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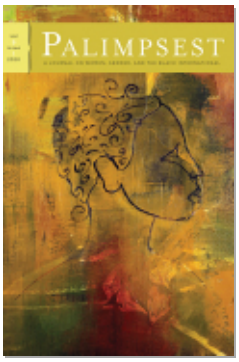

Nneka D. Dennie

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ESSAYS

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Nneka D. Dennie

W. E. B. Du Bois begins and ends his 1903 essay "The Talented Tenth" with a single statement: "The Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men."[1] He continues, "The college-bred Negro . . . is, as he ought to be, the group leader, the man who sets the ideals of the community where he lives, directs its thoughts and heads its social movements."[2] These were not simply rhetorical claims, but gendered declarations of Du Bois's conceptualization of race leadership and racial progress. Similar statements abound throughout his early work, particularly in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). As Du Bois discusses the possibility of black people and white people living together in a peaceful and just society, he contends that "it will demand broad-minded, upright men, both white and black, and in its final accomplishment American civilization will triumph."[3] In addition to portraying black men as responsible for determining the fate of the race, Du Bois normalizes "the Negro" as a masculine figure. He does not do so in a purely symbolic sense, but rather in order to present a model of African American education, self-consciousness, and leadership that revolves around black men. Because Du Bois universalizes African Americans as predominantly male, he is unable to analyze the nuanced lived experiences of black women, and he cannot fully theorize how their oppression is distinct from that of black men. It is evident from the rhetoric and content of Du Bois's works that earlier in his career, he constructed a masculinist framework for overcoming racism.[4] Du Bois's later writings, however, offer black male feminist interpretations of racism and sexism.

In "The Damnation of Women," a chapter from *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil*, Du Bois exemplifies his ability to use intersectional approaches to critique an oppression that is not his own. He establishes that "despite the noisier and more spectacular advance of [his] brothers, [he] instinctively feel[s] and know[s] that it is the five million women of [his] race who really count."[5] Du Bois provides a detailed analysis of the inequalities between black women, white women, and black men. He envisions a world where

> we will pay women what they earn and insist on their working and earning it; we will allow those persons to vote who know enough to vote, whether they be black or female, white or male; and we will ward race suicide, not by further burdening the over-burdened, but by honoring motherhood, even when the sneaking father shirks his duty.[6]

In "The Damnation of Women," Du Bois readily discusses black women and the connections between racial and gendered oppressions. By 1920, Du Bois's positions on gender had greatly shifted. Therefore, this article describes how and why Du Bois's theorizing of black women's oppression transformed between 1903 and 1920.

Although Du Bois authored a significant body of work, few studies consider how Du Bois's feminism evolved over time. David Levering Lewis's biographies examine the trajectory of Du Bois's political thought throughout his career, but they do not devote significant attention to the changing manifestations of Du Bois's gender-progressive thought.[7] While scholars including Joy James and Farah Jasmine Griffin have debated the merits of Du Bois's feminism, many base their arguments on either *The Souls of Black Folk* or "The Damnation of Women."[8] An overemphasis on these two texts obscures the ways in which Du Bois's analyses of race and gender changed over time. Susan Gillman and Alys Weinbaum's edited volume, *Next to the Color Line: Gender, Sexuality, and W. E. B. Du Bois*, offers a variety of perspectives on Du Bois's discussions of race and gender at different points in time.[9] However, literature on Du Bois has yet to explore how his understanding of the injustices faced by black women gradually progressed. Therefore, I suggest that it is necessary to consider the trajectory of Du Bois's political thought rather than strictly focusing on how he discusses, or fails to discuss, black women's oppression at isolated points in time.

First, I argue that Du Bois's writings from the early 1900s largely focus on black women's representation and their social marginalization, while his work from the late 1910s onward also critiques the structural elements of black women's oppression, particularly black women's economic exploitation and lack of political rights. Second, I contend that black women's writing and activism at the turn of the twentieth century radicalized Du Bois and motivated

him to embrace an incipient form of black male feminism. African American women had already begun to critique their labor conditions and political disfranchisement as early as the nineteenth century, as can be seen from an 1881 strike organized by the Washerwomen's Association of Atlanta, as well as the activism of black women suffragists like Mary Ann Shadd Cary and Frances Harper. At the turn of the century, *The Souls of Black Folk* demonstrated that Du Bois understood African American women's position in society to be a function of their labor; however, at this point in time, he did not demonstrate familiarity with either the breadth of black women's activism or their theorizing on behalf of themselves. It was not until the following decade that Du Bois's published works would offer thorough analyses of black women's structural oppression. By examining Du Bois's ideological growth from 1903 to 1920, it will be possible to gauge the impact that black women's writing and activism had on their contemporaries and on the development of black political thought. At times directly and at other times less so, Du Bois's engagements with the work of black women writers and activists spurred him to adopt black male feminist positions. An examination of how Du Bois silenced, echoed, or defended black women illuminates how they shaped the course of his intellectual and political transformations. Above all, it demonstrates that black women's gendered perspectives on racial oppression and strategies for racial uplift had begun to move from the periphery to the center of black liberation ideologies as early as 1920.

In "A Black Man's Place in Feminist Criticism," Michael Awkward describes feminism as "an ideology and reading strategy" and argues that men can embrace a series of "'political, theoretical [and, more generally, interpretive] strategies which . . . can assist in a movement toward actualizing the goals of feminism."[10] Awkward frames feminism as an undefined set of analytical strategies and acts that advance feminist goals, which allows him to create the epistemological space for black men to practice feminism. In so doing, he offers a paradigm through which scholars may read Du Bois as a black male feminist theorist. Awkward stated in 1995: "There is not yet agreement as to what constitutes an identifiably male feminist act of criticism or about the usefulness of such acts for the general advancement of the feminist project."[11] More than two decades later, his words continue to ring true, as scholars have not yet offered a cohesive definition of black male feminism. Literary critic David Ikard uses the term "black male feminist criticism" to describe his work, and others, such as Samuel Adu-Poku and David M. Jones, self-identify as black male feminists.[12] Although scholars discuss black male feminism, they have not fully theorized its meaning. There remains significant room for further clarification of the term.

I use the term *black male feminism* to describe the practices and ideologies that black men employ to jointly challenge racism and sexism. I do not

use the language of "maleness" in order to refer to biological categories nor to be transexclusionary, but because this research is in conversation with a larger body of scholarship that uses the language of *black male feminism*.[13] In keeping with scholars such as Michael Awkward and Luke Charles Harris, I acknowledge that black male feminism is theoretically aligned with black feminism and womanism but remains distinct due to black men's positionality in patriarchal systems.[14] Furthermore, I differentiate between *black male feminism* and *black feminism* because I interpret black male feminism as a relatively inchoate body of thought, whereas black feminist thinkers, including Patricia Hill Collins, Audre Lorde, and more, have created an extensive body of work around black feminist theory, politics, and activism. I also distinguish between the meanings of *black male feminism* and *feminism* at the turn of the twentieth century. I conceptualize Du Bois's black male feminism outside of the purview of first-wave feminism; black male feminism does not allude to feminist mobilization for suffrage, birth control, or social reform. Instead, it broadly refers to black men's attempts to advocate for black women's rights and freedom by simultaneously critiquing racism and sexism. I describe Du Bois as a black male feminist due to the wide applicability of the term and due to the shift that takes place in his work from 1903 to 1920.

