

I. Experience of Duality in Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk*

This thesis dwells upon the issue of duality in *The Souls of Black Folk*, written by W.E.B. Du Bois. In *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois made an eloquent plea for understanding the plight of a newly emancipated but wholly racialized people. As a product of Western civilization and education, Du Bois believed African Americans were at the heart of the American liberal tradition (Louis 63). He argues that the American freedom envisioned by the founders can only be realized if we understand Black American contributions, "there are today no truer exponents of the pure human spirit of the Declaration of Independence than the American Negroes" (43).

Double consciousness is a concept that Du Bois first explored in 1903 publication, *The Souls of Black Folk*. Double consciousness describes the individual sensation of feeling as though human's identity is divided into several parts, making it difficult or impossible to have one unified identity. Du Bois spoke of this within the context of race relations in the United States. He asserts that since American blacks have lived in a society that has historically repressed and devalued them that it has become difficult for them to unify their black identity with their American identity. Double consciousness forces the blacks to not only see themselves from their own unique perspective, but to also view themselves as they might be perceived by the outside world. This is what Du Bois spoke of in the above passage when he talked about "the sense of looking at one's self through the eyes of others" (351). Du Bois wrote *The Souls of Black Folk*, in order to show readers the striving in the souls of black people. He wants readers to feel the pain, achievements, and losses of the blacks. He questions, "Will America be poorer if she replace her brutal dyspeptic blundering with light-hearted but determined negro humility?" (7)

As a result, the blacks suffer from a damaged self-image shaped by the perceptions and treatment of white people. Black life in turn can easily become shaped by stereotypes perpetuated by mainstream culture. According to Du Bois, the prejudices of white people elicit “self-questioning, self-disparagement, and lowering of ideals” among black people (Edles and Appelrouth 354). The internalization of anti-black sentiment from the outside world thus begins to shape the black American experience. Through the concept of double consciousness DuBois becomes able to explore the social problems he studied in his earlier work “The Philadelphia Negro”. Double consciousness also creates an element of conflict within the black American, as he/she struggle to reconcile his/her identity as a black person and as an American citizen.

DuBois cites the example of the black artisan in *The Souls of Black Folk*. Conflicted between producing goods that reflect his unique perspective and life experience and goods that are marketable and acceptable to a broader population he is engaged in a battle of double aims . By working to create what is the best expression of himself he will be deemed unsuccessful and by creating what makes him successful he fails to express himself and in some ways may appear to be rejecting his true self. This example exemplifies the black struggle to unite the different components of their identity. The theme of the book is the division of blacks and whites, similar to a sociological study. It describes the history of the blacks through slavery, abolition, share cropping, education, and politics. Du Bois introduces his theory of the negro problem, which boils down to what does America do with all of these newly freed black people. The book also touches down on double consciousness, which is looking at things from black and American views at the same time. Throughout history, humans have always tried to find ways to be better than each other. Race is a perfect

example, because it is not a real thing, it was created by society. Race just creates a hierarchy, where usually the people with more European features are viewed higher than all other races.

Double consciousness is still very relevant to contemporary society. While many people would like to argue that we live in a post-racial society, there are still many inequalities based upon race that make it difficult for black Americans to reconcile their identities as blacks and as Americans. Media sells us images of black men as athletes, rappers or criminals and as a result white America perceives black men as such and young black males see these limited paths as their only options for advancement. This is just one illustration of how the media, which is largely dominated by white executives, continues to assume the role of shaping the perceptions that blacks have of themselves and that whites have of blacks.

Germane to our discussions of double consciousness and contemporary American patriotism is that Du Bois implores an understanding of the Black investments in the American Republic, not the least of which was centuries of enslaved labor. These investments have rooted Black people in the promise of America and should root America in the promise of Black people. As he writes, "The ideal of fostering and developing the traits and talents of the Negro, not in opposition to or contempt for other races, but rather in large conformity to the greater ideals of the American Republic, in order that some day on American soil two world-races may give to each other those characteristics both so sadly lack" (97). Thus, he laments that Blacks were not considered full Americans citizens as were Whites and thus were segregated behind the "veil of race" away from the central life, polity, and economy of America—a squandering of Black America's vast potential (40). Although Du Bois clearly concludes at this point in history that it is not only possible but desirable to be

Black, American, and patriotic, further consideration of how Black patriotism maps upon the duality of double consciousness is merited. Du Bois does a great job of describing things in detail. He can pull you into a story and make you feel the pain and confusion of others. He is not afraid of showing others true emotions and tragedies, which is needed in order to get society to see the truth. He talks of people who look content, but aren't truly happy because they don't have much hope. Du Bois is also great at showing his own emotion without affecting the true history. It is obvious that he wants not only blacks, but also poor people to have a more fair chance at life, happiness, and education.

The Souls of Black Folk is a classic work of American literary theory by W. E. B. Du Bois. It is a seminal work in the history of sociology, and a cornerstone of African-American literary history. The book, published in 1903, contains several essays on race, some of which had been previously published in *Atlantic Monthly* magazine. Du Bois drew from his own experiences to develop this groundbreaking work on being African-American in American society. Outside of its notable place in African-American history, *The Souls of Black Folk* also holds an important place in social science as one of the early works to deal with sociology. Chapter I lays out an overview of Du Bois's thesis for the book. It says that the blacks of the South need the right to vote, a good education, and to be treated with equality and justice. It also defines his term double consciousness: "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity"(8). The history in this book can really relate to the issues of immigration reform going on in the country right now. Du Bois said people would often say they know excellent colored men, which is a way of beating around the bush on race issues. I

believe Mexicans are going through that right now. Some people are more verbal about the issue and some won't outright say it, but a lot of people are thinking, "What do we do with all of these Mexicans coming into America?" Other races are coming into our country as well, but the focus seems to be on Mexicans. Those two issues are so closely related that it's almost ironic that it is happening again. It would benefit our country to take a look at history before we make the mistake of going too far with this issue. The chapters also show institutional racism, which is definitely present to this day. Although blacks don't always encounter blatant racism, people often wonder if things that people have done to them were purely based on skin color.

