

DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS IN BELL HOOKS' *BONE BLACK*

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the shifts in the concept of double consciousness as depicted in bell hooks' *Bone black* (1996). According to Du Bois, the idea of 'double consciousness' refers to being both black and American. In Du Boisian understanding, double consciousness refers to a condition of being black and American in which 'One ever feels his two-ness – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings' (Du Bois 1989, 5). bell hooks agrees with this view but she also revises the concept in order to take on board the fact that black women have other experiences in addition to double consciousness in America (Hooks 1996).

Keywords: double consciousness, bone black, bell hooks

PLOT OF BELL HOOKS' *BONE BLACK*

As the title of this article suggests, hooks' *Bone black* recounts the life of a black girl in a racist and patriarchal American society. hooks tells of the difficulties girls and women encounter every day and also tackles critical issues – such as race, gender and sexuality – which society generally avoids. hooks issues an overt invitation to society to be accommodative of people of other genders and sexualities and uses her own family as a microcosm to depict the negative attitudes of American society towards African Americans, gays, lesbians and women in general.

RACIAL NATURE OF DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS



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Double consciousness, since the antebellum period to Post-Civil Rights Movement expressed itself through the racial segregation of black people in America. This led to Du Bois proclaiming that 'The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line' (Du Bois 1989, 13). Du Bois also observed that people who were subjected to racial discrimination were black people because of being black and American. Du Bois also observed that, in the American context, people were subjected to racial discrimination because they were both black and American. He termed this condition of being black and American 'Double Consciousness' and regards it as an obstacle to black people in that it causes them to be denied opportunities and to be subjected to racial discrimination. Double consciousness, then, was Du Bois' way of depicting the plight of black people in America. Also talking about the plight of black people and racial discrimination, hooks asserts that:

They learn without understanding that the world is more a home for white folks than it is for anyone else, that black people who most resemble white folks will live better in that world. (Ibid: 31)

While hooks is trying to explain the results of perceptions that white is superior to black, she also reveals the reason that there are black people who want to be white and who try to live like white people. This reminds one of the character of Jack in Hughes (1990) who, after passing for white, says, 'When I look at the colored boy porter who sweeps out the office, I think that that's what I might be doing if I wasn't light-skinned enough to get by' (Hughes 1990, 52). The latter quote illustrates how light-skinned African Americans pass for white in order to access opportunities. Undoubtedly, hooks is referring to those African Americans whose skin is 'lighter than black' and who see themselves as far better than dark-skinned African Americans. hooks further explains that:

They have a grandmother who looks white who lives on a street where all the other people are white. She tells them things like a Black nigger is a no-good nigger, that her Papa looked like a white man but was a nigger. She never explains to them why she has married a man whose skin is the color of soot and other wonderful black things, things they love – shoe polish, coal, women in black slips (Ibid: 31 – 32).

hooks explain that there is a division between light-skinned and dark-skinned African Americans. The latter quote recounts that hooks' grandmother was a mulatto and mulattoes saw themselves as different to African Americans. The phrase that 'a Black nigger is a no-good nigger' confirms this assertion. In spite of all her grandmother's passion for whiteness, she married a black man and never bothered to give any explanation for that. This ambiguity on the part of her grandmother appears to irritate hooks as she says that 'They cannot wait to get away from this grandmother's house when she call one of them blackie in a hating voice, in a voice that seems to say I cannot stand the sight of you.' hooks' grandmother seems to imitate the life of white people and perceive herself as one of the whites. Childs and

Williams (1997) substantiate the above – that ‘Mimicry is ambivalence because it requires a similarity and a dissimilarity: a difference that is almost the same, but not quite’ (Childs and Williams 1997, 129 – 130). They want to ‘protect each other from all forms of humiliation but cannot’ (Ibid: 32). A claim that she calls one of them ‘blackie’ in a hating voice reveals not only hatred for black people, but also her belief that she is white and better than black. hooks argues that ‘They know their place. They are children. They are black. They are next to nothing’ (Ibid: 32).

