Democratic Leadership of the Subalterns

Charles Battaglini
Columbia University
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Abstract: *This paper puts Du Bois's work on leadership in discussion with Gramsci's ideas on the party in a way that highlights the democratic and emancipatory potential of a theory of leadership of the subaltern. They see leadership as the formulation of a worldview that can sustain the passions and agential capacity of the subaltern masses. Leaders have to navigate the area between wishful thinking and despair. On the one hand, despair, skepticism, and fatalism as based on real experiences and the context of the existing state of affairs, on the other, despair and passivity are instrumental in maintaining this situation. To deal with this, Gramsci and Du Bois rely on political expressivism where leaders do not react immediately to the explicit preferences of their followers but instead formulate a worldview that aims to express the needs and grievances of their followers and at the same time provide a conception of the world that can address them. The worldview makes an appeal to the judgment of followers to create and sustain the collective action necessary to shape the world. Gramsci and Du Bois see this form of leadership as distinct from both direct representation and forms of individual charismatic leadership. While charismatic leadership aims to create trust and passions amongst followers in their leader, Du Bois and Gramsci's conception bases the trust not in individual leadership but in the worldview and in the subaltern's own capacity to bring it about.*

Introduction[1]

There is a tension between democracy and leadership one that seems either to deny the agency of voters and represented or of leaders and representatives. If the representatives and leaders are tethered to the preferences of voters they aren't meaningfully agential leaders. But if they respond to an idealized version of voters, the latter aren't agents (Bentley, 1908; Beerbohm, 2015: 641; Peisajovich, 2020; 2024). This problem is accentuated for the subalterns, especially the most marginalized of them, that view themselves from the eyes of the ruling groups as an un-agential. In a recent paper, Beerbohm offered a conception of leadership compatible with democracy that alleviates this tension. Leadership, according to him, creates or sustains a joint commitment towards an ideal amongst followers and coordinates political action towards it (Beerbohm, 2015: 642). This chapter presents Gramsci and Du Bois's conception of leadership along similar lines. Leadership, for them, aims to create and coordinate commitments and actions amongst the subalterns and in doing so it affirms and enacts the agency of subalterns. Gramsci and Du Bois put a special emphasis on the coordination aspect and ideas of implementing an effective plan that takes into account the long-term aspect of the struggle. They are

[1] The references to Gramsci's Notes follow the common format using Q (Quaderni) to refer to the notebook and § for the section. Q11§52 thus refers to notebook 11 note 52. I sometimes will add a reference to the selections from the notebooks, for example, Q11§52/SPN 410-414, when the entire notebook has not been translated. Early Gramsci scholars often referred directly to the page number in the Gerratana edition, which is problematic because one page often has several important notes. Furthermore, the reference to the page number translates less well across edited selections of the Notebooks and more recent translations like that of Joseph Buttigieg.

Abbreviations Gramsci:
BvI-III: *Prison Notebooks*, edited by Joseph Buttigieg volume 1-3
FPN: *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*
LP1-2: *Letters from Prison* volume 1-2
PP1: *Selections from Political Writings, 1910-1920*
PP2: *Selections from Political Writings, 1921-1926*
PPW: *Pre-Prison Writings*
Q: *Quaderni dal Carcere* volume 1-4
SCW: *Selections from Cultrual Writings*
SPN: *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*

Abbreviations Du Bois :
BRA: *Black Reconstruction in America*
Conservation: *The Conservation of Races* in *Writings*
Darkwater: Darkwater: *Voices from within the Veil*
Development: *The Development of a People*
DoD: *Dusk of Dawn*
Gift: *The Gift of Black Folk: The Negroes in the Making of America*
Souls: *The Souls of Black Folk*
W/S: *The Souls of Black Folk* in *Writings*
W: *Writings*

especially worried that failed attempts of leadership do not only fail to create collective action but reinforce the view of the subaltern of themselves as lacking agency. Both Gramsci and Du Bois worry about defeatism and fatalism that arise not only from the failure of leaders to see the possibility for change but also when they overestimate this possibility. Following this view, the agency of leaders, their ability to coordinate and impact their followers' action is not a limit to the agency of their followers but precisely constitutive of it. This chapter thus presents the role of leadership in Gramsci and Du Bois's theory and endeavor to ensure permanent passions. To do so leaders need to organize around a world view that expresses the needs, grievances, and historical experiences of the followers, this entails a shared epistemic labor where leaders need to learn from their followers in order to formulate a new conception of the world that, on its turn, can move followers into shaping their world.

In the first part of the chapter, I present Gramsci's theory of the *Modern Prince* as a conception of leadership that aims to create a commitment and coordinate efforts to achieve this commitment amongst the subaltern. What is crucial to the concept of the *Modern Prince* is that it does not simply aggregate preferences but influences them by presenting a new possible worldview but also by enacting it, at least partially. Therefore for Gramsci, the political party was already an expression of this aim to create a collective will that unites different groups, while the Talented Tenth in Du Bois were a lived denial of all white supremacist prejudices. This presents two problems; the first is that to formulate such a plan leaders cannot base themselves on the explicit preferences of the led since those preferences will precisely be modified. To avoid this problem Gramsci and Du Bois rely on political expressivism, an idea that politics and politicians should reflect the deepest commitment but keep as the ultimate arbiter for the legitimacy of leaders the judgment of the followers. This requires expressivism to have an epistemic role, namely to understand followers would reject a plan instead of claiming *a priori* legitimate leadership. The second problem is that failure of leadership is not simply a failure of a project but also takes away a model that denies the status quo. This means that failure of leadership reinforces a view of the world as unchangeable thus creating fatalism. Expressivist leadership in Gramsci and Du Bois has thus a double epistemic aspect that relates to Gramsci's idea of the pessimism of the intellect and the optimism of the will. The pessimism of the intellect relates to a necessity to understand how the world is, while the optimism of the will relates to the necessity to understand the malleability of the world, to fail in such leadership thus means fail to understand something about the world but also the failure to correct false beliefs about the world. I illustrate in the third part of the chapter this double epistemic aspect by discussing some of the works of Du Bois.

Leadership in Gramsci and Du Bois

Modern Prince and Collective Leadership

Gramsci's theory of leadership provides an alternative to conceptions that focus on individual charismatic leaders but it does not reject the importance of passions falling into a technocratic conception. Gramsci sees leadership not as residing in individuals but in a collective, namely the political party, *The Modern Prince* and the organic intellectuals forming it, and views it as its ability to organize and express the views of the subalterns to create permanent passions (Q13§1/SPN 133). Therefore, while Gramsci does not reject a theory of leadership or certain authority that emanates from successful leadership,[2] but views it as a form of successful organizing.[3] Du Bois's Talented Tenth similarly assigns the task of leadership to a group presented as educators not only because of their credentials but more importantly because of how they reflect and reformulate the conception of the self for African Americans despite the historical background of slavery and Jim Crow.[4]

The *Modern Prince* was the title that Gramsci had in mind for a book conceived and organized along the lines of Machiavelli's *Prince*. The *Prince* does not present a historical example but formulates the qualities and duties of a concrete personage, the ideal *condottiere*, necessary to achieve a certain goal, the creation of a collective will, the unity of different groups with a common overlapping purpose.[5] The *Modern Prince*, in contrast to the *Prince*, focuses on political parties and formulates the character and duties they need to achieve the goal of creating a collective will uniting Italy. The interesting aspect is that, according to Gramsci, the book itself is a part of what needs to be done, the work itself is a

[2] For a critique of leaderless theories of movements, parties, and democracy see Peisjachovich 2020 and 2024.

[3] As many have rightly pointed out before, Gramsci conceptualizes intellectuals not based on their background but on their function of organizer (see, amongst others Crehan, 2002: 131-137; Thomas, 2010: 414-416)

[4] Du Bois writes: 'They stood as living examples of the possibilities of the Negro race, their own hard experiences as well-wrought culture said silently more than all the drawn periods of orators – they were the men who made American slavery impossible.' (W 845) It is true, however, that Du Bois does focus a lot on academic credentials and has an elitist conception of leadership especially in his earlier texts like *Souls* and the *Talented Tenth*. While from *Darkwater* onward, he focuses more on direct input for all through universal voting right (Darkwater 78-108; W (*Votes for Women*) 1158-1160)and he gives experts a more advisory role like in *Dusk of Dawn* (DoD 320), academic credential still remain an important aspect for him as shown in his Memorial Address on the Talented Tenth. In this address to the Sigma Pi Phi fraternity, Du Bois re-assess his earlier idea of the Talented Tenth, for which he criticizes a tacit assumption he had made that knowledge would automatically imply an honest character and pure motives (1948, August 12th: 21). Furthermore, he emphasizes more diversity in age, profession, and income in these groups like the Sigma Pi Phi fraternity (1948, August 12th: 16-23). Nonetheless, a certain form of academic education remains a key aspect of his conception of Black leadership. I discuss more extensively in the next chapter Gramsci and Du Bois's relation to scientific and academic knowledge and how they could see it as a valuable tool for the formulation of a new worldview despite that existing academic and scientific system and institutions are shaped by the existing relations of force.

