

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31874/2309-1606-2024-30-2-9>

UDC 1:37[Booker T. Washington](73)

**La Shun L. Carroll**

## **Beyond the Veil of Vocationalism: Unveiling the Contradictions in Booker T. Washington's Educational Philosophy**



*This paper delves into the contrasting educational philosophies of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois, two prominent figures who grappled with the question of Black progress in a society scarred by racial inequality. Washington, advocating for vocational training, championed economic self-sufficiency as the key to navigating a system rigged against Black success. Du Bois, conversely, championed a liberal arts education, emphasizing critical thinking and social critique as necessary tools for dismantling systemic barriers. This paper argues that while Washington's pragmatism held a certain appeal, its inherent acceptance of the existing social order risked perpetuating the very systems it aimed to overcome. Du Bois, through his more radical vision, recognized that true liberation necessitated not only economic agency but also the intellectual capacity to challenge and dismantle oppressive structures. By analyzing the nuances and complexities of their arguments, this paper highlights the enduring relevance of this historical debate for contemporary discussions on educational equity. It underscores the need for a multifaceted approach to education, one that recognizes the interconnectedness of economic opportunity, intellectual development, and social justice, ultimately advocating for an educational landscape that empowers all individuals to reach their full potential and contribute to a more just and equitable society. Through embracing the strengths and acknowledging the limitations of both perspectives, we can create an educational system that empowers individuals to navigate societal barriers while also equipping them with the critical thinking skills necessary to challenge and dismantle oppressive structures, fostering a more just and equitable society.*

**Keywords:** philosophy, education, vocationalism, Black progress, just and equitable society, racial inequality, Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois.

### **Introduction**

According to Aristotle who considers it a counterpart of both logic and politics, rhetoric is defined as “the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion” [Aristotle 2017: 61]. To convince an audience, the rhetorician may attempt to appeal to either logos, ethos, or pathos, which are referred to as the three means of persuasion [Rapp 2022].

© La Shun L. Carroll, 2024

As a means of persuasion, an appeal may be made to the “principle of ordering” to which the Greek word “logos” refers [Carroll 2017]. Additionally, persuasion achieved through an appeal to one’s ethos results from a successful attempt to target one’s sense of character [Aristotle 2017]. Likewise, persuading by appeal to pathos occurs as a result of deliberately aiming at one’s feelings or emotions [Aristotle 2017]. Considering the effectiveness of such appeals, it should not be surprising that these persuasive tactics were employed in the philosophical rhetoric of two of the most significant African-American leaders in history: Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois.

It was both the spoken and the written forms of the rhetoric of Washington & Du Bois that served as vehicles through which they would deliver the content of their prescriptive arguments for the appropriate course down which the country was to head with the recently emancipated black population. Upon careful analysis of their speeches and literary contributions to society, one will notice that the rhetoric outlining their prescriptive arguments not only contained personal beliefs, but they also comprised aspects of their educational philosophies.

Through the use of strong-sense critical thinking [Browne, & Keeley 2015] to evaluate claims and beliefs, this paper considers the rationale behind the philosophy of Washington as it pertains to vocationalism as an educational approach. Unlike weak-sense critical thinking used to defend one’s present belief, strong-sense critical thinking makes an effort to apply critical skills to evaluate all claims and beliefs, particularly one’s, with an opened mind toward revision of one’s beliefs and a willingness to abandon his or her flawed arguments [Browne, & Keeley 2016].

I argue that ideological approaches to education are composites of, and reducible to, what I refer to as the dichotomous nature of human experience. After briefly providing background on Washington and the educational philosophy derived from either a speech or literary work, with the assistance of a critical questioning framework, an evaluation of reasoning and alternative conclusions is conducted. The findings are used to describe a framework comprising either concordant or discordant construct-context dualities derived from the lived experience that may explain the basis for the choice of the educational philosophy of Washington.

The dawn of emancipation in the United States marked a pivotal moment in history, ushering in an era of both immense hope and daunting challenges for newly liberated Black Americans. Central to the project of upliftment was the question of education – its form, its purpose, and its potential to dismantle the deeply entrenched structures of racial inequality. Two towering figures emerged in this discourse, each offering a distinct vision for Black advancement: Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois. Washington, born into slavery and rising to prominence as the founder of Tuskegee Institute,

championed a philosophy of vocational education, urging Black Americans to attain economic self-sufficiency through industrial training and skilled labor. Du Bois, a Harvard-educated sociologist and activist, countered with a call for a liberal arts education, emphasizing critical thinking, political engagement, and the cultivation of a “talented tenth” to lead the struggle for civil rights.

This paper delves into the nuanced complexities of this historical debate, moving beyond simplistic dichotomies to reveal the intricate interplay of context, ideology, and lived experience that shaped the educational philosophies of both men. While acknowledging the contributions of Washington’s vocational approach in a society rife with discrimination, this paper argues that his vision, particularly its reliance on the flawed logic of “post hoc, ergo propter hoc”, risked perpetuating the very systems of oppression it sought to transcend.

Conversely, Du Bois’ emphasis on intellectual development and social critique offered a more radical and ultimately more transformative path towards dismantling racial hierarchies and achieving true equality. Through a critical analysis of their contrasting approaches, this paper aims to illuminate the enduring relevance of this debate for understanding the ongoing struggle for educational justice in the face of persistent racial disparities in American society.

## Research Problem

The research problem this paper tackles is the ongoing debate surrounding the most effective educational approach to achieving Black empowerment and racial equality in a society grappling with the legacy of slavery and systemic racism. By juxtaposing the contrasting philosophies of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois, the paper seeks to explore the complexities and potential limitations of both vocational training and liberal arts education as tools for social change.