Racially, Indians in general are seen as better than African Americans but not equal to whites. While the latter appears to be the case, they are not expected to be involved in interracial or miscellaneous marriages – despite the persistence of black men in trying to marry Indian women. In substantiating this, hooks further maintains, ‘Saru tells me that white folks and even some niggers like to make fun when a colored person says that they are part Indian but she says in those days there were many such unions, many such marriages’ (Ibid: 49). The fact that both white people and black people make fun of those African Americans who claim to possess Indian blood suggests the readiness in American society to accept the offspring of interracial relationships. Those who claim to have Indian blood in their bodies are perceived to be lying and seeking access to opportunities not available to African Americans.

There is further evidence of this in the way that African Americans dress, speak, and dye their hair to look like white people, evidenced as hooks maintains that ‘We cannot understand why women wear wigs, especially women with lots of hair. Wigs remind us of doll hair, of unloving things. We do not want to look dead’ (Ibid: 57). Mazrui (1972) adds that ‘In the words of J. Maynard Smith: ‘Often, conquered or technically backward peoples have abandoned their own standards of taste in favour of those of their conquerors, just as they have abandoned their own gods for those of Christianity or of Islam’ (Mazrui 1972, 8). hooks further asserts that these women who fix their looks and appearances to look like white people reminds her of white people’s coldness and all sorts of evil to which some white people have subjected African Americans. In view of the above, hooks further exposes how some black women measure beauty:

Good hair is hair that is not kinky, hair that does not feel like balls of steel wool, hair that does not take hours to comb, hair that does not need tons of grease to untangle, hair that is long. Real good hair is straight hair, hair like white folk’s hair (Ibid: 91).

In the above quote, the beauty of hair is measured according to white people’s standards. Possessing hair that is kinky, that feels like balls of steel wool, that is difficult to comb, or hair that needs grease to straighten out, is associated here with blackness or the black race. And surely if someone claims that real good hair is like that of white people, then such an individual is the victim of an inferiority complex and of self-denial. Patton (2006) attributes the latter to racism: ‘This racist legacy and African American internalization of this white supremacist racial classification

brought about what Jones and Shorter-Gooden have termed 'The Lily Complex' (Patton 2006, 26). Patton (2006) explains 'The Lily Complex' thus: 'This complex is defined as altering, disguising, and covering up your physical self in order to assimilate, to be accepted as attractive' (Patton 2006, 26). By wanting to possess hair that is like white people's hair, surely one is not conscious about who one is, but of wanting to be white. This is tantamount to accepting that a black race is an inferior race. In repudiating what seems to be obvious about having hair that looks like that of a white person, hooks justifies her denial that: 'For each of us getting our hair pressed is an important ritual. It is not a sign of our longing to be white. It is a sign of our quest to be beautiful. We are girls. It is a sign of our desire to be women' (Ibid: 92). Although she tries to clarify that their desire to have hair that resembles white people's hair is not their aspiration to be white, the fact is they admire white people's hair more than their own.

In relation to light-skinned people, hooks explains how these light-skinned African Americans position themselves in society:

[Light-skinned African Americans] They hate both white folks and dark black people. They hate white folks for having what they want. They hate dark black folks for reminding the world that they are colored and thus keeping them from really getting what they want. They never pass for white. They do not want to live in white communities and be treated like second-class citizens, like poor white folks are treated. They want to live in the heart of black communities where they will be looked up to, envied, where their every move will be talked about (Ibid: 103–104).

The fact that light-skinned African Americans hate both black people and dark-skinned African Americans explains that they have ties with both races, the various reasons for such hatred notwithstanding. The phrase that 'They hate white folks for having what they want' implies many things. It may also imply that they hate white people because they want to be white as well but are not given a chance. Light-skinned African Americans hate white people simply because white people have more access to opportunities than they have. This also implies that the only obstacle preventing them from being white and accessing opportunities is that they are African Americans, in spite of the lightness of their skin. Light-skinned African Americans simultaneously hate dark African Americans. It seems the dark-skinned African Americans' revelation to the world that these light-skinned African Americans are black is an obstacle that prevents them from gaining access to the opportunities enjoyed by white people.

hooks explains the disrespect that white men show to black women and which results in black women being reluctant to date white men. Because white people in general take black people as insignificant and sub-human, they think they can treat black women like prostitutes and in any way they choose. In fact, this is not new information: black women were raped during slavery, made pregnant and be compelled by law not to tell who the father of a child was when he was a slave

master. Okazawa-Rey, T. Robinson and J.V. Ward (1986) concur with the latter claim that 'In the American South, blacks were subjected to enforced segregation, while white men were able to sexually victimize enslaved and defenseless black women' (Okazawa-Rey et al 1986, 13). This bad treatment which black women endure when they are dating white men seems to be habitual and understandably normative in the eyes of white people.

