
**UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL
OF AMERICAN STUDIES** : VOL
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UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF
THE UNITED STATES

**UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL OF
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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF THE
UNITED STATES AND AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM

It is my pleasure to contribute opening comments to this journal. Indeed, one of the great privileges of being the Director of the Centre for the United States is seeing the journal come together. This year is no different. As in previous years, the essays cover the waterfront of American Studies. Indeed, they stand out as first rate example of how diverse, interesting, and important American Studies continues to be, both at the University of Toronto and more broadly.

I want to extend my sincerest appreciation to each author and to the editorial team. Marshalling together high quality work is a task equally important and difficult, and this year's editors have done this with aplomb. Thank you to both Unita and Kelly.

The Centre for the Study of the United States is our country's preeminent place for making sense of our Southern neighbour. It is also a meeting place where scholars in fields as diverse as political science, economics, cinema studies, women and gender studies, history, geography, and many others come together over a shared intellectual interest in the United States. The result of this is well worth noting: we host dozens of public lectures and events each year. We furnish a complete undergraduate program in American Studies. We act as a touchstone for graduate students whose focus is the United States. As important as all of this, we help bring to fruition an undergraduate student journal in American Studies, and one which routinely reflects the interdisciplinary, dynamic, scholarly, and relevant nature of our Centre. So, it is my great honour to include my comments in this volume, and to commend to all of you each and every one of its articles.

Peter J. Loewen

FROM THE EDITORS

After several months of editing, planning, and consulting, we are pleased to launch the tenth volume of the Undergraduate Journal of American Studies, put forth by the Centre for the Study of the United States at the Munk School of Global Affairs.

In the initial phases of brainstorming and discussion late last year, we withheld from choosing an explicit theme in our call for submissions. However, submissions began rolling in just as we witnessed the rise of a politically charged atmosphere in the United States focused around the same themes as many of our essays. Our central, rather inevitable, theme became one that this year's editors unanimously agreed was pertinent and needed discussion – that of the discourse surrounding race relations in the United States. With well-researched and eloquent essays covering a variety of areas of study, including literature, history, politics, and popular culture, it was not a difficult decision to allow this year's journal to become a reflective commentary on the dynamics shaping a constantly-unfolding, if at times tense, history of American race relations.

This journal is an initiative completely written and edited by students, and we have them to thank first and foremost. We would like to thank every single student who submitted their papers for publication, as well as our assistant editors — Angela, Sam, and Pearson — for their time, effort and collaboration. This journal would also not have been possible without the aid and support of CSUS' program coordinator, Stella Kyriakakis, who has patiently guided us through the yearlong process of editing and piecing the whole journal together.

As this year's co-editors, we wished to have every aspect of this journal reflect the theme of race relations as much as possible, including the physical and visual elements of the book itself. Thanks to the extremely talented and enthusiastic work of our graphic designer, Heather Wimmi, we were able to render the importance of race relations spanning across various historical eras through the timeline motif. Moreover, Heather's cover design effectively reflects the tensions which are depicted throughout this series of

essays, as a result of their content and themes.

Finally, we would like to thank you, our readers, for joining the discussion on this relevant topic. With a country as diverse and vibrant as the United States, we hope that this journal provides you with a better understanding of the polyphonous, multi-faceted, and interdisciplinary voices that have arisen in the current academic climate surrounding American studies.

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1860s

EBONY DAVITT

THE LEAST SUSPECTED

SLAVE ESPIONAGE DURING THE U.S. CIVIL WAR

When looking back on the American Civil War, it is easy to assume the outcome came only from the whites who governed the Union. But such a view ignores or forgets how much black Americans — slaves and freedmen alike — helped in creating both their own destiny and the destiny of the United States. In particular, any proper, critical study of the Civil War should take into account and recognize the underappreciated role of slave espionage. “Black spies,” as the spying was called, provided intelligence that was vital in helping the Union defeat the Confederacy. This essay will look at three examples of black spies to prove that slave espionage indeed played a significant role in the Union’s victory. Additionally, by examining the intelligence the slaves are said to have provided, and comparing their work to that of white spies during the war, it will become clear that slave dispatches were an important part of the Union’s triumph. Using this information can help historians to better understand not only the histories of the United States and espionage, but also African-American history as well.

To comprehend the impact black spies had on Union victory, it is important to also understand the time and context in which these people were living. The Civil War was both the bloodiest war, and one of the most major turning points, in American history.¹ The Civil War was the culmination of a long-building feud over state’s rights and slavery.² Slavery was fundamental to the agrarian plantation economy of the South, and a source of revenue for the United States. Large numbers of Americans, however, found flaws in the slavery system, and worked to end it through federal legislation. In response to the election of what the slave states saw as an anti-slavery president, Abraham Lincoln, they seceded, and the war began shortly after the new Confederacy seized federal forts and other property, and fired on the Union-held Fort Sumter.³ The war dragged on with terrible loss of life. In January of 1863, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, outlawing slavery in the United States.⁴ As with any other war, knowing enemy plans proved highly useful, and both sides engaged in spying — but only one side had the benefit of attracting the most inconspicuous

spies this war ever saw.

Comprehending the significance of slave espionage must start by understanding its beginnings. The Union leaders assumed the Southern slaves supported the Union side. General Ulysses S. Grant saw an outpouring of escaped slaves rushing to Union lines, begging to be recruited into the Union army or aid the army in any way they could.⁵ As many times as Grant tried to send the slaves back, they would return and eventually the Union Army accepted slaves, first as agricultural workers, but eventually into its fighting ranks. The Union leadership also recognized that slaves would be unlikely to be suspected of spying, so escaped or freed slaves would be valuable to the Union in such a role. A runaway slave, George Scott, delivered valuable information about Confederate fortifications and the military's movements to General Benjamin F. Butler of the Union armies.⁶ When this intelligence was confirmed, General Butler ordered that all "contraband" (escaped slaves) coming to Union lines must be brought to his office for debriefings that further helped open the Union's eyes to how valuable black spies could be to their war effort.

It did not take long, however, for the Confederacy to grow suspicious. In May 1863, the Confederate General Robert E. Lee, said, "The chief source of information to the enemy is through our Negroes."⁷ Treachery was to be expected given the poor treatment slaves endured, and the possibility of freedom should the Union win. But even recognizing the likelihood of "treachery" left Lee and the Confederacy with an insoluble practical problem: it would have been impossible to weed the slave spies out of the four million slaves who lived and worked in the South.⁸ Not only were the Confederates left with such a challenge, but they also underestimated the lengths to which slaves would go to when freedom felt so close.