Contextualizing Du Boisian Thought

This research does not seek to answer the question of whether Du Bois is a feminist; rather, it examines how his analyses of race and gender evolve from 1903 to 1920. However, scholars have debated the merits of Du Bois's feminism. Some, including Lawrie Balfour, Farah Jasmine Griffin, and Gary Lemons, contend that Du Bois was a progressive, feminist thinker who helped lay the foundation for discourse on women's rights.[15] While they acknowledge that Du Bois's writings are dominated by male-centric language, they deny that Du Bois had any sexist leanings that were uncharacteristic of his time period. Others, including Joy James and Hazel Carby, claim that Du Bois's masculinist language in his foundational works and his construction of black women in "The Damnation of Women" undermined the essay's potential to promote equality among black men and women, which complicates his feminism.[16] Ultimately, they determine that Du Bois cannot be considered a feminist.

Balfour, Griffin, Carby, and James agree that Du Bois's feminism is conflicted and contradictory. However, they depart from each other as they attempt to determine how significant those contradictions are and whether they impinge upon Du Bois's feminism. Rather than classifying Du Bois as feminist or antifeminist, I examine the shift that takes place in his political discourse from 1903 to 1920. In his early writings, Du Bois examines the social

consequences of black women's labor without also considering how their work perpetuates their poverty. Although Du Bois makes feminist arguments in some of his later works, he is blind to the relationship between race, gender, and black women's oppression until decades after certain nineteenth-century black women, including Sojourner Truth and Maria Stewart, make similar claims. Therefore, the evolution of Du Bois's politics must be understood within the context of black women's labor, writing, and activism during the Jim Crow era. It is against this backdrop that we may more fully comprehend the ideological shift that takes place in his work.

While black women have always offered analyses of their status as raced and gendered subjects, as the nineteenth century progressed, black women continually refined their analyses of their particular standing as both black and women. As such, their activism gradually focused more specifically upon black women, although their work had universal implications. Nineteenth-century black women's activism first centered on abolition; then on African American or women's rights; and, finally, on black women's struggles for racial, gender, and class equality. As black women increasingly prioritized their own liberation, they continued to work alongside black men and white women to dismantle the systems of oppression that also affected their lives. These shifts ultimately informed Du Bois's political thought.

As Gayle Tate explains in *Unknown Tongues: Black Women's Political Activism in the Antebellum Era, 1830–1860*, different stages of black women's activism existed within the abolitionist movement. The first occurred within slavery as black women used their "labor will," or agency over their labor, in order to transform plantations into sites of resistance.[17] Tate explores how enslaved women's attempts to control their labor "shift[ed] the spectrum of resistance in the slave community from episodic acts of defiance and rebellions to a protracted struggle to destabilize the slave system."[18] She then describes the second stage as the "organizational stage of development" in which black women began to participate in broad antislavery networks.[19] This work put black women in contact with black men and white women activists with whom they would later continue to mobilize.

In the mid-to-late nineteenth century, black women's activism was tied to their struggles for full inclusion in movements for black and women's rights. During Reconstruction, black men and white women alike engaged in intense political mobilization to secure various rights—most notably, the right to vote. Black women supported both causes but remained marginalized in both movements. As a result, discourse that was simultaneously antiracist and antisexist began to take a more definitive shape during the mid-to-late nineteenth century, as activists and intellectuals theorized their positions as both black and women. Over the course of the nineteenth century, public speaking and writing were important strategies for black women to theorize

and resist their oppression. As Carla L. Peterson establishes in *"Doers of the Word": African-American Women Speakers and Writers of the North (1830–1880)*, African American women's public writing and speaking "differed in significant ways from that of black men in [their] ability to imagine cultural possibilities specifically engendered by women's space and women's work."[20] These particular mediums offered black women an avenue for addressing their racial and gendered oppression alongside each other, which was at times a difficult task within political spaces that focused primarily on either civil rights or women's rights. Figures such Mary Church Terrell, Anna Julia Cooper, Ida B. Wells, Jessie Fauset, and Nannie H. Burroughs wrote extensively about racism and sexism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Their work exemplifies the expansion of black women's writing toward the turn of the century.

Black women's activism on behalf of themselves also became more pronounced during the late nineteenth century due to the growth of autonomous cultural and political spaces for black women. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, for example, highlights how black churchwomen had "separatist leanings" even though they continued to participate in interracial activism.[21] Deborah Gray White similarly notes the significance of black women's organizations, such as the National Association of Colored Women (NACW).[22] The NACW emerged in 1896 as educated and middle-class black women sought to combat derogatory images of African American women while also empowering black communities. The black women's club movement gained traction throughout the early twentieth century as black women's clubs advocated for suffrage and performed a broad range of community work, such as creating employment agencies and establishing orphanages. Thus, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, black women's organizations diverged from those of black men and white women, although they did not fully abandon interracial and coed activism.

Given that Du Bois's networks were largely composed of women who increasingly mobilized around their political and economic statuses in the United States and not simply their social marginalization, it is likely that his personal and professional relationships with black and white women activists are responsible for his later shift toward analyzing the political and economic aspects of women's oppression. *The Souls of Black Folk* demonstrates that as of 1903, black women's writing and activism had not yet radicalized Du Bois. However, the immense volume of black women's political activity prior to Du Bois's publication of "The Damnation of Women" in 1920 provided an impetus for Du Bois's move toward black male feminism. By examining how the evolution of Du Boisian thought occurred, it will be possible to uncover the contributions of the black women who radicalized Du Bois and, by extension, shaped the direction of early black political thought.

Paternalism and the Representation of Black Women

In *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois deployed a rhetorical and conceptual framework of liberation that was fundamentally masculine. This work stands as a powerful articulation of Du Bois's theories for racial progress. However, it is remarkably silent on the gendered dimensions of black women's experiences. Black women do not appear as agents in this text, but as domestic figures whose primary functions are to support black men and black families. When Du Bois discusses black women, he does not address structural oppression, but rather, focuses on their representation by discussing black women's social status, morality, and respectability.

As Barbara McCaskill explains in "Anna Julia Cooper, Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins, and the African American Feminization of Du Bois's Discourse," Du Bois's limited views of black women inhibit his ability to imagine African American women as race leaders. Du Bois adopts a paternalistic stance as he simultaneously admires and pities black womanhood. The black women characters he presents in *The Souls of Black Folk* are predominantly struggling, overburdened, physically attractive women who are nevertheless able to support black men. McCaskill notes, "Paradoxically, African-American men were impressed into a patriarchy that disclaimed women's equality to men in the political and professional spheres while simultaneously mythologizing this same sisterhood's moral and domestic superiority over their brothers."[23] Du Bois's descriptions of black women unintentionally reinscribed patriarchal ideals as he sought racial equality.

To Du Bois, black women held moral power over men and thrived in the domestic sphere.[24] Despite his later adoption of feminist principles, in *The Souls of Black Folk*, there exists little room for black women to exist unless they adhere to Du Bois's narrow conception of black womanhood. Du Bois primarily depicted black women as gentle, respectable, and fragile individuals. In light of black women's labor and hypersexualization at the turn of the twentieth century, it was revolutionary for Du Bois to emphasize black women's delicacy. However, to restrict black women to such standards remains problematic; it neglects black women's agency and their freedom to express their femininity as they so desire. Du Bois limits his portrayals of African American women to those who exist solely in the domestic sphere and provide self-sacrificial moral support to their families. As such, his theories for racial progress fail to address the needs of women who do not embody the ideals that he sets forth, like working-class women, unmarried women, and women who are not mothers.

