>9</sup>

Stirring controversy, Du Bois blamed white prejudice as a factor that retarded the growth of the black community. Whites, he argued, organized social and business institutions that excluded blacks because they were considered inferior. Du Bois strongly believed that for society to evolve in a positive direction, the races would have to cooperate, stating, "The nation helps the Negro not simply to recompense the injustice long done to him, but rather to make it possible for him to accomplish more quickly a work which usually takes centuries."<sup>10</sup> Although he openly appealed for cooperation from the white community, he was aware of problems that too much reliance on outside aid could cause. It was his belief that reliance on white help would lead to blacks losing their motivation to work for change themselves<sup>11</sup>

Ten years later, at the Fourteenth Conference in 1909, Du Bois had dramatically revised his views on African-American efforts at self-help. The study examined the efforts of churches, women's clubs, senior citizens homes, nurseries, and newspapers. Despite praising the efforts of blacks to improve their own situation Du Bois was convinced that a self-help program would be of little help without increased help from the white

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp.6-13,42-44.

<sup>10</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, ed., Some Efforts of American Negroes for Their Own Social Betterment, pp.43-44.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.44.

community. Du Bois had realized that most self-help programs were lacking the resources, coordination, and ability to ever reform the African-American community effectively.

Du Bois's disillusionment with self-help programs was illustrated by his attitude toward churches as agencies of reform. In The Philadelphia Negro Du Bois argued that the church should play a central role in reform efforts. By the eighth conference in 1903, Du Bois voiced his scepticism about the ability of black churches to conduct practical reform. His doubts reflected the apparent weaknesses in the preachers who led the black congregations. Du Bois believed that these men had to fulfill a variety of roles serving as moral teachers and catalysts for change. In this conference study, however, Du Bois argued that the quality of preachers serving the black community varied greatly. If some ministers were honest and effective in promoting moral and social uplift, others were of dubious character. For example, a survey respondent from Petersburg, Virginia, claimed to have come across four ministers who were sexually immoral, two who were mismanaging funds, and one who abused alcohol.<sup>12</sup>

Along with his doubts about the leadership qualities of the clergy, Du Bois also expressed concern about the failure of black churches to teach their youth about the importance of living a moral life. Du Bois questioned children under the age of twenty about their religious attendance and beliefs. When asked about their religious faith most children responded that religion was about their relationship to God. Du Bois, displeased at these answers subjectively argued that these responses proved that churches failed to

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<sup>12</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, ed. The Negro Church Atlanta: Atlanta University, 1903. p.158.

stress the importance of a moral life. Du Bois's views were not surprising given his professed dislike for the ceremony and dogma of organized religion. Instead, he took a pragmatic view of religion, emphasizing its potential for moral uplift and social reform. Du Bois noted that black religion was decentralized, with several different denominations being patronized by blacks. Often, these denominations competed for members, and their messages and ceremonies were tailored to suit specific clienteles. A variety of churches may have suited worshippers, but these differences would have made a unified reform effort impossible.

Du Bois articulated a refined role for black churches in his reform blueprint. In this conference he emphasized the need for churches to improve the moral character of blacks. Because his doubts about the clergy, and the teachings of the churches, Du Bois de-emphasized his calls for churches to become involved in practical social reform. Most settlement workers were active church members, and it is safe to assume that the program of settlement houses featured much religious content.<sup>13</sup> Du Bois would have been suspicious of any settlement house program actively promoting a highly religious program.

Instead, he became intrigued with the idea of the Federal government undertaking reform efforts on behalf of the nation's poorest citizens. Of note in this study was Du Bois's renewed plea for an increase in national support for black schools. He felt that they

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<sup>13</sup> In his book, *Spearheads for Reform*, Allen F. Davis includes a study on the religion of several settlement workers. Of 339 workers, 88 percent were church members with most of these people claiming that, "religion had been a dominant influence on their lives." Please see page 26.

should stop relying on Negro patrons and charitable donations and instead secure more concrete funding. Through federal support and local taxation schemes, black schools would find themselves on firmer financial ground. Du Bois believed that the Federal government could intervene in more local affairs if it would benefit the nation.<sup>14</sup> When coupled with his reformist leanings on economics, Du Bois envisioned an expanded role for the Federal government in society. This view was consistent with his argument in favour of increasing black voting rights and political participation. If blacks increased their voting rate, he argued, then they would enjoy a larger say in public life. Political activity, coupled with increased Federal Government participation in state affairs would mean that blacks could seek protection from a new source.

The increase in the influence of the government in the practical affairs of the country was a trend that many citizens noted during this period. Starting with a stunning victory over Spain in the Spanish-American war, the United States quickly built an empire acquiring influence over Cuba, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines.<sup>15</sup> The enhanced power of the Federal Government was also exercised in various internal issues. Under President Theodore Roosevelt the government advocated more restrictions on trusts that had grown too powerful. The Justice Department launched forty-three cases to limit or disband large business monopolies. Roosevelt's reign also featured government regulation

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<sup>14</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, Efforts for Social Betterment Among Negro Americans. Atlanta: Atlanta University, 1909. p.133.

<sup>15</sup> William L. O'Neal, The Progressive Years. America Comes of Age. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1975. pp.15-19.

of railroad rates, meat packaging, food processing, and drug production.<sup>16</sup> Clearly, Du Bois understood the changing nature of American society and wanted the government to become more critical of social injustice. To Du Bois's chagrin, Roosevelt did little with his government to help improve the social conditions that blacks faced.