[5] See previous chapters

contribution to the success of its subject, i.e. the formation of a collective will. It does so because it presents concretely the plan and ways to succeed and at the same time arouses the passions necessary for the success of the plan.[6] Gramsci sees the *Prince* as a historical example of a Sorelian myth and at the same time, he views the creation of a Sorelian myth as the task of the prince/modern prince. Gramsci defines a Sorelian myth as 'a political ideology expressed neither in the form of a cold utopia nor as

[6] So the *Prince* is a characterization of a prince, an ideal condottiere, that would unite Italy, the *Modern Prince* is a formulation of a modern prince, an ideal mass political party that would unite Italy. The project of the *Prince/Modern Prince* is to create a prince/modern prince, that would create a collective will, and in doing so has aspects/elements of the prince/modern prince.
The myth for Sorel was the General Strike (not the revolution), this myth is meant to overcome the limits of language, theoretical, and factual description of socialism and the revolution that could never capture the entirety of Socialism. Instead of capturing the idea of a socialist revolution in words, it captures it as a body of image that then coherently, even though it cannot be put into words, captures the entirety of socialism (Sorel, 2004: 122-123). Sorel argues that the myth does not have to become a fact, it should not be judged on whether it exists but only as a means of acting on the present (Sorel, 2004: 126). He compares it to the myth of the apocalypse in Christian theology and that even though the apocalypse never took place it still worked on individuals to create action (Sorel, 2004: 125). It is interesting to note that the myth is the general strike, not the revolution, similarly, in Gramsci, the myth is the political party. Sorel thus does not put in doubt the possibility of revolution but only of a true general strike. The myth also is only important as a whole. So the parts and elements of the myth, for example, the specific effect of the general strike on this or that industry, are irrelevant as long as the picture, as a whole, impacts the present to move it in the ultimate direction (Sorel, 2004: 126-127). The difference between both is that Sorel identified the myth in practical action while Gramsci saw it in organizing. Gramsci criticizes Sorel that the general strike is negative and relies on "spontaneity" that actually hides purely mechanistic assumptions and finally that this abstract character of Sorel comes from an aversion to the Jacobins while they are precisely the embodiment of Machiavelli's Prince (and therefore the myth)(SPN 127-130). How to make sense of these different critiques? To do so we need to look at how Sorel theorizes the link between general strike and revolution.
According to Sorel, the general strike will lead to the revolution for three reasons. First, the general strike puts in clear light the contradiction dividing society clearly into two groups overcoming technical aspects, for example, the idea that the administrative class is technically a part of the proletariat as wage-earners. Second, it frames every conflict in terms of class conflict. Third, it does not allow for reformism and thus for confusion and blurring of the cleavage line (Sorel, 2004: 132-135). This aspect of Sorel's theory is then negative, in that the general strike does not create the organization to sustain the collective will, except to the extent that the realization of the cleavage would automatically lead to the revolution. This is why Gramsci argues that behind the spontaneity and idealism of Sorel, i.e. his focus on improvised, leaderless actions based on ideas and passions, lays a mechanistic assumption of the necessity and the automatism of the revolution. The party then forms a collective will that asserts itself in action like the general strike of Sorel but also begins to take concrete forms. It is an organization with programs and plans (Q13§1/SPN 127-130). So here Gramsci compares the party with the Jacobins who were able to formulate such a concrete program and link it to a new worldview. While the Sorelian myth is an expression of the collective will, the action that needs to be taken towards the revolution, the Prince and the party is not only that expression but also the organizer of that movement that creates the organization and discipline necessary to make the passion awoken by the myth permanent (Q13§1/SPN 133). Therefore, in contrast to Sorel where the myth should be judged only on its impact on action, for Gramsci it needs to take concrete form and existence to ensure permanent passions.
Gramsci thus does not see this idea of Sorelian myth as a form of a noble lie. Through his prison notebooks, he voices on several occasions critique against such ideas of noble lies. Against religion, he points out the paradox that groups in society are fed different worldviews and that it could create a situation where no one believes these noble lies but act as if, in order to be considerate towards others that one assumes still believe in the lie (see Q8§155). More importantly for the topic at hand is that Gramsci does not think that such lie can be maintained for long, instead they create either resignation or have to be based on some co-optation (see chapter 2).

learned theorizing, but rather by a creation of concrete phantasy which acts on a dispersed and shattered people to arouse and organize its collective will' (Q13§1/SPN 126). To present a shattered people as a collective is then already the first step to bring them together, this makes the *Prince* not only a plan for a prince but part of the prince's work (see Q11§12/SPN 333).

While Gramsci borrowed the concept of *Myth* from Sorel he also makes the seemingly paradoxical critique of both being too idealist and too materialist, arguing that behind Sorel's idea of spontaneity there lies a maximum determinism. Gramsci rejects Sorel's view of the myth as purely negative, as a pure formation of cleavages, instead, Gramsci argues for the construction of a positive program. Without this, the myth, as defined by Sorel as pure spontaneity could only lead to socialism and communism if we assume a deterministic and theological history. In other words, without plan and consciousness, spontaneous will can only necessarily lead to communism if it is no will at all but only the reflection of a deterministic logic of history. However, Gramsci, there is confronted to the paradox that when to theorize passions would lead to rationalizing them and thus to dissipate passions.

This aspect of permanent passion is one of the core reasons why Gramsci thinks only the political party can be the Modern Prince and not individual charismatic leaders. With this Gramsci intervenes in a debate between Croce and Sorel, where the former criticizes myths for being too ephemeral, the idea is that once a myth is theorized it is superseded, the rationality takes away the passion necessary for the existence of a myth. Theorizing passions would then dissipate them which would mean that politics as passion can only be momentary and ephemeral. Gramsci criticizes Croce for conflating parties and individuals, arguing that the former can sustain passion and thus the myth necessary for a Prince (Q7§39). Croce, according to Gramsci, is correct in pointing out the ephemeral character of passion when one focuses on individual and individual leadership (Q8§56). Gramsci thus moves away from individual charismatic leadership to party leadership to ensure the permanence of the passion. Charismatic individuals have still relevance in the formation of a collective will but their role diminishes to such a point that any one of them can disappear without threatening the cement that holds the group together (Q7§12/BvIII165 Q13§1/SPN129-130). For Gramsci, the era of charismatic leadership was at an end. Already in his pre-prison writing, he wrote that the 'age of the Caesars is coming to an end in the domain of production: the masses are no longer content to work away passively' (PPW 218). Charismatic leaders with passionate speeches can, according to Gramsci, steer up

the passions and emotions of a group, but he thinks that after some time these emotions cool down and create distrust in the listener (Q16§21/ SCW 381).[7]

Gramsci's worry with permanent passions reflects his view that the struggle for hegemony is a long-term process that involves first a war of position. He was thus critical of those who would become too enthusiastic about the possibility for an easy and quick solution to the class struggle. This was a direct reflection of his own experience where overconfidence in the imminence of the revolution led the Italian Communist Party to send cadres in exile back to Italy where they were immediately arrested by Mussolini's fascist government (Anderson, 2017: 117-118).[8] But his position on the importance of organization and clear-minded action is already present before his prison writings. As he writes in his 1920 *Address to the Anarchists*, the motto of *L'Ordine Nuovo*: 'pessimism of the intelligence, optimism of the will' refers to their failure to take into account the dire situation of the working class and to organize accordingly (see PW1 185-189; BvI 474-475). The lack of 'pessimism of the intelligence' is not only problematic to have a project come to fruition but also because it creates fatalism and resignation. In Note 63 of Notebook 1, Gramsci describes such leaders that fail to show pessimism of the intelligence as those who become exuberant with every new idea and quick solution but also fall into despair when confronted with the harshness of reality (Q1§63/BvI 172). These leaders either formulate a view of the world as unchangeable or find refuge in a mechanistic conception of the world where they think that the revolution and change will one day occur automatically and necessarily. But Gramsci criticizes this also as a form of fatalism, against which he writes: 'Basically, because the "subaltern" who yesterday was a "thing" is now no longer a "thing" but a "historical person"; whereas yesterday he was not responsible because he was "resisting" an extraneous will, he is now responsible, no longer a "resister" but an active agent. But was he ever mere "resistance", mere "thing", mere "nonresponsibility"? Certainly not.' (Q8§205) The alternative to direct confrontation is thus, according to Gramsci, not simply passively

[7] In this note (Q16§21/SCW 380-385) Gramsci discusses the value of conversations and oratory in convincing people and affecting their beliefs. He argues that although verbal (and also visual) means of communication like speeches, theater, cinema, etc… can create a greater emotional response than the writing text the response is more superficial and less in-depth. This analysis might betray a 'literary' conception of culture present in Italy at the time of Gramsci (see the comments of the editors in SCW 345), and begs the question of the validity of this claim in our modern-day where visual media are omnipresent.