FEMALE IDENTITIES IN *BONE BLACK*

In addition to racial discrimination, black women have been subjected to gender inequality, both by white people and black men. This gender inequality has resulted in women being treated by men in any way the men wish. Women, mostly, have been perceived as not equal to men and unable to perform some of the tasks which were seen as the preserve of men. To illustrate that women are human beings like men, hooks tells the story of a smoke woman who could fight men:

This story is about a magic woman who lives inside smoke. She hides in the smoke so no one can capture her. Smoke is to her what clay is to the red bird god. She can take the smoke and make it become many things. Using the smoke she turns herself into a male. She must be male to be a warrior. There are no women warriors. She fights fiercely against her enemies. They cannot understand when the arrows that pierce her body do not cause her to fall (Ibid: 50).

The fact that the face of a warrior in her dreams has a face similar to hers carries two possibilities. The first possibility is she must learn to stand for herself against patriarchy. The other is that women have strength to fight anything and any enemy in their own way, as she says: 'I do not intend to fight in wars and battles. She says that there are many battlegrounds in life, that I will live the truth of the dream in time' (Ibid: 51). The wars she is talking about are battles such as racism, gender inequality, sexual politics, and other forms of discrimination women encounter every day in their societies. Women's capabilities and strengths are not at question as they are believed to have strength like men and to be equal to men. hooks argues that 'The sight of her eldest daughter whirling a chicken in the air without blinking, without feeling moved by its cries and scattered feathers convinces me that in every way women are the equals of men' (Ibid: 58). Women are not expected to kill animals because they are deemed weak by men and because men consider the role of women to be cooking and looking after the household. So this act of whirling a chicken proves to hooks that women are not weak and that they can do anything men are expected to do.

In relation to male dominance, hooks believe that men are bad as they dictate everything in their marriages. Maybe a good husband to her is the one that is not going to treat her like a subordinate, but as a partner. '[...] she says, stammering, marriage is for men, that women get nothing out of it, men get everything' (Ibid:

97-98). Hooks, in the above quote, is explaining the dominance of men over women. She compares this male dominance to the relationship between a master and a dog where the dog waits for the master to give orders. In relation to this, hooks maintains that:

When he was around she became silent. She reminded her daughter of a dog sitting, standing obediently until the master, the head of the house, gave her orders to move, to do this to do that, to cook his food just so, to make sure the house was clean just so (Ibid: 98).

In the above quotes, hooks expresses the plight of women and how women have been degraded to the level of a dog. In defending patriarchy and gender stereotypes, society believes that there is nothing wrong with men giving orders to women – she maintains that ‘When I do they let me know quickly that men have the right to do whatever they want to do and that women must always follow rules. Rules like women are made to have babies’ (Ibid: 138). hooks further tells how what she had been thought and said about marriage had been validated as she asserts that:

ALL THAT SHE does not understand about marriage, about men and women, is explained to her one night. In her dark place on the stairs she is seeing over and over again the still body of a woman pleading, crying, the moving body of the man angry, yelling (Ibid: 148).

hooks sees this assault on her mother as an explanation that helps her understand inequality in marriage. Undoubtedly this also strengthened her childhood feelings and perceptions about marriage. One would recall that in the previous pages she claimed that marriage is for men as it benefits them. The explanation she got is that marriage is about a woman being beaten by a shouting and an angry man. The whole scenario has made it clear to her that marriage is an institution in which women are severely punished, assaulted and yelled at, for no reason and without their pleas being listened to. Marriage, then, is surely explained as hell: somewhere where a woman could be killed if a man wants to kill her. Also, marriage is a place where women forever endure whippings, ruthlessness, and forever cry with no one coming to help because everyone knows that this is a women’s fate and that is how things should be. Instead of standing up for themselves, women grieve and weep in silence, having no alternative because they fear what society will say about them and what a man would do should they decide to stand firm. Staying in a marriage and enduring all sorts of evils seems to be the only option. Talking about tolerance, suffering in silence, and staying in marriage as the only option, hooks recounts all her mother could do:

When he leaves the room she comes to ask the woman if she is alright, if there is anything she can do. The woman’s voice is full of tenderness and hurt. She is in her role as mother. She tells her daughter to go upstairs and go to sleep, that everything will be alright (Ibid: 148).