The first chapter also introduces Du Bois' famous metaphor of the veil. According to Du Bois, this veil is worn by all African-Americans because their view of the world and its potential economic, political, and social opportunities is so vastly different from that of white people. The veil is a visual manifestation of the colour line, a problem Du Bois worked his whole life to remedy. Du Bois sublimates the function of the veil when he refers to it as a gift of second sight for African-Americans, thus simultaneously characterizing the veil as both a blessing and a curse. The second chapter, "The Dawn of Freedom" covers the history of the Freedman's Bureau during reconstruction. Chapters III through VI focus on education. It is here that Du Bois argues against Booker T. Washington's idea of focusing solely on industrial education for black men. He also advocates the addition of a classical education to establish leaders and educators in the black community. Chapters VII through X are sociological studies of the black community. Du Bois investigates the influence that segregation and discrimination have had on the black people. He argues that much of the negative stereotypes of blacks as lazy, violent, and simple-minded are results of the treatment from white people. In "Chapter X: Of the Faith of the

Fathers", Du Bois describes the rise of the Black church, and examines the history and contemporary state of religion and spiritualism among African-Americans. The final chapters of the book are devoted to narratives of individuals. "Chapter XI: Of the Passing of the First-Born" tells the story of DuBois's own son and his untimely death. In the next chapter, the life of Alexander Crummell is a short biography of a black priest in the Episcopal Church. The penultimate chapter of *The Souls of Black Folk*, is a creative work, "Of the Coming of John." This story is that of John from Altamaha, Georgia sent off to a well-off school only to return to place where "little had they understood of what he said, for he spoke an unknown tongue" (107). John's return to the South has made him a foreigner in his own home, and he is forced to die while "softly humming the 'Song of the Bride'" in German, in language not that is not his own (176). The last chapter is about Negro music and makes reference to the short musical passages at the beginning of each of the other chapters.

The major concern of this research is to find double consciousness in *The Souls of the Black Folk*. As the poignant pictures of subalterns get manifested, the author becomes the spokesman to the double consciousness. He grows up in community where powerless have no history as powerful have.

This research is the finding of the dimensions of double consciousness in *The Souls of the Black Folk*. How has the author becomes the spokesman of double consciousness? How do the characters become the voice of double consciousness in society? And how does *The Souls of the Black Folk* becomes the manifesto of double consciousness? These are some of the questions that the research attempts to explore. *The Souls of the Black Folk* functions as a mirror of double consciousness in society in which he represents the voice of the subalterns who are marginalized in terms of class and race. While doing so his representation of the subaltern foregrounds the

realistic reflection due to his own ideological subalternity despite his elitist background.

This research only sticks to the issue of the notion of the double consciousness to find out duality. The insight of double consciousness in *The Souls of the Black Folk* is used neglecting other aspects to make the thesis prove the hypothesis. The characters of the stories represent the status of oppressed people that also confirms the features of Cultural Studies. However, the delimitation of the research is that it only sticks to the notion of the double consciousness.

Different critics have analyzed the book from the multiple perspectives which preserves the universal nature of novel. Though the book is claimed to be one of the truest stories of the world but many critics like Sondra Dave have given skeptic eyes on its trustworthiness. For Dave the literary work has the greater degree of efficiency to present the notion of the truth and reality in relation of the society. He says:

Throughout the book and the author describes how courageous protagonist is and how much she works for the rights of women.

However, I didn't really see any evidence of this - as far as I could see Sultana was driven by her selfish self-interest and nothing else. In fact she comes across as a selfish and not very pleasant person. (94)

Thus, the text is rich in mirroring the real feature of the social and political reality.

The intact representation of the social and political reality in the novel adds the effort of social realism.

Another critic Broderick Francis makes the feminist reading of the text. For her the novel is the exact representation of the feminine subjugation. The exploitation of the females in the book tempts the feminist critics. As claiming for the feminist tone Francis makes a point:

It does not matter whether you are a feminist or not, if there is a crime committed against humanity then as a human being you have to seal the fate of the oppressor and feel and try to assuage the pain of the oppressed. But while many victims can be rescued, reinstated or taken care of, for the woman of Saudi Arabia it's a whole different ball-game whatsoever. (101)

Thus the book is rich in the preservation of the feminist tone. *The Souls of the Black Folk* has touched multiple faces of the then African American history and culture. It is basically the creation of multiculturalism, multilingualism and multidimensional. The text becomes the melting pot of different cultures that proves the relevance of the multiculturalism. For this Scott Herring claims:

The biography leads us from Heroine's childhood to adulthood, and with that we witness the horrors experienced by Saudi women through her words, and the terror develops as we realised that despite being in the royal family, even Princess are mistreated, so think about the regular female Saudi. We get a real insight of what the princess saw, and this book does teach you a great deal. There isn't really a plot? As such for the novel, for it is a biography, so of course it just records her life. But her experiences are extraordinary for the western readers that this book was aimed at. It is difficult to say much about the biography itself and pick out examples of her experiences because these should be left to be discovered by the reader. However the biography covers aspects of her childhood, her family life, her married life, and all the other important periods of woman's life. With each case emphasizing the horrific sense of Male Dominance in the Middle East. (75)

In this way, above mentioned critics have given multiple views to the text, but issue of double consciousness has been yet abandoned, the gap, which is fulfilled by the research.

Du Bois realizes his marginalized epistemic position has been forged from his experiences and thus that this epistemic position can be used to inquire into the larger problem of racism. In “The Souls of White Folk” Du Bois describes himself sitting high above the human masses in a tower, a position that allows him to see in and through the “Souls of White Folk”. Coming from what he describes as unusual points of vantage, evoking the Double Consciousness he is famous for his metaphorical imagery the veil, Du Bois is positioned to see into the nature of whiteness in a unique way. This knowledge position, his seat in the tower, is not given but attained through the experience of being black in America. As Du Bois tells us, the knowledge he gains of white folk is “not foreign...not the knowledge of the traveler or the colonial composite” but is instead a knowledge derived from the “bone of their thought and flesh of their language”(83). So many particular ideas and actions coming from white America lead to experiences that allow Du Bois not only see the ways their thought and language construct him as a black man, but how it simultaneously constructs whiteness as well. Du Bois is thus able to critique whiteness because he has access to a particular form of knowledge that comes from an epistemic position formed out of racial oppression.

In his critique, Du Bois is able to form new possibilities of what whiteness as a racial category means. For example, he places the emergence of the category of whiteness in connection with a racial hierarchy that puts whiteness at the top and is institutionally perpetuated. The institutional perpetuation is shown to persist in schools simply “by emphasis and omission to make children believe that every great

soul...was a white man's soul...every great thought...a white man's thought" (44).

This hierarchy allows knowledge claims to take on an authoritative position that both perpetuates and does not disrupt the assumption that of all the hues of God whiteness alone is inherently and obviously better than brownness. In order to challenge the knowledge claims coming out of the epistemic position of whites Du Bois appeals to other possibilities of what whiteness mean, inserting his own knowledge claims and constructing whiteness as oppressive and dominating. This description related with Du Bois' childhood and life experience in the notion of whiteness as superior in American culture is shown by adding other possible notions that he was able to create his own history. In white dominated American society he suffers from a wide range of social problems and challenges. The problem of race has always been among the most controversial and motivating, and thus has been rising true abundance of appropriate research. *Souls of Black Folk* by William Edward Burghardt Du Bois presents an unprecedented critical research of the black community in the United States conducted at the very dawn of the twentieth century and published in 1903. As Susan Wells described it, "It is a moving evocation of black American folk culture, a poetic rendering of African American history since emancipation, a critical response to the racism and economic subjugation afflicting black Americans at the turn of the twentieth century, and an analysis of political leadership at the same time" (Wells 135). This ground work refers to sociological, anthropological, sociopolitical and historical traditions, though American science has never experienced anything like that before.