For their parts, slave and freedmen spies cited varying reasons for joining the Union cause. As one might expect, simple revenge was one of the most common reasons. Other reasons surfaced: many slaves felt they had nothing to lose, some simply wanted freedom, and still others just wanted a chance at a better life.⁹ Freedom from bondage was a factor to which many white spies, Union or Confederate, could not connect. Patriotism is one thing; freedom from the bonds of slavery is another. The hope many slaves and freedmen held for a better life and for a better future allowed them to also become excellent spies. Grant recognized this fact soon after Union forces began seeing slaves coming to Union lines.

Though it is unknown how many slaves and freedmen acted as spies for the Union, some of their stories still remain. One example of a noted black spy was William A. Jackson, a slave in the household of Confederate President Jefferson Davis himself. Jackson was Davis' coachman, which allowed him to frequently listen in on meetings Davis held

with his top military officials. In May 1862, Jackson traveled into Union territory through Fredericksburg and delivered unspecified intelligence to General Irvin McDowell.¹⁰ Whatever the intelligence was, it is assumed to have been important, as McDowell immediately telegraphed it to the War Department in Washington.¹¹ Nobody knows what happened to Jackson after the war. This can be said for many black spies, as the work was obviously risky — and so was seeking recognition for it.

Another noted spy was a former slave by the name of John Scobell, who was handpicked by the head of the Union Intelligence Service, Allan Pinkerton.¹² Pinkerton had recently begun instructing his operatives to debrief former slaves, and especially to look out for educated slaves.¹³ Scobell was a well-educated man who, in the fall of 1861, would become one of Pinkerton's most famous black spies.¹⁴ Notorious for being quick witted, smart, and an excellent actor, Scobell was able to blend in easily while on missions. On many missions, Scobell played a servant, cook, or laborer for one of Pinkerton's white operatives.¹⁵ Presenting Scobell as a servant to the white spies served two purposes: it helped gain trust for his white counterpart as a supporter of slavery, and it allowed Scobell to more easily access Confederate citizens' property to search for valuable information. Scobell was also able to get information from the slaves and leaders in the black communities behind Confederate lines.¹⁶ Scobell is known for having provided valuable information on Confederate troops, battle plans, supply counts, movements, and morale to the Union forces.¹⁷ In 1862, Scobell stopped working for the agency when Union General Burnside took it over.¹⁸ Unfortunately, like Jackson, nobody knows what happened to Scobell after he was released from his duties.

Finally, one of the most notable spies for the Union was Mary Elizabeth Bowser, a former slave for the Van Lew family of Richmond, Virginia, the Confederate capital. Her mistress, Elizabeth Van Lew, had freed Bowser and sent her North to get an education; after the war broke out, Elizabeth Van Lew formed the spy ring named the "Richmond Underground."¹⁹ The wealthy and connected family reconnected with Bowser and obtained a job for her in the Confederate "White House." In 1867, Bowser wrote about her decision to spy for Elizabeth, "I felt that I had the advantage over the majority of my race both in Blood and Intelligence, and that it was my duty if possible to work where I am most needed."²⁰ Bowser worked as a seemingly uneducated servant for Jefferson Davis, allowing her to listen to his conversations with top Confederate officials and to read documents pertaining to the war efforts. Not only did her race make her inconspicuous, but so did her gender—while she was seen as incompetent by Confederate forces because of her skin color, she was perceived as even less of a threat because she was a woman. The double prejudices that Bowser faced made

her quite valuable to the Union. Because she was a servant, she could walk into a room unnoticed during a meeting, and had access to go through personal belongings in Davis' private quarters. She would then relay the information to Elizabeth Van Lew at meetings on the outskirts of Richmond.²¹ Nobody truly knows exactly what information Bowser gave, nor what larger effects the information garnered.

Few records remain of Bowser after the war ended, except, however, for records where Bowser may have possibly used a pseudonym. There are records of a woman using the pseudonym Miss Richmonia Richards, who worked with educating freedmen, giving a talk about her times in the secret service during the war in 1865.²² "Richards" is believed to be Bowser, as this was not the first time she had attempted to conceal her identity. This "Richards" also spoke of returning to Virginia from Liberia in 1860—the exact year Bowser herself returned.²³ Richards claimed to have worked with the Union by "collecting intelligence in the Confederate Senate as well as the Confederate White House, and aiding in the capture of rebel officers at Fredericksburg, Virginia."²⁴

If this Richards was indeed Bowser in disguise, as the general scholarly consensus seems to be, her ability to speak of her experiences reflects the greater privileges she was connected to, compared to her fellow black spies. Bowser, unlike Davis' slave coachman Jackson, could speak of her missions as she was lighter skinned, educated, and had the support of a wealthy pro-Union family behind her. We can assume she was a valuable asset to the Union cause, because in June 1995 she was inducted into the U.S. Army Intelligence Hall of Fame at Fort Huachuca, Arizona.²⁵ Elizabeth Van Lew and her group, meanwhile, were cited by noted men like General Benjamin Butler, Ulysses S. Grant and George Sharpe as having been critical to the success of the Union army.²⁶

As noted, Grant chose black spies in part because they were the least to be suspected. But how did they fare in intelligence collection compared to white spies? First, it was a lot easier for black spies to move freely within the Confederacy than white Southerners within the Union or white Northerners in the South. Slaves were servants, seen as too unintelligent to understand the information they might overhear and too loyal to share the information even if they did understand it. Confederate President Davis even referred to his slaves as "pieces of furniture," not even viewing them as human.²⁷ Moreover, slaves and servants moved freely among top officials and troops. Strange whites, on the other hand, were viewed as more suspicious; they were out of place, and prying intelligence out of someone consists of asking "nosy" questions. Black spies, especially those positioned as servants, did not need to ask anything, but just listened to conversations, saw events, or read documents to gather intelligence. They would not fall

under suspicion that the white spies were subject to. For example, Mary Bowser easily got a job as a servant in the Confederate White House during the war without question, but Confederate spy Maria Isabella Boyd was not as lucky. Though a woman like Bowser, Boyd was arrested and incarcerated multiple times, leaving her constantly under suspicion and in some cases of little help to the Confederacy.²⁸

Black spies provided another advantage for the Union that white spies could not: they were very unlikely to be double agents, spying for the Confederacy. Unlike white spies, slave and freedmen spies had their lives at stake whether or not the Union won the war. Black spies had the option of either staying slaves or staying freedmen waiting to be kidnapped back into slavery. Thus, black spies had a vested interest in Union success, making them more reliable than white spies; there was hope of a positive reward that came from supporting the Union as opposed to supporting the Confederacy. Additionally, money could not often be used as a bargaining chip on slave spies. The history of espionage is written partly in history books and partly in checkbooks. The right amount of money seems to be able to soften many a hardened patriot's heart. But this tactic could not often be used on slaves because money was of no use to them; simply having money was dangerous for a slave, as whites would assume it was stolen from a white man. Freedmen would often shy away from money, as having or showing too much wealth as a black in any region of the U.S., including the free states, could still get a person's property damaged or even get him killed.²⁹ An example of black spies' loyalty to the Union can be seen in Mary Bowser. After being freed by her mistress Elizabeth, Bowser returned to participate in Elizabeth's spy ring and once again subjected herself to servitude in order to support the Union and hopefully spread emancipation.³⁰ It is difficult in any war to find such a loyal agent, but because of the politics that surrounded this war, millions of possible agents were available to one side and one side only.