Although Roosevelt believed in the eventual possibility that blacks could achieve equality, this would take decades to occur. He felt that the majority of blacks in America were inferior and should not be allowed to vote. During his term as President from 1901 to 1909, he carried out an exclusionary program as blacks saw their political appointments decline. Occasionally, Roosevelt appointed blacks to prominent political positions, but these were exceptionally successful people. The president enthusiastically supported Booker T. Washington's industrial education program, as he felt it equipped blacks with the skills they needed. Industrial education, he reasoned, would decrease the lawlessness among blacks, making mob violence less frequent. While Roosevelt deplored lynchings, he also subscribed to the view that blacks often incited mobs by acting as sexual predators toward white women. Clearly Roosevelt represented the type of reformer that Du Bois sought to educate.<sup>17</sup>

In May 1899 conference participants discussed African-American business, which was a direct continuation of chapter nine in The Philadelphia Negro, dubbed "The

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<sup>16</sup> Brands, H.W. T.R. The Last Romantic. New York: Basic Books, 1997. pp.428, 434-435, 542-545, 548-551., George E. Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, 1900-1912. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958. pp.131-134,207-208,198-201.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas G. Dyer, Theodore Roosevelt and the Idea of Race. Baton Rouge: L.S.U., 1980. pp.90-114.

occupation of the Negro.”<sup>18</sup> In his Philadelphia study, Du Bois argued that blacks were hindered in their search for employment by their own lack of efficiency, experience, training, and motivation. In the fourth annual study, “The Negro in Business,” Du Bois assigned more blame to whites for the conditions facing blacks than he did in the Philadelphia study. He claimed that blacks received few opportunities for training because their white bosses preferred to train white workers. “Even in the North,” he asked, “how many firms stand ready to allow a bright black boy to come into their country-rooms and learn the different techniques of modern commercial life.”<sup>19</sup> In his previous studies he always assigned a large proportion of the blame for poverty to blacks themselves, but now he was far more critical of white prejudice. In this study, prejudice went from being one of many variables to being the most important variable in the failure of black business. Clearly, Du Bois was becoming more outspoken as he assembled his database for reformers.

To underline his argument on prejudice in the workplace, Du Bois described the case study of a black jeweller from Kansas City. The unnamed jeweller managed to build a moderately successful shop despite several setbacks along the way. Following the collapse of his bank, which cost him 500\$, this jeweller had to work as a porter, pursuing his business on the side until he opened a small store. Like Du Bois, the jeweller believed

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<sup>18</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Philadelphia Negro. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1899. Chapter 9.

<sup>19</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, ed., The Negro in Business. Atlanta: Atlanta University, 1899. p.13., For information on the difficulties that blacks faced in business please see, David L. Montgomery, The Fall of the House of Labor, pp.83-85., John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss Jr., From Slavery to Freedom, pp.250-255.

that black business needed increased patronage from successful members of the race. He noted that wealthier blacks often chose not to patronize black businesses, instead choosing to acquire their goods from white providers of similar services. The lack of support blacks showed for these businesses bothered Du Bois, who felt that the survival these businesses would serve as a form of protection for the community. He argued that blacks had to organize into larger commercial units or they would be even less able to compete in the future. The large manufacturing sector of the country would continue to grow in importance, excluding and exploiting blacks.<sup>20</sup>

Du Bois applauded the efforts of blacks to start their own businesses even though when compared to total American investment, black business investment remained low. He noted that the movement toward large scale enterprise had dire consequences for blacks who often lost their jobs, as they didn't have the skills or capital to make their businesses larger. Du Bois advocated adoption of small cottage industries to help black families. For example, he believed that Southern blacks could produce many crafts in the home which could be sold easily, helping people to improve their own standard of living. In particular, Du Bois noted that several broom factories now flourished in the South after having begun this way.<sup>21</sup> Du Bois believed blacks should go out of their way, even at personal cost, to support black-owned businesses. That Du Bois encouraged blacks to participate in business marked an expansion of his self-help reform blueprint. He hoped that by starting businesses African-Americans would find success while making the

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp.25-50.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.14, 50.

community more self-sufficient.

Later at the 1907 conference, Du Bois argued that larger cooperative ventures were necessary for African-Americans to advance in the economic affairs of the nation. Rejecting the racism that hampered many black businesses, Du Bois challenged the notion that blacks were incapable of independent economic development. He traced the historical development of communities in the West Indies and Africa, illustrating that blacks had constructed many sophisticated economic systems in these places. Specifically, Du Bois pointed out the existence of several large markets in Africa. These markets featured crowds numbering between 1,000 and 3,000 traders on any given day. The people that frequented these markets traded a variety of commodities including slaves, spices, various crops, and crafts. Ujiji, Tanzania and Nyangwe, Zaire, were identified by Du Bois as sites for these large markets.<sup>22</sup> Along with the examination of black global economic development, Du Bois mentioned various projects such as the underground railroad that featured cooperation. The road forward for the race, he claimed, was to achieve economic development through cooperative ventures, including the construction of businesses, churches, and schools.

Du Bois attacked the laissez-faire individualism that drove the American economic system. Unrestrained capitalism, he argued, favoured those with capital and this wealth was generated by exploiting the poor. In this situation blacks faced the choice between “fierce individualistic competition” or economic cooperation. Clearly the conference-

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<sup>22</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, ed. Economic Cooperation Among Negro Americans. Atlanta: Atlanta University, 1907. p.17.

goers felt that economic cooperation was a better option, as it would benefit the whole community, not just a fortunate few.<sup>23</sup> Group efforts would also help blacks feel more secure as they set out to change their environment. With the threat of lynching a constant threat to blacks for any perceived affront to white supremacy, cooperative efforts may have protected blacks somewhat from a violent backlash.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps Du Bois was thinking that if whites could form a group like the Ku Klux Klan to protect white supremacy, then blacks should be able to form a group for their own protection. Noting the effectiveness of unions and agricultural coops, Du Bois began to move toward a more socialist direction.

