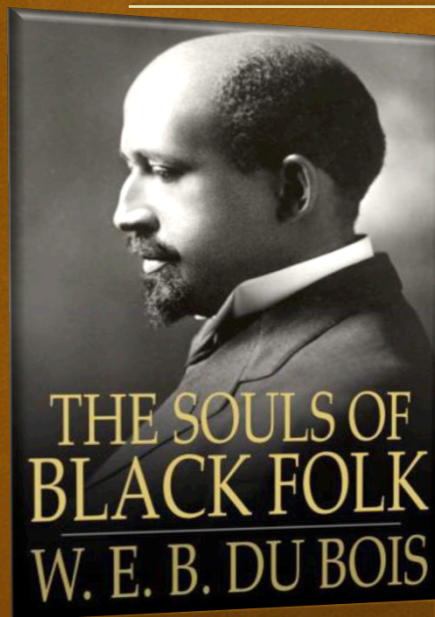


W.E.B. Du Bois's
The Souls of Black Folk:
Historical Influences and
Contemporary
Africana Philosophy



Richter 2013 Presentation
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Philosophy Department
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OVERVIEW



☞ I'm working with Professor Evans in the Philosophy Department on his own edition of W.E.B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* titled *The Souls of Black Folk and Other Writings*. I've thoroughly analyzed Robert Gooding-Williams's edition of *The Souls of Black Folk* and other secondary literature that offer interpretations of that text.

Description



- ✧ In *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois provides a descriptive analysis of Black experience in 19th and 20th Century in America.
- ✧ Du Bois presents sociological and psychological consequences that have directly affected the fate of Blacks in America.
- ✧ An important note to keep in mind is that Du Bois employs soul as a metaphor for Black moral psychology.

Double Consciousness



- ❧ Definition: To look at oneself through the eyes of others
- ❧ Du Bois uses the analogy of “double consciousness” to show the estrangement that shape the lives of Blacks, which they have grown to see themselves as strangers because of the view Whites hold of them.
- ❧ There are negative consequences of struggling with this idea of being two-ness because it’s the direct result of the slave trade, which is a struggle for Blacks to overcome.

The Veil



- ❧ Du Bois explains that there is a color-line problem amongst races in America, but the slavery of Blacks has caused them to live trapped.
- ❧ As a result of Blacks living within the Veil, people either see no color or all color when it comes to race in general.
- ❧ Du Bois urges there is a need for Blacks to live above the Veil, which they aren't trapped and can freely move within the White world.
- ❧ Consequently, people need to recognize the situation of racism in America and understand it because it does exist.



Talented Tenth



- ❧ Definition: 10% of the best Black population has the responsibility to lift the other 90% of Blacks that suffer from the effects of White supremacy
- ❧ Pursuit of knowledge is important for Blacks so they can make a way for themselves and develop the Black culture
- ❧ Industrial and vocational education is important, but a higher liberal arts education is needed for Blacks
- ❧ The establishment of Black colleges is not simply to provide an education, but give Blacks responsibility & culture



Critical Social Theory White Supremacy



- ☞ Du Bois addressed the idea that White supremacy is a critical social theory by analyzing it in *The Souls of White Folk*
- ☞ Du Bois has observed how Whiteness is a sociological or philosophical norm that has exploited non-Whites through use of White domination and White superiority
- ☞ Secondary Literature: David Owen's analysis of *The Souls of White Folk* effectively sets up Du Bois attack on White supremacy by establishing the problem of the color-line is based on White supremacy



My Epilogue



- ❧ I believe that the main goal of *The Souls of Black Folk* is to understand race as a social construct from a sociological and historical perspective.
- ❧ Du Bois did a great job in focusing not only on the cause of racial inequality in America that Blacks have suffered from, but on the effects of the moral psychological perspective of Blacks.