More specifically, the paper investigates:

- *The underlying assumptions and logical frameworks of Washington’s vocationalism and Du Bois’ emphasis on liberal arts education.* This includes examining the historical context that shaped their views and the potential benefits and drawbacks of each approach.
- *The extent to which each philosophy addresses the root causes of racial inequality.* The paper questions whether focusing primarily on economic self-sufficiency through vocational training sufficiently challenges the systemic barriers faced by Black Americans.
- *The implications of both approaches for achieving meaningful social and political change.* This involves considering whether one approach is more conducive to fostering critical thinking, agency, and collective action among Black communities.

By critically examining these issues, the paper aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between education, race, and equality, ultimately informing more effective strategies for achieving social justice.

### Research Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to critically examine and analyze the contrasting educational philosophies of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois, situating their perspectives within the historical and societal context of post-emancipation America. By exploring the nuances and complexities of their arguments, the paper aims to move beyond simplistic dichotomies and illuminate the potential benefits and limitations of both vocational training and liberal arts education as tools for Black empowerment and racial equality.

Ultimately, the paper seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of:

- The historical debate surrounding Black education and its enduring relevance for contemporary discussions on educational justice.
- The complex interplay of race, education, and social change in a society grappling with systemic inequality.
- The potential of critical analysis to challenge assumptions and inform more effective strategies for achieving racial equity in education.

Through this exploration, the paper aims to spark meaningful dialogue and contribute to a more informed and nuanced understanding of the relationship between education and social justice.

### Research Significance

The research significance of this paper lies in its potential to contribute to a more nuanced and historically grounded understanding of the enduring debate surrounding Black education in America. By critically examining the contrasting philosophies of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois, the paper challenges simplistic interpretations of their views and highlights the complex interplay of race, education, and social change in a society grappling with the legacy of slavery and systemic racism.

Here are some key areas where the paper holds significance:

- *Historical Contextualization:* By situating the debate within the sociopolitical landscape of post-emancipation America, the paper provides a deeper understanding of the factors that shaped both Washington's and Du Bois' perspectives. This historical contextualization is crucial for avoiding anachronistic judgments and appreciating the complexities of their arguments.
- *Challenging Dichotomies:* The paper moves beyond simplistic portrayals of Washington and Du Bois as polar opposites, highlighting the nuances

and overlaps in their thinking. This nuanced approach encourages a more critical and informed engagement with their ideas, fostering a more productive dialogue on educational equity.

- *Contemporary Relevance:* While focused on a historical debate, the paper's exploration of the merits and limitations of vocational training versus liberal arts education remains strikingly relevant today. By examining these enduring tensions, the paper provides valuable insights for contemporary discussions on educational justice, particularly as they relate to addressing racial disparities in educational outcomes.
- *Promoting Critical Analysis:* By employing a critical lens to examine the underlying assumptions and logical frameworks of both Washington's and Du Bois' philosophies, the paper encourages readers to engage in similar critical reflection on contemporary educational practices and policies. This emphasis on critical analysis is essential for developing more effective strategies to achieve racial equity in education.

In essence, this paper contributes to a richer understanding of the historical and ongoing struggle for educational justice in America. By revisiting this pivotal debate, the paper provides valuable insights for contemporary discussions on race, education, and social change, ultimately advocating for a more equitable and just educational landscape.

### Research Question

The central research question this paper grapples with is:

How do the contrasting educational philosophies of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois illuminate the complexities and challenges of achieving Black empowerment and racial equality in a society marked by systemic racism?

This overarching question encompasses several sub-questions explored throughout the paper:

What were the core tenets of Washington's vocationalism and Du Bois' emphasis on liberal arts education, and how did their personal experiences and the sociopolitical context of their time shape their views?

What are the potential benefits and limitations of both approaches in addressing the root causes of racial inequality and promoting social change?

Does Washington's emphasis on economic self-sufficiency through vocational training adequately challenge the systemic barriers faced by Black Americans, or does Du Bois' call for critical thinking and political engagement offer a more transformative path towards racial justice?

By engaging with these questions, the paper aims to move beyond simplistic interpretations of this historical debate and foster a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between education, race, and equality in the ongoing struggle for social justice.

## Research Hypothesis

By exposing the logical fallacy within Booker T. Washington's vocationalist approach to education and highlighting the potential of W. E. B. Du Bois' emphasis on critical thinking and social critique, this paper posits that a focus on *intellectual development and dismantling systemic barriers is more conducive to achieving lasting Black empowerment and racial equality than a solely economic or vocational focus*.

This argument, though not presented as a testable prediction, guides the paper's analysis and leads to the conclusion that a more radical approach to education, one that equips individuals with the tools to challenge and dismantle oppressive systems, is essential for achieving true social justice. The transformative power of education lies in its ability to empower individuals to challenge and dismantle oppressive systems, ultimately leading to true social justice.

## Background

In the realm of African American educational philosophies, two prominent figures stand out: Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois. These two scholars held contrasting views on the best approach to uplift the African American community in the post-slavery era, known for his industrial education philosophy, believed that vocational training was the key to improving the social status of African Americans [Washington 2014]. He advocated for practical skills that would make individuals indispensable members of society, emphasizing the importance of economic independence and self-sufficiency [Lewis 2014b]. On the other hand, Du Bois, with his Talented Tenth concept, argued for a liberal arts education for a select group of individuals, focusing on cultivating intellectual leaders within the community [Anderson 2022].

Washington's philosophy was deeply rooted in the idea of vocational education as a means of empowerment for the masses, aiming to equip individuals with tangible skills that would lead to economic stability and societal acceptance [Lewis 2014]. His approach was pragmatic, emphasizing the immediate needs of the African American population in a society that was still grappling with racial prejudices and segregation [Carroll 2018]. Washington's advocacy for vocational training was seen as a practical solution to the challenges faced by African Americans in a post-slavery society, where economic opportunities were limited [Mitchell 2017].

