

The Rhetoric of Black Literary Theory and W.E.B. DuBois's *Influence on Harlem Writers*

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The black literary tradition now demands, for sustenance and for growth, the sorts of reading which it is the especial province of the literary critic to render; and those sorts of reading all share a fundamental concern with the nature and functions of figurative language as manifested in specific texts. No matter to what ends we put our readings, we can never lose sight of the fact that a text is not a fixed 'thing' but a rhetorical structure which functions in response to a complex set of rules. It can never be related satisfactorily to a reality outside itself merely in a one-to-one relation.¹

Abstract - Literary theories are always pathways that lead to an explanatory social, political or economic framework about a group of people. And W.E.B. DuBois's psychoanalysis of African Americans has produced a type of knowledge that concretizes the combination of Blacks and Whites in the production of American national culture. What then are the particularities of black literary theory through which one can understand the black aspect of American culture? This article elaborates on some of DuBois's ways of writing that delineate the African American artistic autonomy sourced from the American soil and the impact of that methodology on Harlem poets and writers. Without intellectually sustained and clear-cut black cultural features, the American Mainstream cannot consider blackness as part of it.

Résumé - Les théories littéraires sont toujours les chemins qui mènent aux cadres explicatifs sociaux, politiques ou économiques d'un groupe de personnes. Et la psychanalyse de W.E.B. DuBois des Afro-Américains a produit un type de connaissance qui concrétise la combinaison des Noirs et des Blancs dans la production de la culture nationale des Etats Unis. Quelles sont donc les particularités de la théorie littéraire noire à travers laquelle on peut comprendre l'aspect noir de la culture américaine? Cet article s'élabore sur quelques aspects de l'écriture de DuBois qui délimitent l'autonomie artistique afro-américaine provenant du sol américain et l'impact de cette méthode sur les poètes et les écrivains de Harlem. Sans caractéristiques culturelles noires claires et intellectuellement soutenues, la culture populaire américaine ne peut pas considérer l'image noire dans son cadre.

1. Introduction

If we get rid of art for art's sake and abide by the fact that a literary work permanently reveals aspects of real life, we would obviously understand why there exists a diversity of literary canons. And each canon respects and sustains certain specific cultural or political rulebooks. The respect of those rules is what critics look up in an artistic/literary work in order to attribute a good or acceptable appreciation to it. What then is the particularity of black literature? Is there any specific target that black artists/authors want to hit in their endeavors? If African writers freely navigate in the continental African cultural landscape in their creative activities, what should African Americans claim on the American soil to be parts of their cultural entity for their artistic use? This article explores W.E.B. DuBois's philosophical trend that gives to African Americans the patent cultural license of the United States. While other

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¹ Henry Louis Gates, Jr "Criticism in the jungle" in Henry Louis Gates, Jr Ed. *Black Literature and literary Theory*, (New York: Routledge, 1990), P.5.

critics insinuate that Blacks do not have any culture in the US, DuBois, through federal and natural laws finds unperturbedly what belongs to them that makes them full American citizens. For it is by denying specific cultural entities to an ethnic group on a soil that the ethnic group is denied its appurtenance to that soil.

The focus in this article would be on what is behind a theory. Thus, its first part will address the issue around the instigation of African American theory. This is inevitably angling my research towards W.E.B. DuBois's scholarly redemption of the black psychological being through *The Souls of Black Folk*, which altogether refurbishes the US pride in multicultural nation. The second aspect of this work is going to be a discourse on the other African American writers' reaction vis-à-vis DuBois's advocacy. In this perspective, the conduction of our analysis will prevail in the methodological perspectives of the African American ways of writing, which is embedded in their quest for the American sociocultural common sense from where spring the particularities of black literature.

2. Behind a Theory: Instigators of African American Theory

Like feminism that is motivated by the patriarchal ascent on various human relations, African American theory is relatively adamant on the explanation of the Blacks' world view. In its appropriation of the meaning of life inside and outside black community, this theory is nourished with hypotheses from other theories and tends to universalize its explanatory findings. Although a theory is not the same as a hypothesis, a theory provides an explanatory framework for some observation, and from the assumptions of the explanation follows a number of possible hypotheses that can be tested in order to provide support for, or challenge, the theory.