[8] Unable, due to the censors, to address the immediate political situation, Gramsci describes the failure of his own party by analyzing the condition of political prisoners during the Risorgimento. He writes: 'In other words, they lacked political passion, which must not be confused with fanaticism or sectarianism, which they had in abundance.' (Q6§21/BvIII 95).

waiting for the conditions to be right, instead, it is organization and assessment of what strategy works well under what conditions.[9]

This worry about the fleeting passions of charismatic leadership that overlook the importance and difficulties of organization is present in Du Bois's writing too. In the same year as Gramsci was writing his address to the Anarchists but thousands of miles away, Du Bois would write a similar critique against Marcus Garvey. Du Bois argues that while Gravey's aims are good, he fails to present a realistic plan to achieve them which then leads to failure which ends up promoting fatalism. In one of his earlier and more nuanced critiques on Garvey,[10] Du Bois does give his intellectual opponent some credit. He recognizes that Garvey is a dynamic force in his movement that represents and captured the interests of black peasants of the West Indies that constantly had their leaders being co-opted by the white English world on the Islands. Furthermore, he acknowledges that Garvey is an excellent orator whose eloquence stirs thousands of men into action (W 971-972).[11] Du Bois's worry with Garvey is thus not that he appeals to passions but instead that it is all on such shaky foundations and does not have the potential to become a permanent passion. He writes: 'The present financial plight of an inexperienced and headstrong promoter [Garvey] may therefore decide the fate of the whole movement. This would be a calamity. Garvey is the beloved leader of tens of thousands of poor bewildered people who have been cheated all their lives. His failure would mean a blow to their faith, and a loss to their little savings, which it would take generations to undo. […] when Garvey forges ahead and almost single-handed attempts to realize his dream in a few years, with large words and wild gestures, he grievously minimizes his task and endangers his cause.' (W 977) Like with the project of the Freedman's Bank,

[9] Gramsci argues that what works for groups that have the support of the ruling class, namely the fascists, does not necessarily work for the subaltern. So he opposes the idea of *arditi del popolo*, which was an organization of veterans that aimed to oppose the veteran groups supporting Mussolini. The term *arditi* originally referred to volunteer assault troops that were used in World War I (BvI 448). That Gramsci opposed the use of *arditi* for the left was because it implied that the state would passively remain neutral in the conflict between right and left-wing veteran groups. But since the right-wing *arditi* support the interest of the ruling class, according to Gramsci, similar opposition from the left would encounter not only the right-wing veteran organizations but also the coercive apparatus of the state (Q1§133; see also PW2 56-58). Following this note, Gramsci wrote one of the rare notes with a somewhat positive assessment of Gandhi's movement. He refers to it as a war of position that takes into account the situation in India and transforms into a war of maneuver (in this case a general strike not a violent revolution), when necessary and tactically useful (Q1§134/BvI 219).

[10] Du Bois wrote this piece after Garvey gave a speech to Madison Square Garden, which Du Bois may have attended. This was the time that animosity between the two men was not yet at its high point but that Du Bois took an interest in Garvey's movement. Du Bois even sent a questionnaire to Garvey in order to present the UNIA to the NAACP readership (See Lewis, 2000: 66).

[11] Note that while Du Bois sees Garvey as creating support, he also argues that his supporters are mostly West-Indian immigrants that are not fully acquainted with the situation in America (see Du Bois, February 1923: 15). This reflects like Gramsci an idea that charismatic leaders can move people, but only to a limited extent, that when the passions cool off people reject the utopist ideas.

Garvey's failure would create a lasting psychological effect on the Blacks' trust in financial institutions and attitudes to saving (W 967).[12]

This critique of Garvey shouldn't be seen as accepting the status quo. Du Bois namely criticizes those leaders after the Reconstruction who '"decried" politics and preached submission' (BRA, 692-693) Du Bois was thus equally critical of Marcus Garvey as he was of Booker T Washington. Although the two movements were different, Garvey was radically against integration while Washington advocated for unconditional assimilation, they both fail in the same way. Du Bois pointed out these commonalities in 1923 after the downfall of Garvey's movement and just before his trial: 'The present generation of Negroes has survived two grave temptations – the greater one fathered by Booker T. Washington which said: Let politics alone, keep in your place, work hard and do not complain: and which meant perpetual color caste for colored folk by their own cooperation and consent and the consequent inevitable debauchery of the white world: and the lesser fathered by Marcus Garvey which said Give up! Surrender! The struggle is useless; back to Africa and fight the white world.' (Du Bois, February 1923: 18) The persona of Marcus Garvey and Booker T Washington illustrate two different shortcomings in leadership, the first lacks the pessimism of the intelligence, a failure to understand the reality of the world and thus what is required to change it, while the latter lacks the optimism of the will, the realization of the necessity of change. Although different in content both are failures of leadership that lead to the same account: defeatism and fatalism.

To summarize I have argued that the role of leadership in Gramsci and Du Bois's work is to create permanent passion, this is done through organization around ideals and views of the subalterns. To do so leaders should show both an optimism of the will and a pessimism of the intellect, in other words, understand both the necessity of change and the organizational requirements imposed by the difficulties of the social reality. Failure in leadership brings the risk of confirming the status quo and reinforcing a fatalistic view of the world that sees change as impossible. For Gramsci and Du Bois, it is then crucial that leaders have a thorough understanding of the state of the world, the situation of the led, but also of the aims and ideals of those led. But how can leaders be responsive to these views of the led when they precisely aim to modify the explicit preferences of their followers? The later Du Bois sees elections as playing a crucial role in this, he argues that only the sufferer knows their own suffering and thus must be given a voice to express it (Darkwater: 83). But this takes preferences as too static. Leaders responding to an everyday plebiscite would be a mere aggregation of expressed preferences without

[12] Both in *Souls* (W 388) and *Black Reconstruction* (600) Du Bois describes the long-term psychological effect of the crash of the Freedmen's Bank, arguing that it eroded all faith that freed slaves had towards saving and financial institutions.

any agency. However, the existence of a leader, a Modern Prince, already influences the preferences of the followers. So the question is: on what should leaders base themselves to formulate plans, worldviews, and commitments that move their followers?

I argue that Gramsci and Du Bois rely on a form of political expressivism, which Charles Larmore defines as the requirement 'that a political order expresses our personal ideal, in the sense that its highest ideal must mirror or coincide with what are in general our deepest commitments (Larmore, 1987: 91). By capturing the deepest commitment of a group, expressivism aims to address not the preferences as they are but as they could be given a set of concrete actions that would impact the world. Moreover, I take political expressivism in Gramsci and Du Bois to have also an epistemic aspect. To put it bluntly, the aim is not only that leaders can say "you should want xyz", but also to ask "what are the issues with xyz that makes it that you reject them?". I read their expressivism in such a way because they always see the judgment of the led as the final arbiter for the legitimacy of a plan. Expressivism then helps in creating leadership that has the optimism of the will, they can represent a view of how the world ought to be, together with the pessimism of the intelligence that takes into account the difficulties of bettering the world.[13] Before illustrating based on some of Du Bois's writings how expressivism works and in what sense it is epistemological, I present this theory more in-depth and address some of the criticism against it.