Unlike other components of his reform plan, such as African-American self-help efforts or business ventures, Du Bois's views on education were consistent over the years. His examination of education in the African-American community began in May 1900 as he examined "The College-Bred Negro". Du Bois argued that a college education was necessary and helpful to blacks, rejecting the notion that a simple industrial education was sufficient. The arguments began when he noted that the number of black college graduates had steadily increased since John Brown Russwurm graduated from Bowdoin College, Maine, in 1826. Unfortunately, the total number of college graduates remained too small as only one black graduate existed for every 3600 black citizens. In the northern and western states, the study revealed that blacks were admitted more readily into the better universities and colleges than in the South. Usually, southern blacks were forced to

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> For an excellent description of the violent pressures that blacks faced during this period, see W.Fitzhugh Brundage, Lynching in the New South. Georgia and Virginia, 1880-1930. Chicago: University of Illinois, 1993.

attend black schools, which varied greatly in curriculum and quality, but any college education, Du Bois emphasized, was beneficial to the few blacks who managed to get one. A total of 1312 graduates responded to Du Bois's survey, proving that college educated blacks could find worthwhile employment. He found that 53.4% worked as teachers, 16.8% as clergymen, 6.3% as physicians, 5.6% as students, and 4.7% as lawyers. Another 4% of college educated black respondents to the survey worked in government service, while 3.6% were in business, 2.7% were farmers or artisans, and 2.4% worked as editors, secretaries, or clerks. This left only .5% of the respondents categorized as working in miscellaneous employment. These were all professions that were more distinguished than the labourer positions in which blacks usually found themselves. In the past, returning to their communities to help teach people basic skills, college graduates usually found employment as teachers. Du Bois argued, however, that in addition to teaching, black graduates had opportunities as merchants, pharmacists, and even as physicians. Along with greater work prospects, the study illustrated that university-educated blacks had a much lower mortality rate than other blacks. Although he failed to elaborate much on the reasons that this rate was lower, Du Bois touted the positive effect higher education might exert on society.<sup>25</sup>

Proponents of industrial education argued that schools overtrained many college graduates for the jobs they were eventually forced to take anyway.<sup>26</sup> Du Bois found this

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<sup>25</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, ed. The College-Bred Negro. Atlanta: Atlanta University, 1900. pp.30-37,63-64,72,103,114., John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., From Slavery to Freedom, p.243.

<sup>26</sup> John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., From Slavery To Freedom, pp.246-247.

untrue, as most graduates entered jobs requiring more specialized skills. The study illustrated that blacks who did manage to attend college usually did quite well, and the success of these graduates clearly shattered the myth that blacks were incapable of higher thought and development. Du Bois campaigned for an increase in the number of black college graduates for a number of reasons. He felt that the success that college graduates found made them logical leaders of the race, as they provided valuable examples for black youth. Through their daily contact with people, he argued, college graduates would prove that blacks had the potential to be as successful as any group in society.

Teaching was the most common profession undertaken by black college graduates. Du Bois argued that they had done an invaluable service for the black community, often with little benefit for themselves. Many blacks educated in the North eventually moved to the South to pursue employment, much in the way Du Bois had. Their movement often entailed sacrifice as they were forced to move from their homes to find suitable work among their people. In examining the birthplaces of 650 black college graduates, Du Bois found that 38 of the 73 Northern graduates who responded to his survey had migrated to the South to find work. Usually, most college graduates who had grown up in the South remained there, with 443 of 507 graduates choosing to do so.<sup>27</sup> In explaining the worth of black teachers, Du Bois stated, “knowledge of life and its wider meaning, has been the point of the Negro’s deepest ignorance, and the sending out of teachers whose training has not been merely for bread-winning but also for human culture has been of inestimable

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<sup>27</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The College Bred Negro. p.43.

value in the training of these men.”<sup>28</sup> Du Bois felt that the college-educated Negro fulfilled a role within society that lesser trained people could not. Educated blacks would teach and lead others to the point where they could improve and demand their right to participate more fully in society. In particular, Du Bois found that college-educated blacks were more likely to exercise their right to vote. For example, 508 respondents to his query (out of 721, or 70%) claimed to vote, with just 213, or 30%, claiming they did not.<sup>29</sup> Apparently, 69% of Southern blacks and 81% of Northern blacks chose to vote regularly. Unfortunately, many of the blacks who voted felt that their ballots were discounted by whites. Those who abstained from voting did so usually because they were prohibited from voting or did not feel that their votes would be tallied. Indeed, although whites often excluded or misinformed black voters, Du Bois saw the right to vote as an important tool in the advancement of his race. He felt that if more blacks were to mobilize and vote as a bloc, then they might gain some influence in political affairs.<sup>30</sup>

Du Bois’s conclusions on political involvement built on the discussion he had begun in The Philadelphia Negro. In the Philadelphia study he argued that black suffrage was only a partial success. He claimed that most black voters were ignorant, and did not understand the mechanics of voting or the issues to be pondered. Du Bois noted that blacks became involved in city politics to gain an advantage within the city machine to ensure jobs or other rewards. For example, one night watchman claimed he voted because

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p.65.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp.86-88.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp.86-88.

it was the only way to obtain a good job. Upon viewing the corruption that seemed rampant in Philadelphia's city politics, Du Bois only halfheartedly promoted political involvement<sup>31</sup>. In the Atlanta study on "The College Negro," he applauded and encouraged political participation.

Du Bois re-examined the status of college educated African-Americans in his last Atlanta conference before leaving for the N.A.A.C.P. in 1910. Du Bois reemphasized that the black community needed well-educated citizens to act as teachers. Education helped blacks to find better and more varied employment opportunities. To this end, Du Bois argued that each state should put together an effective plan of funding for black colleges. Rather than providing duplicate programs, he argued, that schools should coordinate their efforts, offering more courses in history, english, sociology, and natural science, while abandoning less useful courses such as Latin or Greek. The study also confirmed that more blacks were attending white schools, proving that they were worthy of equal treatment, not segregation. Between 1900 and 1909 there were 238 black graduates from what would be considered white schools. This figure increased from 159 in the years between 1889 and 1900, and 69 between 1880 and 1889.<sup>32</sup> By 1910, people realized that higher education for blacks was a fixture in America.

Du Bois expanded his discussion on education in 1901, when he examined common schools. He found that the black community needed more qualified teachers.

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<sup>31</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Philadelphia Negro, pp.368-383.

<sup>32</sup> W.E.B Du Bois and Augustus Granville Dill, ed. The College-Bred Negro American. Atlanta: Atlanta University, 1910. pp.7,49.

Eighty percent of the nation's blacks were illiterate, and of approximately three million school-aged black children only one million were currently enrolled in schools. To rectify this situation Du Bois demanded an increase in the number of trained teachers in the community and improvement in the facilities at their disposal. The responsibility for this situation, he argued, was not racial inferiority but the history of official sanctions against Negro education. Du Bois noted that prior to the Civil War, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and South Carolina had passed bills prohibiting the education of blacks. In Georgia, for example, legislators passed a law in 1829 that prevented people from teaching any "slave, Negro or free person of colour to read or write." Blacks taught to read or write were subject to fines and whippings at the discretion of the court. Whites caught teaching blacks could be fined up to \$500 and sent to jail for an unspecified period.<sup>33</sup> In northern states there were fewer examples of actual legislation against education, but he felt there were more vicious social pressures applied to limit educational opportunities for blacks. He cited mob violence and economic pressure as two major factors that limited black educational efforts.

