One More River to Cross: The Therapeutic Rhetoric of Race in the Post-Civil Rights Era

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Abstract

The rhetoric of W.E.B. Du Bois contributed both to a sense of group failure among blacks and a sense of individual failure. Du Bois also created a need to explain the reasons for the failure of the group, as well as that of individuals within the group, specifically those within a segment of the black population deemed the talented tenth. Today the talented tenth is more generally spoken of as those occupying positions within the black middle class. Explanations for failure among blacks as a group are generally of two kinds. The first posits that the failure blacks experience as a group is due to the failure of the talented tenth to provide adequate leadership of the race. The second posits that the failure blacks experience as a group is due to the failure of American society to commit itself to establishing not only legal equality but also social, political, and economic equality for all Americans.

Members of the talented tenth, not understanding that the root of the problem lies with the impossible situation Du Bois placed them in as saviors of the race begin to attribute perceived failures among blacks to American society. Instead of questioning Du Bois's goal and the possibility for complete 'racial uplift,' members of the talented tenth begin to question American society's commitment to realize the goals of the civil rights movement. Rather than optimism, one finds pessimism among blacks in the post-civil rights era.

I examine Shelby Steele, Derrick Bell, and Randall Robinson's texts as rhetorical discourses that respond to the notion of a debt owed to the race, and evidence a sense of group failure among blacks. I illustrate how David Payne's topoi of therapeutic rhetoric provide a context for understanding not only the arguments these authors make about the nature of failure among blacks, but also the possible solutions these authors pose as avenues for consolation and/or compensation.
One more river to cross: The therapeutic rhetoric of race in the post-civil rights era. Nigel I. Malcolm. The rhetoric of W.E.B. Du Bois contributed both to a sense of group failure among blacks and a sense of individual failure. The proliferation of post-racial theory (PRT) in both social and political spheres of dominant American hegemony has illustrated a desire among academic circles to move past race and racial categories in social analysis. However, absent within post-racial rhetoric is critical language on how to abolish racism and racial inequality. (Samad 2009) It is my contention that the application of Find many great new & used options and get the best deals for One More River to Cross: The Therapeutic Rhetoric of Race in the Post-Civil Rights Era by Nigel I. Malcolm (2007, Hardcover) at the best online prices at eBay! Free shipping for many products! The discussion of rhetoric is tied into the failure of the post-civil rights era and to W.E.B. Du Bois's earlier discussions of the talented tenth and its role among Blacks. Publisher. University Press of America, Incorporated. ISBN-10. 0761839593. Most striking is these Web sites' audacious deployment of the rhetoric of civil rights. At the same time, the epistemology of white supremacy is, as philosopher Charles W. Mills has noted, "an inverted epistemology, an epistemology of ignorance," which produces the ironic outcome that whites in general are "unable to understand the world that they. They regard the post–Civil Rights era of colorblindness as. a period in which the United States solved the issue of racism, led by enlightened white. Northerners who battled ignorant white Southerners in order to liberate poor blacks. Chapter Two: Rhetoric and Failure in the Analysis of Race Rhetoric and the Audience Rhetoric and the Rhetor Therapeutic Rhetoric and Kenneth Burke Therapeutic Rhetoric and Race. Chapter Three: The Self-Society Topos in Shelby Steele's The Content of Our Character and A Dream Deferred A Rhetoric of Personal Adaptation A Rhetoric of the Apocalypse Conclusion. Rather than optimism, one finds pessimism among blacks in the post-civil rights era. I examine Shelby Steele, Derrick Bell, and Randall Robinson's texts as rhetorical discourses that respond to the notion of a debt owed to the race, and evidence a sense of group failure among blacks.