The Souls of Black Folk was a brand new research aimed at penetration into the very depth of African American culture, mentality and ethnicity in context of modern U. S. civilization. By its ardent and evocative manner, the work can be

compared with no earlier work, except, perhaps, Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852) by Harriet Beecher Stowe, which had a tremendous effect on further anti-slavery activity and then Civil Rights movement. *Souls of Black Folk* appeared to be one of the early serious works of this kind in American social science.

In his groundbreaking book, Du Bois tries to find a new approach to understanding the mental code of the black population, taking into consideration the focus of human nature and society in general. On the whole Du Bois conducts his study looking for answers to the critical question of what it is like to be African American in the society of modern United States in forty years after the civil War; the statement he was going to prove was that the twentieth century is the problem of color-line – “the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea” (36) and thus he wanted to find out why and how it happened the way that color became decisive in a way to success and social adoption.

Besides, Du Bois' intention is to see the development of two cultures, African and American, being mixed and integrated in a very specific way resulting in so many problems as wide as the society itself. Hence, the framework of taking race as a social construct has been put into the basis. It means that the author was motivated by total social injustice reigning around and ethnic prejudice dominating in the thoughts of the nation. The subject, as it goes, was not chosen by chance, on the contrary, it has been for long the very pain of W. E. B. Du Bois himself. Before printing a book, he expressed his exciting ideas in essays published in the *Athlantic Monthly*. With new essays, they contributed to the new work and made up fourteen prose pieces, one of which is a fiction short story providing a symbol of tragedy of being an African in white society.

To collect the data for the book, Du Bois has conducted thorough empirical research. Much of the factual material that made up a study was taken directly from Du Bois' own experience. In particular, he has shared his experience of teaching in rural Tennessee, which stimulated him to give critical analysis of rising materialism and pragmatism of Atlanta education programs and hence, by inductive method, he criticizes the total system where money solves everything and becomes more important than human dignity, morality, spirit and other higher values.

What is more, qualitative research was based on historical data. Historiographical and retrospective methods are applied to make up the first three chapters, which are devoted to the description of black reality in the past and present, government politics and specific policies hereafter (for example, here are the realities of Dougherty County, Georgia). In the first chapter Du Bois introduced his outstanding metaphor of the veil. According to it, the African Americans have been living with blinkers on their eyes, as they had to adjust to the surrounding culture and look at themselves the way they are accepted by the whites. And though their world view as for economics, politics, culture, differed from the prevailing one, the Blacks had to sacrifice their own vision; in this way the image of veil is used to give an evidence for a color line. Herein, Du Bois also provides critical analysis of the activities of Booker T. Washington who assisted in building schools for the African Americans, but did care only of industrial education for them and called upon submission to the rules of the whites for the sake of peace and quietness. Addition of classical education is sharply advocated by the author. In the next chapters sociological studies are provided; they demonstrate how segregation and racial bias, stereotypes and discrimination influenced the lives of the black community representatives. Moreover, the Freedmen's Bureau policies during reconstruction are

also “analyzed in even-handed way” (Wright and Arbor 55). Further on, the methods of interviewing and survey are used to reflect the true reality of the people under consideration; some chapters include the retold stories of the witnesses. Particular chapter is devoted to religion which is viewed in culturological aspect. In the opinion of Du Bois, the Church is something like a last residue of tribal being; it promises salvation after death and keeps them away from struggle for better living; it is not right, by Du Bois, therefore, they should not seek for salvation after life, but they should live and live better and seek integration and vote for their dignity.

One more significant source is the artworks of the African Americans; namely, these are songs, or spirituals, which penetratingly express the pains, sorrows, and troubles of the community.

Having thoroughly studied the sources, having gone through heartbreaking experience and collected enough first-hand bloodcurdling stories, Du Bois has come to the conclusion that the entire life, social and spiritual is conflicting and dual. They have been living in the society of double standards; they have been learnt to develop double consciousness, which comes from looking at their selves through the eyes of others. As Rampersad states, “One ever feels his twoness, – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder” (93). They have adjusted to relegate their thoughts and feelings to the background, and thus they had no much chance to progress and entering new, really free life. The obstacles build in their own heads have become very high and difficult, but still possible to overcome. The analysis of political issues has convinced the author that the problem also came from the mismanagement through the Reconstruction era, which influenced all the aspects of their lives, starting with the church and ending with schools. Du Bois

shows that the actions of those who spoke for the race came out to have counterproductive outcomes. Being learnt to tolerate, to adjust and submit, they have found themselves without vote and civil status, without access to higher education and other rights.

As a result, the racial portrait of the Blacks is drawn by the author; sociological accounting of their lives is summed up; and on the whole the attempt to “probe the black American mind” is made. It is eloquently outlined that “After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world” (20). Above all, it is stated that indeed racial differences are not coming from nature, but they are artificially created to suppress those who by chance get into a weaker position; and just this fictitious reality is a reality which was constructed by and, equally important, which helped to construct, our social, political and educational institutions.

Additionally, it is important to underline that Du Bois not only criticizes the things they are, but he also provides a consistent line of advice, which can make the living of the black community better. For instance, he explains how Church can assist in real estate questions or how school can apply the system of “Talented Tenth”, which can help to make race relations better and more adequate (199).

All in all, both factual data and perspectives together with recommendations provided by Du Bois sound sober and sensitive; the evidence gives enough reasons to believe the conclusions of the author and is really provocative.

In fact, the facts presented by the author can be interpreted in some other way, and the very roots of the problem can be seen in real difference between the civilization of white people and that of African continent, which is now objectively

less developed and more closed. According to some theories, human races are really not equal and thus their aspirations to equality are utopian. Selectionism, for example, “insists on hierarchy that can help to escape social conflict” (Stoler 213). It is difficult to say that the facts gathered by Du Bois can absolutely deny the assumptions of socioanthropology and evolutionism; nevertheless, the outcomes of his study look rather convincing and offer a wide range of questions to be studied further. On the one hand, this book is mostly autobiographical and thus motivation is clearly seen, while the author may also have some biased attitude to the problem; but on the other hand, he provides rich data to support his own views and ideas, and the importance of the book had spoken for itself. It has reached the eyes and hearts of those for whom it was intended to know that their voice can also be heard and considered; in addition, Du Bois has made an essential contribution to the whole social, anthropological and historical sciences of the United States, and has skillfully worked out the subject in his other works.