In contrast, Du Bois's philosophy centered around the concept of the Talented Tenth, where he believed that a select group of educated individuals could uplift the entire African American community through their leadership and intellectual contributions [Anderson 2022]. Du Bois emphasized the importance of liberal arts education in fostering critical thinking, cultural



awareness, and social change [Rabaka 2003]. His vision was more long-term and focused on creating a cadre of well-educated individuals who could challenge systemic injustices and advocate for equality on a broader scale [Rabaka 2003].

The debate between Washington and Du Bois encapsulated larger discussions within the African American community about the most effective path to progress and equality. Washington's emphasis on practical skills and economic advancement resonated with many who saw immediate economic stability as a pressing need [Lewis 2014]. However, Du Bois's focus on intellectual development and leadership spoke to a deeper desire for social change and cultural advancement within the African American community [Rabaka 2003].

Despite their differences, both Washington and Du Bois made significant contributions to the educational landscape for African Americans. Washington's emphasis on vocational training laid the foundation for practical skills development and economic empowerment within the community [Lewis 2014]. On the other hand, Du Bois's advocacy for liberal arts education highlighted the importance of intellectual growth, critical thinking, and cultural awareness in challenging societal norms and advocating for social justice [Rabaka 2003].

The educational philosophies of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois represent two distinct approaches to addressing the challenges faced by the African American community in the post-slavery era. While Washington focused on vocational education as a means of immediate economic empowerment, Du Bois emphasized the importance of liberal arts education in fostering intellectual leadership and social change. Both scholars played pivotal roles in shaping the discourse around African American education and empowerment, leaving lasting legacies that continue to influence educational debates to this day.

### **The Educational Philosophy of Washington**

Although often remembered for their rivalry, there was a period during which Washington and Du Bois corresponded [Adams 2015]. Nevertheless, despite having similar ends in mind for blacks [Dowdy 1989], each man's ideology would ultimately be that past which the other would not be able to move, which made relating to, and collaborating with, one another an impossibility. While the individual philosophy of education of each man was not without flaw, they both had a unique vision for the correct path that should be taken concerning the manner in which education should be conducted and what it should consist of if successful outcomes were indeed desired for the recently emancipated black population.

Washington believed an industrial education was best. Industrial training consisted of practical skills and trades, hard physical labor such as farming and working with one's hands. He also contemplated constructs such as liberty and education, which ultimately became contexts for his life. It did not just happen to him, he fought for it and struggled. Nevertheless, although what he achieved was praiseworthy, Washington's decision to adopt a vocational approach to education to solve the problems of his day was optimistic at best, and naïve at worst. Regardless of which one believes was the case, the rationale behind choosing it appeared to be misaligned.

### **Argument Against Rationale Behind Washington's Choice of Vocationalism**

Washington's vocational approach based on his Mentor, Gen. Armstrong, stressed hard manual labor because it supposedly had a moral and intellectual value that built character [Dowdy 1989]. Unfortunately, I disagree with the rationale for adopting such an approach because the reasoning may be shown to be circular. There is no way to begin without assuming what one tries to prove. If hard manual labor had those values that built character, then what reason would there be for former slaves newly emancipated to agree to endure hard labor once more?

According to this logic, what he thought would be the right training to bring about the change that was sought appeared to be in no significant way different from the conditions when blacks were enslaved. That is, if it were true that newly freed slaves under Washington's vocational approach could build character and discipline through hard manual labor because handwork had physical, intellectual, or moral value as he proclaimed, then upon emancipation, the newly freed slaves should have already acquired the skills and character and not require further hard manual labor as education.

That which Washington had called vocational "education" appears to have been eerily similar to the conditions of slavery, which he ought to have known quite well. Therefore, as an argument for a Vocational philosophy of education, since the students would be starting their education having endured hard manual labor under conditions of slavery, and hard manual labor is what builds character and skill, then the emancipated blacks would begin their vocational education with what was to be the result of their training. In other words, this reasoning suffers from unavoidably begging the question, or being circular in its logic [Browne, & Keeley 2015].



### **From Circular Logic to a Red Herring in Atlanta**

Among the reasons that Washington supported an industrial/vocational educational philosophy for blacks was his firm belief that white society would only tolerate it and no other form [Lewis 2014]. In his Atlanta Address, Washington remarks the following: "It is important and right that all privileges of the law be ours, but it is vastly more important that we be prepared for the exercises of these privileges. The opportunity to earn a dollar in a factory just now is worth infinitely more than the opportunity to spend a dollar in an opera-house" [Washington 2006].

Washington makes a valid argument. Essentially, the rhetorical question is "what good is it to exercise the privilege to use one's money if they cannot work to earn any money to use?" Of course, the answer is "no good at all." Fighting for rights requiring direct or indirect access to what one does not have (i.e., money itself directly or a job where one may earn money indirectly) would be pointless. That notwithstanding, what relevance does the truth of that statement have to the fact that the argument given for vocational training is circular? In other words, the truth of the statement itself does nothing to support or convince anyone. The hard labor being proposed by Washington for emancipated blacks is the equivalent of recommending fish enroll in swimming lessons. Truisms or platitudes such as was uttered by Washington in the Atlanta Address do a fantastic job detracting from the main issue by introducing something irrelevant, which is referred to as the Red Herring fallacy [Browne, & Keeley 2016]. Unlike his academic, intellectual rival Du Bois whom Washington felt emphasized an impractical and theoretical education for which there was no immediate benefit, the vocational approach and industrial education provides a skill that could be put to use in a factory where money can be earned with a useful trade. Although it makes complete sense for the moment, the shortsightedness of Washington's position may have been more restrictive than empowering. Perhaps due to the failure to appreciate how any education other than one in industrialism for blacks could lead to work beyond that of physical labor did more to oppress blacks than anything else.

