



**Jacqueline M. Moore.** *Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. DuBois, and the Struggle for Racial Uplift.* Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2003. xix + 195 pp. \$25.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8420-2995-7; \$80.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8420-2994-0.



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## Uplifting the Race

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Jacqueline Moore has written an interesting analysis of the early twentieth-century conflict between Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois over how to uplift African Americans from the racism and discrimination that they faced. This book is a synthesis of the last thirty-five years of scholarship on the lives of these two men and it is very well done. Although the book is written primarily for a student audience and for usage in courses primarily in American or African-American history survey courses, professional historians will also find the book useful as a compact assessment of the historic conflict between Washington and DuBois.

Moore's goal in analyzing this historic conflict is to present readers with a broader understanding of it. Moreover, she wants "to explain in more detail a conflict which most textbooks only briefly outline and to place it in broader historical context" (p. xix). She achieves this goal in a number of ways. First, she places the conflict within the context of the emerging racial segregation that African Americans confronted in the early-twentieth century. Then, she analyzes the personalities,

educational backgrounds, and philosophies of Washington and DuBois. Finally, she also presents the viewpoints of Washington's and DuBois's African-American and white allies and contemporaries. Thus, in this manner she broadens the reader's viewpoint on the conflict by showing how it was not just a disagreement between the two men over educational philosophy and how best to challenge segregation and uplift the race, but also one that involved personality conflicts, misunderstandings, and personal vendettas.

Moore organizes the book into five chapters. The first chapter addresses the rise of segregation in both pre- and post-Civil War American society. She shows how racism, segregation, and discrimination affected the lives of African Americans and how these three evils reached their peak when DuBois and Washington were coming of age as leaders among African Americans. In two more chapters, she analyzes the early lives and educational backgrounds of both DuBois and Washington, and shows how they emerged as leaders among the African-American elite. Then, she carefully documents how the conflict between the two developed over the nature of

education for African Americans, their participation in politics, and their quest for equality in American life. Finally, in a very unique manner, which sets the book apart from others that have sought to address this conflict, she shows that there were other African Americans who proposed and pursued other strategies (including emigration to Africa) to address the issue of racial uplift for African Americans.[1]

She concludes the book by offering documents, primarily letters and essays, which document what each man as well as others had to say about African-American life in the early twentieth century. These documents are a very important part of the book. Indeed, it enables the reader to draw his or her own conclusions about the conflict and even to take sides. The documents humanize the participants in the conflict: several documents show how Washington used spies and his political influence to harass and intimidate DuBois and his supporters; others show how DuBois and his supporters sought to discredit Washington with inflammatory charges and unfounded accusations.

Overall, Moore's book does a very good job of explaining the complexity of the conflict between DuBois and Washington. Moreover, by including a chapter that analyzes the positions of other African-American leaders and activists such as Kelly Miller, Mary Church Terrell, Alexander Crummell, and even those who advocated that African Americans emigrate to Africa to escape American racism and segregation, she shows that African Americans had more options for "racial uplift" than those offered by DuBois and Washington.

For those of us who teach American and African-American history survey courses from the perspective of the "conflict thesis" this will be a very valuable resource. It will provide students analysis and documentation, as well as an interpretation of how the ongoing racial conflict in American society bred not only ideological and violent conflict between blacks and whites, but also intragroup conflict among various factions in the African-American community. As noted above, this is the type of complexity that students need to learn and understand. Moore's book shows literally that many issues in American history are not just "black and white," but many shades of gray that require in-depth analysis in order to understand them fully.

I strongly recommend the book for American and African-American history survey courses. Those of us who have had students read DuBois's *The Souls of Black*

*Folk* and Washington's *Up From Slavery* in order to provide them a perspective on early twentieth-century race relations not available in most American history textbooks can now use this book as a condensed, but very adequate substitute.[2] Students will not only receive a broader understanding of the conflict, but also be able to read and interpret it beyond the perspectives of the two central protagonists. In addition, the book is well written, easy to read, and accompanied by a bibliographic essay that will lead students to the recent historiography and primary sources that further illuminate the DuBois-Washington conflict.

Perhaps the only misgiving that I have about substituting Moore's book for one that I have used before is the price. Students can purchase DuBois's *Souls of Black Folk* and Washington's *Up From Slavery* (as well as James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of An Ex-Colored Man*) in *Three Negro Classics* for only \$6.95 in the paperback version (see note [2]). The paperback version of Moore's book costs almost three times as much and the hardback version is very costly for such a small volume. Nevertheless, as noted above, the analysis that Moore provides and the documents included in the book make the paperback version a very worthwhile addition to the reading list for American and African-American survey courses.

#### Notes

[1]. The DuBois-Washington conflict has been well documented and analyzed in a number of sources. The best analyses are those of August Meier, *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1971); Francis L. Broderick, "The Gnawing Dilemma: Separation and Integration, 1865-1925," in *Key Issues in the Afro-American Experience*, vol. 2, *Since 1865*, ed. Nathan I. Huggins, Martin Kilson, and Daniel M. Fox (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1971); John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*, 7th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997); and David L. Lewis, *W. E. B. DuBois: Biography of A Race, 1868-1919* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993).

[2]. Both of these books by DuBois and Washington are in a convenient and inexpensive paperback entitled *Three Negro Classics* (New York: Avon Books, 1999). The third "classic" in the book is James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of An Ex-Colored Man*, originally published in 1912.

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