The phrase ‘The woman’s voice is full of tenderness and hurt’ reveals her mother’s unhappiness, especially in knowing that her children are watching their father

assaulting their mother. She could also be unhappy that she cannot go anywhere. In relation to this, hooks is hopeful that her mother's favourite brother and her father will talk so that it does not happen again. That she is disappointed at her uncle's reaction is evident when she argues that 'When he finally comes, her mother's favorite brother, she cannot believe the calm way he lifts suitcase, box, sack, carries them to the car without question' (Ibid: 150). Her mother's brother's reaction is not what she expected – perhaps it is not what either of them expected. This incident also shows how society has inculcated into everyone that it is no big deal for a husband to beat a woman. Hooks concurs: 'She cannot bear his silent agreement that the man is right, that he has done what men are able to do' (Ibid: 150). Disturbed by her mother's brother's failure to do something and by what seems to be an acceptable way of doing things to abuse a woman, hooks refuses to accept what she has seen, averring that 'She has been told that a man should obey god, that a woman should obey man, that children should obey their fathers and mothers, particularly their mothers. I will not obey' (Ibid: 151). Maybe the reason hooks claims that she is not going to obey is that men are equal to women, but they act like god in that they can do anything to women. This reminds hooks of a movie where a man killed his daughter and his wife:

In the movie a man has killed his wife and daughter. He has killed the daughter because she witnesses the death of the wife. When they go to trial all the remaining family come to speak on behalf of the man (Ibid: 153).

hooks gives the impression of being saddened by what happens in this movie. She is also shocked by what society can do to protect a murderer of the innocent simply because he is a man. Also, the fact that this man in this movie decided to kill his own daughter does explain the insignificance of women in a patriarchal world. Similarly, one wonders – if it had been a son who witnessed the killing, would this man have done the same? The coming of the family to speak on behalf of this man recounts the superiority that is attached to manhood. It further tells that a man is never wrong, but a woman. Society's belief in the righteousness and superiority of men, as depicted in this movie, makes society have pity on the man rather than on the dead innocent souls murdered by this man. As hooks maintains: 'Everyone sympathizes with the man. His story is so sad that they begin to weep' (Ibid: 153).

In questioning everything that is a result of gender inequality and patriarchy, hooks does not leave out issues concerning sex:

MASTURBATION IS SOMETHING she has never heard anyone talk about girls doing. Like so many spaces of fun and privilege in their world, it is reserved for the boy child – the one whose growing passion for sexuality can be celebrated, talked about with smiles of triumph and pleasure (Ibid: 112).

hooks recounts that masturbation is perceived to be something which can be done by boys and not girls. She implies that girls are not seen as people who can do it to

entertain themselves. In view of the latter, Brill (2012) argues that 'All authors agree that the overwhelming majority of boys masturbate at some period of their lives, and some hold the same to be true of girls' (Brill 2012, 66). In addition, the fact that girls are undervalued members of society and do not have 'such moments' in the same way that boys do explains women as sex objects. As hooks maintains:

Sexuality is something that will be done to them, something they have to fear. It can bring unwanted pregnancy. It can turn one into a whore. It is a curse. It will ruin a young girl's life, pull her into pain again and again, into childbirth, into welfare, into all sorts of longings that will never be satisfied. (Ibid: 112)

hooks also seems to be amazed by how sex is made to appear negative and evil to women while it is presented to men as a good thing. One would argue that women are being prevented from entertaining themselves through sex for the benefit of men. The fact that women are warned about the consequences of sex while men are praised about it substantiates the latter statement. To further explain this, if two people (whether they are of the same sex or not) eat poison or are shot in the head, the chances are that they will both die. In the same way as in accidents, the people involved are expected to die or to be severely injured – but not because they are or are not women. This is simply further illustration of how patriarchy has invaded even the spaces – such as sex – that are supposed to be enjoyed and decided upon by an individual so as to benefit only men. Because of this patriarchal invasion of women's privacy, some women alternatively find other means of entertaining themselves, as hooks explains:

When she finds pleasure touching her body, she knows that they will think it wrong; that it is something to keep hidden, to do in secret. She is ashamed, ashamed that she comes home from school wanting to lie in bed touching the wet dark hidden parts of her body, ashamed that she lies awake night touching herself, moving her hands, her fingers deeper and deeper inside, inside the place of women's pain and misery, the place men want to enter, the place babies come through- ashamed of the pleasure. (Ibid: 113)

hooks is talking about finding masturbation as an alternative space for her sexual entertainment – something which society and men have made women ashamed to do. Brill (2012) adds that 'Guttcci, basing his statement on a thirty years' experience, assumed that almost all girls masturbate who attain the age of eighteen or twenty without any opportunity for sexual intercourse' (Brill 2012, 68). hooks refers to her private part as a place of women's pain and misery by way of explaining that it is because of it that women find themselves in the situation they are in. hooks says this to recount that, if women did not have vaginas, things would be different. Explicitly, she sees her private part as a source of evil and men's ruthlessness. hooks also says that, because women possess vaginas – which seems to be very important to men, both for entertainment and making children – they are not considered as important subjects. This suggests that the mere fact of whether they do not enjoy being not

considered as important subjects is not an issue to men. One would argue that, to men, vaginas are more important than they are to women. So, in this alternative space that hooks is talking about, she claims that men do not even appear in the picture. In this vein she says:

Males are not objects of her lust. She does not touch herself thinking about their penises moving inside her, the wetness of their ejaculations. It is her own wetness that the fingers seek. It is the moment she thinks of, not as orgasm, for she does not know the word, but as the moment of climbing a tall place and reaching the top (Ibid: 113).

hooks tells that, in this alternative space, men are not her sources of lust. Just as men need women – or to think about a woman – to have a yearning for sex, women also need men to have sexual desire. In this space it is different, hooks does not need men to arouse her sexual desire; she needs only herself. This could be a product of men's domination and women's desire not to be linked to men. Or its origin could lie in women wishing or in showcasing that they can do anything without men.

hooks seems to have found peace of mind in her new space because she does not need a man to do something. Instead, and in expressing her satisfaction, hooks compares her excitement with her childhood dream as she claims that 'Like the caves she dreamed about in childhood it is a place of refuge, a sanctuary' (Ibid: 113). hooks sees it as a place of safety to which she has successfully run.

Regardless of these women who comply with men's orders, hooks concedes that there are those who, like her, do not need men in their lives. One of them is her aunt:

Unlike some women, Aunt Charley is no longer interested in men. She is mainly concerned with god, piano music, and her beauty parlor business. She has turned her kitchen into a beauty parlor (Ibid: 55).

hooks' aunt's lack of interest in men shows that there are women who can successfully lead their lives without men. Such women do not need anyone to provide for them; they make ends meet. Unlike some women who rely on men for everything, they create opportunities for themselves – just like hooks' aunt who turned her kitchen into a beauty parlour. Instead, these independent women rely on God as a source of hope like everyone else. The reason they rely on God is because they believe that God answers their prayers and protects them, things men cannot do. In relation to loving and trusting in God, hooks further enlightens her readers that 'Aunt Charley likes talking about god and the Bible. She has a Bible sitting right near the stove amid the jars of Dixie Peach and Vaseline, near the trays filled with combs of all sizes and colors' (Ibid: 56). The words 'Aunt Charley likes talking about god and the Bible' authenticates their (Aunt Charley and other independent women) trust in God. It surreptitiously discloses that there is no place for men in their lives, except God. In their trust and belief in God, they are manifestly confident women and hooks concurs that 'Everything in her house is arranged to remind you that it is hers' (Ibid: 56). The manner of arranging her belongings to remind others that they are hers sustains the

notion of confidence. hooks further mentions another successful independent woman who is thrilled with how she lives, in spite of society's speculations about her life:

Miss Robert is one of them. She is unmarried and getting on in age. She will never marry because no one is good enough they say. She will never marry because no one has asked her they say. She was my first grade teacher. She lives alone (Ibid: 104).