Considering the importance of the black spies' contributions to the Union's victory, it is concerning that they are often not mentioned in official American history texts. Of course, it is understandable that information of slave espionage is lacking, since espionage by its nature is a job that entails secrecy, which means it is unlikely to have been recorded in diaries or open letters. As well, many of the slave spies were illiterate, further reducing the likelihood that they could have written about their exploits. But while it makes sense that it is difficult to find documentary evidence on the black spies' missions, the failure to recognize their work makes no sense at all. Even while researching, it was difficult to find full-length articles dedicated to black spies. Much of their work is mentioned in passing or as a secondary to white espionage.

There are various factors at play when it comes to this lack of recognition. First, simply because slaves were freed after the war does not by any means mean they were considered equal citizens. Black soldiers and agents could not revel in the victory of the Union like other soldiers and agents; no matter how much a black person contributed to the war effort, it was still seen as shameful for them to speak about their service or wear their uniforms in public.³¹ Many Americans did not like the idea of being saved by the inferior Negro as much as they liked the idea of saving the Negro themselves. Second, because these events consisted of spying, many records and other evidence were destroyed. In Mary Bowser's case, any record of her work was collected and destroyed after the war at the request of Elizabeth Van Lew, who wanted to protect her spy ring.³² Her consideration for her spies is admirable, of course, but left historians with very little in terms of intelligence distribution (this was not simply to do with Bowser being a black spy; both the Union and Confederacy attempted to destroy any evidence of espionage to protect many people's lives). Finally, many black spies were not recognized because they didn't want to be. Many of them still lived near or in the South, and the last thing they wanted was to be singled out as having helped the hated Union win the war. Many a bitter Southerner would have quickly murdered any Union spy, especially a black one. For many black spies, being a hero to the Union was simply not an option. Taken together, these factors explain why black spies are not as prevalent in history books as the white spies. Still, since at least a handful of black spies *are* known, it is shameful that they and their work are still largely ignored in historical works.

At first glance, it can seem like black spies contributed very little compared to white spies, seeing as they are not remembered in a heroic sense. What has to be considered is the historical context and the politics surrounding the time. The American people did not want black heroes, and they did not want to know they were protected by ex-slaves and freedmen. Instead, they wanted to relive the stories of their own classic American heroes. Famed spies such as Allen Pinkerton or Pauline Cushman were more comforting to white Union citizens.³³ Black spies had no choice but to remain unseen. In the end, the United States chose the heroes it truly wanted.

After the war, slavery was officially abolished and the United States became reunited. Black spies contributed greatly to the Union war effort by putting their lives on the line to obtain information for a just cause. Bowser, Scobell, and Jackson are just three of many examples of black spies who helped in obtaining Union victory. Even if their names are not memorized or their stories not readily told they still played an important role in creating a united America. It seems shameful to erase the contributions of

many from history texts simply because they are not heroes in the classic sense. Their weapons were not rifle and saber, but guile and bravery. They did not charge into battle behind flying flags, but crept around the battles' margins behind cloaks of anonymity inherent in their status. Without the espionage work provided by black spies, it is difficult to say when or how the war could have ended. There is no doubt that slave espionage benefited the Union and aided in its victory; it would be a shame to forget the many people who risked their lives to make that victory possible. Black spies should not be forgotten; they should become another example of how blacks lives helped build the nation—and kept it together.

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IMAGE SOURCED FROM:

http://hd.housedivided.dickinson.edu/node/32390?size=_original

"*The Escaped Slave in the Union Army*," *Harper's Weekly*, July 2, 1864.

CREAM *of* WHEAT



Maybe *Cream of Wheat*
aint got no vitamins.
I dont know what them
things is. If they's bugs
they aint none in *Cream of*
Wheat but she's sho' good
to eat and cheap. Costs 'bout
1¢ fo' a great big dish.

Rastus

1920s

IBTEHAL
JEELANY

SELLING MORE THAN FOOD

THE RACIAL IMPLICATIONS OF A 1920S CREAM OF WHEAT ADVERTISEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The development and enhancement of modern advertising in the United States flourished during the 1920s, bringing about a complete transformation in its strategies. The advertising team was comprised of professional salesmen, graphic designers, and copy writers, who went beyond presenting basic product information by developing designs that appealed to the consumer's psychological needs and wants, and by idealizing the experience of their products.¹ A significant portion of advertising was targeted towards women, whom advertisers realized were the ones responsible for purchasing various items for themselves and their households such as clothing, electronic appliances, and food.² However, other advertising techniques during this period employed racial stereotypes and tropes of African Americans as happy and compliant servants readily attending to their master's (white consumer) needs. Many of these advertisement characters became renowned national icons; Aunt Jemima and Rastus from Cream of Wheat continue to be displayed as the face of the brand (with Rastus hardly having undergone any major changes) until the present day, in spite of African American initiatives and campaigns to eradicate these kinds of racial and negative stereotypes.³

The definition of race and racial stereotypes is more complex than it seems. Omi and Winant define race as "a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies."⁴ The fluid, unfixed state of race is explained through racial formation as a "sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, transformed, and destroyed."⁵ It is a complicated process that can be examined by studying racial projects, and the evolution of hegemony.⁶ It is important to acknowledge in terms of the evolution of hegemony, that although racial dictatorship has been replaced as a racial hegemonic rule, it has led to three lasting consequences: defining American identity as "white," the mental effect of there being a "colour line" in U.S society, and finally the formation of forces by the opposition (resistance organizations).⁷

Although the theories of racial formation and racial projects are far more detailed and profound than how it is described here, it is sufficient for the relatively brief analysis in this paper. By treating race as an unfixed term representing social conflicts between peoples, its transformative nature as a complicated sociohistorical process, and it being largely impacted by racial dictatorship; this paper will focus on a Cream of Wheat advertisement from 1922 to examine the popular yet problematic reasons of such racial representations, and how the advertisement conveys more than mere basic product information using a visual analysis method.