The black historical background embodies bondage and servitude which cannot connote with pleasure and happiness or with humanitarian assent. The interpretative nature of theory gives it the chance of working concepts according to the goal the interpreter needs to reach. In this regards, the relationship between a slave and his/her master, for instance, can be interpreted as a cultural entity belonging to the American social, political and economic life. Thus, the fourteen essays included in *The Soul of Black Folk* not only do explore the inner being of Americans of African descent, but also exhibit the US's multiculturalism. Shanette M. Harris, in "Constructing a Psychological Perspective: The Observer and the Observed in *The Souls of Black Folk*", finds that:

Observations outlined and discussed in *Souls* gave impetus to theories and assumptions that currently underlie "Black" or "African American Psychology" and premises that set the stage for today's focus on and concern with "multiculturalism." Prior to this work, the depth of the black psyche was largely unknown and unexplored, often assumed by European Americans to be nonexistent. The absence of knowledge of the inner life of African Americans made it so much easier for European Americans to oppress and dehumanize what was historically considered as an object and viewed as inhuman or at best, subhuman. In *Souls*, Du Bois's plea and presentation provide both Europeans and African Americans a concrete image of "Negro" culture and worldview that was previously invisible. Here the artifacts, values, beliefs, and customs of a displaced African

people are described and clarified alongside the discussion of the spirit and thought of the individual.²

The interpretative nature of theory allows authors to use the aimed goals to generalize the results found on the individual. Thus, DuBois's psychological analysis of a black character in the US renders theoretical the universalization of cultural production. That is to say, the purpose or option of an African American is inevitably depending on the place of residence. And it is obvious that only through human interaction with nature is that culture produced. Therefore, if agreed that American culture is produced through the role played by Blacks, why not accept the latter as US citizens with the same rights as others? DuBois finds a Negro who:

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 Opportunities closed roughly in his face. This then, is the end of his striving: to be a co-worker in the kingdom of culture, to escape both death and isolation, to husband and use his best powers and his latent genius.³

As the meaning of theory is to be based on the act of viewing analytically and generalizing contextually, it is thus based upon a process of abstraction. That is to say, theory involves stepping back, or abstracting, from that which one is viewing.⁴ In this regard, DuBois's treatment of black character envisages the call of attention on the peculiarities surrounding him. Even if another analytical view of blackness could give a different result than DuBois's, DuBois uses these particularities in the sense that could delineate the black conception of life replete with his American experience and sustain his participation in the edification of American life. "The sense of being an exclusive insider by virtue of experience."⁵ This explains the attitude of the American Mainstream towards each minority group, which could not be part of it if the latter does not have a specific cultural line that distinguishes it from other ethnic groups in the US. "The conflict resulting from attempts to accommodate the Mainstream and resisting it was one of several cultural paradoxes that complicated the decision of black performers and playwrights"⁶. Thus, DuBois's objective in his analysis is to prod for what is specific for Blacks in the US, which will constitute the source of the black community's pride and the US cultural feature altogether. Robert W. Williams in "Paradoxes of the South in Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk*" argues that

² Shanette M. Harris, "Constructing a Psychological Perspective: The Observer and the Observed in *The Souls of Black Folk*." *The Souls of Black Folk: One Hundred Years Later*. Ed. Dolan Hubbard. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003. 218-250. Rpt. in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*. Ed. Thomas J. Schoenberg and Lawrence J. Trudeau. Vol. 169. Detroit: Gale, 2006. *Literature Resource Center*.

³ W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* in Nathan Huggins edit. *W.E.B. DuBois Writings: The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade, The Souls of Black Folk, Dusk of Dawn, Essays and Articles*, (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1986), p. 365.

⁴ Wikipedia

⁵ Eduard Said (1985: 106) cited by Bill Ashcroft et al in *The Empire Writes Back*, (London: Routledge, 1989) p.21.

⁶ David Krasner, *A Beautiful Pageant: African American Theater Drama and Performance in the Harlem Renaissance 1910-1927*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), P. 4.