Naturally, Du Bois did not share the same sentiments concerning the appropriate manner in which to educate blacks. As opposed to an industrial approach to education that neglected any substantial form of higher learning, Du Bois believed that it was a strong foundation in classic liberal arts that was going to expedite obtaining equality and opportunities for blacks. His formalized educational philosophy detailed how the process was to occur known as the Talented Tenth [Du Bois, & Chandler 2014]. The Talented Tenth was supposed to be the best, and brightest blacks with impeccable academic credentials charged with leading the masses [Dowdy 1989]. The primary

purpose, then, of an educational philosophy such as the Talented Tenth was to provide a pool of the most educated individuals from which potential leaders for blacks would be selected [Shinault 2014].

Du Bois believed that any progress to be made would be the result of the exceptional few slowly elevating those who were less mentally sharp as far as possible. From this, one of Du Bois' descriptive assumptions would be that the elevation by the educated elite is possible. Such an assumption appeals to emotions and popularity [Browne, & Keeley 2015]. Nevertheless, despite the optimism bias [Browne, & Keeley 2015], both Washington and Du Bois were guilty to a degree of causal oversimplification and confusing cause and effect. That is, education and training are not the only factors contributing to success as an earner or a leader. Also, each may influence the other. Ultimately, I find that both men were also guilty of searching for the perfect solution in that each viewed the other's efforts alone as insufficient and refused to adopt them. However, each man's contribution complemented the other's, and both were, together, responsible for the successes and failures that their efforts experienced collectively as a movement.

### **Educational Philosophy as Prescriptive Argument**

Given the ethical nature of prescriptive arguments, such as those comprising the aspects of the educational philosophies of Washington and Du Bois that we have considered, it must be an individual's underlying values that influence the reasons justifying them that he or she provides and, therefore, any conclusions derived from them [Browne, & Keeley 2015: 61]. A prescriptive argument must be premised on one's taken-for-granted beliefs regarding the relative desirability for competing values, which may be understood as their value assumptions [Browne, & Keeley 2015]. The values of which the assumptions consist are the ideas, notions, or concepts that one believes to be worthwhile, which are left unstated [Browne, & Keeley 2015]. That notwithstanding, the order in which one prioritizes values is referred to as one's value preference and is what distinguishes the supporting reasons and conclusions that he or she draws [Browne, & Keeley 2015].

The values, value assumptions, and value preferences that premised the respective philosophical arguments regarding the education of Washington and Du Bois were the result of their lived experiences. That is, the ideas or concepts believed to be worthwhile, the taken-for-granted beliefs concerning the relative desirability of competing values, and the order in which one prioritized them were the result of subjective experience. However, values, assumptions, and preferences may also influence subjective experiences one has. Thus, there exists a dynamism that accounts for the interaction between one's values and his or her experience that imparts the feel of an

autonomous, living entity that facilitates rendering it subjective. Together, values, assumptions, and preferences were determined to be responsible for the ideological differences that scholars have identified as being the basis for the antagonism that existed between Washington and Du Bois [Dagbovie 2007].

Nonetheless, as difficult to discern as they may be from one another, it is crucial to understand that one's subjective experience and the values and value assumptions of the individual doing the experiencing are not necessarily the same or consistent. In other words, although counterintuitive initially, it may be possible for there to exist, two distinct people, each of whom shares the same or similar values, value assumptions, or both, yet oppose one another ideologically because of the subjective experience each may have. Thus, as both causes and effects of the same thing, the influence that values, assumptions, and preferences have on shaping ideology is difficult to deny but may become more evident to the reader when he or she appreciates values, assumptions, and preferences for what I suggest them to either be identical to or consistent with: theoretical constructs.

### **Values and Constructs: Ideas or Concepts Inferred or Expressed**

A construct is defined as either a directly unobservable mental abstraction that one employs to express an idea or concept [Laerd Dissertation 2017], or an idea or concept [which is directly unobservable] that is inferred from observed events [Martella, 2013]. Also, values may be understood as the ideas, notions, or concepts that one believes to be worthwhile that remain unstated [Browne, & Keeley 2015]. Thus, whether inferred from observed events, or abstractions one employs, the unobservable, unstated ideas and concepts that one holds as values appear to be interchangeable with constructs.

As counterintuitive as it may appear at first glance, although both men's philosophies of education and prescriptive arguments would seem to be starkly opposing, I contend that their underlying values as constructs according to which both Du Bois and Washington subjectively experienced and developed their educational doctrines may not have been different; the context of subjective experience, as the empirical framework within, against, and according to which each man constructed his respective philosophical positions on education significantly differed. A construct-context duality comprised of sameness in values yet contextual differences in which they developed was responsible for their respective ideologies. It is in this manner that one may reconcile individuals' philosophical differences by acknowledging that the values of each person can be similar, or at least consistent with one another.

### **Equivalence or Consistency of Values and Constructs**

According to the definitions provided, if constructs are unobservable and mental abstractions either used to express ideas or are ideas themselves while values are also ideas that are not directly observed either, then I contend that either values are constructs, or values are consistent with constructs. Moreover, if this is the case, then while constructs are either equivalent or consistent with values and Washington and Du Bois both had similar endpoints as goals for blacks in mind, then the men also had similar values, or their values were at least consistent with one another.