BACKGROUND: CREAM OF WHEAT

The somewhat faded, washed-out Cream of Wheat advertisement illustrates a black man named Rastus dressed in a chef's outfit and smiling happily as he holds a chalkboard covering most of his body. The text reads: "Maybe Cream of Wheat aint got no vitamins. I dont know what them things is. If they's bugs they ain't none in *Cream Of Wheat* but she's sho' good to eat and cheap. Costs 'bout 1 cent fo' a great big dish. Rastus."⁸

Cream of Wheat was founded in 1893 when the Diamond Milling Company persuaded the head miller at the company to sell a concoction he was often seen taking home.⁹ Since then, the success of the product had the company focus its entire production on Cream of Wheat.¹⁰ The recognizable face of the brand was inspired by a woodcut of a black chef illustrated on a skillet that one of the founders of the company, Emery Mapes, came across as he searched around for a representational icon. However, in 1925 the face was replaced with a more realistic version modeled by a broad-smiled waiter Mapes encountered while dining at a restaurant.¹¹ Therefore, the face depicted in this advertisement is the one prior to the more realistic version. Considering the origin of the character of Rastus as the face of Cream of Wheat, one might argue that there is nothing explicitly racist about him. However, there are important elements in the figure that signify a deeper meaning. These can be analyzed by observing important elements of the advertisement such as Rastus' gender, occupation, body, smile, text, and particularly his race — a characteristic Omi and Winant describe as going beyond mere skin color.¹²

RACIAL ADVERTISING: FROM SLAVE TO SERVANT, AND THE OLD SOUTH

Many advertisement campaigns during the 1920s capitalized on their products by using similar negative and demeaning stereotypes of African Americans that were used before to justify slavery.¹³ Stereotypes represented African Americans with characteristics such as being lazy, natural entertainers, and childish.¹⁴ An example of a popular stereotype which represents Rastus, is the trope of Uncle Tom: the older black male who

showed no signs of having his own family, but was happily devoted to the family he served, and was particularly close to the children.¹⁵ The Tom stereotype was often used to advertise domestic products. His wide smile acted as a reassurance to white customers of his loyalty and service to their needs of happiness and comfort. His kind nature and portrayal of being void of any sexuality, helped white families accept him as a dependant and innocuous servant.¹⁶

The desexualized nature of Rastus is often symbolized in advertisements by rarely illustrating the lower portion of his body, or by obscuring it with other objects. In this way, African Americans had their identities rearranged for them.¹⁷ Their constructed identity worked to maintain social order during the antebellum and post bellum period.¹⁸ During the antebellum period (1812-1861), anti-abolitionists and plantation owners perceived their acceptance of a dependent slave as beneficial for the slave, despite advertisements for runaway slaves that clearly suggested otherwise.^{19/20} Similarly, during the post bellum period (1865-1877), an evolved representation between the slave and master greatly resembled the servant and consumer in advertising, film, radio and television. This transformation into the greater sphere of media aided the maintenance of social order by the upper class, who reflected attitudes of white supremacy through these various channels.²¹

The similarities between both representations of the master and slave relationship is further understood by other factors involved in a socio-historical process. The Cream of Wheat advertisement with Rastus, who represented a dutiful servant, appealed to the consumer's sense of supremacy and entitlement to the product.²² However, it also reminded consumers of the imagined life of the Old South. The magnitude and popularity of this kind of representation stemmed largely from the nostalgic desire of life in the Old South, which firstly, was imagined as a place of white leisure where requests were served by content black servants. Secondly, it represented the growing anxiety and longing for the past as millions of blacks migrated north starting in the late nineteenth century up until the first thirty years of the twentieth century.²³ Lastly, the rapid shift from the pre-industrial world to the new industrial "world of abundance" of the late nineteenth century also contributed to this growing anxiety.²⁴ The fantasizing of the Old South overlooked the reality of rebellions initiated by blacks, their goals of self-sufficiency, and the violent treatment they received.²⁵ This was achieved by representing characters such as Rastus as black servants who remained loyal to Southern culture, and who did not try to assimilate into the transforming culture of the 1920s.²⁶

Furthermore, by placing his face and body in a position that possessed a greater portion of the advertisement, the depiction symbolized a kind of

accompaniment of Rastus to the homes of white women, and as a ‘spiritual guide’ to consumers who were not in the class that could afford to hire live-in cooks.²⁷ Therefore, the figure that Rastus represents could be understood as a symbol signifying a complicated combination of the idealized master and servant relationship of the Old South and its influence by the historical roots in slavery, the social changes that were taking place in terms of migration, and a shift into modernity.

CONDESCENDING STRATEGY

Another strategy that was burdened with stereotypes in advertising Cream of Wheat was how Rastus’ dialect was portrayed. He was shown speaking in a distinctively Southern style that revealed his poor and improper language, thereby illustrating his inferiority while elevating white status and aggravating the division between class and race in society.²⁸ The main part of the text on the chalkboard, which is signed off with his name to demonstrate the direct message between Rastus and the consumers, illustrates his poor spelling as well as his lack of intelligence, as he claims he does not know what “vitamines” are and assumes the possibility that they are bugs. This condescending representation of Rastus was demeaning for all blacks while considered humorous by whites. The use of humour in such a way can be described by Thomas Hobbes’ belief that “humor arises from a conception of superiority in ourselves by comparison with the inferiority of others.”²⁹ Additionally, Sigmund Freud argued that “the humorist acquires his superiority by assuming the role of the grown-up.., while he reduces the other people to the position of children.”³⁰ Interestingly, the period between 1890 and 1950 reflected a time when control over the black minority was decreasing in many aspects, and it is possible that this advertisement was used as a subtle technique to reassert white control.³¹

Moreover, an understanding of Freud’s statement can be likened to the discussion of the social system, which consisted of the binary master-servant relationship. While black servants were regarded as helpless and dependent, white people represented a source of paternalism and protection for their childlike servants.³² The awareness of diminishing control is further clarified by viewing this condescending strategy as a product of racial dictatorship the U.S exercised as they fostered a white mentality and the colour line.³³