Although some decent schools existed, African-American children were usually kept completely separate from white schools, and received inadequate funding. In the South, school funding came from three sources--the local black community, its white counterparts, and philanthropic Northerners. Most whites felt hesitant to fund black schools and, indeed, southern whites angrily opposed the creation of tax support for these

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<sup>33</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, ed. The Negro Common School. Atlanta: Atlanta University, 1901. Ibid., p.17-18,ii., John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss Jr, From Slavery to Freedom, p.243.

institutions. Du Bois carefully examined southern tax records in order to gauge the cost of black education to whites and blacks. Between 1870 and 1899, he found that black education in the South cost \$70,000,000. He argued that the cost of this education was covered by blacks through direct and indirect taxation. Through direct education taxation blacks in Delaware, Arkansas, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana paid enough or more in taxes to cover the costs of education, while another four areas-- the District of Columbia, Virginia, Florida, and Texas-- covered at least 75% of total education costs. Blacks in West Virginia, Tennessee, Missouri, and North Carolina paid approximately one-half of their educational costs, with blacks in Maryland and Kentucky paying a third of the cost. Du Bois then argued that blacks, the nation's poorest citizens, also supported education through such indirect means as poll or property taxes. Because many blacks worked as tenant farmers, he found that their rent costs were actually forms of taxation as land owners simply used their rent fees to cover any tax costs they faced. Du Bois found that when indirect and direct taxation totals were combined blacks easily covered the costs of their education. He argued that white tax-payers in the South did not have their tax dollars devoted to Negro education.<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately, the burden of paying for their education fell directly on the nation's poorest citizens. White government officials, Du Bois argued, should be held responsible for their previous misuse

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<sup>34</sup> In his work on The Philadelphia Negro, Du Bois took a more academic approach, trying whenever possible to reach objective conclusions. His use of these statistics during this study was more creative as he subjectively used them to argue for more school funding. His use of information in this fashion indicates that the focus of the studies was becoming less academic and more political in nature. W.E.B. Du Bois, ed. The Negro Common School. Atlanta: Atlanta University, 1901, pp.42, 89-95.

of black tax funds and legislative restrictions on education. He felt that southern whites could rectify the past by committing more tax money to common schools which desperately needed to be improved. He took care to thank those generous Southerners who had donated an estimated two million dollars toward African-American education, but he felt the whole system needed to be upgraded with better schools, materials, teachers and supervision.<sup>35</sup>

In this discussion of common schools, Du Bois expanded on his argument for greater black voting participation. In his previous study of college graduates he noted that blacks with higher levels of education were more likely to vote. His suggestion of a federal tax to generate funds for education indicated his belief in the need for stronger intervention in state or local affairs when it would benefit the country. His desire for a tax scheme signalled a dramatic shift in Du Bois's program for the uplift of the black community. Previously, Du Bois felt that any reform programs had to be self-help efforts from within the black community. His arguments for a higher degree of state funding prove that he recognized the potential of the state to help minorities. He recognized that the government's extensive financial holdings, along with the country's improved infrastructure, made the state potentially a leading catalyst for change in America. Du Bois argued that state and federal funding of school systems was the least that whites owed blacks after the decades of slavery and discrimination. He acknowledged possible constitutional restrictions on the federal government becoming involved in school funding,

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 42, 89-953., The reliance of African-American schools on Northern philanthropists is discussed in John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss Jr., From Slavery to Freedom. pp.239-244.

but noted that these types of restrictions should be ignored or altered when the programs would benefit all Americans. When combined with a strengthened Federal Government, increased black voting participation would possibly allow blacks to increase their influence in society.

During the progressive era many people came to believe that education was the solution to society's problems. Schools were built at a tremendous pace in America, with the number of high schools rising from 6,000 to 14,000 between 1900 and 1920<sup>36</sup>. The growth of education reflected the influence of John Dewey, a noted reform Darwinist from the University of Chicago and Columbia University in New York. Dewey stated that education should centre on the life experiences of the student. Dewey's general ideas were defined in different ways by various social reformers.<sup>37</sup> Many Americans applied this theory by promoting a distinct form of black education. They believed education should be kept simple, since blacks were impoverished and less prepared for education than their white counterparts. Du Bois focused his theory of education to oppose that view as he felt that education should help them change their social position.

In the largest of the studies conducted to this point, Du Bois and his associates

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<sup>36</sup> Arthur S. Link and Richard L. McCormack, Progressivism. Arlington Heights, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, 1983, p.90.

<sup>37</sup> John Dewey and W.E.B. Du Bois went on to work together on a couple of projects. They were both among the sixty committee members that helped to form the N.A.A.C.P. Their attitudes on education intersected in the early 1930's when they both promoted the People's college concept. These international schools were interracial and featured free tuition, and the absence of exams. Please see Herbert Aptheker, ed. The Correspondence of W.E.B. Du Bois. Volume 1 Selections, 1877-1934. Amherst: Umass, 1973. pp.433-434, 169n.

thoroughly studied the Negro artisan. The study began by looking at the history of artisans, more numerous during the slave period. Following the civil war little technical training was available to blacks since whites no longer chose to use their services. To revive the trades within the Negro community, industrial schools had been set up, but were often limited in their success. Du Bois claimed that these schools suffered in part because they tried to undertake too varied a program. The schools also trained people to the rank in life that they expected them to fill, so girls prepared for housework. Often, only as an afterthought, did these schools equip blacks with trades they could use later to support themselves. Du Bois felt that a modern program, greater specialization, and definition of purpose would help schools become more effective. Along with being costly, industrial education relied on funding from a few northern philanthropists and organizations. Unfortunately, the industrial schools reliance led to conservative curricula, as most benefactors disagreed with any radical course changes and might reduce a school's funding. Without a broader academic approach he felt the race would always lack leadership. People were no longer tied to southern farms, and as many sought employment in factories located in large cities, their schools had not equipped them with the skills to gain acceptance into unions or factory jobs. Indeed, few schools were producing quality tradesmen.<sup>38</sup>

Clearly, Du Bois was extremely critical of the industrial education program that Booker T. Washington had developed and promoted. In a famous address given at the Atlanta

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<sup>38</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, ed. The Negro Artisan. Atlanta: Atlanta University, 1902. p.22-23, 28-33, 188.