Society's speculations about Miss Robert originate from society's expectations about women – expectations which Miss Robert dishonoured. These expectations include women getting married, having children, not working, depending on men for support, and complying with men's orders. The fact that she is alone, a teacher and single bears testimony to the latter. It appears that, because Miss Robert did not do what society expects of a woman, it does not bother asking or trying to find out why. Rather, it speculates. Such speculations, one may argue, are nothing but sour grapes. Surely hooks questions not only society's attitude towards women, but also questions what is wrong if a woman in society prefers not to get married, prefers to work for herself, prefers not to have children, and prefers not to depend on a man for survival. In answering this question, hooks maintains that 'We both agreed that it is not a sad thing for she is able to be independent, to move around, to cook for herself, to plant a garden. She is alone, old, and happy. She tells me always, who could ask for anything more' (Ibid: 107). hooks concedes that there is nothing especially wrong if one is happy and able to do anything without help from a man. And the phrase 'who could ask for anything more' recounts the relishing and beauty of independence and self-reliance.

There are also other women like these independent women who do not want anything to do with men – women who are homosexuals (in the same way as there are men who are homosexuals). Brill (2012) adds that '[...] the sexual object of the homosexual man is not a woman but a man, and the sexual object of a homosexual woman is not a man but a woman' (Brill 2012, 138). In many societies, homosexuals are not welcomed and are given derogatory names. Regarding the names that the homosexuals are given by societies, hooks argue that 'WHEN THEY TALK about same-sex love they use the word *funny*. They never say the word *homosexual*' (Ibid: 136). Because of society's unfamiliarity with same-sex relationships, it regards homosexuals as doing 'funny' things or uses the word 'funny' to suggest that not being heterosexual makes them funny. The word is also used because society does not know anything about homosexuality and does not want to accept it. Because of society's attitude towards homosexuals, hooks argues that 'As small children we think to be called funny is a nice way of talking about something grown-ups are uncertain about, ashamed and even afraid of' (Ibid: 136). This emanates from society's failure to know more about homosexuality and to find out what causes it. hooks talks further about society's take on funny people:

Mostly men we know are funny. Everyone knows who they are and everyone watches and talks about their business. They are good men, kind men, respected men in the community and it is not their fault, not their choice that they are funny- they are just that way. (Ibid: 136)

It seems that society knows these funny people and the expression 'Everyone knows who they are and everyone watches and talks about their business' confirms this. And also it appears that some of them are useful and respected in the society. In relation to the latter, Brill (2012) says 'When we read the works of I. Bloch, M. Hirschfeld, Moll, Havelock Ellis, and others, we are soon convinced that homosexuality is ubiquitous' (Brill 2012, 139). hooks is trying to tell her readers that the fact that they are funny is not their fault and she further says they did not choose to be funny. Interestingly and implicitly, hooks is trying to say that they are created by God like everyone else. One would argue on the contrary and claim that their condition of being funny is a biological fault. Brill (2012) concurs 'The same may be said of Krafft-Ebing's theory that the bisexual predisposition gives to the individual male and female brain-cells somatic sexual organs which develop toward puberty under the influence of the independent sex glands' (Brill 2012, 142). This biological fault makes them do things differently in that they are not attracted to people of the opposite sex. In relation to being different, hooks maintains that 'Funny men are different from other men because they want secretly to be able to do the things that women do' (Ibid: 136). The mere fact that they are different does not mean they should be treated differently for they are also human beings. Homosexuals must be given space to mind their condition just like the heterosexuals are. The society must accept these homosexuals as human beings, not as different people. Concerning one minding one's own business, hooks avers that 'When I go to one of the houses where homosexual men are sitting around drinking and talking to one another, I feel as though I am entering a world that does not concern me' (Ibid: 137). hooks is putting it plainly that society must learn to mind its own issues and that each and every member of society has his or her own problems to take care of instead trespassing in provinces that are not theirs.

CONCLUSION

The title of bell hooks' *Bone black* alone suggests a modification of Du Bois' concept of double consciousness. In the book, hooks both illustrates the Du Boisian understanding of double consciousness and expands the concept. Without underplaying the significance of race, hooks also introduces gender and sexuality and emphasises these identities through revealing her personal experiences as a black girl. hooks' deeper digging into these identities helps provide an understanding of their significance – which is no less than that of racism. hooks also explains these identities as problems that African American communities try to avoid but

which need attention and treatment equal to that accorded to racism. Through these identities, hooks adds new dimensions which modify double consciousness.

Not only does hooks end up sharing a Du Boisian understanding of double consciousness, she also modifies it too. hooks also depicts the African American community as having other problems that transcend the practical manifestations of dualism or double consciousness. Through introducing these new identities in addition to duality, hooks suggests that the African American community has multiple identities.

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