

# Du bois the souls of black folk

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Du Bois' The Souls of Black Folk Review al Affiliation This paper represents the critical analysis of Du Bois' The Souls of Black Folk (1903), focusing on the review of Du Bois' conception of African-Americans' plight in the USA during the second half of nineteenth and early twentieth century and his blueprint for their full emancipation.

Keywords: Du Bois, African-Americans

Du Bois' The Souls of Black Folk Review

Du Bois' The Souls of Black Folk (1903) is essentially based on the analysis of strives overcoming by the descendants of Africans in the USA after Lincoln's Emancipation proclamation in 1863 and on author's own experiences as an African-American in the American society of early twentieth century.

Considering " the problem of the color-line" to be the corner stone of contemporary society, the author focuses on the issues of segregation and racism providing deliberate examination of economic, political, social and cultural conditions and struggles of America's blacks in the second half of nineteenth and early twentieth century (Du Bois, 1903).

The Souls of Black Folk represents a collection of fourteen historical and sociological essays framed by the Forethought and Afterthought. In the Forethought and Of Our Spiritual Strivings Du Bois outlines the primary metaphorical concepts of his work, the " veil" and " double consciousness", through which, according to the author, American blacks face the world. Hence, the " veil" represents " Negroes'" innate feature, an indication of color line, historically conditioned lack of ability of white people to accept blacks as equals and at the inability of African-Americans to exceed the poor limits society establishes for them. The " double consciousness" is closely related to the concept of the " veil" and refers to the existence of two conflicting

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identities of African-Americans, that is to say the one of emancipated American citizen and the other of former slave continuing to experience inequality and restrictions. Thus, these concepts clearly describe the distillation of being Black in America of those days. Moreover, social tendencies of the post-emancipation epoch aggravated a lot African-Americans' plight then. For example, in *Of the Black Belt* Du Bois cites his experience of travelling in so-called Jim Crow Car giving readers the insight of how poorly the discrimination on the ground of skin color legalized by Jim Crow Laws affected the blacks' life conditions and their self-appraisal in particular. Du Bois also outlines the prejudicialness of American society toward the Black people. It appears clearly in the anecdote about priest Crummell who fought for his right to achieve education and become a preacher despite numerous rejections of church conventions or in *Of the Coming of John* where the black protagonist having killed the white protecting the dignity of his sister is exposed to the prejudice and has no choice but to escape in order not to be lynched. The other important issue Du Bois emphasizes in *Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others*, *Of the Training of Black Men* is the importance of African-Americans' fight for rights and classical education which is vital to overcome the oppressive pursuit of wealth and to educate leaders of black community.

Thereby, the author states African-Americans have the right to require from society “ three things”, that are the right to vote, civil equality and “ the education of youth according to ability” (Du Bois, 1903). He also claims that not only US Government, but the entire world needs to help African-American achieve these goals and black people themselves have to realize their equality with the whites and struggle incessantly, as Crummell did. Du <https://assignbuster.com/du-bois-the-souls-of-black-folk/>

Bois was convinced that " only by a union of intelligence and sympathy across the color-line ... shall justice and right triumph" (Du Bois, 1903).

To conclude, Du Bois' blueprint for full emancipation indeed proved itself to be efficient on account of black people obtained governmental protection they needed and modern world prospers under the slogans of tolerance and equality.

#### References

Du Bois, W. E. B., (1903). The Souls of Black Folk. Retrieved from <http://www.bartleby.com/114/index.html>