Throughout *The Souls of Black Folk*, black women are valuable for their ability to manage stable households and reassure men of their capabilities. Du Bois admires women for their financial and emotional contributions to black families, but is preoccupied with their strength rather than the economic

inequalities that they face. Josie, a tragic character in a chapter titled "Of the Meaning of Progress," provides evidence of this and of Du Bois's portrayal of black women as overworked and distressed. In "Of the Meaning of Progress," Du Bois searches for work as a teacher and encounters a family with whom he develops a close bond. He describes the family's eldest daughter, Josie, as "the centre of the family" and explains that she had "the shadow of an unconscious moral heroism that would unwillingly give all of life to make life broader, deeper, and fuller for her and hers."[25] Despite Josie's desire for a formal education, her familial responsibilities to her parents and nine siblings eventually take precedence. A decade after Du Bois's departure from the town, he returns and discovers that Josie is dead. He explains that "Josie shivered and worked on, with the vision of schooldays all fled, with a face wan and tired,—worked until, on a summer's day, some one [*sic*] married another; then Josie crept to her mother like a hurt child, and slept—and sleeps."[26]

McCaskill explains that Josie, due to her domestic labor and eventual death, represents black women's failures; the "conditions Josie shares with many African American women of 1903—malnutrition, undereducation, impoverishment, prejudice—lead to her death and the disintegration of her family."[27] In Du Bois's estimation, the family, and by extension the race, suffers without Josie's domestic guidance. Du Bois locates women as important actors in the home for their ability to support and maintain families, but does not acknowledge their ability to perform meaningful work outside of the private sphere. "Of the Meaning of Progress" reminds readers that despite women's intellect and morality, they remain vulnerable to physical threats that impinge upon their ability to foster racial progress. Du Bois encouraged black men to combat black women's oppression by protecting them from the kinds of harm that Josie experiences, which would shield them from racism but also have the unintended consequence of reinforcing paternalistic, patriarchal ideals.

Farah Jasmine Griffin elaborates on the centrality of protection to Du Boisian thought in "Black Feminists and Du Bois: Respectability, Protection, and Beyond." According to Griffin, Du Bois encourages black men to protect black women in order to "restor[e] a sense of masculinity to black men while granting black women at least one of the privileges of femininity."[28] Du Bois's emphasis on protecting black women likely stems from a long history of racially motivated sexual assaults against them. To protect black women's virtue would then accomplish both of the aforementioned goals that Griffin identified. While Du Bois's focus on protecting black women is well intentioned, it unintentionally undermines black women's agency by encouraging their dependence on men and by assuming black women's victimization. Du Bois advocates for black men to protect black women in both his published writing and his personal correspondence. In so doing, he not only attempted to preserve black women's virtue but also attempted to promote positive representations of black women, as is exemplified by a pair of letters written in 1906.

On April 14, 1906, Du Bois wrote a letter to the editor of the *Congregationalist and Christian World* magazine. It demands an apology from the editor for publishing an article titled "Not Pity, but Respect," which was written by a black minister named Thomas N. Baker. The article vilified black women who were delegates to a Student Volunteer Movement convention. Du Bois chastises Baker for writing an incendiary critique of middle/upper-class black women and criticizes the magazine for making Baker's article public. Although Du Bois acknowledges the editor's constitutional right to freedom of the press, he maintains that the magazine is not obligated to publish any work that is "indecent." Du Bois then asserts that any writing that suggests that black women activists are comparable to "public prostitutes is too dirty to be allowed in any paper which calls itself religious."[29] The letter concludes as Du Bois reprimands the editor for exploiting black writers by publishing derogatory remarks simply for the sake of including work by African Americans.

Du Bois's letter implies that black men must be responsible for protecting black women and standing in solidarity with them; he consistently seeks to defend black women from allegations of indecency. Du Bois attempts to preserve black women's respectability by asserting that "educated Christian Negro women" are "as chaste and decent as the wives, sisters and daughters of the editors of the Congregationalist."[30] In likening educated black women to the relatives of the editors of a predominantly white magazine, Du Bois argues that black and white women are equals, and he suggests that class similarities are more salient than racial differences between black and white women. However, as the letter discusses black women's morality and their social status, it only pertains to elite, educated women; it is inattentive to the implications of Baker's article for laboring women. As Du Bois critiques the portrayal of middle/upper-class black women, he does not address other elements of black women's oppression, such as their economic exploitation and their subordination to black men. Similarly to "The Damnation of Women," this letter finds that black women's damnation lies in their inability to be deemed respectable, delicate, and worthy of the same admiration as white women. Yet unlike his 1920 essay, the letter demonstrates that as of 1906, Du Bois had not yet articulated how racism affected black women's political or economic standing. His analyses of race and gender were limited to black women's representation and their need for protection. Du Bois attempted to address black women's social marginalization, but in so doing, he adopted paternalistic attitudes toward black women.

On the same day that Du Bois authored his letter to the editors of the *Congregationalist*, he also wrote directly to Thomas N. Baker regarding the article that was published one week prior. Du Bois informs Baker that he has typically been interested in and respected his writings thus far and always believed that they shared a common goal. He states that although he had hoped to collaborate with Baker in the future, he was shocked by Baker's recent article

in the *Congregationalist*. Du Bois expresses his displeasure at "the vicious and wanton attack which [Baker] made on educated Negro womanhood" and goes on to argue that Baker has disgraced the women of his own race.[31] He describes the article as "cowardly andd [*sic*] shameless" for its insults to educated black women.[32] Du Bois acknowledges that this letter will have little impact on Baker's views but nevertheless writes to express his outrage.

This piece suggests that the issue of race and representation is critically important to Du Bois. He criticizes Baker for "publicly malign[ing]" black women; Du Bois's emphasis on the public nature of Baker's critique implies that Du Bois believes there should be a public and private distinction in the discourse that African Americans participate in.[33] Du Bois's writing suggests that black men have a responsibility to publicly defend black women to white Americans, rather than criticizing them as Baker did. Furthermore, it implies that black men must privately defend black women among other African Americans. Similarly to his letter to the *Congregationalist*, Du Bois's letter to Baker demonstrates his understanding of social responsibility while offering a nuanced perspective on how black men's responsibility to black women is manifested in the public and private spheres. From both letters, it becomes evident that Du Bois sees a link between black women's public portrayal, how they are perceived by white people, and their status in the United States. To Du Bois, public images are political; therefore, black men have a duty to protect black women by providing positive representations of them. Only certain women, however, appear worthy of protection in Du Bois's 1903 publication and 1906 letters.

Du Bois's early work focuses on middle/upper-class black women at the expense of working-class women; this omission has implications for black political thought. Du Bois's emphasis on elite black women and their social marginalization influenced his contemporaries and the collective direction of black political thought. His correspondence to Baker illustrates that he was actively in conversation with other African American community leaders about the relationship between race and gender. Du Bois created and participated in networks with other black writers, ministers, activists, and more, at times in order to discuss black women's marginalization. However, in so doing, his focus remained limited to the respectability of educated, middle/upper-class black women. Because his conception of black womanhood only encompassed elite women, Du Bois presented an antisexist strategy that could only be successful for those who required protection.

Du Bois's approach to advancing black women ultimately limited the effectiveness of his efforts to promote racial progress. Unless women expressed their femininity as imagined by Du Bois, his theories were at odds with their lived experiences. Du Bois's early theories were unable to fully advocate for the uplift of black women because they only sought women's protection, not

women's rights or women's empowerment. Black political thinkers and social critics today must avoid replicating Du Bois's oversights as they examine black women's social and political status in the United States. It is inadequate to center antiracist and antisexist work on middle/upper-class black women without accounting for the vast array of conditions that also affect how black women experience race and gender, such as their sexuality and socioeconomic status.