Cotton States and International Exposition on September 18, 1895, Washington summarized his views, warning against social protests for equality. Instead, he advocated a program designed to win philanthropic support and white approval. Washington thought that blacks should remain in the rural South, working in agriculture, eventually earning the respect of Southern whites. Keenly aware of white hostility in the form of the Ku Klux Klan and elsewhere, Washington promoted a program that he felt would help uplift the race without instigating a violent backlash. Du Bois rejected the notion that blacks should stay in the country and win white respect, as the urban context in which blacks lived could not be reversed. Instead, he recognized that schools were not equipping blacks with the skills needed to overcome the prejudice of unions and factory owners. Industrial schools, he claimed, often cost the community too much money and provided too little. Du Bois was comfortable with the urban context, having lived most of his life in such cities as Boston, Berlin, Philadelphia and Atlanta. Washington, on the other hand, was never completely comfortable with an urban setting, having been born and raised in the country. He attended the Hampton Institute, a vocational school in rural Virginia. While Washington felt it was better for blacks to be in the country, the reality of the situation was that they were suffering in the country. Specifically, blacks found life miserable because of segregation, the exploitative crop-lien system, and the constant threat of lynching.

Many reformers cited the heightened African-American crime rate as an argument for segregation. Du Bois confronted these beliefs when he examined crime in his 1904 study. He noted that incarceration had become a business in the South, as often prisoners

were forced into labour for the state, or officials contracted them out as workers for private businesses. Many states managed to cover the costs of maintaining prisons and occasionally even turned a profit. Georgia, for example, spent an average of \$2.38 on 2,938 inmates, but realized a return of \$6.12 from the labours of the prisoners. This trend was not limited to Georgia, however, as seven Southern states--South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, and Arkansas--spent \$890,432 on their prison systems but made \$938,406 from convict-lease arrangements. White officials expanded this business, contracting out labour in direct competition with poor blacks trying to make a living themselves. Obviously the success of this system prompted whites to charge and prosecute blacks at a disproportionate rate. Du Bois found that upon being convicted of a crime blacks were sentenced for longer periods than their white counterparts, with blacks being assigned an average term of 4.84 years as opposed to 3.46 for whites.<sup>39</sup> Greedy white officials also fed the high crime rate in the South, not, as whites argued, a lack of morality in the black community. Governor James K. Vardaman of Mississippi, an admitted racist, argued that due to racial inferiority, blacks were responsible for more crime than any other race. Vardaman claimed that educated blacks were more likely to engage in unlawful activity than their uneducated counterparts. The governor, a supporter of "orderly lynching," also believed that crime occurred most often in the Northeast. Du Bois answered these assumptions about crime by referring to basic census statistics. He felt that black crime remained constant, but the end of slavery and the rise of the prisoner-

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<sup>39</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, ed. Some Notes on Negro Crime. Atlanta: Atlanta University, 1904. pp.5- 12.

lease system led to an increase in the number of cases being processed in the courts. Educated blacks, moreover, were much less likely to commit crime than their uneducated counterparts. He argued that the rate of crime was higher in the North, for both whites and blacks, leading him to conclude that social environment was closely related to crime. This study provided many examples in which police officers, judges, and court officials discriminated against blacks. Race prejudice, he asserted, was often a major factor in the crime rates and was often most apparent in areas where blacks and whites engaged in direct economic competition. Du Bois concluded that there was “comparatively little crime in the black belt and in the white belt. It is in the counties where the races meet on something like numerical equality and in economic competition that the maximum of crime is charged against Negroes.”<sup>40</sup> In The Philadelphia Negro, Du Bois identified white prejudice as a significant barrier to the development of the black race. In his discussion on the prisoner lease system, Du Bois went further, claiming that whites often had financial motives that prompted them to discriminate against blacks. The prisoner lease system, for example, saved white tax money and helped undercut black labourers who may have worked the same projects. Du Bois now boldly stated that whites maliciously worked to keep blacks from moving forward.<sup>41</sup>

Du Bois also examined the type of crime that blacks committed because many whites believed that blacks were more likely to commit violent crimes. Contrary to popular belief, Du Bois found that rape accounted for less than three percent of black

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 9-18.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., pp.56-57.

crime. He argued that black males committed rape in a desperate attempt to assert some form of personal power. They acted this way because they were kept in a powerless position in society having been stripped of basic economic, social, and political rights. According to his statistics, Du Bois found that in 1890 it was far more likely for blacks to be charged with burglary than rape. He was not surprised by these findings, considering economic hardships faced by most blacks.<sup>42</sup>

Du Bois began his second decade cycle studying the "Health and Physique of the Negro American". In this study he made his most direct attack on the racist theories of physical anthropologists and physicians. Initially, he disputed the validity of physical measurements in determining the level of a race. He cited the works of social scientists such as G. Sergi, J. Deniker, W.Z. Ripley, and Franz Boas. These thinkers had criticized studies that claimed that physical characteristics like hair, facial angle, and head size could suggest racial inferiority.<sup>43</sup> In a detailed address to the conference, Boas adopted a cultural approach to dispute the notion that blacks were inferior. He argued that black civilizations on the continent of Africa were actually very advanced and had been kept from moving forward by the slave trade, geography, and climate, not as many believed, by racial inferiority. In particular, Boas pointed out some of the highly advanced cultural development that took place in Africa. He claimed that the Zulu people had assembled a

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., pp. 15-18.