This thesis has been divided into three chapters. In the first chapter, the researcher introduces the topic, elaborates the hypothesis, and quotes different critics’ views regarding to the text. In the same chapter, the researcher shows the departure also. In the second chapter the researcher makes a through analysis of the text by applying the tool of double consciousness, race and vail. The last chapter contains the conclusive ending of the research.

II. Divided Consciousness *The Souls of the Black Folk*

The centennial anniversary of W.E. B. Du Bois' seminal work, *The Souls of Black Folk*, merits both celebration and reflection. Academic and mainstream arenas need pause to consider the implications of his slender book on our understanding of the burden and very vast scope of prejudice. *The Souls of Black Folk* serves as testament to Du Bois' position as one of the foremost scholars on race and religion, in general, and the Black experience, in particular. In just fourteen essays, Du Bois provided keen insight into the social problems of the day. The text is important due to its broad applications for understanding the religious, economic, political, social, and cultural implications of a society precariously structured to garner and measure the success of the one group at the expense of another. Furthermore, Du Bois' observations and findings are timeless; many of his concerns continue to plague society today. Du Bois presented a conundrum - how a religious, White America could be so entrenched in racism, on one hand, and how a deeply aggrieved Black America negotiated such terrain through the use of that same religion.

African American political consciousness is likely to be characterized by the concept of duality. The integrative and assimilative part will continue to be sanctioned by the political culture because it is philosophically consistent with European American cultural precepts. The quest for an emancipatory politics will always be elusive. In incorporating the idea of community into one's political consciousness and activities is a declaration of historical connectedness and continuity, of America's cultural relevance in structuring African American agency.

Concept of dual identity appears throughout the text in nearly every essay and is central to the author's goal in making the African-American condition understood. Access to a liberal education for African-Americans is one of the most powerful

points that Du Bois stresses, and it is one that has, unfortunately, not improved much since this book was written. In fact, it has become more difficult not only for African-Americans to receive a liberal education, but for all Americans to receive such an education. The current focus on literature and educational system mainly related with college and career readiness in America's public schools has only served to bolster the Booker T. Washington's model of teaching training over the Du Bois' model of an education for thinkers and leaders.

The result is that all culture, including African-American culture, has been degraded. Not only does a black school child not have access to Shakespeare; he often no longer has access to the treasures of his own culture in Negro spirituals and in the great works of great men like Du Bois. Instead of proper opportunity to the blacks Du Bois was also affected by so many sufferings as a language arts teacher. Blacks were mistreated with their misnamed disciplined, import rap songs into the classroom in a condescending and debasing attempt to make a curriculum without meaning seem, just for a moment, like it has real relevance to the lives to their students. Meanwhile, the true things of perpetual relevance truth, beauty, and goodness are cast aside in favor of higher standardized test scores and employment in technical, service, and labor jobs. Even the great liberal arts universities have gotten in on the debasement and condescension, with an Ivy League school recently publishing a book of annotated hip hop lyrics. Meanwhile, little boys and girls across the United States, both black and white, are further removed from access to the great ideas and the eternal things, the things that will make them not black and white but human in the fullest and truest sense of that word.

Du Bois depicts references to the experience of double consciousness, to show the gap between blacks and whites. He asserts that "double consciousness, this sense

of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others"(44). This theme extends into the contradictory nature of American policy towards black people during the time of this book was written. Although as an African American in New England, Du Bois was able to attend Harvard University and was afforded many of the privileges of any citizen. The United State is comprised of both the north and south, but race policy for the nation is split. In the book each of the chapters opens with a question of quotation of verse from a famous source in the western literary canon followed by lines of music from African-American oral tradition. Which proves Du Bois own native love towards his own culture. The use of his unique technique in every chapters results both from the recognized cultural establishment and from the unrecognized, yet widely known tradition of slave songs spirituals. Although from the use of such slave songs and spirituals, the effects is an impression of support, both from within the black community and from without, and puts the two formats on pair with one another.

The eloquently informed the reader of a variety of challenges faced by Blacks as a result of inequities in every societal arena. In addition, he developed into their spiritual psyche to show an indomitable spirit. The strength of the work also lies in Du Bois' ability to systematically and critically assess flaws in White society and the resulting limitation in Black society. Although he clearly pointed to the legacy of racism as the primary culprit that stymied progress for the Black masses, he was able to soberly attest to ways in which a large segment of the Black population refused to avail themselves of those existing resources required to improve their lot. At the heart of the text was the presentation of a conflicted, dichotomized identity being Black and American - where the former identity labeled one the problem to be ignored, pitied, or stigmatized and the latter identity served as a constant reminder of a legacy of

oppression and station to be esteemed but never reached. Du Bois also used other dichotomies – the sacred and secular, qualitative and quantitative analysis, and examples of oppression and liberation.

The themes of race and religion were woven through each essay to illustrate life behind the veil for the slave, the freed person, and the Negro. This same theme provides insight about double consciousness for Blacks today. The author's tone moved from somber observation to jubilant testimony as he chronicled a history fraught by the illogical, the impractical, the senseless and, in some instances, the horrific. And although Black Folk faced a barrage of negative structural forces such as racism, classism, and sexism, Du Bois continued to illustrate how their souls somehow remained intact and ready to fight another day. Upon completion of the work, we are disquieted by the stark reality of the harshness Blacks faced, yet somewhat optimistic in the belief that they would somehow triumph. Today's reader benefits from the manner in which Du Bois highlighted pressing social problems. His observations aid sociologists that attempt to explore, explain, describe, predict and address social ills. The remaining section of this essay will consider some of the ways in which Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk* informs the discipline of sociology in terms of racism and race relations, economic inequality, political disenfranchisement and Black leadership, education, religion and the Black church.

First and foremost, Du Bois emphasize the legacy of racism and its deleterious effects on the lives of Black people. Certain consequences of racism and discrimination were clear. Separate spheres of life, physical abuse, paternalism, and economic disenfranchisement. Other consequences were less visible, but just as detrimental angst, conflicted identity, self-hate, self-doubt, and a lack of industriousness and self-reliance. For Du Bois, issues of race were at the heart of the

conflicted relationship between Whites and Blacks in America. And although the problem was ideological and steeped in a protracted view of religion, its effects trickled through every dimension of Black life. He also informed the reader that racism and discrimination not only stymied Blacks, but had serious repercussions for Whites whose fear, doubt, distrust, contempt, and hatred of Blacks diminished their own humanity. Thus the legacy of racism left the entire nation deficient of the basic human qualities on which it was supposedly founded. Du Bois recognized diversity, but believed that a humane society should strive for fellowship and address social problems due to the central importance, the intrinsic value, of all humanity.