DuBois set forth a political message of social change, especially with his critique of Booker T. Washington's positions on racial uplift (Rampersad; Reed). As a treatise on self-development *Souls* spoke of the existential and practical struggles needed to reunite the African American identity, an identity torn and ragged from the machinations of a racist color line and the Veil, its epistemological expression (Brodwin; Gilroy; Zamir).⁷

Here we can realize the theoretical procedure that pushes DuBois's arts and philosophy that is used to describe ideas and empirical phenomena which are not easily measurable. Since theory abstracts, it draws away from the particular and empirical.⁸ That is why, while looking for a name that could replace the pejorative "Third World literatures," Ashcroft et al found that the name 'new literatures in English' proposed by some contenders instead of the most recent 'post-colonial literatures' becomes vague and misleading because it does not give any theoretical direction or comparative framework.⁹

Some scholars tend call literatures with an African American theoretical corpus 'literature of protest.' Notwithstanding, it is undeniable that every piece of literature should answer many questions in its course. It should use some background on which to set a hypothesis for development and demonstration. African American writings take in consideration the European stereotypes built on Blacks. It forms the antithesis of those stereotypes, elaborates on them, and ends up in deconstructing the European conception of life in general and the white underestimation of black human potentials in particular. Deconstruction teaches us that meaning in a text is not and should not remain rigid. However, Derrida is not a black philosopher. If there is a form of liberalism in arts and the freedom to expand one's thought, therefore the black use of deconstruction and even post structuralist theories among others is an intellectual endeavor that any author – black or white – can use, given the context in which they are and the goal they aim to reach.

It should be noted that if a theory is inspired by other theories, its corpus is delineated by its motivations and its aims. In this regard, the use of deconstruction or post structuralism in the edification of black literary tradition is not a credit to these theories. Rather, for the development of knowledge one needs normative or empirical rationalizations. In this perspective, a theory can be normative (or prescriptive), meaning a postulation about what ought to be. It provides "goals, norms, and standards". A theory can be a body of knowledge, which may or may not be associated with particular explanatory models. To theorize is to develop this body of knowledge.¹⁰ Thus, the black literary theory is itself authoritarian, edified empirically for the development of its own knowledge. This tradition may not need the explanatory models like basing its elaboration on other theories. This is strongly felt in DuBois's use of songs in plantations, which express sorrow and pain, to illustrate the black cultural appurtenance to the US. This obviously falls in the

⁷ Robert W. Williams, "Paradoxes of the South in Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk*." *The Mississippi Quarterly* 62.1-2 (2009): 71-89. *Literature Resource Center*.

⁸ Wikipedia

⁹ Bill Ashcroft et al. p.23.

¹⁰ Wikipedia

normative standard because any uncanny situation deserves painful expression and naturally an event belongs to the place where it happens. Why, therefore, not attribute to the American culture what emanate from Blacks on the American soil?

DuBois's claim for African Americans' civil rights through his essays in *The Soul of Black Folks* is a demonstration of black cultural independence that insinuates the black aspect of the American culture. It is a development of knowledge that stands alone with its own prerogatives and prescriptions. The role of literature being the cultivation of humanities through the game of words, DuBois's elaboration on the consciousness of Americans of African descent is particularly theoretical. And the theory embedded in this production of knowledge not only does give credit to the African participation in the cultural edification of the US, but also concretizes the American multiculturalism. No matter how strong non-black culture may be, the American national culture depends on the black aspect of it. Edward W. Said argues that:

... when supposedly otherwise neutral departments of culture like literature and critical theory converge upon the weaker or subordinate culture and interpret it with ideas of unchanging non-European and European essences, narratives about geographical possession and images of legitimacy and redemption, the striking consequence has been to disguise the power situation and to conceal how much the experience of the stronger party overlaps with and, strangely, depends on the weaker.¹¹

The following part of this essay discusses the attention given to DuBois's endeavor by other black writers and poets. This is about the relationship between the N.A.A.C.P.'s objectives and the black writers' will to extend their talents beyond the scope of the black literary tradition in order to remain universal writers and poets instead of having the adjective "black" preceding the name writer or poet.

3. The Black Literary Tradition and the Harlem Writers

The main objectives of DuBois's way of treating black consciousness are:

- Revisiting black life situations in the US human relations, mostly life on plantations,
- Interpret black blues songs as vehicles of culture proper to blacks in the US,
- Value all that concerns black life into the American cultural mold and,
- Use the findings of all his analyses as a basis that naturally or legally gives Blacks the right to American citizenship and consequently equal opportunities with other Americans.