<sup>43</sup> Du Bois would enjoy a solid professional relationship with these thinkers. In 1909, Du Bois tried to put together a group to publish an encyclopaedia series on Africa and the accomplishments of Africans and their descendants around the world. The "Encyclopaedia Africana" board of advisors would include prof. Giuseppe Sergi, Dr. J. Deniker and Dr. Franz Boas.

highly evolved military organization that was highly successful in Southwestern Africa. Boas also noted that African craftsmen were extremely gifted, noting the quality of mats made in Egypt, baskets from the Congo river region, and bronze castings on the West Coast of Africa.<sup>44</sup>

Du Bois also spent considerable time attacking the established racial belief that whites had heavier brains and, therefore, greater intelligence. This argument, popular throughout the United States, possessed methodological flaws. Initially, Du Bois attacked the theory claiming that scientists used far too few samples to make any definitive conclusions. By simply considering brain weight, for example, researchers ignored the importance of brain structure. Even had white brains developed differently, (and he felt no evidence suggested this), people still had no solid proof that whites were inherently more intelligent. Du Bois felt that scientists could attribute any differences in brain construction to such environmental factors as age, occupation, or health, and to blame these differences solely on genetic differences was incorrect. Du Bois found that the brains studied represented a cross-section of varying age, gender, social standing, and health. He concluded that, "these same peculiarities can no doubt be found in many white brains and probably have no connection with the mental capacity of either race."<sup>45</sup> The study continued with other challenges to current racist assumptions in physical anthropology.

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<sup>44</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois ed., The Health and Physique of the Negro American. Atlanta: Atlanta University, 1906. p.20., John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss Jr, From Slavery to Freedom. pp.381-382, 441.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., pp.24-27.

Du Bois then presented forty-eight photographs of various blacks, which he claimed represented the main physical types of blacks in America. He noted that some of these people had achieved more success than others. The successful examples he had noted had diverse skin colors. This diversity proved that environmental factors, not skin color, determined social standing. Many of his subjects were of mixed race, and Du Bois found no evidence that these individuals were stronger or weaker than those of pure blood. The growing number of mulattoes in America led him to believe that society was moving toward racial amalgamation. In a scathing political attack, he argued that under slavery so many secret relations between whites and blacks occurred that if slavery had been left untouched, the distinction between races would have disappeared over time.<sup>46</sup>

By studying the children of interracial marriages, Du Bois found that there was no proof that race mixing helped or hindered individual development. Children of mixed heritage were healthy or unhealthy at the same rate as other children, and had the same potential to become successful or unsuccessful members of society. The measures taken against race-mixing were unnecessary, Du Bois argued, because white prejudice kept the number of interracial relationships from reaching a high level. These laws prevented black men from marrying white women, but did not remove the social pressures which kept whites away from black women, as whites could now conduct their liaisons without ever having to go through the embarrassment of marrying a black woman or raising the children. In the past, whites who fathered children with black women may have felt obligated to at least provide somewhat for the children. Sarcastically he proposed

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., pp.36-39.

what he thought was more realistic approach for the enemies of integration, declaring, “at present those who dislike amalgamation can best prevent it by helping to raise the Negro to such a plane of intelligence and economic independence that he will never stoop to mingle his blood with those who despise him.”<sup>47</sup> This comment illustrates Du Bois’s anger at the interracial relationship issue, rather than any desire for a program of reverse discrimination.

The study also featured a variety of charts which displayed measurements and comparisons of height, weight, chests, and heads. The point of these charts was to attribute the differences between the races to differences in nutrition, an environmental factor reflecting income. Following this discussion on physical characteristics, the study assessed important demographic information, including birth rates, mortality rates and general health information. Disturbing to conference goers was the high African-American mortality rate. The black mortality rate in 1900 was 29.6 per thousand, a higher rate than the 17.3 per thousand that white Americans faced. Du Bois’s material showed that blacks often suffered from such diseases as pneumonia, diseases of the nervous system, malaria, diarrhoeal illness, heart disease, and consumption. The research revealed that conditions were worse for blacks in Southern cities, as opposed to those who lived in Northern centres. This point, Du Bois argued, undercut the myth that blacks lacked the strength to survive in the colder climate of the North. The professor also claimed that if one examined mortality rates along the lines of social class rather than race, the figures would become similar between all races and ethnicities of people. Indeed, the situation

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 27-39.

had improved slowly, thanks to black efforts at education, economic organization, health care and improvements in social conditions.<sup>48</sup>

In 1910, Du Bois decided to leave the University of Atlanta to join the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, an organization that he had helped to found. The N.A.A.C.P. was created as a reaction to a lynching in Springfield, Illinois, the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln. The lynching was so shocking that it prompted a white Southerner, William Walling, to call a meeting to form a group dedicated to eradicating lynching in America. According to Du Bois, the group featured philanthropists, social scientists, social workers, and concerned blacks, and he was heartened at the fact that no supporters of Booker T. Washington attended the meeting. By 1910, Du Bois decided to move to New York, accepting the N.A.A.C.P.'s offer to become their director of publicity.<sup>49</sup> He accepted this job and left Atlanta, his home for thirteen years, tired of constantly having to beg for the funds to run the conferences and studies the way he wanted. Du Bois also found that his ideas had brought him into conflict with Booker T. Washington, the most powerful man in the black community, who controlled patronage appointments and whose influence over philanthropists was considerable. Du Bois believed that Washington was working to suppress his efforts to raise funds, and he became so desperate for money that he directly asked Andrew Carnegie, the steel mogul and philanthropist for money. Considering that Carnegie championed the system which Du Bois criticized so bitterly, it was not surprising that these requests for funds were

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., pp.72, 76,82-83,88,89.

<sup>49</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois, p.255.

rejected.<sup>50</sup>

The radical nature of the conferences had instigated a backlash against the university and the conferences, so Du Bois unselfishly and pragmatically chose to leave rather than further hurt the project. He also found that the university administration worried about his radical beliefs and often pressured him to take a more moderate line.<sup>51</sup> Finding that his conferences did little to change the status quo, he decided to leave academia and assume a more public role fighting for civil rights.