In the same manner presenting the bitter reality and sufferings Du Bois examined the legacy of racism enables scholars to examine current implications. Segregation in urban cities, economics inequality, and poverty are evidence of the cumulative effects of racism (Francis 47). International terrorism, hate crimes and the prison industrials complex teeming with Black males point to Du Bois' observation of the tendency to consider differences with suspicious and mistrust. And although our society is more tolerant than ever before, a new form of racism exists – aversive racism – characterized by egalitarian attitudes, but avoidance and subtle discrimination against Blacks”(Lynch 86). In America so many organizations started by Blacks were joined by Whites which continued to face the dilemma of double consciousness. As posited by many critics and their research confirms that race still matters in terms of opportunity, access, treatment, and quality of life.

Du Bois suggested that the economic plight of Blacks began during slavery where persons worked for no money and continued after Emancipation where Blacks worked for very little money. For most, accumulating wealth was not an option for even industrious freed persons had to contend with Whites who undermined their

efforts. Du Bois was particularly critical of the South's influence, where plantations were replaced by tenant farming, and the political, legal, and social systems supported thievery. During the several great migrations of the 20th century, rural cabins described by Du Bois as "dirty and dilapidated, smelling of eating and sleeping, poorly ventilated, and anything but homes" (140) were replaced by urban slums, squalor, and continued discrimination where as the North took part in oppressive tactics. Literature suggests that the effects of historic discrimination have resulted in a disproportionate percentage of poor blacks. For example, in 1996 although Blacks comprised approximately percent of the US population, they made up about 28 percent of the poor. Although about 75 percent of all poor people are White, Blacks, especially single mothers and their children, are at greater risk of poverty. And just as Du Bois' tenant farmers' outlook was "almost hopeless" (141), scholars suggest a growing angst in the Black community that cannot be combated without more ideas among other things and economic aspects.

Just as the theologian and philosopher Cornel west (1993) critiques the absence of effective Black leaders, Du Bois questioned the leadership role of Booker T. Washington and his apologetic stance toward Whites. Although Du Bois acknowledged Washington's sincerity and successes, he noted, "there is among educated and thoughtful colored men in all parts of the land a feeling of deep regret, sorrow, and apprehension at the wide currency and ascendancy which some of Mr. Washington's theories have gained" (47). Du Bois suggests that Washington's work reflects his indoctrination in the most superficial of American value systems, commercialism and materialism.

Unlike the honor he bestowed upon Alexander Crummell, Du Bois believed that Washington's stance justified continued oppressive conditions and squelched

potential resistance by the Black masses. Du Bois argued that the accomplishments of Blacks can be linked to the caliber and character of Black leaders. A century later, West (1993) queries, "How do we account for the absence of the Frederick Douglasses, Sojourner Truths, Martin Luther King Jrs., Malcolm Xs, and Fannie Lou Hamers in our time? Why hasn't black America produced intellectuals of the caliber of W.E. B. Du Bois in the past few decades?" (35). Based on West's typology of Black political leaders, Washington could be considered a race-effacing managerial leader that succumbed to hegemony, rather than a race-transcending prophetic leader that would critique the status quo as well as Blacks who blindly follow its dictates. Current attempts to subvert Affirmative Action legislation, Black conservatism, ambivalence by both national parties toward Black concerns, and the transition of Blacks from the position as the largest racial minority group inform Du Bois' observation in *Souls*:

To-day the black man has almost nothing to say as to how much he shall taxed, or how those taxes shall be expended; as to who shall execute the laws, and how they shall do it; as to who shall make the laws, and how they shall be made...the laws are made by men who have little interest in him; they are executed by men who have absolutely no motive for treating the black people with courtesy or consideration. (176-77)

Du Bois writes about his teaching experiences in rural Tennessee in Chapter IV and chronicled the trials and tragic fate of the educated John in Chapter XIII's "Of the Coming of John." But he continued to point to education as the primary means of mobility and character development for Blacks. He also noted the difficulty in convincing segments of the Black population of the merits of education given

the limited options upon completion. The author applauded the, "planting of the free school among Negroes" (34) and recognized the need for a diverse education system. However, he was clear that those persons most equipped in character and dedication should serve as leaders and shows their skills via a liberal arts education. He applauded certain Southern universities and provided empirical evidence of the benefits of education in Chapter VI. Education continues to be important for success. Balfour suggests that education, hard work, and strong families have enabled Blacks, more than any other race, to progress from working class to middle class in one generation. And although certain scholars theorize that some.

The Blacks reject the importance of formal education and hold disdain for their high achieving peers. Blacks conscious nature and sense of revenge is more reliable and their systematic research shows the converse. However, well depiction of Du Bois' assessment, segments of Black America continue to be constrained today due to sub-par educational systems.

Just as issues of race are central in *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois was clear that religion, characterized by "the Preacher, the Music, and the Frenzy" (191) served to sustain and empower a people. And just as Du Bois acknowledged the Black Church as the social center of Black life, studies suggest that it continues to serve as a vanguard in the Black community due to its dual sacred and secular roles. The Church meets religious needs, serves as an educational arena, provides economic aid, and provides sanctuary from discrimination, racism, and other stresses (99). Likewise another critic Arnold suggests that "souls in the book is a play on words referring to the twoness of the black American" (52). As the oldest organization owned, financed, and controlled by Blacks, it also cultivates Black identity. From the "invisible institution" during slavery to the organized Black Church, the institution

allowed for the creative, adaptive fusion of African religions and Christianity to develop a collective identity in response to hegemony and discrimination experienced in White religious settings (Billingsley Wilmore 99).

Du Bois translates the common experiences of African American people into his creation, which not only expresses the cultural dualism of the American native black people but also the transition of the ambivalence attitude of the native people. Gates, Henry Louis “asserts the actuality of the live experiences of the America, outside the artificial confines of literature and art”(326). By using these experiences of ordinary people along with him, Du Bois brings the Afro-American situations with the voice of the minority groups.

And Black involvement in church has been linked to increase life satisfaction as compared to their white counterparts and black sentiments are always broken. Past scholars who found activism among Black churches may be concerned about increased fundamentalism that may place activism. But according to most recent studies, the contemporary Black Church continues to galvanize large segments of the Black community to address social problems such as “neighborhood poverty, gang violence, and drug abuse and provides activities for Black youth and young adults” (Calhoun-Brown 117). At every turn black face minstrelsy has seemed a form in which improbably threatening or startlingly sympathetic racial meanings were simultaneously produced and dissolved.

However, like Du Bois, others suggest that the Church does not always proactively address the needs of the less-educated masses, better educated Blacks that require more than fire and brimstone sermons, youth and young adults who question tradition and competition due to the increased religious and social outlets now available to the blacks.

W.E.B. DuBois' "Souls of Black Folk", a collection of autobiographical and historical essays contains many themes. There is the theme of souls and their attainment of consciousness, the theme of double consciousness and the duality and bifurcation of black life and culture; but one of the most striking themes is that of "the veil." The veil provides a link between the fourteen seemingly unconnected essays that make up "The Souls of Black Folk". Mentioned at least once in most of the essays, it means that, "the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second sight in this American world, -a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others(6). The veil is a metaphor for the separation and invisibility of black life and existence in America and is a reoccurring theme in books about black life in America.