These objectives are matching those of the Harlem literary movement of the 1920s. In his analysis on DuBois's philosophy, Shadi Neimneh in "Thematics of interracial violence in selected Harlem Renaissance novels" finds that:

As early as 1903, W. E. B. Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk* was paving the way for the radical spirit of the movement when he rejected the old school of Negro thought, represented by Booker T. Washington, for its accommodation, submission, and acceptance of intellectual inferiority. (2) The New Negro Du Bois favored is proud, progressive, and above all militant in self-defense. Those Negroes who fought in World

¹¹ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), p. 191-192.

War I for democracy and left the racially hostile South to succeed in Northern cities became more self-assertive with a renewed sense of their manliness--thus embodying the ideals already posited by Du Bois regarding the new negro mentality. They demanded rights and refused to turn the other cheek for a slap. In the domain of literary politics, Du Bois found an art devoid of politics advancing racial equality meaningless. He wanted art to be revolutionary. He thought blacks could achieve through culture what could not be achieved through actual violence or weapons.¹²

If we view this correspondence to emanate from the fact that the NAACP of that period was led by DuBois, it was rather the Mainstream's preconditions for a community to be accepted in it. That is, every community should gather around specific cultural entities with authentic sources, prove intellectually that they belong to the American cultural landscape. This has been in the perspective of the American arts emancipation.

Because the WWI has already revealed the secret to the whole world about the potentialities of the black race through the bravery of the black regiment in that war, the black elite is now pushing forward in its dissuasion of the white community about the stereotypes on Blacks. Moreover the American arts after war had to be subjected to change. That is the American arts had to be emancipated. Nathan Irvin Huggins explains that:

America was self-conscious about a newness and change which had actually begun in the years before America's entry into the European war. This had been the theme of Van Wyck Brooks's *America's Coming of Age* (1915). Brooks announced that American arts and letters were at last free from the fetters of provincialism and Puritanism. The bracing winds from Europe had propelled the becalmed American culture and set it loose to find its own course. Van Wyck Brooks and the young intellectuals who had engaged in the prewar rebellion went into the war convinced that the day of American art and letters was at hand. Despite the disillusionment that followed wartime idealism, the 1920s continued some of this spirit of emancipation, innovation, and newness.¹³

The emancipation of American arts and letters and the Mainstream's sine qua non condition connote the emancipation of individual ethnic groups in terms of exposing their expressive cultures.

However, the African American community under DuBois's leadership had immediately to listen to the latter in his various views. In this regard, poets and writers of the Harlem Renaissance, in their great apprehension to facelift black culture and thus be part of the Mainstream, had to confine the choice of themes to write on in the context of black relationship with white. They had to write prose or poems that strongly do away with stereotypes on Blacks. Gerald Early observes:

Something like the concept of honor had to be on James Weldon Johnson's mind, for instance, when he wrote in the preface of his 1922 anthology, *The Book of American Negro Poetry*, calling for racial uplift through the creation of art: "No people that has produced great literature and art has ever been looked upon by the world as distinctly inferior." Put

¹² Neimneh, Shadi. "Thematics of interracial violence in selected Harlem Renaissance novels." *Papers on Language & Literature* 50.2 *Literature Resource Center*. (2014): p.152.

¹³ Nathan Irvin Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 53.

another way, as this era, the Harlem Renaissance, gave us the cultural paradigms for seeing blacks and black expression in relation to modern American popular culture.¹⁴

James Weldon Johnson's position in the Harlem movement echoed that of DuBois. That means he shared the leadership with him after Booker T. Washington. Not just an influential and notable novelist, poet, and songwriter, James Weldon Johnson was a lawyer, a United States consul in a foreign nation, and served an important role in combating racism through his position in the NAACP. According to NAACP History:

While in New York, Johnson also became involved in politics. In 1904, he served as treasurer for the Colored Republican Club. In 1906, the Roosevelt Administration appointed Johnson as the United States consul in Puerto Cabello, Venezuela. In 1909, he served as consul in Corinto, Nicaragua until 1913. In addition to his service as consul, during this time, Johnson anonymously published his novel, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* (1912).¹⁵

This novel serves as a precursor to the Harlem way of writing since its content is about a colored man – a mulatto who was not aware of his blackness due to the fairness of his skin until he was told so in a classroom. Moreover the main objective of Johnson is to wage war against racism through a methodology based on a character with specific physiological features that are found only on someone issued from a couple made up of a black male and a white female or vice versa. This particularity creates another cultural situation that I don't want to explore here but which is very important as far as the black literary tradition is concerned.

