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“Beyond the Narrow Now”: Another Elaboration of the Example -- W. E. B. Du Bois at the Limit of World

This essay, an excerpt from a larger study, traces and adduces an interpretive understanding of the young W. E. B. Du Bois’s engagement with Europe at the end of the 19th century. In so doing, it outlines a complex movement in which the sense of a double identification or horizon opens simultaneously within and yet before the experience of another shore. This secondary inhabitation of the past arrives as the irruption of a future present: simultaneously reconfiguring the lived sense of that past and announcing an illimitable horizon of possible senses of world. It perhaps, then, an example of how to think the history of the future as life. This essay thus remarks the prehistory of Du Bois’s formulation in the forethought of *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* of 1903 of the “strange meaning of being black, here at the dawning of the 20th century” in such a way as to place it at stake and available for our active meditation here-now in the midst of the first movements of the 21st century.