Sharing similar or consistent values, it was the contextualized life-experiences of each man that still allowed him to exhibit ideological individuality without compromise. Although they shared similar or consistent values, because the relative intensity with which each man held their respective values was dissimilar, both Washington and Du Bois were capable of responding in a unique way concerning prescriptive issues such as those related to philosophy of education. Whatever differences in intensity exist easily translate into particular preferences for a value that one has [Browne, & Keeley 2015]. Also, it is through one's preferences for specific values that lead to the development of a partial ordering. The partial ordering of values based on preferences, which facilitates the process of value prioritization, results in a select group of the highest priority values that are what become one's value assumptions.

Although I maintain that values are either equivalent with constructs, or consistent with them at the very least, this claim in no way precludes individuality or uniqueness in one's philosophy due to the influence that differences in value preferences have on value assumptions in constructing a prescriptive argument or developing ideology. Additionally, relative qualitative characteristics of values as constructs (e.g., when contemplated, why, or how long) that became the context for both Washington and Du Bois I argue contributed to the creation of significant differences that resulted in the divergence of their philosophical viewpoints.

### **Construct Integration: From Mental Abstraction to Subjective Experience**

Much the same way that Du Bois and Washington were individuals whose existence was a culmination of unique ideas, the experiencing of different events and being treated as distinct people, constructs comprise a variety of dimensions that make them what they are. Examples of constructs include those referring to ideas, people, and events [Laerd Dissertation 2017]. Constructs referring to ideas, people, and events that certainly played a significant role in

the evolution of the philosophical frameworks of both men included racism, equality, discrimination, liberty, and even poverty. Moreover, the emancipated Blacks and the issue of color were vital to the views developed by each man and introduced a social dimension to their constructs. In consideration of the nature of the climate in which the two men existed, issues related to morality, the value of life, and (in)tolerance as constructs were likely significantly involved in shaping how, and into whom, each man would evolve.

Despite the undeniable construct similarities that provided the background for the lived experiences of each of the men, actually living the experience resulted in the integration of both men into the very constructs themselves. In this respect, the incorporation into the constructs altered their perspectives such that what was previously an objective, abstract theoretical construct became a subjective, realistic context. Furthermore, as a consequence of the integration that resulted in the formation of a new context, I contend that there was a compelling corresponding cognitive transformation that occurred in both Du Bois and Washington, which was a necessary adaptation if they each were to reconcile their constructs with contexts.

### **Cognitive Transformation**

For Du Bois, I propose that a significant contributor to his transformation was the experience upon attending college at Fisk in the south. It should be mentioned that, while privileged to be raised in Great Barrington, Du Bois did not himself experience any racial discrimination that had been plaguing the South [Ogden, & Hill 2014]. Thus, when he attended university at Fisk, the maltreatment and discrimination he did experience at the hands of whites broadened his perspective leading to his acquiring empirical knowledge that resulted in a forced integration into the construct of racism, which had theretofore been merely an abstraction [Dagbovie 2007].

In light of the relative nature of experience, the only thing that could have been worse than getting the deplorable treatment itself that blacks had received throughout their lives would have to be receiving such treatment for the very first time; the contrast alone for the first occasion would be the furthest thing from expected that no subsequent occurrence could ever be equally unexpected, as was the case for Du Bois. I contend that Du Bois experienced a “becoming,” as he came to know the newfound context of being treated as black imposed upon him for the first time while in the South. Moreover, the formation of bonds with others sharing in this context [Du Bois 1968] galvanized the transformation that he would ultimately undergo to become one of the greatest leaders in history.

As for Washington, it was his integration after being thrust into the abstract construct of liberty upon emancipation that I argue catalyzed

his transformation. While unimaginably unnerving and unfortunate, considering the remarkable potential these men possessed, the experiences prompting their transformations provided both Du Bois and Washington unique and indelible contextual perspectives that were likely responsible for their philosophical divergence and inability to reconcile their ideological differences. That is, to say, transitioning from slavery to freedom would be nearly impossible for someone such as Du Bois to fully appreciate much the same as it would be difficult for a person in Washington's place who did make the transition from slavery to understand the perspective of someone born a free man.

Despite the value-construct similarities, it would ultimately be the contextual differences that were responsible for the apparent divergence of the trajectories observed in the paths the educational philosophies of both Du Bois and Washington had taken. I claim that a reconciliation of their views may be possible if considered from individual perspectives. Based on the resulting person being comprised of both the lived experiences of each person and his or her value-constructs, the perspective that I propose for a framework for comprehension is that of the inherent duality, or dichotomous nature, of which the lived human experience consists.

### **Dichotomous Framework for Experience: Concordant and Discordant Duality**

By inherent duality or dichotomous nature of the lived human experience, I refer to aspects comprising the essence of humankind's experiences. I propose that there exist two such aspects that each person's experience is comprised of at any given moment. It is these two aspects that account for who a person may be at any particular point in time and what he or she may ultimately become at some future point.

Regardless of whether they are equivalent, or consistent with one another, there is the intangible value-construct dimension comprising the underlying assumptions, ideas, and beliefs held in order according to one's preference. Nevertheless, in contrast with such value-constructs, there also exists that which encompasses the empirical nature of human experience serving as a tangible context for the values that one assumes or believes to be the case. For each person, either the constructs may align with the context within which the values exist; or both the value-constructs and contexts may be misaligned. In the former case, when aligned, the construct-context I refer to as a concordant duality whereas, in the latter case of construct-context misalignment, the result is a discordant duality.

Despite concordant dualities resulting from value constructs aligning with the contexts within which they occur, these value-constructs and contexts need

not be caused or influenced by one another, but they may be. Moreover, the constructs and contexts must either be conceptually equivalent or at the least, consistent with one another to result in an overall concordant duality. While there may be only one way to achieve concordance via alignment, there are multiple ways for discordance in duality to occur arising from misalignment of value-constructs and contextual occurrences that may be understood to behave similarly to DNA.