THE POWER OF STEREOTYPES AND VISUALS

The key factor that made these advertisements influential was the heavy reliance on stereotyping, which worked by conveying a simple and familiar message constructed through the white perception of the reality of blacks.³⁴ These stereotypical images functioned as a method of reinforcing

the white essentialist “truth” of the natural order of white control and black oppression, and subsequently constructed African Americans as the inferior “other.”³⁵ The term stereotype as we know it today was coined by Walter Lippmann in 1926, where he defined it as “an ordered more or less consistent picture of the world to which our habits, our capacities, our comforts and our hopes have adjusted themselves, it is a form of perception which implies a certain character on the data of our senses before the data reach intelligence.”³⁶ In this way, racial stereotypes became solidified through the consistent reinforcement of black inferiority dated to the period of slavery, and continued as it evolved into a symbol of reducing anxiety for white consumers. Through stereotyped advertising, all members of the race were portrayed in the same manner and those images became embedded in the American consciousness.³⁷ In addition, these stereotypes negatively affected African Americans, as the characters that represented them in advertising demonstrated how others perceived them, and in turn determined how they felt about themselves such as feeling qualified solely for manual labour.^{38/39} Findings from various studies suggest that negative stereotypes hinder the upward mobility of minority groups and provide harmful representations of the group for both the minority and majority.⁴⁰ Therefore, stereotypes associated with blacks have been detrimental to the black community and influenced behavior patterns displayed by dominant groups towards blacks.⁴¹

THE POSITIVE EFFECTS

The strong held stereotypes illustrated through advertisements and other channels affected the mindset of black people as they were perceived as “something to be argued about, condemned or defended, to be kept down or put ‘in his place’ or helped up.”⁴² To view the self represented as a second class citizen resulted in a state of cognitive dissonance, where the conflict of one’s self dignity contrasted with society’s unsympathetic views of African Americans.⁴³ In *The Souls of Black Folks*, W.E.B. Du Bois described this mental state of comprehending the two views of how blacks viewed the self, and how other people perceived them as a “double consciousness.”⁴⁴ However, the effects of the prevalence of demeaning stereotypes was not entirely detrimental, as African Americans increasingly began to examine their history and the central role of slavery and its dominant images — all of which continued to influence American society as it transformed.⁴⁵

Indeed, one of the results of racial formation and the third effect of racial dictatorship was the creation of resistance organizations.⁴⁶ The understanding of the deep historical roots of racism and how it affected the lack of consistency between American social creed and American social practices on blacks, led to an active state of improving their position by

spreading awareness and taking up the challenge to mend their self-esteem, which had been lost to the injustices of slavery.⁴⁷ This is apparent in the early movement of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People in 1909, which aimed to create a positive image for black people, and campaigned against various racist images, as they were aware of the powerful effects of visual culture.⁴⁸

The struggle to create a positive representation of African Americans against the solidified stereotypes that governed their image prior to and during 1920s, led progressive blacks to differentiate between the Old Negro and New Negro and come to an accurate understanding of the self.⁴⁹ J. A. Rogers described the distinction between the stereotype-burdened Old Negro as the one who is highly devoted to the master and his family, who is more cognizant of skin color rather than qualification, is overly thankful especially for his employment, and is characterized by an apologetic nature in his dealings even when he is insulted.⁵⁰ In sharp contrast to the familiar characteristics of the Old Negro, the New Negro was described as proud and unapologetic for his existence, fearless, and ambitious. Moreover, unlike the Old Negro, the New Negro was characterized as an individual who believed and supported social equality and education, and felt qualified to compete with whites, rather than solely work under them.⁵¹

CONCLUSION

The 1922 Cream of Wheat advertisement conveyed a greater message than what may have initially appeared to be the case. Firstly, it was not a unique advertisement during 1920s America. Rather, the image like many other advertisements and various media, reflects a time in American society that was greatly impacted by the historical process of slavery, and the slave's representation as a content, good-natured servant ready to please his master in the Old South. Advertising was also affected by the migration of blacks to the North, as well as the shift in society from the pre-industrial to new industrial world. Images of characters acted as a source of marketing by reminding people of the past, and reduced the growing anxiety that came with social change and the diminishing control of whites. The weakening of control and its challenge to white superiority was in turn faced with another set of processes, which took the form of condescending advertising that relied heavily on stereotyping. Nevertheless, another set of processes in reaction to images like the Cream of Wheat advertisement resulted in black resistance and a movement to restore black world esteem.

ENDNOTES

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³ Ibid.

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⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid, 55-56.

⁷ Ibid, 66.

⁸ "Cream of Wheat: Race and the Birth of the Packaged Food Industry in Minneapolis," The Historyapolis Project, accessed June 18, 2015, <http://historyapolis.com/cream-of-wheat-race-and-the-birth-of-the-packaged-food-industry-in-minneapolis>.

⁹ Marilyn Kern-Foxworth, *Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben, and Rastus: Blacks in Advertising, Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1994), 24-95.

¹⁰ Ibid, 45.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Omi and Winant, "Racial Formation," 55.

¹³ Cynthia Bailin, "From Picaninny to Savage Brute: Racialized Images and African American Stereotyping in Turn-of-the-Century American Advertising," in *We Are What We Sell: How Advertising Shapes American Life and Always Has*, ed. Coombs S. Danielle and Bob Batchelor (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2014), 87-102.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid, 90.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Kern-Foxworth, *Aunt Jemima*, 32, 39.

¹⁸ Billy Hawkins, "The Dominant Images of Black Men in America: The Representation of OJ Simpson," in *African Americans in Sport: Contemporary Themes*, ed. Gary A. Sables (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 39-45.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Kern-Foxworth, *Aunt Jemima*, 24.

²¹ Hawkins, "The Dominant Images," 42, 91.

²² Maurice Berger, *For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 29.

²³ Sherrie A. Inness, ed., *Kitchen Culture in America: Popular Representations of Food, Gender, and Race* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 69-95.

²⁴ Karen L. Cox, *Dreaming of Dixie: How the South was Created in American Popular Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 34-57.

- ²⁵ Berger, *For All the World to See*, 27.
- ²⁶ Inness, *Kitchen Culture*, 76.
- ²⁷ Cox, *Dreaming of Dixie*, 39.
- ²⁸ Kern-Foxworth, 95.
- ²⁹ Dubin C. Steven, "Symbolic Slavery: Black Representations in Popular Culture," *Social Problems* 34 (1987): 130.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Ibid, 132.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Omi and Winant, "Racial Formation," 66.
- ³⁴ Bailin, "From Picaninny to Savage Brute," 96.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ Foxworth, *Aunt Jemima*, 77.
- ³⁷ Ibid, 45.
- ³⁸ Ibid, 43.
- ³⁹ Bailin, "From Picaninny to Savage Brute," 90.
- ⁴⁰ Foxworth, *Aunt Jemima*, 77.
- ⁴¹ Ibid, 78.
- ⁴² Alain Locke, "The New Negro," in *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader* ed. David L. Lewis (New York: Viking, 1994), 47.
- ⁴³ Berger, *For All the World to See*, 19.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Foxworth, *Aunt Jemima*, 25.
- ⁴⁶ Omi and Winant, "Racial Formation," 66.
- ⁴⁷ Locke, "The New Negro," 48-49.
- ⁴⁸ Berger, *For All the World to See*, 40.
- ⁴⁹ Locke, "The New Negro," 47.
- ⁵⁰ J.A Rogers. "Who is the New Negro, and Why?" in *The New Negro: Readings on Race, Representation, and African American Culture 1892-1938*, ed. Henry L. Gates and Gene A. Jarrett (Princeton University Press, 2007), 129-131.
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IMAGE SOURCED FROM:

<http://historyapolis.com/cream-of-wheat-race-and-the-birth-of-the-packaged-food-industry-in-minneapolis/>
Cream of Wheat Co. advertisement by Edward V. Brewer, 1921.