Expressivism and Elitism

Charles Larmore in his book 1987 book *Patterns of Moral Complexity* presents and criticizes different kinds of expressivism the main one stems from the German Romantics, especially Herder, who saw the identity of the people are created antecedently to the state and that state should reflect and nourish those identities.[14] This is the form of expressivism that, according to Robert Gooding-Williams,

[13] Good politicians then need to create concrete plans to achieve their goals that take into account the inevitability of setbacks difficulties and the long-term character of the struggle. This is, according to Gramsci what differentiates Machiavelli from Savonarola. He characterizes Machiavelli not only as a political scientist but also as a politician and therefore a passionate man that concerns himself with what "ought to be" in a political, not moralistic sense. The opposition then between Savonarola and Machiavelli and is not the that the former is concerned with what "ought to be" and the latter is not, but instead that the latter entails a concrete realistic plan about what "ought to be" while Savonarola remains only abstract and nebulous (Q8§84).

[14] Paul C Taylor identifies three ways in which Du Bois's expressivist commitments manifest themselves: 'First, his social ontology depicts a single human family that develops multiple, evolving ways of being human. Second, this ontology, reminiscent of Johann Gottfried Herder's, informs his picture of normative politics, which holds, among other things, that human collectives have rights and duties of self-determination and self-realization. Finally, the aspect of his thought that might broadly be considered his ethics— his sense of how one ought to carry the existentially fraught burden of constructing an individual life plan, and of how societies ought to organize

characterizes *Souls* and is at the source of Du Bois's elitism. Expressivist models of politics have several issues, one, which is the core of Gooding-Williams's critique of Du Bois, is that it leads to an overly narrow conception of politics based on rule that excludes grassroots politics (Gooding-Williams 9-13). According to Gooding-Williams, Du Bois rejects a criticism model of leadership where the legitimacy of leaders is based on their responsiveness to demands from their followers because he thought that the black masses due to the harms of slavery would lack the capacity and education to competently express their criticism. Larmore's concerns with expressivism are twofold, first, he says that it is incompatible with a liberal model of politics that views the state as having neutrality based on a *modus vivendi* conception of tolerance. Second, he criticizes expressivism for denying pluralism within society and only recognizing pluralism between societies. According to him, political expressivism requires a wholeness in society, it assumes that constitutive moral ties must extend to the entirety of society that expresses a common goal that harmonizes all the different elements of the totality (Larmore, 1987: 96-97). In the case of Du Bois, according to Gooding-Williams's reading, this harmonization can be seen as a form of assimilation project. The deepest commitment of the Black community becomes a desire to be included in American society and share its values, which would be an *a priori* vindication of Du Bois's project and his values (Gooding-Williams, 2009: 153-155, 159-160).[15]

At the core of Gooding-Williams's interpretation of *Souls* is a reading of Du Bois's as presenting the Black masses as a problem in that they would not have developed modern values. The idea is that slavery kept a pre-modern people in a static position without the possibility of developing modern ethical norms. A key aspect of this is the destruction of the family that Du Bois sees as the core institution of ethical development (Development, 2013/1903: 537/304-538/305).[16] But also the

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themselves to support this work— holds that individuals have, or should have, the opportunity for holistic self-development, to experience, as he puts it in one of his clearest statements on the point, "the free enjoyment of every natural appetite."'(Taylor, 2011: 241)

[15] These values of Du Bois are what Kevin Gaines calls *uplift ideology*. Gaines describes this as bourgeois and middle-class morality that was espoused by Black intellectual elites as different as Booker T Washington and Du Bois. This ideology entails an emphasis on self-help, racial solidarity, temperance, thrift, chastity, social purity, patriarchal authority, and the accumulation of wealth (Gaines, 1996: 2-5). In his sixth chapter Gaines discuss Du Bois's study *The Philadelphia Negro* to show how prejudices from an uplift ideology characterize this work even though it broke with many of the racial explanation of Black criminality at the time (Gaines 1996: 152-178). Gooding-Williams aims is not to show the uplift ideology presents in Du Bois's writing but instead to reconstruct his argument to show how uplift ideology could be for Du Bois a defensible form of politics (Gooding-Williams, 2009: 8-9).

[16] See also *The Revelation of Saint Orgne the Damned* (1938) that reproduces some of the aspects of his earlier text of *The Development of a People* but 35 years later. This is to show that Du Bois kept this kind of Hegelian idealist aspect about the development of norms and values even later in life even though in that text he emphasizes a lot more the materialist aspect and how values reflect them. Religion, for example, becomes a set of dogma supporting the status quo instead of teaching ethics.

destruction of tradition and communal life are these elements that slavery destroyed and are necessary for cultural development. According to this reading, Du Bois's Talented Tenth needs to bring the backward masses into the modern world. That entails stripping of pre-modern practices that are still existent and resist modernity (Gooding-Williams, 2009: 134-139). However, the issue is that if the deep values and commitment of a people is the basis for legitimate leadership but that these existing elements are what is criticized and stripped away by the modern leaders, these leaders would undermine their own source of authority. Du Bois solves this issue by discerning between the *masses* and the *folk*, the first represents the problematic aspect of moral backwardness of a people while the second represents the cultural values shared by all African Americans because of their common history. In other words, by expressing the *folk*, the leader is able to criticize the *masses* legitimately even though *folk* and *masses* are formed by the same group of individuals (W 817; Gooding-Williams, 2009: 132-133, 150-157). Du Bois then base the legitimacy of the Talented Tenth on the latter and criticizes the former.

Gramsci has a similar idea of leadership as needing to criticize pre-modern worldviews. He argues that workers have two forms of consciousness a practical one, based on their lived experiences, and an "explicit" that are leftovers remainder of the past (Q8§169, see also Q11§12/SPN 327). For him, legitimate leadership is based on the practical consciousness and criticizes the "explicit" one and its sedimentation in "common sense" (Q11§12/SPN 328-330, 333-335; Q11§13/SPN 423). Gramsci, like Du Bois, legitimates leadership by formulating a division within the individuals that form the subalterns, the leadership that criticizes one aspect of the individual is legitimated by the other aspect. The *folk* legitimizes the critique of the *masses*, and *practical* consciousness legitimates the critique of *explicit* consciousness. Furthermore, both are strongly pejorative towards those groups they see as pre-modern, so while Du Bois is critical of the black masses Gramsci writing on the peasantry is often very pejorative (PW1 84).[17]

At first sight, this would thus point out to an expressivist form of leadership that is legitimated based on an external and *a priori* source of authority, namely authentic representation of a cultural folk-spirit, in the case of Du Bois, and practical consciousness in the case of Gramsci. However, there is an important difference between the German Romantic expressivism and Gramsci and Du Bois's view (especially in his later text, but I argue also in some of his earlier work) namely that it is connected to needs and grievances and not an *a priori* source of authority like culture.[18] As I argue in chapter three

[17] Lo Piparo (1979) goes on to point the paradox that Gramsci is most critical of the culture of the groups that he is closest to politically.

[18] I do not deny that Du Bois's expressivism is strongly influenced by Herder with the importance of the cultural folk and a certain cultural relativism attributing to each race access to truths of life (Zamir, 1995: 105-107).

culture is, especially for Gramsci but also for Du Bois, a reflection of historical experiences and present needs and grievances.

To read expressivism as relating to practical experiences changes the burden of proof for legitimate leadership. According to Gooding-Williams, Du Bois uses political expressivist forms of legitimation because it sees the Black masses as unable to voice critique, the political expressivism then replaces democratic critique as a basis for legitimacy. For Gramsci, on the other hand, the legitimacy of the leadership depends on it being accepted by followers. He sees the cultural practices that are endorsed and the kind of leaders that are followed as those that answer to the practical needs and demands of their followers, so ultimately the basis for legitimacy is the judgment of the followers.[19] There are some indications that this is the same for Du Bois, that he ultimately relies still on the judgments and views of followers. In contrast to a Weberian approach of charismatic leadership, Du Bois does not rely on the threat of physical force to elicit obedience but on the leaders' ability to convince the led (Gooding-Williams, 2009: 10). Melvin Rogers also argued that the use of rhetoric in *Souls* aims to both move and rely on the judgment of the readers; the aim is then to move white readers' conception of the self and who belongs in the demos. Although this happens through nonrational and emotional means that precisely change the judgment of the reader it ultimately rests on it as a mode of justification (Rogers, 2012: 195-198). Similarly, I view Du Bois's conception of Black leadership as an attempt to change the self-conception of the subaltern, and thus it rests ultimately on the judgment of the followers whether or not they endorse this conception. It implies shared epistemic labor where leaders on their own cannot claim to capture the life and experiences of the follower but they have to confirm their view by putting it under the judgment of those affected.