In his early writings, Du Bois did not expect black women to promote racial progress through political activism, but rather, saw them as objects whose protection would foster racial equality. Du Bois's inability to recognize the centrality of black women's empowerment, and not simply their protection, to racial progress was a crucial conceptual failure. However, his early focus on elite black women's representation and social status later shifted as he began to consider how the systematic oppression of black women also denied them political rights and perpetuated their poverty.

Conflicted Contributions

Toward the 1910s, Du Bois gradually began to consider how black women's oppression extended beyond their public portrayal and their social denigration. He continued to discuss black women's representation and social marginalization and began to analyze black women's status in relation to their political and economic standing, not simply their social location. Du Bois also collaborated with a range of women activists throughout the 1910s. However, in so doing, Du Bois offered complex and, at times, contradictory interpretations of women's rights at large, and black women's oppression in particular. During the first decade of the 1900s, Du Bois's support for women's rights was tentative; he likens women's oppression to black oppression, but is hesitant to take action. His correspondence with multiple women highlights his wariness of women's rights activism and points to his preoccupation with black women's morality. The 1910s, though, signal a coming shift in Du Bois's analyses of race and gender. By the late 1910s, Du Bois arrives at a more explicitly political understanding of racism and sexism.

Du Bois's 1906 letters stand in stark contrast to a letter that he wrote to a Miss M. B. Marston less than a year later. Du Bois offers an impassioned defense of black women in the former two letters, but in the latter, Du Bois refuses to collaborate with a woman who asked for his assistance with women's suffrage work. Du Bois corresponded with Marston on March 11, 1907. This letter is a response to an unknown inquiry that Marston made. Judging from Du Bois's response, Marston asked for clarification about one of Du Bois's publications and requested his help with some form of women's suffrage activism. It is unclear from this correspondence whether

Marston is black, white, or of another race, but Du Bois's critique of women who perpetuate racism suggests that Marston is white.

Du Bois begins his letter by establishing that contrary to Marston's belief, he does not simply want racial equality, but wants African Americans to have justice and the right to "develop according to their capacity" or, in other words, to have the opportunity to fulfill their potential.[34] He also states that he hopes African Americans can make greater contributions to society than white Americans have made thus far. Du Bois establishes that he is in favor of women's suffrage and believes in equal rights, regardless of race or gender. He then refuses to aid Marston because "most women in the United States are so narrow that anything I should say would be misinterpreted" and because "the Negro race has suffered more from the antipathy ans [*sic*] narrowness of women both South and North than from any other single source."[35] Du Bois states that he would like to help but that he does not think his assistance will be beneficial.[36]

This correspondence exemplifies the sometimes-contradictory nature of Du Bois's relationship to women's oppression. He simultaneously expresses a willingness to work for women's rights, blames women for racial oppression, and derides women for their "narrowness." Du Bois believes that women should be granted full human rights, but nevertheless holds misogynistic beliefs about how receptive women are to new ideas. He makes sweeping generalizations about women while insulting their intelligence, but states, "I sympathize too with the women in their struggle for emancipation."[37] Du Bois distances himself from sexism by rejecting its systematic denial of rights to women, but replicates sexist logic as he discusses women's "narrowness."

Du Bois's letter to Marston is significant because it suggests that his understanding of black women's oppression is at times conflicted. He identifies women at large as the preeminent oppressors of African Americans, but does not specify which African Americans, nor does he specify whether he refers to black women, white women, or all women. Although Du Bois's critique of racist women suggests that he refers to white women, readers cannot readily discern which women are encompassed by Du Bois's use of the term *women*. As such, it is not clear whether or not he believes that black women also inhibit racial progress by attempting to mobilize around gender issues.

This letter offers a paradigm for understanding the distinction between public and private manifestations of sexism and black male feminism. Despite Du Bois's desire to protect black women and his outward support for women's suffrage, he nevertheless remained subject to patriarchal and paternalistic logic in his private life. Du Bois's contradictory statements suggest that he inadvertently perpetuated sexism in his private life, although he was publicly progressive; similarly, despite their palpable commitment to feminism, black male feminists may unintentionally harbor misogynistic views. As Awkward

states in "A Black Man's Place in Black Feminist Criticism," "a black male feminism cannot contribute to the continuation and expansion of the black feminist project by being so identified against or out of touch with itself as to fail to be both self-reflective and at least minimally self-interested."[38] Du Bois's writings do not demonstrate the self-reflectivity that Awkward describes, but Du Bois's shortcomings in this regard can remind contemporary black male feminists to practice feminism in both public and private spaces.

The tensions between Du Bois's public and private practice of feminism reappear in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP's) pamphlet, "Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889-1918" (1919). While this publication appears to be inspired by Ida B. Wells's writings and activism, it fails to acknowledge her groundbreaking antilynching campaign. Wells is widely credited with introducing the notion that black men were lynched because of false accusations of rape. Her investigative journalism offered sharp critiques of racial violence and white supremacy. Two particular publications, *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases* (1892) and *The Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynching in the United States* (1895), provide an exhaustive catalogue of lynchings throughout the country. In addition to presenting statistics about lynching, these texts condemn southern men for participating in and protecting barbaric lynch mobs and chastise southern women for tolerating and, at times, encouraging the violence that is meted out in their name.

"Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889-1918" echoes Wells's contributions as it explains that although 28.4 percent of the recorded victims of lynchings were accused of sexual assault,

> in a number of cases where Negroes have been lynched for rape and "attacks upon women," the alleged attacks rest upon no stronger evidence than "entering the room of a woman" or brushing against her. In such cases as these latter the victims and their friends have often asserted that there was no intention on the part of the victim to attack a white woman or to commit rape.[39]

The pamphlet offers brief narratives about selected lynchings of black men who were accused of rape, including that of Robert Johnson, who was proved to be innocent following his death.[40] It then provides a variety of charts that list lynching victims, the state where the attack occurred, and the alleged crime for which the victim was lynched.

The NAACP pamphlet is deeply reminiscent of Wells's publications, which often contained detailed records of lynchings and examined the facts of individual cases in order to demonstrate that the victims were falsely accused of rape. Although the first page of the pamphlet lists nine other relevant publications about lynchings, it does not credit Wells. Despite authoring

Southern Horrors and *The Red Record* more than twenty years prior, and despite cofounding the NAACP alongside Du Bois, Wells was entirely written out of its account of the past thirty years of lynchings. The hundred-page pamphlet makes no reference to Wells or to her previous work. Given the scope and longevity of her antilynching campaign, this omission is quite notable. While "Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889-1918" does not identify a primary author, Du Bois exercised considerable influence over the NAACP and its publications. At best, the pamphlet's complete exclusion of Wells can be attributed to a mere oversight. At worst, it was a deliberate slighting that sought to amplify Du Bois's voice over that of his black women contemporaries. Either scenario represents Du Bois's tenuous commitment to crediting black women as activists and intellectuals.

Du Bois's response to Marston and the omission of Wells's work by no means should be taken as conclusive evidence that he refused to cooperate with women writers and activists. There are several instances of Du Bois working with black and white women between 1903 and 1920. His professional networks were quite extensive, and he exchanged correspondence with well-known women, including Alice Dunbar-Nelson and Georgia Douglas Johnson. Black women's political activity both directly and indirectly informed Du Bois's thinking on the relationship between race and gender, as is evidenced by his documented relationships with several black women. While his letter to Marston suggests that he was at times critical of women activists, other evidence suggests that Du Bois actively sought to support black women both publicly and privately. This does not mitigate Du Bois's contentious relationships with other notable black women, such as Ida B. Wells, but reiterates that during the early 1900s, Du Bois struggled to come to terms with how to jointly advance racial and gender equality.