1920s

ELIJAH SMITH

TO SING WITH OTHER TONGUES

EXAMINING PENTECOSTAL THEMES IN THE SCAT
VOCALS OF LOUIS ARMSTRONG'S
"THE HEEBIE JEBBIES DANCE"

**My grandfather's grandmother...looked longingly at the hills, and often
crooned a heathen melody to the child between her knees, thus:**

Do ba-na co-ba, ge-ne me, ge-ne me!

Do ba-na co-ba, ge-ne me, ge-ne me!

Ben d' nu-li, nu-li, nu-li, ben d' le.

**The child sang it to his children and they to their children's children, and so
two hundred years it has travelled down to us and we sing it to our children,
knowing as little as our fathers what its words may mean, but knowing well the
meaning of its music.**

— W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*

On February 26, 1926, Louis Armstrong and his Hot Five recorded "The Heebie Jeebies Dance," in Chicago for Okeh Records.¹ The original lyrics — as written by Boyd Atkins — were relatively unremarkable: "I've got the Heebies, I mean the Jeebies, / Talk 'bout a dance the Heebie Jeebies, / You'll see girls and boys, / Faces lit with joys, / If you don't know it / You ought to learn it / Don't feel so blue, / Someone will teach you, / Come on now let's do that prance, / Called the Heebie Jeebies dance."² Allegedly, while recording the song, a simple accident transformed the potentially mediocre tune into one of the most influential tracks in American history. According to Armstrong:

I dropped the paper with the lyrics — right in the middle of the tune...And I did not want to stop and spoil the record which was moving along so wonderfully...so when I dropped the paper, I immediately turned back into the horn and started to Scatting... just as nothing had happened...When I finished the record I just knew the recording people would throw it out...and to my surprise they all came running out of the controlling booth and said — "Leave that in."³

Scatting is often rudimentarily defined as the practice of lyricizing improvised nonsense syllables in song. Brent Edwards — an American scholar specializing in African-American diasporic literature — challenged the reductive nature of this definition in his article “Louis Armstrong and the Syntax of Scat,” writing: “Scat does carry semantic content, though not necessarily linguistic content...Scat can convey ‘extrinsic symbolization’ (referring to the outside world through either spatio-temporal, kinetic, or affective registers).”⁴ Not only does scat *refer* to the outside world, but — like all forms of music produced for public consumption — it “is inherently bound up with social context.”⁵ He is not alone in this assertion: prominent jazz scholars Paul Berliner, Ingrid Monson, and Brian Hatcher have all supported the conclusion that the syntactic structure of vocal improvisation is socially-determined.⁶

The purpose of the following essay is to examine the socio-historical environment of “The Heebie Jeebies Dance” in order to identify the specific social context to which it refers; to determine the “semantic content” of Armstrong’s scat. This project draws methodological inspiration from American scholar Shane Vogel’s recent book *The Scene of Harlem Cabaret*. In it, he attempts to supplement “the positivist archival work of New Negro historiography [in order to]...index precisely that which cannot be preserved, those affective states and experiences that both intentionally and unintentionally elude historic inscription.”⁷ He does so by identifying and utilizing queer archives, unofficial sources of representation that alternately complement or challenge traditional historiography.⁸ Following the logic of this methodology, Armstrong’s scat vocals in “The Heebie Jeebies Dance” are themselves a type of queer archive: an index of socio-historical information which defies traditional historiography due to an inherent lack of linguistic clarity.

Ultimately, the following paper will analyze Armstrong’s use of scat vocals within the context of 1920s America. First, the paper will draw on historical evidence to argue that jazz in the 1920s was a form of art characteristically imbued with an exceptionally high degree of social relevance. Second, that jazz music was a common site for social rebellion and counter-cultural revolution, and that jazz musicians actively and knowingly participated in perpetuating this particular image. Finally, this paper will argue that certain elements of Armstrong’s “The Heebie Jeebies Dance” (his use of scat, in particular) drew inspiration from — and simultaneously referred to — one of that era’s other major counter-cultural developments: Pentecostalism.

Jazz originated during the second decade of the twentieth century in the late-night bars and restaurants of Storyville, New Orleans: a particular district of the port city where prostitution was legal.⁹ From its earliest

incarnations, jazz was associated with urban nightlife; drinking, dancing, and various other amoral behaviors both real and imagined. The coalescence of a distinct genre called jazz was influenced by a number of sources in the cosmopolitan city: African rhythms, Southern music revivalism, and the unique counter-rhythmic style common to the music of former slaves and their communities. The influence of the musical styles of former slaves on early jazz also included an emphasis on work songs, vocalization punctuated by shouts and moans, and tonal registers previously established in the rural blues of the American South.¹⁰

Jazz transformed from a regional phenomenon to a national one after the end of the First World War. The development of radio technologies, the migration of black Americans to northern cities, and the widespread availability of record players contributed to the popularity of jazz music among American publics.¹¹ Outside of New Orleans, Chicago and New York developed into the most important centres for jazz production, though by the early 1920s, urban centres across America boasted some form of jazz nightlife. In his book *Slumming: Sexual and Racial Encounters in American Nightlife, 1885-1940*, Chad Heap argues that, in addition to New Orleans, New York, and Chicago, in “Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit, Atlantic City, Baltimore, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, black jazz entertainment became a mainstay in the nighttime diversions of affluent whites.”¹²

Almost immediately after its inception and subsequent popularity in post-war America, both the forms and functions of jazz music were believed to carry enormous social subtext; historians have come to refer to the 1920s as America’s Jazz Age, a term that was also sometimes used by contemporaries of the period. Jazz in the 1920s was, according to conductor Edwin J. Stringham, “both indicative and resultant of the present day social conditions in these United States.”¹³ In 1922, the Reverend A. W. Beaven of Rochester, New York, had gone so far as to declare that jazz had moved “beyond the dance and the music and [was] now an attitude toward life in general.”¹⁴ By the time Louis Armstrong recorded “The Heebie Jeebies Dance” in 1926, jazz was already deeply involved in a complex relationship with America’s larger social mechanisms. This meant that many critics of jazz seemed to draw easy comparisons between the popularity of the genre and the nation’s growing rates of crime, divorce, and suicide. Some even claimed that jazz was responsible for the declining quality of college football.¹⁵ Alain Locke, distinguished as the first African American Rhodes Scholar and pioneering force behind the Harlem Renaissance, recognized that jazz was an art form capable — for better or worse — of influencing social conceptions regarding the role of black Americans in defining the nation’s cultural output.

