Name MODEL

Text W.E.B Du Bois, "The Souls of Black Folk"

In "The Souls of Black Folk," W.E.B. Du Bois argues that, in the time immediately following Emancipation, awareness of two very different populations weakened the work of black artisans, intellectuals, and artists. They were aware of both a very developed white population and a generally uneducated and poor black population.

What was needed by their own people—"a poverty-stricken horde"—was to white people, simple and basic—a "twice-told tale" (63, 68). Furthermore, white people misunderstood and even despised black ideals and beauty (69-72). On the other hand, black intellectuals and artists did not share the experience of the white population. White experience was "Greek to (their) own flesh and blood" and white standards were not those of their own people (69, 65-66).

As such, black artists and intellectuals were caught in between, facing "two unreconciled ideals" (73). This position "wrought sad havoc" with their "courage and faith and deeds" (74). At the very least, they were confused and unproductive. At the worst, they were tempted "toward quackery and demagogy" (65). Diffused and fraudulent, they did not live up to their own potential or to the "criticism of the other world" (65-66). Often, they ended up "ashamed of themselves" (76).

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