### **Modeling Construct-Context Duality After DNA**

I thought of construct-context duality as resembling DNA and its respective components. The viability of the construct-context duality depends on the existence of two strands: each strand may be either value-construct or context. Additionally, because they comprise components that complement one another, given either value-construct or context alone, one can predict what the corresponding strand ought to be comprised of; however, this does not guarantee that it necessarily is or will be as it ought.

When value-construct and corresponding context are as they ought to be, the result is concordant duality. Nonetheless, unlike concordant duality, discordant duality may be thought of as occurring when there is a misalignment of value-construct with a context that results from either a frameshift, deletions, substitutions, or mutations of any component of the construct or context similar to what occurs in the case of damaging errors in DNA. For example, well aware of the dynamism that occurs between value constructs and subjective experiences, one could imagine a disturbance of equilibrium by something like a cold, illness, or amnesia in which either value-constructs change to address the pressing issue of illness but are inappropriate for a context or vice versa. The change could be due to simple shifting of constructs, so another construct substitutes, deletion because of amnesia, or mutation into completely different construct in the case of mental illness. Interestingly, discordant dualities may also undergo modifications to prevent or correct damaging mistakes. That is, corrections may be made via excision or splicing procedures that can repair the errors known or found in one's value-constructs. Such corrective actions may be self-induced or helped through counseling.

To one's context as an immediate past over which one has no control, repair or corrections may manifest as memory suppression. In this fashion, each person as a whole is dynamic and exists in a state of flux that does not necessarily entail perpetual difference because modifications will occur to both constructs as well as contextual aspects. Modification may be simultaneous, asynchronous, and even nullify one another to yield no significant net alteration. Thus, as discordant dualities may be converted



to concordant ones allowing oneself to subconsciously reconcile untenable constructs with misaligned contexts or vice versa, concordant dualities are also subject to transformation.

### **Noble Fallacy: Washington's Subconscious Reconciliation**

I would argue that Du Bois experienced the most robust construct-context, discordant duality at Fisk when the tone was set for his philosophical worldview to become fixed. Washington's most profound experience of duality discordance I would claim occurred upon transitioning from slavery to freedom. It was then that his value-constructs concerning freedom met the contextual reality of it. In the face of such a discordant duality, subconsciously, Washington's mind fought to reconcile these differences. However, since it would be illogical to assume that solving problems could occur through the implementation of what one does not know, any reconciliation would necessarily have been the result of doing what Washington knew. From this perspective, if one were to attempt to understand Washington's experiential duality and educational beliefs, then, of course, vocational philosophy would make sense; vocationalism was consistent with all that he knew.

Washington claimed his approach could build character and discipline through hard manual labor because handwork had physical, intellectual, or moral value and was a composite of idealized value-constructs with context. Where he wanted to take blacks, he had been himself; how Washington wanted to get them, there was how he viewed himself as getting where he was. What Washington desired for these people to obtain was the experience of a concordant duality comprising the value-constructs he envisioned. The value-constructs for the people (i.e., discipline, character) were the result of a particular context (i.e., hard manual labor), which was based on the world he had known.

As noble and sincere as Washington may have been, his solution was essentially encouraging the perpetuation of the cycle through which they had just passed: enslavement under voluntary conditions followed by emancipation. Thus, it becomes apparent that conditions followed by outcome served as a roadmap for his vocational philosophy if only on a subconscious level. Propounding vocationalism was akin to the conditions of slavery that were experienced; emancipation, I claim, was the subsequent state in which blacks found themselves and Washington likened the character traits obtained and discipline learned having endured hardship to a symbolic manifestation or representation of that freedom from prior captivity. Although it can be empowering psychologically to choose to embrace circumstances beyond one's control, which may have been another subtlety of Washington's approach that may have escaped appreciation, the purpose was to obtain discipline from having persevered through struggle leading to character development.

### Logical Fallacy

Unfortunately, Washington's vision was a classic case of a logical fallacy referred to as post hoc, ergo proper hoc, which means "after this, therefore because of this" [The School of Thought 2024]. Just stated, while it is true that a causal relationship between two events implies that there exists a sequential or ordinal relationship among them, it is not the case that sequentially or ordinally related events necessarily implies that the particular relationship between the two events is causal. If one of the newly emancipated blacks were to believe Washington's vocationalism, then he or she would be accepting that the conditions of hard manual labor they had just endured was insufficient to bring about the desired character improvements it promised yet be expected of their own volition to recommit to another cycle of similar conditions in hopes of achieving a different outcome this time.

It is difficult to decide what was more incredible because either one of two options is correct concerning a relationship that is genuinely causal: cause A yields the same effect B (true causal relationship), or cause A yields different effect  $\sim B$ . Thus, if going through with vocationalism comprising hard labor conditions like slavery, then as the true cause A, same effect B results, which means ending up just as they were before beginning vocational training. There would be no point. Otherwise, vocationalism as hard conditions would lead to different outcomes achieving character traits promised, which would imply somehow that slavery was not hard enough manual labor to acquire discipline and improve character. This would be tantamount to self-denial. The fact of the matter is that no significant alteration in outcome would result and to have proposed vocational philosophy of education to emancipated blacks can be seen unfavorably as a way to continue the oppression from which they were emancipated.

### Concluding Remarks

The choice of theoretical framework for the present research was decided upon because it was felt that critical thinking provided the most holistic approach to analysis. Given the sharply contrasting points of contention revolving around the specific aspects of educational philosophy respectively espoused by the two men, their similarities are often and easily overlooked. In researching their positions on the philosophy of education, for every difference indicated by the fact that was uncovered, a corresponding similarity was discovered. The discovery of such similarities required a contextualized analysis of each's educational philosophy, which is what a critical thinking framework provided.

