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Alridge, Derrick P. (2008) *The Educational Thought of W.E.B. Du Bois: An Intellectual History*. New York, New York: Teachers College Press.

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Derrick P. Alridge provides an intellectual history of W.E.B. DuBois in terms that other historians or biographers have not fully considered. Alridge looks upon Du Bois as a “pragmatic educational theorist who developed original ideas and adapted many ideas of his time to forge educational strategies aimed at improving the social, economic, and political conditions of African Americans” (1). In *The Educational Thought of W.E.B. Du Bois: An Intellectual History*, Alridge challenges readers to reconsider the lasting accomplishments of Du Bois in educational terms. Alridge provides an important analysis of Du Bois’ educational thought as it developed throughout his life as a scholar, professor, and activist committed to the social, economic, and political equality of all people. Through a careful historical study that

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closely examines Du Bois' unpublished essays, correspondence, and Du Bois' proximity to other black educational thinkers, Alridge makes important interventions with this text and presents a more thorough understanding of Du Bois' thought by illustrating the fluidity of his continually evolving philosophy as it responded to the changing context of American social, economic, and political conditions.

As an intellectual history, this work makes an important contribution to the biographical work of Du Bois completed by Francis Broderick, (1959) Elliot Rudwick (1960), David Lewis (1993, 2000), and Manning Marable (2005) because the book closely examines the trajectory of Du Bois developing and rich educational philosophy. Moreover, Alridge's explicit focus on education makes for an analytical intervention that builds upon the edited volumes of Du Bois' writings on education (Aptheker, 1973; Provenzo, 2002). As such, *The Educational Thought of W.E.B. Du Bois* is an important text for historians, educational historians, and educators interested in W.E.B. Du Bois.

The first part of this book examines the primary education of W.E.B. Du Bois in Great Barrington, Massachusetts and the pursuit of higher education at Fisk University, Harvard University, and the University of Berlin (11-32). The opening chapters of the book are critical to understanding the foundational thought of Du Bois' philosophy, which consisted of "class formation and the process by which blacks would obtain higher social and economic status" (21). Du Bois in these formative years developed a strong belief in liberal and classical education, but also a keen understanding of Hegelian dialectics and the German influenced social scientific method that drove so much of Du Bois' earliest and most lasting contributions. It was during this phase of his early career that Du Bois fully dedicated himself to utilizing social scientific methods to solve the "Negro problem," in part by carefully cultivating a talented core of black leadership that led to racial uplift.

The second part of the book places Du Bois' educational thought within the rapidly changing social, economic, and political context between 1895 and 1920. In the process, Alridge places Du Bois in the context of Progressive thought, epitomized by the educational philosophy of John

Dewey (39-42). The Progressive Era also witnessed the full force of Du Bois' social scientific work, which criticized the pseudo-scientific work used to justify Jim Crow laws and the relegation of African Americans to second-class citizenship. For instance, Du Bois' scathing critique of Frederick L. Hoffman's *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro* (1897) illustrated the critical trajectory Du Bois would take in his scholarship and activism, which soon led to the publication of *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899). Aldridge also contextualizes Du Bois' burgeoning educational thought by placing him in conversation with prominent black educators, including Alexander Crummell, Anna Julia Cooper, Kelly Miller, and Nannie Helen Burroughs (51-60). This contextualization illustrates the ideological debate among educators, demonstrating that, for Du Bois, industrial education should be a *part* of the curriculum, but liberal education and a carefully cultivated cadre of black leaders should be the primary aims of education, providing African Americans "with an intellectual grounding in black history and culture to strengthen black individual and collective identity and to guard against the ravishes that white supremacy could have on black people" (67).

The third part of the book explores the continued development of Du Bois' thought during the interwar years. Between 1920 and 1940, Du Bois' continued to forge a comprehensive educational philosophy, marked during this period by ideological affiliation with "New Negro" consciousness and a growing pragmatic concern for developing notions of voluntary separate schooling. In addition, Du Bois incorporated Marxist influenced ideas of black economic cooperation in his analysis (76-85). Aldridge continues to broaden his analysis in this section by placing Du Bois in conversation with leading black pedagogues including Alain Locke, Carter G. Woodson, Mary McLeod Bethune, Charles Thompson, Horace Mann Bond, and the white social reconstructionists, including George Counts and William Heard Kilpatrick (86-99). This contextualization frames an extensive educational plan that developed a base of critical consciousness, pragmatic concern, and independent economic considerations that served as the foundations for the Civil Rights Movement of the next generation.