On April 14, 1903, Mary Church Terrell, the first president of the NACW, wrote a letter responding to Du Bois's request for her to speak at the Eighth Atlanta Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems. Terrell proposes to speak about women and asks Du Bois if there is a specific aspect of black womanhood that he would like for her to discuss. Terrell congratulates Du Bois for his success as an author and states that she "shall try to do anything that [he] think[s] is helpful."[41] In Du Bois's undated response, he specifies that he would like for Terrell to speak to a group of women about "The Negro Woman and the Church."[42] Like his early published works, Du Bois's correspondence to Terrell again demonstrates that he is preoccupied with black women's morality. However, his collaboration with Terrell suggests that he also supports black women's political activity to a certain degree.

That Du Bois invited Terrell to speak highlights his willingness to work with prominent black women. As of 1903, Terrell was an established clubwoman who was well-known for her activism on behalf of black women; the

fact that Du Bois asked Terrell to deliver an address suggests a conscious desire to include gendered analyses of race at his conference. Terrell's eagerness to participate and to assist Du Bois indicates that he engaged in productive working relationships with black women. Despite his theoretical and rhetorical inattention to black women's oppression in his early works, Du Bois's correspondence with Terrell and several other black women demonstrates that in the same period, he participated in networks with black women activists and intentionally sought to collaborate with them.

Du Bois's partnership with Terrell extended to his support for her written work. Terrell frequently published essays in the *Crisis*, the NAACP's magazine, under Du Bois's editorship. As early as 1911, Du Bois used the *Crisis* as a vehicle to endorse women's suffrage.[43] In a September 1912 special issue on "Votes for Women," Terrell authored an article titled "The Justice of Woman Suffrage." In this piece, she argues that women's suffrage would advance equality for all. She opens her essay by declaring that "it is difficult to believe that any individual in the United States with one drop of African blood in his veins can oppose woman suffrage."[44] She then explains that for African American men to oppose women's right to vote is for them to adopt a hypocritical position. Terrell asks,

> What could be more absurd than to see one group of human beings who are denied rights which they are trying to secure for themselves working to prevent another group from obtaining the same rights? For the very arguments which are advanced against granting the right of suffrage to women are offered by those who have disfranchised colored men.[45]

She continues to identify the logical inconsistencies between supporting black suffrage while opposing women's suffrage and insinuates that black men who adopt such a stance will risk appearing unintelligent.[46]

According to Terrell, to argue for equal political rights "in the twentieth century in a country whose government was founded upon the eternal principles that all men are created free and equal, that governments get their just powers from the consent of the governed, seems like laying one's self open to the charge of anachronism."[47] She frames women's suffrage not as a radical measure, but as one that would simply ensure that the American republic is "a government of the people, for the people and by the people."[48] Terrell determines that "by an unparalleled exhibition of lexicographical acrobatics the word 'people' has been turned and twisted to mean all who were shrewd and wise enough to have themselves born boys instead of girls, and white instead of black," as she rejects the notion that half of the American people be excluded from the franchise.[49] She concludes by suggesting that any women who do not want suffrage "have been stunted and dwarfed by oppression so long that they cannot comprehend what liberty means and have no desire to enjoy it."[50]

Terrell, in "The Justice of Woman Suffrage," aligns black people's struggle for the vote with women's and argues that women's suffrage would allow the United States to fulfill the promise of its founding principles.

Terrell's work exemplifies the ways in which the *Crisis* served as an outlet to elevate black women writers. A second "Votes for Women" issue appeared in August 1915, which contained essays by prominent black women writers and activists, including Terrell, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Nannie Helen Burroughs, and Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin. As scholars including Valethia Watkins and Nellie McKay have argued, Du Bois often used the *Crisis* as a platform to publish work by and about black women.[51] Although his early writings were often limited in scope to black women's social status, Du Bois was nevertheless instrumental in facilitating discourse on women's rights while he edited the *Crisis*. Du Bois's early theories for racial progress, which did not frame black women as leaders or public figures, were at odds with his praxis of racial uplift, which often involved networks with black women activists.

The working relationship between Du Bois and Terrell continued for several years, and the two grew to become friends. In a January 29, 1917, letter, Terrell states to Du Bois in jest, "for a long, long time I have known that you looked up to me as a guide and exemplar for excellence."[52] She then quips that she did not expect him to have a surgery simply because she previously had one and wishes him a speedy recovery. Terrell and Du Bois had a working relationship that was also a friendship; that their correspondence from 1903 to 1917 ranges from professional to personal suggests that Du Bois's private support for black women is not always discernible in his published work. Du Bois's writings do not reflect the extent of his activism on behalf of black women or his collaborations with black women activists.

Du Bois's early works and personal correspondence demonstrate the complexity of his relationship to feminism. Although Du Bois's published writings promoted positive representations of black women, they simultaneously neglected black women's agency and unintentionally advocated for paternalistic relationships between black men and black women. In his personal correspondence, Du Bois described his commitment to women's rights and sought to build networks with black women, but he nevertheless made some disparaging comments about women in general. While Du Bois understates black women's agency in his published writing, his personal correspondence suggests that he actively endorsed black women's activism. Du Bois's advocacy for black women's political rights and economic independence becomes clearer later in his career.

Support for Women's Rights

During the late 1910s, Du Bois turned his attention more directly toward black women's structural oppression. At this point in his career, Du Bois incorporated

analyses of black women's political standing and economic exploitation into his critiques of their social marginalization. Du Bois's personal correspondence and published work from the late 1910s onward begin to offer explicit support for women's rights.

In addition to publishing black women's essays in favor of suffrage in the *Crisis*, Du Bois authored multiple editorials on the relationship between African American rights and women's right to vote. He also used the magazine as a forum for writers to debate women's right to vote from varying perspectives. Included in a November 1915 issue of the *Crisis* was an essay by Kelly Miller, "The Risk of Woman Suffrage." Miller begins by stating that he is "wholly unable to see wherein the experiment of woman suffrage promises any genuine advantage to social well-being."[53] He continues to explain that by virtue of their sex, women are better suited for child-rearing and other domestic activities, while men are better suited to engage in public affairs. As such, "woman suffrage could not possibly enhance the harmoniousness of this relationship [between men and women], but might seriously jeopardize it."[54] Because "woman is physically weaker than man and is incapable of competing with him in the stern and strenuous activities of public and practical life," Miller opposes woman suffrage.[55] He explains that women do not suffer from being denied the franchise because their fathers and husbands are able to vote on their behalf. While Miller concedes that suffrage may be appropriate for "unfortunate females, such as widows and hopeless spinsters," he maintains that women's suffrage would cause greater damage than good by disrupting domestic relationships between men and women.[56]

Also published in the November 1915 issue of the *Crisis* is an editorial titled "Woman Suffrage" wherein Du Bois seeks to impress upon African American readers the urgency of voting in favor of women's suffrage later that month. His editorial is a direct rebuttal to Miller. After offering a brief summary of Miller's essay, Du Bois asserts that "all these arguments sound today ancient."[57] He summarily dismisses each of Miller's points, explaining that women "in governments, in the professions, in sciences, art and literature and the industries . . . are leading and dominating forces and growing in power as their emancipation grows."[58] He criticizes the notion that women are the weaker sex and therefore ineligible to vote, as well as Miller's suggestion that men vote on behalf of their wives and daughters. Du Bois states unequivocally, "A woman is just as much a thinking, feeling, acting person after marriage as before. She has opinions and she has a right to have them and she has a right to express them."[59] He then uses a rhetorical approach popularized by white suffragists as he likens women's oppression to enslavement and laments that "the soul longest in slavery and still in the most disgusting and indefensible slavery is the soul of womanhood."[60] Du Bois does not differentiate between black and white women in his editorial, nor does he discuss the implications

of suffrage for black women. However, two years later, in an editorial titled "Votes for Women," Du Bois reminds his readers that women's suffrage will enfranchise black women as well as white.