Du Bois's veil metaphor, "In those somber forests of his striving his own soul rose before him, and he saw himself, -darkly as though through a veil" is an allusion to Saint Paul's line in Isiah 25:7, "For now we see through a glass, darkly." Saint Paul's use of the veil in Isiah and later in Second Corinthians is similar to Du Bois's use of the metaphor of the veil. Both writers claim that as long as one is wrapped in the veil their attempts to gain self-consciousness will fail because they will always see the image of themselves reflect back to them by others.

Du Bois applies this by claiming that as long as one is behind the veil the, "world which yields him no self-consciousness but who only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world." (127). Saint Paul in Second Corinthians says the way to self consciousness and an understanding lies in, "the veil being taken away, Now the lord is the spirit and where the spirit of the lord is there is

liberty."(26). Du Bois does not claim that transcending the veil will lead to a better understanding of the world but like Saint Paul he finds that only through transcending the veil can people achieve liberty and gain self-consciousness.

The veil metaphor in *Souls of Black Folk* is symbolic of the invisibility of blacks in America. Du Bois says that Blacks in America are a forgotten people, "after the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil. The invisibility of Black existence in America is one of the reasons why Du Bois writes *Souls of Black Folk* in order to elucidate the invisible history and strivings of Black Americans, "I have sought here to sketch, in vague, uncertain outline, the spiritual world in which ten thousand Americans live and strive." Du Bois in each of the following chapters tries to manifest the strivings of Black existence from that of the reconstruction period to the black spirituals and the stories of rural black children that he tried to educate. Du Bois in *Souls of Black Folk* is grappling with trying to establish some sense of history and memory for Black Americans, Du Bois struggles in the pages of the book to prevent Black Americans from becoming a Seventh Son invisible to the rest of the world, hidden behind a veil of prejudice, "Hear my Cry, O God the reader vouch safe that this my book fall not still born into the world-wilderness. Let there spring, Gentle one, from its leaves vigor of thought and thoughtful deed to reap the harvest wonderful."(83).

The invisibility of Black existence is a recurring theme in other books about Black history. In Raboteau's book slave religion is called, "the invisible institution of the ante-bellum South." Raboteau tries to uncover and bring to light the religious practices of Black slaves, he tried to bring their history out of the veil. Raboteau writes how religion for slaves was a way in which, "slaves maintained their identity as

persons despite a system bent on reducing them to a subhuman level... In the midst of slavery religion was for the enslaved a space of meaning, freedom, and transcendence." Because slave religion was an invisible institution hidden by a veil from white slave masters, it provided a way in which slaves could resist social death. The history of Black women is also the history of a people made invisible; hidden behind the veil. Bell Hooks in her study of Black women and feminism tries to bring to light the forgotten past of black women who have also been hidden behind a veil, "Traditionally, scholars have emphasized the impact of slavery on the black male consciousness, arguing that black men more so than black women were the real victims of slavery." To Bell Hooks, the veil which makes black women invisible to white society is made from an inseparable cloth woven from the threads of racism and sexism.

The Black reconstruction period is another area in which scholars have grappled with the consequences of the veil which has hidden the history of black striving and struggle from view. Eric Foner's book on the reconstruction was the first major study of the period. Which depicts the real fundamental scenario of United States. The reconstruction which Foner terms America's unfinished revolution could also be called American invisible revolution due to the lack of scholarship on the area. The most striking examples of the theme of the veil and invisibility is in literature about Blacks struggling with their identity and with oppression. In "Beloved", Sethe's rationale for killing her child can not be understood by the white police system which sentence her to prison. In Ralph Ellison's, "Invisible Man", the main character says, "I am an invisible man, No I am not a spook like those that haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood movie ectoplasm's. I am a man of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids- and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible understand

because people refuse to see me"(67). Ralph Ellison's invisible man shows the bitter reality of the history of blackwomen, slavery, reconstruction, and many other elements of black life are hidden behind the veil making them invisible to much of society.

The veil is also a metaphor for the separation both physically and psychologically of blacks and whites America. Physically the veil separates blacks and whites through Slavery, Jim Crow laws, economic inequality, and the voluntary segregation that followed the end of the civil war. The veil acts as a physical barrier that permanently brands black Americans as an other; the veil is the metaphorical manifestation of the train tracks that divide the black and white parts of town. Du Bois in Chapter two lays out the creation of the veil from the end of the civil war to the failure of reconstruction. The following chapters then tell of those who have acted to strengthen the veil such as Booker T. Washington or who suffered behind the veil such as the school children Du Bois taught.

The veil also acts as a psychological barrier separating blacks from whites. The theme of the psychological separation of blacks and whites is a central metaphor of the book starting with the first lines where Du Bois recalls his encounters with whites who view him not as a person but as a problem, "They half approach me in a half-hesitant sort of way, eye me curiously or compassionately, and then instead of saying directly how does it feel to be a problem? They say, I know an Excellent colored man in my town"(127). The veil in this case hides the humanity of blacks which has important implications to the types of relations that developed between blacks and whites. With their humanity hidden behind the veil black and white relations at the time of the writing of the Souls of Black Folk were marked by violence. Dual nature was drafted in America during the civil war, following the

reconstruction period, the black contribution was erased in the formation of United States.

The theme of separation caused by the veil is repeated in many other black texts. In Raboteau's book slave religious practices were separate from white religious practices. Although many times slaves and their masters worshipped together religion during the slavery period provided to very separate things for master and slaves. For the master religion was a way to justify slavery and for slaves religion became a form of resistance and hope; a way to resist social death. In Eric Foner's book on reconstruction a veil separated black and white interpretations of reconstruction. For blacks reconstruction was a time of hope and freedom; for whites reconstruction was a time in which the north repressed a defeated region, with ignorant former slaves, who unable to act constructively for themselves were pawns of the northern intruders. The veil, a metaphor for separation both physically and psychologically hides the humanity of blacks, and created deep divisions between the races.

Du Bois in "*Souls of Black Folk*," unlike other blacks is able to move around the veil, operate behind it, lift it, and even transcend it. In the forethought Du Bois tells the reader that in the following chapters he has, "Stepped with in the veil, raising it that you may view faintly its deeper recesses, -the meaning of its religion, the passion of its human sorrow, and the struggle of its greater souls." Du Bois in the first Chapter steps outside the veil to reveal the origin and his awareness of the veil. And it is Du Bois's awareness of the veil that allows him to step outside of it and reveal the history of the Negro, "his two-ness, -an American, a Negro, two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body"(1).