Concerning the question of worldview and assimilation, from Gramsci's perspective, the aim is to create a new worldview, a form of explicit knowledge, that corresponds better to the practical

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Shamoon Zamir's book *Dark Voices* read *Souls* as a work characterized by doubt, where he moves away from pragmatism and idealism. This last aspect is especially related to my argument here. Zamir argues that Du Bois rejects the possibility of the solution of a 'happy consciousness' or at least puts it to doubt the immediate feasibility of national culture, Hegel's *Sittlichkeit* (Zamir, 1995: 114-119, 168). *Souls* also rejects the idea of essentialized wholeness of culture and *Folk-Spirit* thinking of it responsive to historical changes that then also give rise to different forms of insight and understanding, thus putting in doubt the epistemic privilege of the Talented Tenth (Zamir, 1995: 185-187, 200). However, in contrast to Zamir, I am less concerned with putting this aspect of Du Bois in relation (positive or negative) to different philosophical currents and more interested in the possible useful elements in these doubts. In other words, I am not claiming to capture a correct and comprehensive position of Du Bois as he was writing *Souls* instead I aim to capture what is a useful aspect of his latent thought that would only be developed more explicitly later although not always in connection with the question of leadership.

[19] See the previous chapter.

knowledge of people, in other words, he wants to unite theory and practice (Q8§169).[20] From this point of view, previous worldviews are not necessarily discarded in their entirety but what may be of value is kept. Nonetheless, the aim ultimately is to present a new view of the world not simply to update an old one. Similarly, the early Du Bois of *Souls* and *Conservation* see a value in the messages of different races or civilizations and therefore the aim is to merge what is valuable of both messages instead of bringing one in correspondence with the other. So he writes in *Souls*: 'In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism for he knows that the Negro blood has a message to the world' (W/Souls 365). Admittedly *Souls* does not clearly state what this message to the world is and in his early work, he fails to question the generally accepted norms and ideals under which he understands what he sees as the Negro problem.[21] Nonetheless, it remains precisely an open question in *Souls* what exactly the message of Black civilization to the world is. Many passages in *Souls*, like the one cited above, warrant a reading that emphasizes the creation of a new worldview. The question comes to ask whether *Souls* has found a specific message or not, while Gooding-Williams argue it does, I argue below that it is only solved to some extent in *the Gift of Black Folk*.[22]

This conception of expressivism may tend to fall into the idea that what works will be accepted, in other words, that followers will always endorse the leader with the best plan and that this endorsement would then show a successful form of expressivism.[23] However, as discussed in the first

[20] It is important to stress that for Gramsci which theory fits the practice and experiences of the subaltern classes is not *a priori* given. Gramsci is strongly anti-dogmatic even Marxism and the philosophy of Praxis need to be updated or entirely rejected if they do not fit. It cannot be taken as an absolute eternal truth (Q11§62/SPN 406-407). Theory needs to follow reality instead of the other way around, he thus writes: 'reality is teeming with the most bizarre coincidences, and it is the theoretician's task to find in this bizarreness new evidence for his theory, to "translate" the elements of historical life into theoretical language, but not vice versa, making reality conform to an abstract scheme. Reality will never conform to an abstract scheme, and therefore this conception is nothing but an expression of passivity.' (Q3§48)

[21] These are norms and values Du Bois would put into question later according to Gooding-Williams (Gooding-Williams, 2009: 161).

[22] In *The Conservation of Race* Du Bois seems to think more explicitly that the message of Black race or nation hasn't been voiced yet. While he attributes constitutional liberty and commercial freedom to the English nation; science and philosophy to the German nation; literature and art to the Romance nations he writes: 'Manifestly some of the great races of today – particularly the Negro race – have not as yet given to civilization the full spiritual message which they are capable of giving' (W 819).

[23] Sometimes Gramsci and Du Bois do seem to endorse a view that what works creates mass support. So Gramsci writes: 'It is evident that this kind of mass creation cannot just happen "arbitrarily", around any ideology, simply because of the formally constructive will of a personality or a group which puts it forward solely based on its own fanatical philosophical or religious convictions. Mass adhesion or non-adhesion to an ideology is the real critical test of the rationality and historicity of modes of thinking. Any arbitrary constructions are pretty rapidly eliminated

part of this chapter, Gramsci and Du Bois were skeptical of charismatic leadership that would arouse the passions in an intense but ephemeral way. Instead, their focus is on maintaining permanent passion. This expressivist conception of leadership then shouldn't be seen as a way to legitimate or justify leadership, instead, it is a striving. In other words, expressivism is a necessary condition for good leadership but the fact of leadership is not an absolute indicator of successful expressivism. In this way leadership is always *a posteriori,* it cannot be relied on as a claim for obedience, but precisely the absence of the necessity of a claim for obedience signals expressivism for Gramsci and Du Bois. In the rest of this chapter, I illustrate, based on the works of Du Bois the importance of expressivism for good leadership. In doing so I argue that expressivism is epistemic in the sense that its failure is a failure to grasp some of the aspects of the world that is necessary to ensure permanent passion. The epistemic aspect is twofold. On the one hand, it aims to grasp some important facts about how the world is and how the world needs and can be, in other words, it is a form of pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the will. On the other hand, expressivism as the requirement for successful leadership has the epistemic task of dispelling false views on the world, namely the view that the world is unchangeable.

Expressivism, Epistemology, and Fatalism

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by historical competition, even if sometimes, they manage to enjoy a popularity of a kind; whereas constructions which respond to the demands of a complex organic period of history always impose themselves and prevail in the end, even though they may pass through several intermediary phases during which they manage to affirm themselves only in more or less bizarre and heterogeneous combinations.' (Q11§12/SPN 341) As I argue in chapter 2 this should not be read as a claim that whatever ideology has mass adhesion is true, Gramsci did not endorse a consensus theory of truth. Instead, it should be read in the light of the claim Gramsci made in an earlier note (Q10II§41xii/FPN 398) that points out that ideology cannot exist if they are not at all connected to the needs and grievances of followers, or his claim that mass manipulation is impossible (Q11§12). In other words, Gramsci had a belief that what worked, what is historical rational could (could and not would in the sense that it needs to be formulated, contradictions in society, the fact that the old is dying does not necessarily imply that the new is born in Gramsci's theory Q3§34) ultimately attract support, which does not mean that all ideologies that attract support work (this is closer to the view of Femia (1981: 111) and Bellamy and Schecter, (1993: 104-108)).
Du Bois can certainly not be imputed a consensus theory of truth, the mass adhesion of white supremacist view in America show the falsehood of this theory for Du Bois. However, he does have an element that links the views that are adopted with an idea that they address practical experiences or interests (see chapter 2). Moreover, in the case of Marcus Garvey, for example, even though he sees him as a popular leader, he qualifies this arguing that Garvey has supporters mostly amongst Jamaican immigrants (see note 12 above). Still, his critique of demagoguery shows a more skeptical attitude than Gramsci on the capacity of the masses to reject views of the world that address needs and grievances.

Expression of the state of the world

The previous part argued that the expressivism of Du Bois and thus his conception of leadership does not have to be elitist because it is not based on an *a priori* claim to legitimacy, but instead rest on the judgment of followers as to whether the worldview expressed by leadership reflects and answers their needs and grievances. This follows my argument in chapter 3 where culture is presented as an expression of historical experiences, and current needs and grievances. Expressivism requires a shared epistemic labor; leaders on their own cannot access such knowledge of the subalterns. At the same time, as I argued in chapter 2 and above, the explicit preferences of the subalterns are a flawed guide to formulate a new worldview in that they are shaped by the social reality that leaders precisely aim to change. This part aims to illustrate forms and pitfalls for expressivist leadership arguing that it has an epistemic character; failure of expressivism is thus a failure to understand the world together with a failure of leadership.

The worry of intellectuals losing touch is constantly present in Gramsci and Du Bois's work. Gramsci writes about this in terms of the necessity to unite theory and practice and writes that: 'The popular element "feels" but does not understand or know; the intellectual element "knows" but does not understand and, above all, does not feel.' (Q4§33; see also Q11§12/334-35 and Q11§67/SPN 418) Du Bois writes in *Dusk of Dawn*: 'first of all, not being possibly among the entombed or capable of sharing their inner thought and experience, this outside leadership will continually misinterpret and compromise and complicate matters even with the best of will. And secondly, of course, no matter how successful the outside advocacy is, it remains impotent and unsuccessful until it actually succeeds in freeing and making articulate the submerged caste.' (DoD 132/W651).[24] But I argue that in his earlier texts on expressivism he has the same concern.