In "Votes for Women," published in the November 1917 issue of the *Crisis*, Du Bois again urges black voters to support women's suffrage. He explains that African American men often do not support women's right to vote for two primary reasons. First, he suggests that black men have not yet "realize[d] the new status of women in industrial and social life."[61] As such, "despite the fact that within his own group women are achieving economic independence even faster than whites, [the black man] . . . looks forward to the time when his wages will be large enough to support his wife and daughters in comparative idleness at home."[62] According to Du Bois, although black women make greater financial gains than white women, black men strive to emulate gender dynamics among white men and women, wherein a patriarch financially supports his wife and daughter, who do not seek work outside of the home. Because black men fail to recognize black women's evolving roles as laborers and citizens, they fail to endorse women's suffrage.

Du Bois then offers a second explanation for why African American voters do not favor women's right to vote. He states,

> [T]he American Negro is particularly bitter at the attitude of many white women: at the naïve assumption that the height of his ambition is to marry them, at their artificially-inspired fear of every dark face, which leads to frightful accusations and suspicions, and at their sometimes insulting behavior toward him in public places.[63]

While Du Bois acknowledges that white women have been at fault for their racist perceptions and treatment of African Americans, he contends that "two wrongs never made a right" and insists that "we cannot punish the insolence of certain classes of American white women or correct their ridiculous fears by denying them their undoubted rights."[64] For Du Bois, white women's racism does not negate their democratic right to vote.

As Du Bois makes the case for women's suffrage, he reminds black men that women are capable of and have an equal right to self-government and declares that "the denial of this right is as unjust as is the denial of the right to vote to American Negroes."[65] Women's disenfranchisement, for Du Bois, is comparable to that of African Americans. He argues that while women will vote "almost unanimously, at first, for every reactionary Negro-hating piece of legislation that is proposed," in time, they will emerge "out of the silly fairy-land to which their Southern male masters beguile them."[66] Du Bois initially homogenizes women voters as white women while he discusses the implications of suffrage and suggests that they will support antiblack policies. However, he

then incorporates black women into his conceptualization of women voters and suggests that "it is going to be more difficult to disfranchise colored women in the South than it was to disfranchise colored men."[67] Du Bois hypothesizes that white men, "as used as they are to the mistreatment of colored women, cannot in the blaze of present publicity physically beat them away from the polls" as they do black men.[68] He further contends that white men wield less economic power over black women than they do over black men. According to Du Bois, "while you can still bribe some pauperized Negro laborers with a few dollars at election time, you cannot bribe Negro women."[69] Because white men are less able to exert their influence over black women, women's suffrage would empower African Americans at large.

Although the editorial does not discuss at length the impact that black women voters would have on American democracy, Du Bois implies that women's suffrage will ultimately benefit black communities by providing more African Americans with the right to vote. He also maintains that by supporting women's suffrage, black men would be able to contribute to the furthering of American civilization. He concludes that "it is only in such broad-minded willingness to do justice to all, even to his own temporary hurt, that the black man can prove his right not only to share, but to help direct modern culture."[70] For Du Bois, supporting women's suffrage would not only advance equal rights for all but would also affirm black men's roles in society as worthy and pioneering American citizens.

Du Bois's personal correspondence in the late 1910s, as well as his public work, reflects his support for women's rights. On July 31, 1917, Du Bois wrote a letter on behalf of Mabel E. Brown. Written slightly over a decade after his correspondence regarding T. N. Baker's article in the *Congregationalist and Christian World* magazine, and three years prior to the publication of "The Damnation of Women," the letter, addressed to "To Whom It May Concern," attempts to introduce Brown to potential collaborators. Du Bois states that he believes equally in the necessity of voting rights for African Americans and for women and then asserts that "either without the other would be a contradiction, and both are essential to democracy."[71] Du Bois then praises Brown for her suffrage work. The letter, while short, is quite telling. It indicates that by the late 1910s, Du Bois did not only advocate for civil rights for African Americans but was also active in women's rights networks. That Du Bois was reputable enough among women's suffragists to endorse a woman who sought to build working relationships suggests that Du Bois was immersed in the struggle for women's rights and challenged women's structural oppression, both publicly and privately, later in his career.

Du Bois's use of the *Crisis* as a vehicle to spur debate on and vocalize his support for women's suffrage, as well as his 1917 letter, signal a significant shift in Du Bois's relationship to feminism. His willingness to publish extensively on women's suffrage and his ability to introduce an aspiring suffragist

to other activists demonstrates that he was a strong proponent of women's rights. Between 1903 and 1917, Du Bois refined his understanding of women's rights. His 1903 published writings advocated for black men to protect black women, his 1906 letters focused primarily upon women's social status, and his 1907 letter offered a cursory endorsement of women's rights. During this same period, however, he fostered working relationships with Mary Church Terrell and various women suffragists. The November 1915 and November 1917 issues of the *Crisis*, in addition to Du Bois's letter on behalf of Brown, indicate that by the late 1910s, Du Bois was invested in understanding women's political status and conferring equal rights to women.

Du Bois's 1920 essay, "The Damnation of Women," represents the culmination of nearly two decades of Du Bois becoming more attentive to black women's experiences. By 1920, Du Bois had shifted away from only examining black women's representation and their social standing to also considering the political and economic elements of their oppression. In "The Damnation of Women," Du Bois establishes a connection between white men's perception of black women and black women's economic standing. He consistently demands women's economic independence, and he describes black women's social marginalization as one of the main sources of their poverty. This essay also calls for black women's right to vote and for their ability to enter the public sphere.

In "The Damnation of Women," Du Bois argues that black women's economic exploitation has deteriorated black womanhood. He explains that as racism denies black men access to economic opportunities, African American women are forced to seek work outside of the home. To Du Bois, black women's labor prevents them from embodying the highest ideals of womanhood; labor jeopardizes black women's "delicate sense of beauty and striving for self-realization" while destroying black families.[72] Du Bois explains that African American women cannot fully experience motherhood or be delicate if they must financially support their families. Ultimately, he determines that the true damnation of women is that "only at the sacrifice of intelligence and the chance to do their best work can the majority of modern women bear children."[73] Du Bois bemoans black women's status because their labor prevents them from meeting traditional, Eurocentric standards of femininity.

To Du Bois, black women's damnation also lies in their inability to receive the benefits of womanhood that white women receive. He posits that their oppression is intimately connected to white men's devaluation of black women, which greatly contrasts with their admiration and protection of white women. Du Bois contends that African American women have been degraded by slavery and by white men's sexualization of the black female body.[74] However, he also argues that "the defective eyesight of the white world rejects black women as beauties."[75] Du Bois further explains, "black women alone, as a group . . . are asked to be no more beautiful than God made them, but they are asked to be

efficient, to be strong, fertile, muscled, and able to work."[76] Du Bois suggests that even though white men frequently sexually assaulted black women during slavery, white men deny black women's beauty in an attempt to justify their labor. Therefore, he indirectly attributes black women's economic exploitation to white men's perception of their beauty, or lack thereof, in addition to racism and sexism.