The contextualized approach to analysis taken prompted consideration of the impact of the context of lived human experience, which guided the inquiry. Ultimately, Du Bois and Washington each developed a philosophy and could

build moral value as he proclaimed philosophy of education in response to, and a consequence of, the ubiquity and pervasiveness of systematically operationalized constructs including racism that had disproportionately affected Black Americans. Specifically, their respective educational philosophies were used as a means through which they could both, directly and indirectly, target what each concluded were the causes and the effects of their particular values as constructs with which society still currently battles more than a century later.

This exploration into the contrasting educational philosophies of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois reveals a depth and complexity that transcends simplistic categorization. While their approaches differed significantly, both men dedicated their lives to the pursuit of Black progress within a society deeply entrenched in racial hierarchy. Washington's vocationalism, born from the realities of a segregated South, offered a pragmatic path toward economic self-sufficiency, a crucial aspect of navigating a society rigged against Black success. However, as this analysis has demonstrated, the inherent logical fallacy within his approach risked perpetuating the very systems of oppression it aimed to overcome.

Du Bois, with his unwavering belief in the power of critical thinking and a liberal arts education, offered a more radical vision. He understood that true liberation necessitated not only economic agency but also the intellectual tools to dismantle the systemic barriers that perpetuated racial inequality. His call for a "talented tenth" to lead the charge for social and political change underscored his belief in the transformative potential of education to empower individuals and reshape society.

The echoes of this historical debate resonate powerfully in the 21st century. While the context has evolved, the fundamental questions surrounding educational equity and its role in achieving racial justice remain as relevant as ever. The allure of a purely vocational approach, with its promise of immediate economic gains, persists. Yet, as Du Bois so eloquently argued over a century ago, true empowerment necessitates equipping individuals with the critical thinking skills, historical awareness, and social consciousness to challenge and dismantle oppressive systems.

This is not to diminish the importance of vocational training or to suggest a singular path toward Black empowerment. Rather, this analysis underscores the need for a multifaceted approach to education, one that recognizes the interconnectedness of economic opportunity, intellectual development, and social justice. It is in the spirit of both Du Bois and Washington, in their shared commitment to Black progress, that we must continue to grapple with these complex questions and strive toward an educational landscape that empowers all individuals to reach their full potential and contribute to a more just and equitable society.

## References:

- Adams, N. (2015). *The correspondence of W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington*. Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts. <https://hdl.handle.net/2144/16367>
- Anderson, J. D. (2022). A Message for Humanity: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Talented Tenth Idea. In A. D. Morris, et al. (eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of W. E. B. Du Bois*. (Pp. 703–718). Oxford Handbooks. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190062767.013.13>
- Aristotle. (2017). *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*. Trans. from Greek by G. A. Kennedy. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Browne, M. N., & Keeley, S. M. (2015). *Asking the right questions: A guide to critical thinking*. Boston: Pearson.
- Carroll, L. (2017). A Comprehensive Definition of Technology from an Ethological Perspective. *Social Sciences*, 6(4), 126–126. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci6040126>
- Carroll, L. (2018). Concordant and discordant construct-context dualities as a framework for understanding the choice of vocational educational philosophy of Booker T. Washington. <https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints201812.0110.v1>
- Dagbovie, P. G. (2007). Exploring a Century of Historical Scholarship on Booker T. Washington. *The Journal of African American History*, 92(2), 239–264.
- Dowdy, L. C., Jr. (1989). *The impact of the philosophies of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., Booker T. Washington, and W. E. B. Du Bois on the educational program of Johnson C. Smith University (doctoral dissertation, Rutgers University, 1989)*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 50, 3176A.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1968). *The autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois: A soliloquy on viewing my life from the last decade of its first century*. New York, NY: International Publishers.
- Du Bois, W. E. B., & Chandler, N. B. (2014). The Talented Tenth: 1903. In N. B. Chandler (ed.). *The Problem of the Color Line at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: The Essential Early Essays*, American Philosophy (FUP). New York, NY, 2014; online edn, Fordham Scholarship Online, 17 Sept. 2015. <https://doi.org/10.5422/fordham/9780823254545.003.0011>
- Laerd Dissertation. (2024). *Constructs in quantitative research*. <http://dissertation.laerd.com/constructs-in-quantitative-research.php>
- Lewis, T. (2014). Booker T. Washington's audacious vocationalist philosophy. *Oxford Review of Education*, 40(2), 189–205. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2014.889603>
- Mitchell, K. (2017). Education, race and empire: a genealogy of humanitarian governance in the United States. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 42(3), 349–362.
- Ogden, W. R., & Hill, C. B. (2007). The scholar as change agent. *College Student Journal*, 41(4), 932–939.
- Rabaka, R. (2003). W. E. B. Du Bois's Evolving Africana Philosophy Of Education. *Journal of Black Studies*, 33(4), 399–449. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934702250021>
- Rapp, C. (2022). Aristotle's Rhetoric. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-rhetoric/>
- Shinault, R. (2014). *Extraordinary Life Quotes: Inspirational and Motivational Quotes for Winning the Game of Life*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Washington, B. T. (2006). The Atlanta Exposition Address (1895). In C. A. Palmer (ed.). *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History* (2nd ed., Vol. 6, pp. 2428–2430). Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA. [https://link.galegroup.com.gate.lib.buffalo.edu/apps/doc/CX3444701370/UHIC?u=sunybuff\\_main&xid=2528c22](https://link.galegroup.com.gate.lib.buffalo.edu/apps/doc/CX3444701370/UHIC?u=sunybuff_main&xid=2528c22)

Washington, B. T. (2014). *Up from slavery: An autobiography*. New York: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781316018231>

The School of Thought. (2024). *Thou shalt not commit logical fallacies*. <https://yourlogicalfallacyis.com/>