It should be noted that Johnson's novel paved the way for Harlem writers as much as DuBois's works did.

After leaving the public sector, in 1916, Johnson accepted the position of field secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Johnson worked at opening new branches and expanding membership. In 1920, the NAACP appointed him executive secretary. In this position, he was able to bring attention to racism, lynching, and segregation. After ten years of serving as executive secretary, Johnson resigned, and accepted a creative writing teaching position at Fisk University. Johnson developed his own philosophy on lessening racism in America. While W.E.B. Du Bois advocated intellectual development and Booker T. Washington advocated industrial training to combat racism, Johnson believed that it was important for blacks to produce great literature and art. By doing so, Johnson held that blacks could demonstrate their intellectual equality and advance their placement in America.¹⁶

The influence of this leadership on the Harlem writers and poets is obvious since the leaders themselves are writers and their works are acclaimed by the American readership. Even before them, Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906) – the first African American who earned his living through writing, Charles Waddell Chesnut (1858-1932) in his *The House behind the Cedars* inspired the following generations of American writers of black descent.

¹⁴ Gerald Early, "Three Notes toward a Cultural Definition of the Harlem Renaissance." *Callaloo* 14.1 (Winter 1991): 136-149. Rpt. in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*. Ed. Thomas J. Schoenberg and Lawrence J. Trudeau. Vol. 218. Detroit: Gale, 2009. *Literature Resource Center*.

¹⁵ NAACP History: James Weldon Johnson © 2009 - 2014 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

¹⁶ *ibid*

Despite the intellectual endeavor and the artistic potentials exhibited by black writers and poets in their search for cultural identity, which is at the same time an important part and parcel of the cultural discourse, these artists receive the feedback that qualifies the outcome of their work as black genius without any universal meaning. Keith D. Leonard argues that,

But unlike in Dunbar's verse, in Harlem Renaissance poetry this provisional unity of folk and formal more fully articulated a distinctive and hybrid ethnic cultural self that also more fully transformed as it embraced the mainstream social and cultural values of which it was partly constituted. In other words, instead of being the heroic culmination of communal racial uplift, moral heroism, and national becoming, as they were for Dunbar, poetic genius and ethnic self-hood in most Harlem Renaissance poetry were the culmination of a marvelous construction of an empowering *individual* ethnic self whose distinctive cultural heritage became the necessary foundation for its claim to fulfilling national ideals. Enacting the paradox that individuality created community, the marvel of Harlem Renaissance poetry was that this pursuit of individual distinction did indeed make poetic genius black.¹⁷

This quotation insinuates the fact that the talent exhibited by African American poets and writers does not serve apart from black purpose and has nothing to do with the general sense of life. Consequently black writers do not deserve to be called simply writers or poets. They are rather addressed as "black writers/poets." This appellation not only does lead to the exclusion of those writers from the list of commonly known writers, but also shifts aside the case of the black community as not being a human case worth considering. This has become an interpellation which transforms the black writers into subjects. Louis Althusser explains:

We observe that the structure of all ideology, interpellating individuals as subjects in the name of a Unique and Absolute Subject, is *specular*, i.e. a mirror-structure and *doubly specular*: this mirror duplication is constitutive of ideology and ensures its functioning. Which means that all ideology is *centered*, that the Absolute Subject occupies the unique place of the Center, and interpellates around it the infinity of individuals into subjects... such that it *subjects* the subjects to the Subject, while giving them in the Subject in which each subject can contemplate its own image ... the guarantee that this really concerns them...¹⁸

Black artists in particular are challenged here by the ideology according to which they are not artists, in the universal meaning of the term. They are just black writers and thus must only deal with black situations and nothing else. The black community in general is interpellated through the interpellation of its artists. Now they ought to react. It is through this reaction they become subjects because they are fully concerned. The first and the most important reaction here is that of writers/poets (Absolute Subject) who, consequently resent being called "black writers" just because it excludes their creative talents from the universal context and confines them only in the black context.

¹⁷ Leonard, Keith D. "To Make a Poet Black': Constructing an Ethnic Poetics in Harlem Renaissance Poetry." *Fettered Genius: The African American Bardic Poet from Slavery to Civil Rights*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006. 81-117. Rpt. in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*. Ed. Thomas J. Schoenberg and Lawrence J. Trudeau. Vol. 218. Detroit: Gale, 2009. *Literature Resource Center*.