In "The Damnation of Women," Du Bois conceptualizes individual black women's economic independence as fundamental to the project of collective racial uplift. As such, he determines that "we cannot abolish the new economic freedom of women."[77] By seeking work outside of the home and accessing a broader range of labor opportunities, "[black] women are passing through, not only a moral, but an economic revolution."[78] Black women's labor, to Du Bois, represents "the up-working of new revolutionary ideals, which must in time have vast influence on the thought and action of this land."[79] Ultimately, he calls for women's economic independence and for their participation in public affairs.

Despite its impassioned advocacy for black women's political rights and economic opportunities, "The Damnation of Women" is not without fault, as it deliberately silenced one of Du Bois's black woman contemporaries. In 1892, Anna Julia Cooper published *A Voice from the South*, which prefigured *The Souls of Black Folk* and "The Damnation of Women" in its demands for racial equality and its intersectional analyses of black women's oppression. Du Bois was undoubtedly familiar with Cooper's work and quotes her at length in "The Damnation of Women." While the essay references other women by name, it anonymizes Cooper's contributions as it states,

> To no modern race does its women mean so much as to the Negro nor come so near to the fulfilment of its meaning. As one of our women writes, "Only the black woman can say 'when and where I enter, in the quiet, undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there the whole Negro race enters with me.'"[80]

Here, Du Bois does not credit Cooper for her quote or for supporting his thinking on the position of black women in the United States. It is possible, then, that other insights in "The Damnation of Women" are borrowed from Cooper's *A Voice from the South*.[81]

Where Du Bois suggests that "we cannot imprison women again in a home or require them all on pain of death to be nurses and housekeepers," Cooper makes similar arguments for women's education and entry into the public sphere twenty-eight years prior.[82] She states, "Religion, science, art, economics, have all needed the feminine flavor."[83] Cooper further explains that "you will not find the law of love shut out from the affairs of men after the

feminine half of the world's truth is completed" as she advocates for women to fully participate in political discourse.[84] Additional similarities emerge between *A Voice from the South* and "The Damnation of Women" as Du Bois reprises Cooper's centering of black women and her framing of black women's contributions as the crux of racial uplift. In Cooper's intersectional analysis of black women's oppression, she posited that "the position of woman in society determines the vital elements of its regeneration and progress."[85] She also emphasized that black women, through their labor and moral influence as mothers, wives, and daughters, propel black communities forward. Du Bois shares this sentiment as he acknowledges that

> black women (and women whose grandmothers were black) are today furnishing our teachers; they are the main pillars of those social settlements which we call churches; and they have with small doubt raised three-fourths of our church property. If we have today, as seems likely, over a billion dollars of accumulated goods, who shall say how much of it has been wrung from the hearts of servant girls and washer-women and women toilers in the fields?[86]

Conceptual continuities abound between "The Damnation of Women" and *A Voice from the South*. Whether Du Bois knowingly or inadvertently reproduces some of Cooper's 1892 arguments, his direct quoting of her work demonstrates that he valued her writing, however cursorily. As with Ida B. Wells, Du Bois simultaneously appropriated Cooper's interventions and minimized her as a political thinker, even as he wrote about black women's oppression. Du Bois's erasure of both women highlights that on multiple occasions, Du Bois did not only build upon black women's earlier writing but also refused to credit their intellectual contributions to his own work. Although Du Bois began to advocate for black women's rights by 1920, he nevertheless struggled to accept black women thinkers whose insights predated his.

Du Bois's personal correspondence and published work highlight how his analyses of black women's oppression had shifted by 1920. Earlier in his career, Du Bois's discussions of black women center on their representation and their morality. Later, however, Du Bois supports women's suffrage; participates in networks with women activists; and argues for black women's reproductive freedom, education, and economic independence. He also connects sexual violence against black women to a white supremacist desire for white people's political and economic dominance.[87] Du Bois's move toward black male feminism is notable for its broader influence on the direction of black political thought in the early twentieth century. However, Du Bois's gender progressivism cannot be divorced from black women's theorization and mobilization; the shift in his analyses of race and gender must be understood as a testament to the breadth of black women's political activity at the turn of the century.

Conclusion

From 1903 to 1920, Du Bois gradually approached black male feminist interpretations of race and gender. Throughout his career, Du Bois's interpretations of women's rights and black women's oppression were compartmentalized. During the early 1900s, his analyses focused primarily upon black women's social marginalization and public representation, but from the late 1910s onward, he also addressed black women's political and economic status. Despite the theoretical and rhetorical exclusions of black women from Du Bois's writings in the early 1900s, Du Bois's private correspondence and his editorship of the *Crisis* illustrate that he fostered extensive professional relationships with women and provided a platform for debate on women's rights. Du Bois's brand of black male feminism was not without its faults, however, as he relied on limited notions of womanhood and occasionally silenced black women intellectuals.

The shift in Du Bois's political thought likely resulted from the proliferation of black women's activism and theorization at the turn of the century. Throughout the nineteenth century, black women sought to control their labor, spoke and wrote publicly, developed black women's clubs, and endorsed both black and women's suffrage in their struggles for freedom and equality. During the early twentieth century, black women increasingly mobilized on behalf of themselves. The black women's club movement grew exponentially, and black women writers and activists offered vigorous support to the women's suffrage movement. By 1920, black women's activism had taken many forms. The wide range of their activism and intellectual work at the turn of the century radicalized Du Bois and spurred his shift toward black male feminism.

A reconsideration of Du Bois's discussions of black women and women's rights can allow scholars to reframe Du Bois as a figure who was significantly influenced by lesser-known black women intellectuals. Such readings of Du Bois have the potential to be instructive for contemporary intellectuals because they can highlight how black political thinkers may grapple more fully with black feminist thought. Luke Charles Harris, in "The Challenge and Possibility for Black Males to Embrace Feminism," argues that in order to fully empower African Americans, "we must come to terms with feminism and learn to see it as a fundamental aspect of our politics."[88] Similarly, in order to engage with the breadth of Du Bois's political thought, it is necessary to see his discourse on gender and working relationships with black women as fundamental aspects of his antiracist writings. By reconciling feminism with Du Bois's work, it will be possible to see how he offers entry points for evaluating the historical relationship between black male feminism and black politics. The interventions that Du Bois makes, in addition to his silences, can reveal the impact that black male feminism has had on black intellectual history. By the

same token, new readings of Du Bois can shed light on how feminist thinkers may continue to contend with race and the roles of men in feminist projects. An examination of Du Bois's eventual embrace of black male feminism can foster a stronger union between the fields of black studies and women's studies as it highlights that black men, in addition to black women, can participate in critical discourses about gender equality. Above all, it demonstrates that black women activists and intellectuals catalyzed the evolution of Du Boisian thought from 1903 to 1920.