The chapter *Of the Coming of John* read together with *Of the Faith of Fathers*, shows how a failure of leadership can arise from an epistemic failure of leaders to understand the world of their followers. While Gooding-Williams reads it as a failure of John Jones to sympathize with the Black folk-spirit and its expression as the Black Church (Gooding-Williams, 2009: 115-120), I see it as a failure of John Jones to understand the world and fails therefore to offer a plan or conception of the world that

[24] In other texts, he links this explicitly to the need to have universal suffrage. In *Darkwater* Du Bois writes: 'in the last analysis only the sufferer knows his suffering and that no state can be strong which excludes from its expressed wisdom the knowledge possessed by mothers, wives, and daughters.' (Darkwater: 83) or in an article in the *Globe* where he writes: 'Only the soul that suffers knows its suffering. Only the one who needs knows what need means.' (W 1166)

addresses the reality of the Georgian town. The moment that depicts John Jones's epistemic disconnect the clearest is the speech he gives during the welcome ceremony in the Baptist church. It goes as follow:

'He spoke slowly and methodically. The age, he said, demanded new ideas; we were far different from those men of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, – with broader ideas of human brotherhood and destiny. Then he spoke of the rise of charity and popular education, and particularly of the spread of wealth and work. The question was, then, he added reflectively, looking at the low discolored ceiling, what part the Negroes of this land would take in the striving of the new century. He sketched in vague outline the new Industrial School that might rise among these pines, he spoke in detail of the charitable and philanthropic work that might be organized, of money that might be saved for banks and business. Finally he urged unity, and deprecated especially religious and denominational bickering. "To-day", he said, with a smile, "the world cares little whether a man be Baptist or Methodist, or indeed a churchman at all, so long he is good and true. What difference does it make whether a man be baptized in river or wash-bowl, or not at all? Let's leave all the littleness and look higher." Then, thinking of nothing else, he slowly sat down. A painful hush seized that crowded mass. Little had they understood of what he said, for he spoke an unknown tongue, save the last word about baptism; that they knew, and they sat very still while the clock ticked. Then at last a low suppressed snarl came from the Amen corner, and an old bent man arose, walked over the seats, and climbed straight up into the pulpit. […] John never knew clearly what the old man said; he only felt himself held up to the scorn and scathing denunciation for trampling on the true Religion, and he realized with amazement that all unknowingly he had put rough, rude hands on something this little world held sacred.' (W/S 529-530)

While there is a way in which John Jones makes an error to understand the spiritual values of the village, reflecting therefore a romantic expressivism, there is also a sense in which he fails to understand the reality of that town. In other words, the issue is not only that he fails to use his speech aptly to move his audience, but he also makes an epistemic error about how the world is. How does this error take form? John Jones seems to be correct in criticizing Jim Crow and the social relation in the Georgian town. Indeed, this community seems characteristics of the Southern religious community that Du Bois discusses in *Of the Faith of Fathers* that uses deception as a natural defense. This may lead some to conclude that the villagers are not epistemically privileged in understanding their grievances, that they are victims of false consciousness, and thus that John Jones is epistemically warranted in his speech. However, this is too quick, in the *Faith of the Fathers* Du Bois discusses more in-depth Black

religion and according to him its relevance. Religion works for Du Bois in similar ways as it does in Gramsci's work, namely as a reaction to material and historical realities. Du Bois presents a genealogy of the Black church as a reaction to the different conditions of the Black population (W/S 499).[25] It starts with the violence of slavery but also resistance to it. By the middle of the eighteenth century, however, the spirit of revolt had gradually died and Du Bois writes that African Americans were 'unconsciously ripe for a new philosophy of life. Nothing suited his condition then better than the doctrines of passive submission embodied in the newly learned Christianity' (W/S 499). While the historical and economic situation changed, during, for example, the Civil War and the Reconstruction, the content of religion changed: 'Freedom became to him a real thing and not a dream. His religion became darker and more intense, and into his ethics crept a note of revenge, into his songs a day of reckoning close at hand.' (W/S 501). But then again, after the reconstruction in the 'Age of Reaction' religion change, became divided in two. In the North, religion emphasizes anger and radicalism while in the South it emphasizes assimilation, passivity, and the Lie (W/S 501-504).

From this point of view, John Jones fails in his leadership because he fails to demand real happiness in the sense that Marx uses when he says: 'The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of men, is a demand for their real happiness. The call to abandon their illusions about their condition is a call to abandon a condition which requires illusions. The criticism of religion is, therefore, the embryonic criticism of this vale of tears which religion is the halo' (Marx, 1844: 54). Indeed, in a conversation with his younger sister, after he angered the churchgoers, John acknowledges that studying and learning create unhappiness (W/S 530). Like Gramsci, Du Bois is not endorsing religion, but instead, he is treating it as a symptom that if treated without curing the disease could kill the host instead of healing them. However, this does not mean that the unreal happiness of men shouldn't be criticized. This leads to a paradox that John Jones at the same time should believe in the reality of the social relations in his hometown in that those social relations do in fact rule behavior in that social milieu, but at the same time, there are reasons not to believe the truth of those relations in that they reproduce themselves and are based on a fundamentally incorrect belief of the existence of a natural racial hierarchy (Haslanger, 2012: 410-411). I argue that Gramsci and Du Bois's answer to this paradox starts at the same place where Haslanger's answers start, namely: 'We should not resist seeing the reality that we should, in fact, resist' (Haslanger, 2012: 30). In this case, this means believing that there is a racial hierarchy but not that it is natural despite but instead is reproduced and enabled by social practices, in other words showing a pessimism of the intellect of the stickiness of oppressive relations.

[25] See also chapter 2 and 3

By confusing the symptom for the disease, John Jones fails to propose a real cure. Indeed the program that John Jones presents is one based on the *New Ideas* essay of Alexander Crummell, who saw slavery as a thing of the past and emancipation as achieved (Gooding-Williams, 2009: 114-115). The project then is a form of economic uplift similar to that presented by Booker T Washington that emphasizes the use of money from philanthropy, technical school, and so forth. John Jones optimism towards the possibility of change, makes him overlook the reality of the world, he fails to show a pessimism of the intellect. This failure then echoes back confirming a biased view of the world. Therefore John Jones failure to understand the pervasiveness of the racial hierarchy in his hometown paradoxically leads him to reify them and see them as unavoidable.

Indeed, Du Bois ends the story of John Jones with a reference to Wagner's opera *Lohengrin* which is about the impossibility of a lasting union between the supernatural and the earthly, Du Bois seems to imply a necessary incompatibility between the ideal of John Jones and the earthly reality characterized by the prison of Jim Crow. The spirit of resignation triumphs and John Jones becomes a Schoppenhauerian saint who forsakes the vanity of human striving for a will-less nothingness (W/S 534-535; Gooding-Williams, 2009: 120-125). The resignation and pessimism arise, paradoxically, for John Jones from his optimism, the idea that the world has "new ideas" that entail that emancipation is a fact and slavery a thing of the past. Confronted with the reality he falls into resignation abandoning attempts to change it. This resignation is negated in *The Sorrow Songs*, where Du Bois writes: 'The silently growing assumption of this age is that the probation of races is past, and that the backward races of to-day are of proven inefficiency and not worth the saving. Such an assumption is the arrogance of peoples irreverent toward Time and ignorant of the deeds of men.' (W/S 544) The world then can change, it must change but in order to change it, one must take it as it is and start from there.[26] Otherwise, this would not only fail to change the world it would confirm the false assumption that the status quo is the only way the world can be.

[26] Du Bois takes a similar attitude towards his own life in *Darkwater* (which he would echo later in *Autobiography*). He describes how he views his youth as an Age of Miracles in which he conceptualized himself as self-sufficient, where his willing is enough to shape the world accordingly. That however gave place to the Days of Dillusion, where, confronted with the reality of American racism he began to realize that most of what he had called will and ability was sheer luck. Ultimately he arrives at the second age of miracles, this age is not like the first one where he sees his will as self-sufficient to create the world, but he recognizes that his dreams, in concert with the help and support of others, are able to shape his life and affect the world (Darkwater 8-13). I see this as a similar conception of change and history that Gramsci has, namely one that acknowledges the role of individuals in shaping the world but recognizes the limits of structure but here also of organization and the behavior of other humans (Q11§59/SPN 346; see also Morera, 1990).