¹⁸ Quoted by Julian Wolfrey, *Critical Keywords in Literary and Cultural Theory*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), P.116.

Among the Negro artists, there is a minority who reject being black artists just because they are taught to desire doing things the way white people do therefore write as a white artist would. They are people in front of whom stands a racial mountain, according to Langston Hughes. One of this minority group confided to him that he wanted to be a poet but not a black poet, which meant he wanted to write like a white poet; unconsciously he wanted to be white – this is impossible.¹⁹ However, the influence that the more advanced black leaders have over the Negro artists is the most concerned in the context of black literary tradition. In this perspective some of the Harlem writers who had to respect their leaders in their creative writings found it essential to escape the confinement advocated by NAACP leaders. This is the reason why not only did they want to be universal artists but also to make the black case a case of human life upon which any artist can express themselves. Hughes further elaborates on that category of artists. He says:

Certainly there is, for the American Negro artist who can escape the restrictions the more advanced among his own group would put upon him, a great field of unused material ready for his art. Without going outside his race, and even among the better classes with their 'white' culture and conscious American manners, but still Negro enough to be different, there is sufficient matter to furnish a black artist with a lifetime of creative work.²⁰

But still there is a majority of Negro artists who desire to remain black in their creative work with, in mind, the Mainstream's conditions for the American national cultural participants. They produced art out of black canvases and did not care whether they looked like anybody. "They furnish a wealth of colorful, distinctive material for any artist because they still hold their own individuality in the face of American standardization. And perhaps these common people will give to the world its truly great Negro artist, the one who is not afraid to be himself."²¹

4. Conclusion

DuBois's psychological analysis of black characters in *The Souls of Black Folk* indirectly orients its readers to rendering the literary tradition that African Americans are conducive to follow in their creative work. Thus, the assumption that black literature is a protest literature does not firmly stand since there is no other ways to express the black aspect of American culture if it is not through the ordinary way of analyzing black and white real lives in America. Literature of opposition and resistance should be appropriate in the qualification of African American literary theory since deconstruction and post structuralism are dominant in its inspiration.

It is in this perspective that this article has first of all addressed the fundamental issues behind a literary theory. The common sense of a theory is to have a target to hit and pave a way to reach it. In this regard, a literary tradition becomes vague and

¹⁹ Langston Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain", Vincent B. Leitch et al edit. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc. 2001), p. 1313.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 1314.

²¹ Ibid.

misleading if it does not give any theoretical direction or comparative framework. Therefore, a theory provides an explanatory agenda for some observation and from the assumptions of the explanation follows a number of possible hypotheses that can be tested in order to provide support for, or challenge, the theory. Since that is the procedure toward knowledge production, DuBois has endeavored to make us realize what is particular to African Americans. And through this realization the path becomes obvious to follow when we need to concretize the Black's part in the American national culture. It is in this way that we come to conclude that no matter how strong non-black culture could be, it ends up in strikingly overlapping with, and strangely depending on black culture in the US. Consequently, one cannot talk about American social, political, and economic life without black watermark in it.

Secondly, this article has taken into consideration the usefulness of DuBois's way of resisting stereotypes that camouflage the black intellectual and artistic talent. Finding it efficient, DuBois and other NAACP leaders have influenced the Harlem poets and writers in the sense of making essential the methodology of leftist literature in their proof to whites their artistic ability. The New Negro of Harlem movement was supposed to obey their leaders in the autonomization of their ethnic group in search of its cultural identity, which was impelled by the US independence in art and letters after WWI. However, poets and artists of the Harlem Renaissance distinguished themselves up to three categories when they were interpellated by the feedback according to which their artistic and creative talents were useful only for Blacks and therefore were to be called "black writers/poets". The first category does not want to be black poets. They want to be poets but not black poets, which means they want to be white. The second category wanted to use black and/white cultural features to escape the restrictions imposed on them by the more advanced and prove their distinctive universal authorship. And the third category, which is the majority of Harlem artists wished to remain black and use only black images in front of the prerogatives of the American Mainstream. They are those who are not afraid to be themselves, and who prove to be truly Negro artists.

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