ABSTRACT
Using textual and visual analysis, this paper analyzes discussions of the Martin Luther King Jr. National Memorial (MLK), its position within the national landscape, and the type of work it has the potential to do. Focusing on MLK’s centerpiece, the *Stone of Hope*, I argue that while specifically intended to contribute to the story of progress common to the National Mall’s broad-ideal-based historical narrative, the sculpture in fact broadcasts the deepest tension of black cultural identity, its “twoness” (see Du Bois, 1903) With this, the work of public art opens a new discursive space for the (re)telling of the veil’s effect on black experience in America (see Du Bois, 1903). Thinking with Peters (1999), MLK serves as a communication technology that permits visitors to commune with the dead and resuscitates a version of King, allowing him, at least in theory, to outlive his human life span. The *Stone of Hope* effectively stands in the gap connecting traces from America’s racial past to present and even future moments in the racial order.