Past and Future Worldview

The previous section argued that the expressivism of Gramsci and Du Bois entails a form of shared epistemic privilege; leaders disconnected from followers fail to understand the reality of the world. For both of them, this failed connection leads to failed leadership which, in its turn, fosters fatalism and defeatism. The imperative for successful leadership is then based on a worry that failure would create a backlash. Expressivism would seem to entail only pessimism of the intelligence. In this section, I argue that it also entails an optimism of the will. More precisely, I argue that through expressing the need and experiences of a group leaders can learn about the possibility and the necessity of a different world. The expressivism, therefore, does not only require an epistemic division of labor to appreciate what is but also what needs and can be. *The Sorrow Songs*, with which I ended the previous section, sing of this optimism of the will, showing 'how the deeds of men' change the world. This would mean then that accepting the status quo is not an option and that the goal is not assimilation but the transformation of the world. To illustrate my argument I focus on an often overlooked work of Du Bois, *The Gift of Black Folk*.

The *Gift of Black Folk* is one of the less valued works of Du Bois that he himself thought was hurriedly done (DoD 269). As Rampersad describes it, it is more fleshed out with facts and statistics than *Souls* but has not nearly as much rhetorical power as the earlier piece and adds very little to it (Rampersad, 1990: 234). However, that this book adds so little to other works makes it precisely all the more useful. First, it captures many of the ideas in *Souls* but, by putting them in a different language, highlights different elements of it. Second, referring to the ideas of *Souls* but written after *Darkwater* it sits at a crossroad between both works and shows how the soul of *Souls* despite some of its elitist character translates into the more democratic egalitarian view of *Darkwater*. Finally, I read this book as providing more about the message of Black civilization, a message that isn't voiced explicitly in *Souls* and absent from *Conservation*.

In *Conservation*, Du Bois provides an argument for the importance to uphold races which he defines in cultural and changeable ways, namely as 'a vast family of human beings, generally of common blood and language, always of common history, traditions and impulses, who are both voluntarily and involuntarily striving together for the accomplishment of certain more or less vividly conceived ideals of life.' (W 817) He goes on to differentiate eight major races and acknowledges many different minor race groups or sub-groups. Physical similarities and common blood are, according to Du Bois, barely relevant in accounting for what bind together these groups, what is more relevant is their spiritual and psychical differences like habits of thought and laws, that are not based on common blood but common history

(W 818).[27] For Du Bois, each race group has a particular ideal or message it can give to the world and help it guide nearer and nearer to human perfection. These gifts are, for example, from the English constitutional liberty and commercial freedom while the Germans stood for science and philosophy. The Black people has also a gift to give, that is why Du Bois argues against assimilation, in favor of being African American instead of either one. But the question then is: where does this gift or ideal come from? For Du Bois it comes from a shared history in *Conservation* and *Souls* he traced that back to the Egyptian civilization, but in *Souls,* he linked it also to a more modern aspect of Black history, namely the experience of slavery.

In the last chapter of *Souls*, *The Sorrow Songs*, Du Bois plants the foundation of his view of *The Gift of Black Folk*. He discusses the sorrow songs that articulate the message of the slave to the world. […] They are the music of an unhappy people, of the children of disappointment; they tell of death and suffering and unvoiced longing toward a truer world, of misty wanderings and hidden ways' (W/S 538) 'In these songs, I have said, the slave spoke to the world. Such a message is naturally veiled and half articulate.' (W/S 541) 'Through all the Sorrow Songs there breathes a hope – a faith in the ultimate justice of things. […] Sometimes it is faith in life, sometimes a faith in death, sometimes assurance of boundless justice in some fair world beyond. But whichever it is, the meaning is always clear: that sometime, somewhere, men will judge men by their souls and not by their skins.' (W/S 544) The messages of the slave songs in the *Sorrow Songs* are about the necessity and the possibility of a better world. While the last part of this quoted piece can be interpreted simply as a form, a demand of integration and assimilation, I see it as the opening of something else that does not necessarily follow white American norms. This comes to light in that there is a practical element to the gift, namely a practice of a better world. In the Sorrow Songs Du Bois identifies three gifts of the Black folk to America: a gift of story and song, a gift of sweat and brawn, and a gift of the Spirit (W/S 545).

The content of these gifts is developed more extensively in *The Gift of Black Folk*. Each chapter of the book is dedicated to developing the content of these gifts through historical and statistical evidence. It starts with the participation of Blacks in Exploring America, then labor, war, democracy, freedom of womanhood, art, and religion. Some of those gifts and deeds are more doubtful, like the

[27] There have been many debates on whether or not Du Bois actually relies on biological or geographically based fix essence or not (see Appiah, 1992: 38-46; Outlaw, 1996: 15-37; Gooding-Williams 1996: 39-56). To me, it seems that Du Bois is speaking more about what we currently understand as ethnicity. Although it seems that his differentiation of race groups and sub-groups lack a comprehensive grasp of the diversity of ethnic groups, his argument does seem internally consistent if it is read as giving a definition of ethnicity instead of what is seen as race (see also Haslanger, 2012). Either way, I will set aside this debate to focus on what it is that needs to be conserved and what its origins are.

contribution in the wars. Nonetheless, the aim of his work remains clear; it records the agency and action of African Americans. In chapter 3 *Black Soldiers* Du Bois argues that even though the man in ranks usually has little choice in the war they choose, African American soldiers always used their own judgment for their participation in wars, fighting always not only for America but also for their own personal freedom and respect (Gift, 29-30).

I take Du Bois here to have a similar basis for Gramsci's interests in the study of the history of the subalterns namely to record the agency of those groups. As I argued in chapter 2 the term subalterns in Gramsci works refers not only to the most oppressed classes in society but instead to all the non-ruling classes, i.e. the bourgeoisie in a feudal system is part of the subalterns. The need to study the history of the subalterns is then a historical and strategic necessity (Q14§63).[28] The history of the subaltern is thus as important to know the present and the past as is the history of the ruling class. However, as discussed in chapter 2, the study of the submerged subalterns, those most marginalized in society, add an additional difficulty in that they have a history it is necessarily fragmented and episodic and only rarely recorded in written documents (Q3§14; Q3§48/BvII 48-49/SPN 196-197). But this also means that recording their history has an additional emancipatory potential in that it shows the agency of the subaltern group, that they are never merely passive but always agent and it is used to reject what Du Bois calls 'the arrogance of peoples irreverent toward Time and ignorant of the deeds of men.' (W/S 544; for Gramsci see Q3§18 and Q8§205).

Both Gramsci and Du Bois see the history of the subaltern as a source of agency, a proof that subalterns are not simply reacting but can act and initiate change. But Du Bois goes further than Gramsci. While the latter usually is critical of past forms of knowledge that sediment into "folklore" and "common sense" to focus only on the current practices of the subaltern,[29] Du Bois finds in these past

[28] This reflects his methodological views that all histories and aspects of history are important to understand the present and possible future but that, at the same time, our study of history is often being biased by sectional interests see Morera, 2000: 30. Note that these sectional interests are not necessarily as blatantly and disingenuously biased as the American historian of Reconstruction that Du Bois opposes (see BRA chapter XVII *The Propaganda of History*)

[29] As discussed in the previous chapter, common sense and folklore are based on remainders of the past, previous views of the world, mixed with aspects of current philosophical views. He sees that there could be truth in, for example, common sense, but that is more by chance than anything else (Q11§13/SPN 422-423). He sees often the remainders of past worldview as something precisely problematic, it is the present dominance of the past hegemonic groups (Q8§169). He is especially critical of folklore in which he sees most of the remainder of the past still being present (Q27§1/SCW 188-191). When it comes to the formulation of a new worldview the aim is to create a new common sense but then based on good sense, this involves a critical evaluation of commonsensical beliefs rejecting the problematic aspect to elevate beliefs to a higher form of consciousness (Q11§12/SPN 328-331). Gramsci does not reject *a priori* every aspect of dominant and previous worldview, he does not fall into the genetic fallacy that conflates the problematic origins with the lack of evidence for a belief (Q8§153; Q14§67/SCW

experiences practical knowledge valuable for the creation of a new worldview. For example, in his writing on labor he emphasizes both the value of work and the value of leisure:

'To all this we must add the peculiar spiritual contribution which the Negro made to labor. Always, physical fact has its spiritual complement, but in this case the gift is apt to be forgotten or slurred over. This gift is the thing that is usually known as "laziness". Again and again men speak of the laziness of Negro labor and some suppose that slavery was necessary on that account; and that even in freedom Negroes must be "driven". On the other hand, and in contradiction to this is the fact that Negroes do work and do work efficiently. […] The white laborer therefore brought to America the habit of regular, continuous toil which he regarded as a great moral duty. The black laborer brought the idea of toil as a necessary evil ministering to the pleasure of life. […] New and better organization of industry, a clearer conception of the value of effort and a wider knowledge of the process of production must come in, so as to increase the wage of the worker and decrease rent, interest, and profit; and then the black laborer's subconscious contribution to current economics will be recognized as of tremendous and increasing importance.' (Gift, 26-28)

In his chapter on Black Labor, Du Bois depict thus the tremendous factual and tangible contribution of black labor rejecting the racial trope of "laziness", but at the same time brings into doubt the value of work and wealth for their own sake, in other words, as pure form of production and accumulation instead of forms of self-expression. Some might have worries that Du Bois plays in instead of undermining a racist trope. Seeing this gift as a racial gift, unchangeable and unmovable is problematic and is resisted by so many Blacks who endorse the gospel of Work and Wealth and so many non-Black who do not live by this gospel. But Du Bois's conception of race is not as an immoveable essentialistic, instead, the gifts are sociohistorical products that could arise in any group of people, whatever their skin colors. Furthermore, although all members of the group share this common socio-historical experience that does not mean they are not also affected by other experiences. What I take Du Bois to do here is to take the history of a subaltern group as a key aspect of how to create a new society and worldview. He is not promoting a form of assimilation nor a form of cultural nationalism instead it is a forward-looking view that improves on the existing worldview.

While Gramsci finds inspiration for a new worldview solely in the practical activities of the subaltern and advocates for leadership that focuses on the current experiences (Q8§169; Q11§12/SPN

125-127; on the genetic fallacy see amongst others: Srinivasan, 2015; Rossi and Argenton, 2019). Gramsci, therefore, does not attribute priority to the history of the subalterns or other elements of the past as a source of a new worldview, if some of those are integrated that would be because they are elements or common sense that so happen not to incorrect.

330), Du Bois, combines a study of the history of the subalterns with one of practical consciousness to yield a conception of the world that improves on the currently dominant worldview but also previous ones. The project he presents in the first pages of *Souls*: 'The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, – this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message to the world. He simply wishes to make it possible to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face.' (W/S 365). This message continued in the last pages that present the gifts and asks: 'Your country? How came it yours?' (W/S 545), is expanded and spelled explicitly in *The Gift of Black Folk*, that it is not about a project of assimilation or cultural conservation but the creation of something new. Or as Du Bois puts it in *Black Reconstruction in America*: 'A great song arose, the loveliest thing born this side the seas. It was a new song. It did not come from Africa, though the dark throb and beat of that Ancient of Days was in it and through it. It did not come from white America – never from so pale and hard and thin a thing, however deep these vulgar and surrounding tones had driven. Not the Indies nor the hot South, the cold East or heavy West made that music. It was a new song and its deep and plaintive beauty, its great cadences and wild appeal wailed, throbbed and thundered on the world's ears with a message seldom voiced by man. It swelled and blossomed like incense, improvised and born anew out of an age long past, and weaving into its texture the old and new melodies in word and thought.' (BRA, 124)

While it is undeniable that Du Bois, especially in his early writings, uses uncritically norms and values to criticizes what he sees as the Black masses, his expressivism is not meant to accept the ruling norms of American society. As I read Du Bois the aim is not to bring a people with pre-modern values into modernity, instead, he uses Black experiences as a way to criticize white American values or ideas about modernity. Expressivist leadership has to understand the necessity of a different world and at the same time the possibility of it. Here again, failure of expressivist leadership entails epistemic failure, but while in the previous section the failure was to misunderstand how the world is, here the failure is to misunderstand that the world can and must change.

The Reconstruction also is characterized by a similar failure of leaders to see exactly what democracy requires. We see still the worry of Du Bois that masses of people living in poverty and with low levels of education can rule themselves only in a spasmodic way marked by backlashes, this shows again the worry of permanence and the need for organized action. On the other hand, he also affirms

that if the masses are kept out of political power 'they will remain submerged unless rescued by revolution; and a philosophy will prevail, teaching that the submergence of the mass is inevitable and is on the whole best, not only for them, but for the ruling classes.' (BRA 206) So while the spontaneous leaderless action of the masses in government is fraught with obstacles, the possibility of failure that would lead to fatalism, it is still better than the option of exclusion that is a sure route towards fatalism and passivity. But then Du Bois adds 'In all this argument there is seldom a consideration of the possibility that the great mass of people may become intelligent, with incomes that insure a decent standard of living. In such case, no one could deny the right and inevitableness of democracy.' (BRA 206) So there is a way out, a stable way for a stable real democracy including the great masses of people, but to achieve this action is required, this includes the right to vote, but also education, wealth redistribution, and coercive power to enforce and protect the rights of African Americans. But the abolition-democrats failed to see this, Du Bois criticizes Charles Sumner for failing to see that abolition-democracy required an economic revolution and required force (BRA 591-592). The cause of their failings is that they kept an uncritical belief in the American Assumption; the idea that wealth arises from one's own effort and that any average worker can by thrift become a capitalist (BRA 183, 186).[30]

Du Bois sees Booker T Washington as the product of these views and the culmination of failure of seeing how the world can be and should be. Instead of understanding the power of political rights, and thus the agency of African Americans as a political group, Washington, according to Du Bois, surrendered it preaching instead the ideas of the American Assumption backed by the propaganda of a religion that teaches meekness, sacrifice, and humility. The result then is that millions of people give up their agency and endorse a fatalistic view of the world (BRA 692-694).

In this expressivist conception of leadership, the expressivism entails a shared epistemic labor that allows leaders to understand the reality of the world, the difficulty of change, but also the possibility and necessity of change. Only by showing both the pessimism of the intellect and the optimism of the will can leaders perform their function of organizing passions permanently. Furthermore, only this form of organizing, both passionate and clear-minded, is what can reshape societies and thus reject the false beliefs about an unchangeable status quo. Expressivist leadership has, therefore, a twofold epistemic aspect, on the one hand, it is epistemic in that it requires understanding how the world is, can be, and must be. On the other hand, it is also epistemic in the sense that it aims to

[30] As I argue in chapter 1, Du Bois's rejection of the American Assumption is an important departure from values of uplift ideology (for uplift Ideology see Gaines, 1996 and note 17 above), in that he sees that wealth as the result of luck and inheritance instead of merit and capacity.

correct false beliefs about the world, namely the false belief about the unchangeability and naturalness of an oppressive status quo.

Conclusion

This chapter argued that the aim of leadership in Gramsci and Du Bois' account is to ensure permanent passion amongst the followers. To do so requires a conception of leadership as organizers that both shape and are shaped by the beliefs, hopes, and wishes of their followers.

This conception of leadership brings in two worries that Gramsci and Du Bois tried to address. First is the question of how a leader can formulate a plan, a worldview for their followers if that worldview precisely changes the preferences of their followers. The second is that a failure of leadership does not only mean that a project failed but also that an image which denied existing beliefs about the world is rejected, which creates defeatism, fatalism, and reinforce biased view about the inevitability of the status quo. Any project of leadership, especially for the subalterns, then requires a deep understanding of the world as it is in other to make change possible. To address these worries, I argue that Gramsci and Du Bois turn towards political expressivism. This entails the idea that politics should reflect the deepest commitment, needs, values that arise from the practical experience of a community. I take expressivism to require a shared epistemic labor that allows leadership to show the pessimism of the intellect, i.e. the ability to understand the complexity of the world and the arduousness of change, and the optimism of the will, i.e. the ability to understand that the world can and must change. Based on this leaders can formulate a view of the world aiming to both extend and pass the judgment of their followers to create enthusiastic support. Failures of expressivism are then an epistemic failure that hinders the capacity of leaders to mobilize and coordinate in the attainment of a certain goal, which leads to a failure of leadership, that reinforces an epistemic failure of seeing the world as unchangeable.

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