Another factor which contributed to Du Bois's decision to leave the university was a despicable act of mob violence that occurred not far from his home. Sam Hose was a labourer in rural Georgia who was accused of murdering his employer, Alfred Cranford, and raping Cranford's wife. Although Hose acted in self-defence and never raped Mrs. Cranford, newspaper accounts of the incident made him out to be a vicious thug. The newspapers claimed that Hose had repeatedly raped Mrs. Cranford, infecting her with syphilis, after having beaten her husband to death. Sam Hose was also said to have removed an infant from its cradle, throwing it to the ground. In reality, Hose threw an axe at his employer, upon being threatened by Cranford who was brandishing a pistol at the time. The supposed rape and assault of Mrs. Cranford and her baby never happened. Despite his good reputation, the literate and bright Sam Hose was hunted and eventually killed by an angry lynch mob. Horrifically, Hose's knuckles were removed and placed on

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<sup>50</sup> Du Bois asked Carnegie for money in 1906, but had his request denied. For details on the 1906 request please see, W.E.B. Du Bois, The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois, p.225., Herbert Aptheker, ed. The Correspondence of W.E.B. Du Bois, pp.121-122.

<sup>51</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois. p.252.

display at an Atlanta grocery store.<sup>52</sup> Du Bois was deeply touched by this incident, as he had worked constantly to educate society that blacks were not a threat. His analysis of the race problem had been scientific in nature, as objective and thorough as he could make it. The lynching in his own backyard made it difficult for him to believe in the scientific method he used. Lynching, he came to believe, negated any practical attempts at reform because it intimidated blacks and reinforced among whites the belief that blacks were sub-human, not worthy of basic rights. All his efforts to educate and guide reformers were threatened by the terror that lynching spread among the people he was trying to help.

In his campaign against lynching Du Bois further expanded on his belief that the Federal government should intervene on a local level to protect blacks. In the Atlanta conferences he articulated an expanded role for the state in the affairs of the nation and he never forgot that idea. His belief in the potential power of the Federal government was illustrated by the NAACP's effort to convince congress to pass anti-lynching legislation.<sup>53</sup> Progressive reformers Jane Addams and Florence Kelley had previously managed to convince the Federal government to pass legislation restricting child labour. Moreover, these famous settlement workers were friends of Du Bois, had attended the Atlanta conferences, and were board members in the NAACP.<sup>54</sup> Soon, the NAACP journal, The

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<sup>52</sup> For details on the Hose lynching see W. Fitzhugh Brundage, Lynching in the New South, pp.82-84.

<sup>53</sup> For a detailed account of the N.A.A.C.P.'s efforts to lobby the federal government to pass anti-lynching legislation please see Robert L. Zangrando, The N.A.A.C.P. Crusade Against Lynching. Philadelphia: Temple University, 1980.

<sup>54</sup> Allen F. Davis, Spearheads for Reform, pp.96-102, 124-127.

Crisis, which Du Bois edited, addressed the need for government involvement directly. Most notably, Du Bois encouraged the Federal government to pass legislation against lynching.

Clearly, through the Atlanta conferences Du Bois mobilised sociology to attack many of the racist notions that prevailed in society. He used his research to try to correct the belief in society that blacks were physically, intellectually, and morally inferior to whites. Du Bois believed that greed was a primary cause of white prejudice toward African-Americans. Over his years at Atlanta University, Du Bois began to question the self-help plan that he had favoured just a few years before. He came to believe that because of the prejudice and poverty they had endured, African-Americans deserved more intervention by various levels of government. For the benefit of the nation, Du Bois felt the Federal Government should fund and coordinate the reform of race relations in America.

### ***Conclusion***

Susan P. Wharton, Charles Harrison, and Samuel Lindsay McCune hired W.E. B Du Bois to conduct a study of Philadelphia's black community. They believed that the black population of the city was directly responsible for the crime and squalor evident in Philadelphia. They hoped that if a black man conducted the study it would be viewed by reformers as an objective source of information. Du Bois clearly possessed the qualifications to conduct the study, but he did not have the personality to replicate the views his employers sought.

Du Bois saw his employment with the University of Pennsylvania as a tremendous opportunity to apply sociology to America's race problem. Initially, he tried to write an objective study of Philadelphia's blacks which would inform reformers about the positive character of the black community. As the project progressed, however, his own views and opinions became more evident and the piece ceased to be objective in the eyes of its sponsors. "Objectivity," apparently was a matter of one's taste.

Clearly, Du Bois did not believe that blacks were an inferior race, forever banished by heredity to the lowest levels of society. With a comprehensive effort from within the community, blacks could improve themselves and their community. Du Bois understood the evolutionary theory popular during the period, but rejected its racist application. Unlike some who used evolutionary ideas in a discriminatory way, Du Bois put much stock in environmental influences on racial development. These beliefs led to the more radical elements of developing ideas on reform initially appearing in The Philadelphia

Negro and, later, in the Atlanta Conference studies.

In The Philadelphia Negro, Du Bois argued that the social environment in which blacks existed comprised the most important factor keeping them from moving forward in American society. He investigated the causes of black poverty and assigned responsibility to both blacks and whites. Slavery had created an artificial environment that stripped blacks of the ability to move ahead. The end of the peculiar institution found slaves without necessary capital or training, suddenly released into a racist society that embraced a laissez-faire economic system. Although proud of black accomplishments just a few decades removed from slavery, Du Bois noted that it was always most difficult for the poorest in society to advance. Du Bois argued that white prejudice prevented black advancement by limiting employment opportunities. Despite their best efforts, blacks were stuck in poor-paying, and dangerous manual jobs, and rarely were they promoted to positions of responsibility. Whites ignored black businesses, as owners were forced to cater to their own people, society's poorest. Along with the economic difficulties that white prejudice caused, Du Bois found the social limitations on blacks nearly as difficult to stomach. He did his research during a period in which segregation was common, and blacks were painted as a dangerous threat to white America. Academics and physicians popularized the belief that blacks were an inferior race. The widespread belief in white superiority throughout society led to lynching, segregation, and forced migration. While blacks saw governments enact legislation limiting their rights, they were also terrorized by the Ku Klux Klan and lynch mobs. A large part of Du Bois's early career focused upon educating whites on the promise of the black community. He worked to highlight the

accomplishments of blacks, and claimed that they were no more likely to be a criminal element than would be any other impoverished minority. Du Bois scolded whites for their hostility toward interracial relationships, dismissing their claims that such couplings were becoming more common and threatened racial stock. To change society, white reformers and successful blacks had to cooperate and help the less fortunate in society. The fact that Du Bois assigned responsibility to whites and declared the potential equality of the races made him a radical figure.

