



Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil

W. E. B. Du Bois

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Published in 1920, the text incorporates autobiographical information as well as essays, spirituals, and poems that were all written by Du Bois himself. Several of its essays are personal in nature, with obvious emotional rhetoric. The style maintains a religious tone and his spirituality is a common thread in many of the individual essays. Described in varying tones of black and brown, a Christ-like figure of racial hope is prevalent, signifying the coming moment of racial confrontation and eventual salvation. This figure is one which Du Bois characterizes as the bearer of eternal freedom from discrimination, poverty, and from the color line itself. The stories within *Darkwater* also revolve around discontent with the way that democracy was viewed and handled among people of different ethnic, racial, and social groups. The chapter structure of *Darkwater* follows a consistent pattern of a narrative section and a poetic section, both within one chapter. The narrative sections are frequently autobiographical or are otherwise works of speculative fiction. In this text Du Bois compiles previously written works from *The Atlantic*, *the Independent*, *The Crisis*, and *The Journal of Race Development*. In his chapter called "The Damnation of Women," Du Bois seeks to elevate women by acknowledging their labor in the home, the workplace and the black church. The chapter has been described as one of the first proto-feminist analyses by a male intellectual. In the chapter, Du Bois gives the black mother even more glorification for her role as child bearer. He calls for women to seek a life of economic independence, and argues that women have a right to control their own bodies and reproductive choices. Yet in his description of women he often describes their physical traits first such as his description of journalist Mary Shadd Cary whom Du Bois described as a "ravishing dream-born beauty."

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