In the fourth and final part of his analysis, Alridge contextualizes the concluding phase of Du Bois' evolving philosophy within the shifting geopolitical dynamics of the Cold War and the pragmatic concerns of the Civil Rights Movement. Du Bois cautioned the need for controlled desegregation policy and raised critical questions about the logic of nonviolence protest (115-117). Du Bois also expressed adamant support for Pan African unification and solidarity, in which he advocated for an Afrocentric and Pan African education, which connected to his initial social scientific goals to confront white supremacy and the ideological tension inherent to double consciousness (129-132). This stage of pedagogical development includes both a revised notion of the "Talented Tenth," - a "Guiding Hundredth" - and a Marxist reassertion of understanding economics in order to explore alternatives to capitalism (127-129). Alridge concludes his study by examining the pervasive influence of Du Bois on black studies programs led by James Stewart and Molefi Asante, in addition to the important interventions made by historians of education including James Anderson, Christopher Span, and Vanessa Siddle-Walker, among others (137-143).

Alridge is successful in documenting the evolving educational thought of W.E.B. Du Bois, which is not an easy task considering Du Bois was never consistently explicit as to what his educational thought was. In the process, Alridge makes important interventions with this text, not the least of which is skillfully complicating the oversimplified binary of Du Bois and Booker T. Washington. Through a close study of Du Bois' published works, but more importantly, his unpublished manuscripts (notably at the Du Bois collection at Fisk University) and correspondence, Alridge reconstructs an educational philosophy that always advocated for full equality, but maintained a commitment to both traditional and Progressive ideals. One of the most important methodological interventions Alridge makes is placing Du Bois in context of the many Progressive educators who sought to shape black education and American education broadly conceived. One result of this is the fact that Du Bois' educational thought cannot simply be understood in opposition to that of Booker T. Washington. Indeed, Du Bois developed a philosophy in response to many educators, including Alexander Crummell, Anna Julia

Cooper, Kelly Miller, Nannie Helen Burroughs, Alain Locke, Carter G. Woodson, Mary McLeod Bethune, Horace Mann Bond, and George Counts. This larger intellectual contextualization does much to complicate and advance our understanding of Du Bois. Alridge demonstrates both continuity and change as Du Bois consistently advocated for vocational or industrial education within a larger context of liberal education, but advocated for more committed leadership dedicated to dismantling white supremacy not just across the United State, but by the end of his life, across the globe. Beyond illustrating the development of one educator, this book also supports implicit arguments about the central role of education to the Long Civil Rights Movement. By examining the evolving and ever-changing educational thought of Du Bois, Alridge traces the development of a pedagogy from the late nineteenth century to the middle of the 1960s, the traditional periodization of the Civil Rights Movement. This history makes the important point that the traditional phase of the movement (1954-1968) was not the sole incubator of education for freedom, but rather the latest manifestation of progressive educational thought that consistently advocated for freedom since the late nineteenth century.

Alongside these very important interventions, Alridge at times does not go far enough in his analysis. Indeed, for the broader interventions this makes both in educational history and long civil rights movement historiography, Alridge's 189-page text makes for a short history when in fact more contextual and content-based analysis is called for. In particular, the contextualization of Du Bois among other educators, which effectively dismantles the Du Bois-Washington dichotomy, leaves questions as to the extent these educators and theorists directly influenced one another, which seems an appropriate question to ask of an intellectual history. Furthermore, as education during the Civil Rights Movement begins to warrant more attention from historians, Alridge perhaps missed an opportunity to fully explicate how Du Bois meaningfully shaped conceptions of education for freedom during the 1950s and 1960s phase of the movement. Such interventions could have pushed our understandings of education in profound ways.

By the texts conclusion, however, it becomes clear that Alridge provides a very important analysis and delineation of W.E.B. Du Bois' educational thought. This book is critical for foundations of education scholars who present the traditional dichotomous Du Bois-Washington relationship that is too often used to represent black education ideologies during the Jim Crow era. This book is also important for historians interested in continuing to explore the tenets and nature of the Long Civil Rights Movement, especially the centrality of education as a critical site of racial, cultural, and ideological contestation. Beyond these specific academic circles, Alridge is an articulate author who engages primary sources and the socio-political context of his subject in a way that is meaningful, accessible, and informative to all readers. *The Educational Thought of W.E.B. Du Bois* is a well-written and supported text that makes important contributions to the field of education and history.

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