Although his contract with the University of Pennsylvania ended, his construction of an elaborate plan for reform continued. Horace Bumstead offered Du Bois the opportunity to continue his work at the University of Atlanta. Du Bois took charge of a series of annual studies and conferences. The conferences became a forum for many reformers with attitudes similar to those of Du Bois. Like The Philadelphia Negro, the first few conferences were somewhat traditional in tone, as Du Bois emphasized the need for self-help within the black community. He honestly believed that through education, political activity, economic cooperation, and moral uplift the race would eventually prove its equality. For this to occur, Du Bois concluded, whites had to remove the social restrictions they imposed on blacks. With each passing year, Du Bois became bolder in his rejection of racist theories and prejudicial social practices.

The evolution of the reform plan that Du Bois proposed began immediately after he took over the Atlanta conferences. Although he continued to encourage a community self-help philosophy, Du Bois became less willing to assign responsibility to blacks for their social situation. In The Philadelphia Negro, Du Bois admonished blacks for their

lack of moral strength. He abandoned this view in the first two Atlanta conferences. Instead, he claimed that the lasting impact of slavery combined with white employment prejudice forced blacks into poverty. Obviously, Du Bois rejected the Gospel of Wealth argument that poverty indicated moral weakness. White prejudice, which had played a more peripheral role in The Philadelphia Negro, now struck Du Bois as the root cause of black misery. He claimed that white prejudice convinced blacks that they were inferior, limiting their motivation to work for racial improvement.

During the first two conferences Du Bois also emphasized the need for economic cooperation. He felt that individually blacks lacked sufficient capital to start successful businesses. He understood the need for capital in the laissez-faire system America embraced. While he rejected the concept that the poor were being punished for their moral weakness, he understood that Americans were impressed by wealth. The emphasis that Du Bois placed on the acquisition of capital made him different from his contemporary rival, Booker T. Washington. Washington emphasized a program that was more agricultural in nature and was designed to ease the tensions between Southern whites and blacks. Du Bois believed that this program was ill suited to the urban situations that increasing numbers of blacks faced.

Education proved the most important component of Du Bois' reform plan. In the first conference, he discussed the benefits of college education. He found that blacks often had the ability and determination to be successful at the post-secondary level. College graduates, he argued, found more frequent and better job opportunities. These conclusions challenged Washington, who felt that educational efforts were better spent on

programs that taught basic agricultural or industrial skills. Du Bois criticized the curriculum of industrial schools, noting that they did little to prepare the students for the modern industrial workplace. He felt that the brightest among the black community, “the talented tenth,” should have access to the highest levels of education. He believed that if educated properly, these blacks could lead the race forward. With a heightened level of black education, political participation would become more important to reform efforts. Du Bois encouraged blacks to form a voting block, which he felt would win them concessions from white politicians seeking election. Washington felt that pursuit of political power incited white hostility, particularly in the South, so he abandoned any public demands for equal political rights.

The fourth conference that Du Bois led focused on the common school system and saw him make a sweeping change in his reform program. Despite the hard work of educators, the common school system did not adequately educate black students. African-Americans, with the help of a few white philanthropists, were responsible for funding their whole system in some states. Du Bois was insulted by the fact that whites had contributed so little to black, common- school education. To improve society Du Bois felt that whites had to help in the uplifting of the black community. The most appropriate way for whites to help was to provide dependable state and federal funding for a black common school system. He also advocated municipal taxation and legislative programs as helpful.

In The Philadelphia Negro and the early Atlanta conferences, Du Bois pleaded with church authorities to become more involved in practical reform efforts. Over time he became disillusioned with this strategy and the churches themselves. Churches, he

claimed, were hampered by uneducated clergy members and inconsistent reform efforts. A disappointed Du Bois decided that churches should stick to promoting moral reform. They might play an important role in this area despite their limitations in more practical reform efforts. Du Bois' arguments for increased government funding for education and the limits on church involvement indicated his evolving views on self-help. Du Bois never completely abandoned the self-help philosophy, but he realized its limitations. He recognized that the black community needed self-help ideals to maintain their motivation. Unfortunately, because of their small scale and uncoordinated nature, the various self-help programs servicing the community failed to confront larger questions. Du Bois noted that the problems facing the black community were large-scale problems of economics, attitude, and environment. This led to calls for state involvement, and then the establishment of the N.A.A.C.P. The first few years of the N.A.A.C.P.'s existence were spent lobbying the Federal government on various issues.

Du Bois's critique became most evident in two of his later conferences, one on Negro Crime, and the other on the Health and Physique of Negro Americans. In these two studies Du Bois asserted that blacks were equal in potential to whites, and were only being held back by their negative social environment. In the Health and Physique of Negro Americans, Du Bois cited numerous authorities who argued against the inferiority of blacks. He attacked the academic and professional thinking behind America's racist attitudes by attributing black difficulties to the social environment rather than heredity. Du Bois also attacked American materialism, suggesting that wealth did not yield a fair measurement of evolution or morality, and that through their greed and cruel treatment of

blacks whites could be considered the inferior race.

Obviously Du Bois took seriously his role as the brains of the reform movement. Although he did not manage to overhaul the attitudes of the American racial landscape, he did attract the attention of many prominent reformers. With each of his projects, Du Bois slowly gained a greater audience, and his ability grew to motivate and influence other reformers. Although The Philadelphia Negro had few readers, Du Bois soon found himself editing the official publication of the N.A.A.C.P., The Crisis, the most widely circulated black publication in America. He helped to transform the civil rights movement from following accommodationist, self-help programs, to demanding a more equal position. Most importantly, he gave black Americans an intellectual leader who worked to convince both races that blacks were not inferior. He believed that blacks had a future in America. By the end of his work with the Atlanta Conferences, Du Bois felt certain that blacks could succeed in America. For this success to occur, however, the Federal Government would have to assist the reform effort. Unfortunately, this assistance lay several decades in the future.

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