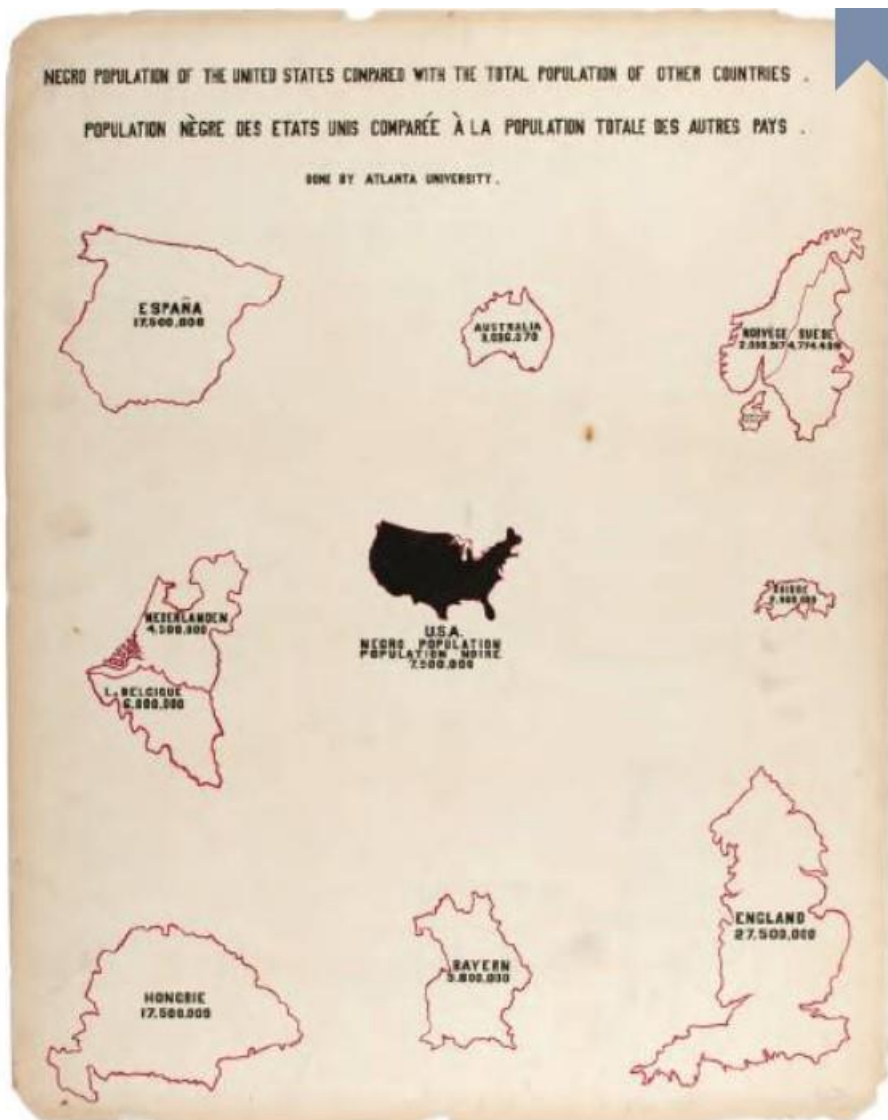


Plate 41 of W.E.B Du Bois' *Data Portraits: Visualizing Black America*, both then and now, shows an interesting story about how African Americans are seen in the world. There are two main takeaways from the data, whether it be the 1900 or 2020 numbers. The first merely shows the size of the African American population. What is most interesting, at a first glance, about this data is that the black population is easily able to contend with these entire countries. In the 1900 visualization, Black America outranks Australia, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, and Germany. It is a similar story with the 2020 numbers, with the African American population coming in at number four in the ranking, only behind Germany, the United Kingdom, and Spain. This on its own says something about how black people are treated in comparison. Despite being considered a minority in their own country, the population of African Americans can easily overtake that of these other Western countries. If that is the case, then why are problems facing African Americans often dismissed or underestimated? Clearly, it is not because they are a minority, since problems facing these smaller countries are known and are taken seriously.

The second takeaway from the data comes not necessarily from the data itself, but from the mere act of comparing the population of Black America to these other Western countries. By choosing predominantly white, European countries, Du Bois is able to show that the importance that is placed on these countries is not proportional to their individual populations. Most, if not all, of these countries participated in the colonization that resulted in the creation of the slave trade and, in turn, the African American population. By comparing the current black population to these countries, it shows how much of an impact that this has made, with the African American population outnumbering most of the countries.



B., Du Bois William E, et al. *W.E.B Du Bois's Data Portraits: Visualizing Black America*, W.E.B. Du Bois Center at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst, MA, 2018, p. 110.

Population of Western Countries vs. African Americans