The same year that Armstrong recorded “The Heebie Jeebies Dance,” Locke edited *The New Negro*, an anthology in which he calls for a re-evaluation of race relationships, particularly of the attitudes of whites toward blacks, and blacks toward themselves: “Our greatest rehabilitation...rests in the revaluation by white and black alike of the Negro in terms of his artistic endowments and cultural contributions...Music especially.”¹⁶ Though Armstrong’s jazz might not have been the type of cultural contribution to which Locke would have preferred, his essay does signify that African American musical production was involved during this period within a larger context of re-imagining race identities and social relationships.

Though jazz had fast become an immensely popular form of entertainment in America (one study conducted in 1929 concluded that two thirds of all radio time was devoted to jazz), it was just as quickly derided by many of the period’s leading intellectuals; automaker Henry Ford, for instance, dismissed it as “the drivel of morons.”^{17/18} In his article “Jazz and the American Identity,” Richard L. Tietze remarked that “jazz is intimately connected to the American experience [and yet]...during the first Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, mainstream American culture, both Black and White, rejected jazz as ‘low art’ and ‘jungle music’ rather than as a true art form.”¹⁹ A significant number of highly influential black contributors to the New Negro movement and the Harlem Renaissance, including Alain Locke, W. E. B. DuBois, James Weldon Johnson, and David Peyton), also contributed to early criticisms of jazz music.²⁰

This combination of immense social popularity and concurrent elitist marginalization encouraged the development of jazz into a location for relevant counter-cultural discourses. Among the prominent literary figures of the period, Langston Hughes was a lone voice in support of jazz music and its contribution to American culture.²¹ He incorporated jazz rhythms into the beat of his poetry, which regularly focused on themes of racial identity. In “Elderly Race Leaders,” he challenged an older generation of black intellectuals like Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois who advocated the necessity of black involvement in historically white “high” art forms.²² In his essay “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain,” Hughes writes:

Most of my own poems are racial in theme and treatment, derived from the life I know. In many of them I try to grasp and hold some of the meanings and rhythms of jazz...Jazz to me is one of the inherent expressions of Negro life in America; the eternal tom-tom beating in the Negro soul — the tom-tom of revolt against weariness in a white world...Let the blare of Negro jazz bands...penetrate the closed ears of the colored near-intellectual until they

listen and perhaps understand...We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame.²³

Through his work, Hughes effectively presented jazz as the soundtrack for a new racial identity for black Americans, one which sought to define itself by celebrating race rather than dismissing it. Like jazz itself, his perspective was both popular and disruptive.

In his article “Disease is Unrhythmical: Jazz, Health, and Disability in 1920s America,” Russel L. Johnson contends that, “whether conveyed through musical arrangements, lyrics, or titles, undoubtedly part of the popular enjoyment of jazz derived from thumbing one’s nose at convention, cultural norms, and musical experts.”²⁴ Chad Heap has studied the popular pastime among upper-middle class white individuals of frequenting predominantly black jazz bars and nightclubs in the 1920s. He argues that they “used their journeys into black neighbourhoods to challenge the bounds of sexual respectability and to contest the popular notions of racial difference that separated early-twentieth-century Americans.”²⁵

Jazz, however, threatened more than just the established racial hierarchy; according to Anne Shaw Faulkner, a prominent musical educator during the 1920s, “jazz disorganizes all regular laws and order; it stimulates extreme deeds, to a breaking away from all rules and conventions.”²⁶ Jazz was the most popular musical form of the 1920s among both black and white American publics precisely because it encouraged so many people to challenge dominant norms and the prevailing social constraints of a dated morality.

As Russell Johnson notes, jazz musicians were well aware of the participatory role their music played in the counter-cultural revolution; they regularly embraced it. After hearing some jazz critics refer to the genre as nothing more than ‘noise,’ Zez Confrey released his novelty hit “Kitten on the Keys.”²⁷ The popular jazz tracks “Jazz Convulsions,” “Goin’ Nuts,” “Crazy Words, Crazy Tune,” “Crazy Blues,” “Crazy Rhythm,” “Prince of Wails,” and “Wall Street Wails,” are just a few examples of known responses to critics — like the public health commissioner in the city of Milwaukee — who argued that jazz electrified “the nervous system until a veritable hysterical frenzy is reached. It is easy to see that such a frenzy is damaging to the nervous system and will undermine health in no time.”²⁸ Another common criticism was that jazz resembled “music of the jungle,” and that jazz dances were “primitive,” and “savage.” Duke Ellington responded by forming his group The Jungle Band, singing hits with titles like “Jungle Nights in Harlem,” and “Jungle Blues,” while Fats Waller wrote and performed “Jungle Jamboree.”²⁹ Some critics noted that jazz

dances appeared “jerky,” “spasmodic,” and reminiscent of epilepsy.³⁰ Jazz bands like Ferdinand “Jelly Roll” Morton’s Red Hot Peppers responded by advertising their shows as a “Quaking, Quivering, Shaking, Shivering good time.”³¹ Even Louis Armstrong’s depiction of his inspiration for scatting on “The Heebie Jeebies Dance” has been challenged numerous times, with certain scholars considering it a highly unlikely anecdote.³²

Armstrong himself has offered at least four differing versions of the story, and it has been hinted — by both Armstrong and other musicians present — that the decision to scat was no accident.³³ Brent Edwards has argued that “in vocal expression in music, scat falls where language rustles with alterity...[It] is by no means innocent; it is the very point at which the music polices the edges of its territory.”³⁴ Unfortunately, Louis Armstrong never explicitly stated what purpose his scatting served, what territory it explored, to what it semantically referred. With no traditional historiographical evidence available, a queer archive must suffice; the first being the lyrics of the song itself. At face value, they seem almost formulaic to the point of triteness. The song seems to be about a popular dance craze called the Heebie Jeebies, only there is no evidence to suggest that there ever was a dance called the Heebie Jeebies prior to 1926. The song itself is the progenitor of the dance craze it is documenting. The term *Heebie-jeebies* was first used in a comic strip in 1923, and attained relative popularity in America prior to “The Heebie Jeebies Dance.”³⁵ In *The Book of Negro Folklore*, Langston Hughes defined the “heebies” as “the shakes,” a condition that could be brought on by cheap wine, for example.³⁶ Edwards concludes: “So the dance starts with a sense of an inherently modern state of bodily unease, anxiety, or trembling, perhaps in the wake of an excess of stimulation...that causes a loss of control, a nervous loss of articulacy that expresses itself as incommensurable physical movement.”³⁷ He suggests that the term *Heebie-jeebies* implies an invasive presence, an infectious disease that overcomes the physical form.³⁸ The song also suggests that the final result of this invasion of anxious energy and overstimulation is not epileptic, but liberating; not delirium, but dance. The lyrics “You’ll see girls and boys, / Faces lit with joys,” and “Don’t feel so blue, / Someone will teach you,” emphasized that the loss of movement or control was not frightening, but joyful, and that the resulting dance was an activity which an entire group engaged in together.