Now that he has lifted the veil, in the following chapters Du Bois shows his white audience the history of the Black man following reconstruction and the origins

of the black church. Du Bois then talks about the conditions of individuals living behind the veil from his first born son who, "Within the veil was he born, said I; and there within shall he live, -a Negro and a Negro's son.... I saw the shadow of the veil as it passed over my baby, I saw the cold city towering above the blood red land"(165). In this passage Du Bois is both within and above the veil. He is a Negro living like his baby within the veil but he is also above the veil, able to see it pass over his child.

After Du Bois's child dies, he prays that it will, "sleep till I sleep, and waken to a baby voice and the ceaseless patter of little feet-above the veil"(168). Here Du Bois is living above the veil but in the following Chapter he once again travels behind the veil to tell the story of Alexander Crummell a black man who for, "fourscore years had he wondered in this same world of mine, within the Veil." Du Bois then in the last Chapter "Sorrow Songs" travels back into the veil from which he came, to return to the spiritual. Du Bois's ability to move around the veil could create some confusion as to whether the writer is black. For this reason Du Bois in his introduction says that, "I who speak here am bone of the bone and flesh of the flesh of them that live within the veil"(1). Du Bois's ability to move in and out of the veil gives him the ability to expose to whites that which is obscured from their view. It also lends Du Bois authority when speaking about his subject matter for he alone in the book is able to operate on both sides of the veil.

In the Chapter on "Sorrow Songs" Du Bois implores the reader to rise above the veil, "In his good time America shall rend the veil and the prisoner shall go free"(67). Du Bois likens the veil to a prison that traps Blacks from achieving progress and freedom. According to Du Bois the veil causes Blacks to accept the false images that whites see of Blacks. Du Bois although not explicitly in *Souls of Black Folk* critique's Booker T. Washington for accepting the veil and accepting white's ideas of

Blacks. Booker T. Washington an accommodationist accepts the white idea that blacks are problem people; not a people with a problem caused by white racism. Booker T. Washington seeks to work behind the veil by pursuing policies of accommodation. Du Bois in contrast wants blacks to transcend the veil by politically agitating and educating themselves.

Du Bois's conception of the veil contradicts some of the other theme's in *Souls of Black Folk*. First, how can the problem of the twentieth century be that of the color-line when blacks are invisible behind a veil of prejudice? Second, how can Du Bois speak from behind the veil as he does in parts of certain chapters and yet present a resemble critique of society? Third, how can the veil both make blacks invisible and separate them at the same time and make the separations so apparent to society. Fourth, how can Du Bois say blacks are gifted with second sight, when Du Bois says blacks are looking at their past and present through a veil? And Fifth, Du Bois's prescription for lifting the veil, education and political activism, are only small steps to lifting the stifling iron veil that keeps blacks invisible and separated from white America. DuBois's metaphor has limitations and internal contradictions; but these internal contradictions are minor compared to the power that the veil has as a symbol of black existence in America.

The veil in *Souls of Black Folk* is a metaphor that connotes the invisibility of black America, the separation between whites and blacks, and the obstacles that blacks face in gaining self-consciousness in a racist society. The veil is also a metaphor that reoccurs in other novels about black strivings. The veil is not a two dimensional cloth to Du Bois but instead it is a three dimensional prison that prevent blacks from seeing themselves as they are but instead makes them see the negative stereotypes that whites have of them.

The veil is also to Du Bois both a blind fold and a noose on the existence of ten thousand thousand Americans who live and strive invisible and separated from their white brothers and sisters. Du Bois wrote *Souls of Black Folks* to lift the veil and show the pain and sorrow of a striving people. Like Saint Paul's letter to the Corinthians Du Bois's letter to the American people urges people not to live behind the veil but to live above it. Thus we can understand the veil as operating simultaneously at the "micro-" level of identity, experience, the divisions and struggles within the racialized self; and at the "macro-" level of the social whole, the collectivity, the state, history, the nation. It furnishes a conceptual tool, an anatomy of racial formation, whose significance derives precisely from the various levels (or the various instances, to speak structuralese for a moment) at which it shapes society. Such is the main dialectic of the veil.

The Souls of Black Folk is a complicated text that combines a critique of historical events with a proposal for how to shape America. The text is a compilation of fourteen separate essays that range from autobiographies to sermons. While the teacher may find it helpful to study each chapter separately in order to interpret the complexities of Du Bois' argument, the essays are meant to build upon one another, creating, for the reader, a portrait of what it means to be African-American at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Because of its reliance on historical knowledge, the teacher may find it beneficial to have students research W. E. B. Du Bois, Reconstruction, the Atlanta Compromise, and Booker T. Washington. The teacher may also find it helpful to prepare students for the language used in *The Souls of Black Folk*. The book contains historically accurate language that is offensive and derogatory nowadays, including references to African-Americans as niggers and Negroes. In addition, the dialect may

seem stereotyped, but the teacher may wish to make students aware of its historical accuracy. Much of Du Bois' writing is complex, with long, convoluted sentence structure. Students are encouraged to work through these complexities to understand Du Bois' philosophical, social, historical and racially motivated theories.

The first two sections of the book deals with the history of the black people. It tells of the mistakes and mismanagement that followed the emancipation proclamation and the problems that followed primarily in the south. Although deep down in my history brain I knew much of this (I have one year of post civil war American history) some of it felt very new. I had the general idea that it had not been handled well but to see how it had been handled badly was really good.

The third section lays out the problems caused by previous leaders within the community. Du Bois primarily criticises Booker T. Washington for having sold the blacks cheap by not insisting on suffrage and higher education. The need for education and suffrage become cornerstones in the rest of the book. The fourth and fifth sections deal with the importance of education in order to allow everyone to reach their full potential. Du Bois is critical to the idea that coloured people should not have universities. He is of the opinion that a university education for some coloured people is vital in order for everyone to get the best education. At one point he says:

Progress in human affairs is more often a pull than a push, a surging forward of the exceptional man, and the lifting of his duller brethren slowly and painfully to his vantage-ground. Thus it was no accident that gave birth to universities centuries before the common schools, that made fair Harvard the first flower of our wilderness.(54)

I found this very interesting. Often we talk about the importance of universal education. Making sure everyone goes through grade school but often university education is seen as something for the elite. The fact that you need someone to educate at the mass level is somehow forgotten. The need to drag everyone along with them. The book then goes on to describe the life of those in the south. The poor conditions and the cultural practices that are legacies of slavery. He talks about the living conditions that the coloured people were forced to endure due to poverty and a lack of education. He describes the family breakdowns that were caused by poverty.