Notes

1. W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Talented Tenth," in *The Future of the Race*, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Cornel West (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 133.
2. Du Bois, "Talented," 149.
3. W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, ed. David W. Blight and Robert Gooding-Williams (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1997), 99. First published 1903.
4. In *Transcending the Talented Tenth: Black Leaders and American Intellectuals* (New York: Routledge, 1997), Joy James argues that masculinism is distinct from patriarchy and sexism because it is not explicitly misogynistic, nor does it advocate male supremacy. However, masculinism remains an oppressive force because it erases women's experiences and presumes male dominance.
5. W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Damnation of Women," in *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* (New York: Dover, 1999), 85. First published 1920.
6. Du Bois, "Damnation," 85.
7. David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868–1919* (New York: H. Holt, 1993); David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919–1963* (New York: H. Holt, 2001).
8. James, *Transcending*; Farah Jasmine Griffin, "Black Male Feminists and Du Bois: Respectability, Protection, and Beyond," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 568 (2000): 28–40.
9. *Next to the Color Line: Gender, Sexuality, and W. E. B. Du Bois*, eds. Susan Gillman and Alys Eve Weinbaum (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).
10. Michael Awkward, "A Black Man's Place in Black Feminist Criticism," in *Negotiating Difference: Race, Gender, and the Politics of Positionality* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 46–47.
11. Awkward, "Black Man's," 44.
12. David Ikard, *Breaking the Silence toward a Black Male Feminist Criticism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007); Samuel Adu-Poku, "Envisioning (Black) Male Feminism: A Cross-Cultural Perspective," *Journal of Gender Studies* 10, no. 2 (2001): 157–67; David M. Jones, "'Women's Lib,' Gender Theory, and the Politics of Home: How I Became a Black Male Feminist," *Feminist Teacher* 13, no. 3 (2001): 213–24.

13. See Gary Lemons, "To Be Black, Male, and 'Feminist'—Making Womanist Space for Black Men," *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 17, no. 1 (1997): 35–61; and the "Black Male Feminism" special issue of *Palimpsest: A Journal of Women, Gender, and the Black International* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012).
14. Awkward, *Negotiating Difference*; Luke Charles Harris, "The Challenge and Possibility for Black Males to Embrace Feminism," in *Black Men on Race, Gender, and Sexuality*, ed. Devon W. Carbado (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 383–86.
15. Lawrie Balfour, "Representative Women: Slavery and the Gendered Ground of Citizenship," in *Democracy's Reconstruction: Thinking Politically with W. E. B. Du Bois* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 97–114; Griffin, "Black Male Feminists"; Gary Lemons, *Womanist Forefathers: Frederick Douglass and W. E. B. Du Bois* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009).
16. James, *Transcending*; Hazel Carby, "The Souls of Black Men," in *Race Men* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 2–44.
17. Gayle Tate, *Unknown Tongues: Black Women's Political Activism in the Antebellum Era, 1830–1860* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2003), 4.
18. Tate, *Unknown Tongues*, 11.
19. Tate, 12.
20. Carla Peterson, *"Doers of the Word": African-American Women Speakers and Writers in the North (1830–1880)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 3.
21. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 48, 89.
22. Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894–1994* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999).
23. Barbara McCaskill, "Anna Julia Cooper, Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins, and the African American Feminization of Du Bois's Discourse," in *The Souls of Black Folk One Hundred Years Later*, ed. Dolan Hubbard (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003), 73.
24. McCaskill, "Anna Julia Cooper," 75.
25. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 75.
26. Du Bois, 78.
27. Du Bois, 79.
28. Griffin, "Black Male Feminists," 5.
29. W. E. B. Du Bois, "Letter from W. E. B. Du Bois to *Congregationalist and Christian World*," April 14, 1906, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312), Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.
30. Du Bois, "Letter to *Congregationalist*."
31. W. E. B. Du Bois, "Letter from W. E. B. Du Bois to T. N. Baker," April 14, 1906, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312), Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

32. Du Bois, "Letter to T. N. Baker."
33. Du Bois, "Letter to T. N. Baker."
34. W. E. B. Du Bois, "Letter from W. E. B. Du Bois to Miss M. B. Marston," March 11, 1907, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312), Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.
35. Du Bois, "Letter to Marston."
36. In a November 1917 *Crisis* editorial titled "Votes for Women," Du Bois criticized white women for their racism and suggested that black men's bitterness toward white women prompts them to oppose women's suffrage. From his 1907 letter to Marston, it appears that he previously held the position that he later criticized.
37. Du Bois, "Letter to Marston."
38. Awkward, "Black Man's," 49.
39. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, "Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States," 1919, 10.
40. National Association, 21.
41. Mary Church Terrell, "Letter from Mary Church Terrell to W. E. B. Du Bois," April 14, 1903, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312), Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.
42. Terrell, "Letter to Du Bois."
43. For sustained analysis of how Du Bois addressed women's suffrage in the *Crisis*, see Valethia Watkins, "Votes for Women: Race, Gender, and W. E. B. Du Bois's Advocacy of Woman Suffrage," *Phylon* 53, no. 2 (2016): 3–19; Garth E. Pauley, "W. E. B. Du Bois on Woman Suffrage: A Critical Analysis of His *Crisis* Writings," *Journal of Black Studies* 30, no. 3 (2000): 383–410; and Jean Yellin, "Dubois's *Crisis* and Woman Suffrage," *Massachusetts Review* 14, no. 2 (1973): 365–75.
44. Mary Church Terrell, "The Justice of Woman Suffrage," *Crisis* 4, no. 5 (1912): 243.
45. Terrell, "Justice."
46. Terrell, 244.
47. Terrell, 245.
48. Terrell.
49. Terrell.
50. Terrell.
51. Watkins, "Votes for Women"; Nellie McKay, "W. E. B. Du Bois: The Black Women in His Writings—Selected Fictional and Autobiographical Portraits," in *The Souls of Black Folk: W. E. B. Du Bois, A Norton Critical Edition*, eds. Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Terri Hume Oliver (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), 263–72.
52. Mary Church Terrell, "Letter from Mary Church Terrell to W. E. B. Du Bois," January 29, 1917, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312), Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.
53. Kelly Miller, "The Risk of Woman Suffrage," *Crisis* 11, no. 1 (1915): 37.
54. Miller, "Risk of Woman Suffrage."

55. Miller.
56. Miller.
57. W. E. B. Du Bois, "Woman Suffrage," *Crisis* 11, no. 1 (1915): 29.
58. Du Bois, "Woman Suffrage."
59. Du Bois, 30.
60. Du Bois.
61. W. E. B. Du Bois, "Votes for Women," *Crisis* 15, no. 1 (1917): 8.
62. Du Bois, "Votes for Women."
63. Du Bois.
64. Du Bois.
65. Du Bois.
66. Du Bois.
67. Du Bois.
68. Du Bois.
69. Du Bois.
70. Du Bois.
71. W. E. B. Du Bois, "Letter from W. E. B. Du Bois to Whom It May Concern," July 31, 1917, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312), Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.
72. Du Bois, "Damnation," 103.
73. Du Bois, "Damnation," 96.
74. Du Bois, 100.
75. Du Bois, 106.
76. Du Bois.
77. Du Bois, 105.
78. Du Bois, 104.
79. Du Bois, 107.
80. Du Bois, 101.
81. See Shirley Moody-Turner, "'Dear Doctor Du Bois': Anna Julia Cooper, W. E. B. Du Bois, and the Gender Politics of Black Publishing," *MELUS: Multi-Ethnic Literature of the U.S.* 40, no. 3 (2015) for a discussion of the relationship between both intellectuals from 1923 to 1932.
82. Du Bois, "Damnation," 105.
83. Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice from the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 58. First published in 1892.
84. Cooper, *Voice from the South.*
85. Cooper, 21.
86. Du Bois, "Damnation," 85.
87. Balfour, "Representative Women," 103.
88. Harris, 383.