**Ла Шун Л. Керрол. За завісою слідування професійному покликанню: розкриття протиріч у філософії освіти Букера Т. Вашингтона**

У цій статті розглянуто протилежні освітні філософії Букера Т. Вашингтона та В. Е. Б. Дю Буа, двох видатних діячів, які переймалися питанням прогресу прав темношкірих у суспільстві, ураженому расовою нерівністю. Вашингтон, виступаючи за професійне навчання, відстоював економічну самодостатність як ключ до навігації системою, сфальсифікованою проти успіху темношкірих. Дю Буа, навпаки, відстоював гуманітарну освіту, наголошуючи на критичному мисленні та соціальній критиці як на необхідних інструментах для усунення системних бар'єрів. У цій статті стверджується, що хоча прагматизм Вашингтона мав певну привабливість, його невід'ємне прийняття існуючого соціального порядку ризикувало увічнити ті самі системи, які він мав на меті подолати. Через своє більш радикальне бачення Дю Буа визнав, що справжнє звільнення потребує не лише економічної дії, але й інтелектуальної здатності кинути виклик репресивним структурам і зруйнувати їх. Аналізуючи нюанси та складність їхніх аргументів, ця стаття підкреслює незмінну актуальність цієї історичної дискусії для сучасних дискусій щодо рівності в освіті. Вона підкреслює необхідність багатостороннього підходу до освіти, такого, який визнає взаємозв'язок економічних можливостей, інтелектуального розвитку та соціальної справедливості, зрештою виступає за освітній ландшафт, який дає всім людям можливість повністю реалізувати свій потенціал і зробити внесок у більш справедливе та рівноправне суспільство. Охоплюючи сильні сторони та визнаючи обмеження обох точок зору, ми можемо створити освітню систему, яка надає людям можливість долати суспільні бар'єри, а також озброює їх навичками критичного мислення, необхідними для того, щоб кинути виклик і зруйнувати репресивні структури, сприяючи більш справедливому та рівноправному суспільству.

**Ключові слова:** *філософія, освіта, слідування професійному покликанню, прогрес прав темношкірих, справедливе та рівноправне суспільство, расова нерівність, Букер Т. Вашингтон, В. Е. Б. Дю Буа.*

---

**Carroll, La Shun L.,** D.D.S. (graduating Cum Laude, from the University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine), Ed.M. (Science and the Public from the University at Buffalo Graduate School of Education), B.A. (*Magna Cum Laude* from Baruch College, CUNY, majoring in both Philosophy and Natural Science). He is a full member of Sigma Xi, the Scientific Research Honor Society. Dr. Carroll was also an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at Saint Michael's

College in Vermont. Research interests: metaphysics, logic, science, technology, and education.

E-mail: [lc Carroll@buffalo.edu](mailto:lc Carroll@buffalo.edu)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4132-6392>

**Керролл, Ла Шун Л.**, доктор наук з хірургії у стоматології (закінчив з відзнакою Школу стоматологічної медицини Університету Буффало), магістр з освіти (спеціальність «наука та громадськість», Вища школа освіти Університету Буффало), бакалавр гуманітаристики (з великою відзнакою, Барух коледж, Університет міста Нью Йорк, за спеціальністю як філософія, так і природничі науки). Він є дійсним членом Сигма Ксі, Почесного товариства наукових досліджень. Доктор Керролл також був ад'юнкт-професором кафедри біологічних наук коледжу Святого Майкла у Вермонті. Наукові інтереси: метафізика, логіка, наука, технології та освіта.

E-mail: [lc Carroll@buffalo.edu](mailto:lc Carroll@buffalo.edu)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4132-6392>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31874/2309-1606-2024-30-2-10>  
УДК 1.37:17.01

**Андрій Шевчук**

## Моральна проблематика освіченого громадянства у контексті філософії освіти



Моральна проблематика формування освіченого громадянства є досить актуальною для українського суспільства; вона знаходиться у проблемному полі філософії освіти, що є методологічним орієнтиром формування світогляду особистості. У статті зроблено спробу окреслити понятійно-категоріальний апарат освіченого громадянства, зокрема уточнено значення термінів «громадянство» і «громадянськість». Громадянськість визначено як моральну якість особистості через свідоме виконання цивільних обов'язків і боргу перед державою та суспільством. Також зазначено, як громадянська соціалізація особистості пов'язана з культурою громадянства, що полягає в наявності набору чеснот: законослухняність, лояльність, общинність, патріотизм, любов до батьківщини, інтернаціоналізм. У роботі стверджується, що філософія освіти, маючи широкий арсенал методологічного інструментарію для формування світогляду людини-громадянина, може скеровувати освітньо-виховні процеси в українській спільноті. Громадянська освіта й виховання мають здійснюватися шляхом створення демократичного освітнього середовища на основі європейських цінностей: повага до людської гідності, свобода, демократія, рівність, верховенство права, повага до прав людини. У висновках зазначено, що проблема формування освіченого громадянства в Україні вимагає комплексного вирішення як владними структурами, так і освітніми інституціями. Розкриття теоретичних засад формування особистості людини-громадянина, окреслення соціокультурних детермінант формування громадянського суспільства, визначення прикладних аспектів освіченого громадянства в Україні дозволять побудувати освітньо-виховну модель нового українського суспільства.

**Ключові слова:** філософія освіти, громадянство, громадянськість, громадянська соціалізація, культура громадянства, громадянська освіта, громадянське виховання.

### Вступ

Сучасне становище вітчизняного суспільства потребує світоглядних змін як на особистісному, так і на колективному рівні. Відтак особливої ваги набувають загальнолюдські (європейські) морально-етичні цін-

© Андрій Шевчук, 2024