He also criticises the system of loans to grow cotton and how merchants except only cotton crops as security on these loans meaning that the poor are forced into growing crops that don't give them the best profit. And therefore stops them from getting out of poverty, and indirectly stops them from working hard. Why work hard if you won't get anything for it? This particular argument feels very relevant today with regards to third world debt and the subprime mortgages. He criticises the churches for perpetuating the segregation of the south but also for allowing the subjugation of the coloured people in the first place. The use of the church to keep slaves enslaved was, according to Du Bois, a contributing factor to problems of morals within the coloured community. Technically this is a very well written book. The continued use of the image of the veil and the use of the phrase "the valley of the shadow of death"(115) invokes the Bible in a very significant way. I want to quote some important parts of the text to you because they were so beautiful but I am going to limit myself to just a few:

Herein lie buried many things which if read with patience may show the strange meaning of being black here at the dawning of the Twentieth Century. This meaning is not without interest to you, Gentle

Reader; for the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line. I pray you, then, receive my little book in all charity, studying my words with me, forgiving mistake and foible for sake of the faith and passion that is in me, and seeking the grain of truth hidden there.(76)

These concept of color line,faith and passion denotes the dual nature of writer interms of double conscious.This is the start of the book. Isn't this just the most beautiful introduction to a book ever. It made me swoon.

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 for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man 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.(32)

This quote just sums up so much of what is wrong in the world and shows the bitter reality still that is in the African American society.

Du Bois became convinced that integration in America was unrealistic, and that white capitalism was geared toward keeping minorities down. To show the miserable condition of African American's life he sites his own real tragic story. And he says:

He died at eventide, when the sun lay like a brooding sorrow above the western hills, veiling its face; when the winds spoke not, and the trees, the great green trees he loved, stood motionless. I saw his breath beat quicker and quicker, pause, and then his little soul leapt like a star that travels in the night and left a world of darkness in its train. The day changed not; the same tall trees peeped in at the windows, the same green grass glinted in the setting sun. Only in the chamber of death writhed the world's most piteous thing—a childless mother.(43)

The language is just so beautifully balanced and sad and just wonderful. And the final sentence so incredibly poignant. He makes a compelling argument as to why keeping people in poverty and ignorance hurts not just the person in question but the country as a whole and might lead to the rebellion and unrest. Often people in power argue that educating the poor can give them dangerous ideas. Here he shows how the poverty actually gives them these ideas. I found the points made in this book to be highly relevant for today too. It is always important to know where we have come from but I think the issues in this book are as valid today as they were when it was written. The importance of education, the importance of universal suffrage and being involved in the political process and the inherent problems when one group dominates another. None of these issues have gone away. None of these issues have been fully resolved.

All in all, while reading the primary text *The Souls of Black Folk* by W. E. B. Du Bois from the eyes of duality the researcher finds the bitter life experience of African Americans in the white dominated society. As an active participant in two worlds, Du Bois embodies his assessment of life within the veil and experience to the extreme. His extensive education makes him a renowned scholar and a man

exceptional for his time. Hence the focuses of his work is the liberation of African American people, his academic life was necessarily steeped in western and largely white culture. Thus, Du Bois becomes the spokesperson of African American blacks with his experience in white dominated society.

III. Marginalization in *The Souls of Black Folks*

The researcher concludes the research with inspiring quote from Du Bois; Infinite is human nature. We make it finite by choking back the mass of men, by attempting to speak for others, to interpret and act for them, and we end by acting for ourselves. This infinity is seen in the infinite amount of ways human beings can form to live and relate to each other. We can form and function under systems of inclusion or exclusion, oppression or liberation. How one paradigm of relating and living with each other is shifted depends on the possibilities for change and new ways that are put forth by people. Du Bois recognized this and in his effort to find ways of living that didn't involve racism and prejudice he privileged the formation of new possibilities that accompanied marginalized epistemic positions. By privileging a marginalized epistemic position on the basis of the possibilities it can offer to current problems, a practical reason for privileging certain standpoints that keep a larger problem in view emerges. Du Bois privileged these standpoints because he could see the possibility of a brighter future ahead, even in his darkest moments he never shuts out the possibility for change.

W. E. B. Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) is a seminal work in African American literature and an American classic. In this work Du Bois proposes that the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line. His concepts of life behind the veil of race and the resulting "double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others,"(7) have become touchstones for thinking about race in America. In addition to these enduring concepts, *Souls* offers an assessment of the progress of the race, the obstacles to that progress, and the possibilities for future progress as the nation entered the twentieth century. Du Bois examines the years immediately following the Civil War and, in particular, the

Freedmen's Bureau's role in Reconstruction. The Bureau's failures were due not only to southern opposition and national neglect, but also to mismanagement and courts that were biased in favor of black litigants. The Bureau did have successes as well, and its most important contribution to progress was the founding of African American schools. Since the end of Reconstruction in 1876, Du Bois claims that the most significant event in African American history has been the rise of the educator, Booker T. Washington, to the role of spokesman for the race. Du Bois argues that Washington's approach to race relations is counterproductive to the long-term progress of the race. Washington's acceptance of segregation and his emphasis on material progress represent an old attitude of adjustment and submission. Du Bois asserts that this policy has damaged African Americans by contributing to the loss of the vote, the loss of civil status, and the loss of aid for institutions of higher education. Du Bois insists that the right to vote, civic equality, and the education of youth according to ability are essential for African American progress.

Du Bois relates his experiences as a schoolteacher in rural Tennessee, and then he turns his attention to a critique of American materialism in the rising city of Atlanta where the single-minded attention to gaining wealth threatens to replace all other considerations. In terms of education, African Americans should not be taught merely to earn money. Rather, Du Bois argues there should be a balance between the standards of lower training and the standards of human culture and lofty ideals of life.

Du Bois returns to an examination of rural African American life with a presentation of Dougherty County, Georgia as representative of life in the southern Black Belt. He presents the history and current conditions of the county. Cotton is still the life-blood of the Black Belt economy, and few African Americans are enjoying any economic success. Du Bois describes the legal system and tenant farming system

as only slightly removed from slavery. He also examines African American religion from its origins in African society, through its development in slavery, to the formation of the Baptist and Methodist churches. He argues that "the study of Negro religion is not only a vital part of the history of the Negro in America, but no uninteresting part of American history"(178). He goes on to examine the impact of slavery on morality.

In the last chapters of his book, Du Bois concentrates on how racial prejudice impacts individuals. He mourns the loss of his baby son, but he wonders if his son is not better off dead than growing up in a world dominated by the color-line. Du Bois relates the story of Alexander Crummel, who struggled against prejudice in his attempts to become an Episcopal priest. In "Of the Coming of John," Du Bois presents the story of a young black man who attains education. John's new knowledge, however, places him at odds with a southern community, and he is destroyed by racism. Finally, Du Bois concludes his book with an essay on African American spirituals. These songs have developed from their African origins into powerful expressions of the sorrow, pain, and exile that characterize the African American experience. For Du Bois, these songs exist not simply as the sole American music, but as the most beautiful expression of human experience born this side the seas. In relating the story of African-American people, Du Bois relies on his own experience and presents his own voice through his narration. Hence the work is as much the story of his soul as it is about the souls of all black folk.

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