

Comparison of booker t. washington's up from slavery and web dubois' the souls of...

[Sociology](#), [Slavery](#)



Literary Devices in Rhetorical Writing During a time period when slavery had finally come to an end, African Americans still struggled as their opportunities for equality were next to nonexistent. In this time of hardship and unfair treatment, not many of those facing these adversities had the courage to speak out on their beliefs for change; Booker T. Washington and WEB Dubois, however, did not possess such fears — both thoroughly articulated their opinions and stood for what they believed was right.

Booker T. Washington and WEB Dubois shared a few commonalities — both men were highly educated, for example, as well as they both expressed strong opposition against segregation. Washington's *Up from Slavery: An Autobiography* and Dubois' *The Souls of Black Folk* outline each of these powerful historical figures' views on segregation and what can be done to end it. Both of these works are excellent examples of rhetorical writing, possessing strong persuasive arguments.

A deeper examination of these texts can be done by a comparison of chapter fourteen of Washington's work, entitled "The Atlanta Exposition Address," and chapter three of Dubois' *The Souls of Black Folk* - "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others." Each of the texts contains persuasive arguments; however, each writer's separate use of rhetorical strategies alludes to an effective expression of the intended theme. Booker T. Washington's use of diction throughout "The Atlanta Exposition Address" reflected his level of education in a way that made him stand out in the African American community.

His use of advanced rhetoric in comparison to the majority of the African American population made it easier for him to be noticed and heard. Judging by the text, it is apparent that all three modes of persuasion are present. By mentioning his reform-related accomplishments, Washington often appeals to logos in order to establish his credibility and prominence as a leader; this appeal enhances his use of ethos, which reflects his desire to advance the African American race as a working class.

Washington features an anecdote within the text, which acts as a metaphoric plea for African Americans to realize the opportunities manual labor could potentially hold for them. The phrase "cast down your buckets where you are" is especially significant in his attempt to glorify common labor, referring to the abundance of resources present in this world (Washington 2).

In sections five through seven, Washington repeatedly uses this phrase in the beginning of consecutive sentences, exemplifying anaphora; this literary device reiterates the significance of his words, strengthening his argument as to why freed slaves would benefit from common labor. Another literary device employed in "The Atlanta Exposition Address" is metonymy, which can be found in the phrase "separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress," as well as in "the organs of religious bodies, joined in the general chorus of condemnation or demands for retraction" (Washington 2, 5).

This representative "part-of-a-whole" strategy directly links the subject to the writer's key points, thus creating a deeper connection and increasing their impact on the audience. A prominent literary device in "Of Mr. Booker

"T. Washington and Others" is its structure. Dubois organizes the text in a way that maximizes the effectiveness of his message, which was to point out the flaws in Washington's propositions. He begins by explaining Booker T. Washington's success, after which he provides background information on African American progress in the 1800s and leads to his own criticism of Washington.

By using words such as "mistakes," "shortcomings," "bitterness," and similar expressions — "disappointment of displaced demagogues" and "spite of narrow minds" -- Dubois creates a negative tone, which mainly reflects his attitude toward Washington himself (Dubois 2). Dubois also employs the use of lists throughout the entire chapter, which are highly effective in convincing the reader to side with the writer. For example, in the text Dubois discusses the African Americans who have higher aspirations than those of Washington, but do not vocalize them; some of these unfulfilled wants are: "1. the right to vote. / 2. civic equality. [and] 3. the education of youth according to ability (Dubois 5). By repeatedly featuring such lists throughout "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others" Dubois makes a compelling argument that there is much more to strive for than what has already been accomplished by Washington. Literary devices not only make the writer stand out as an individual, but also contribute immensely to the overall message of the text. In Booker T. Washington's "The Atlanta Exposition Address," his use of diction, modes of persuasion, anaphora, and metonymy are what help him establish a sense of authority and respect among his readers.

WEB Dubois' "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others," on the other hand, features a more complex structure and tone, setting apart his key points and allowing the reader to have a clearer understanding of his position in the argument against Washington. Washington wanted general occupations for African Americans, while Dubois was more concerned with equality; both of these great leaders were interested in the betterment of African Americans' lives, and their excellent use of literary devices are what helped their writings become memorable pieces of American history.