Finally, the appearance of Armstrong’s scat on the track suggested that the emotion or the physicality of the dance overwhelmed the power of speech, rendering coherent language either useless or unnecessary. It has been previously established that jazz music was distinctly reflective, that it referred to social realities and engaged with them artistically. Additionally, jazz was counter-cultural, and regularly challenged mainstream ideas or

expectations. “The Heebie Jeebies Dance” was no exception: the description of dance as a state of exuberant transcendence to the point where all conscious control of language and movement are surrendered is immediately reminiscent of Pentecostal worship in early-twentieth-century America. The meteoric rise of Pentecostalism — like jazz music itself — was highly controversial among mainstream publics, and represented a counter-cultural approach to race relations and identity formation.

Prior to the advent of Pentecostalism in 1906, 96% of African American Christians were either Baptist or Methodist.³⁹ In her book *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism*, Estrela Y. Alexander describes the prevailing experiences of black Baptists and Methodists:

Black leaders...sought to imbue the black church with a measure of respectability...These leaders put as much distance between themselves and anything that would remind them and their white antagonists of a heathen past...African Baptists and Methodists patterned worship after the white churches they emerged out of. Richard Allen, founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, for example, denounced emotional displays in worship and took pains to ensure that emotive forms were excluded from the liturgy and worship of his nascent denomination.⁴⁰

In his chapter “Navigating the Territory: Early Afro-Pentecostalism as a Movement within Black Civil Society,” David D. Daniels describes how sectors of the five major African American Christian denominations “sponsored literary, musical, and dramatic societies, which promoted elite Western literature, classical music, operas, marching band repertoires, and anglicized spirituals.”⁴¹ The method of religious worship available to black Americans was highly controlled and — like musical production — subjected to a rigorous social mandate of respectability presented by elite black intellectuals like W. E. B. DuBois and Alain Locke. The advent of Pentecostalism challenged that mandate.

In major American urban centres like Los Angeles and New Orleans, traditional southern African American spirituality combined with the organizational structure of the popular Holiness movement common in northern cities like Topeka to create the foundation for modern Pentecostalism.⁴² Among the first Pentecostal denominations was the Church of God in Christ, whose founder — Charles Harrison Mason — was adamant that black Christians recognize and celebrate their African heritage.⁴³ From its very inception, Pentecostal denominations subverted the dominant model of worship “by adopting cultural styles, values, and norms which were at odds with this model’s middle-class orientation.”⁴⁴ As present in many African cultures, music was used creatively and formed a central and

ever-present aspect of worship.⁴⁵ Songs were sung to express devotion, and when language could no longer express spirituality, they sang in unknown tongues. When words restricted their “exhilaration, they hummed, moaned or yelled out wordless melodies.”⁴⁶ The practice of speaking in tongues — singing words void of linguistic content but rich with semantics — became a common feature of Pentecostal churches. According to one *Los Angeles Times* article, the practice was dismissed as “weird babel.”⁴⁷ Dancing was another form of worship that appeared frequently among the worship of early Pentecostals.

Dancing served a dual purpose: to release pent up spiritual energy and to invite possession by the Holy Spirit.⁴⁸ Every part of the body danced in worship: legs and feet but also head, hands, shoulders, and arms gyrated in a group dance with no formal instruction.⁴⁹ According to Alexander, “early mainline black religionists...condemned all forms of religious dance.”⁵⁰ Despite its near-universal derision by upper- and middle-class individuals, Pentecostalism appealed to working- and lower-class peoples — both black and white — who sought new styles of emotive worship.⁵¹ If they were concerned by the official opinions of mainline media, churches, and intellectuals, it did not stop them from congregating; within a single generation, Pentecostalism was the third-largest group among black Christian denominations and had attracted more adherents than Roman Catholicism, Episcopalian, Congregationalism, and Presbyterianism combined.⁵² By the 1920s, “black Pentecostal recording artists introduced their musical culture to the broader community, which incorporated the New Orleans jazz style...and was impervious to distinctions between sacred and secular music.”⁵³ In his article “Jazz and Pentecostalism,” Harvey Cox argued that jazz and Pentecostalism share so many formal characteristics because neither ever existed beyond the influence of the other.⁵⁴

Not only were jazz and Pentecostalism contemporaries when they first emerged in the early-twentieth century, but both were entirely American traditions immediately characterized by African influences. Both were initially derided by mainstream critics but quickly drew popular support — from both black and white Americans — and developed into counter-cultural centres where expected norms and behaviors were challenged and redefined. Whether or not Louis Armstrong intentionally referenced Pentecostal worship — particularly the act of speaking in tongues — when he began to scat on “The Heebie Jeebies Dance” will probably never be known for certain, but the evidence is compelling. Regardless of his intention, it is likely that the track’s massive popularity was in part due to recognition among audiences of one major form of popular counter-cultural expression evident in another.

Furthermore, Armstrong’s introduction of scat into popular music

invited other artists to explore this technique as a means for self-expression whenever language failed to convey emotion or experience. In doing so — whether knowingly or not — his scat vocals in “The Heebie Jeebies Dance” drew reference to the particularly Pentecostal practice of vocal improvisation as a means of unrestricted self-expression.

According to American poet Nathaniel Mackey, scat’s “apparent mangling of articulate speech testifies to an ‘unspeakable’ history,” one which is defined by racial violence and dehumanization.⁵⁵ Others have argued that scat exists alongside instruments on a sort of continuum of sound: in jazz and blues, one is employed when the other fails to convey a certain desired tonal register.⁵⁶ In Billie Holliday’s autobiography *Lady Sings the Blues*, she recalls listening to Louis Armstrong’s recording of “West End Blues:”

Ba-ba-ba-ba-ba-ba and the rest of it had plenty of meaning for me — just as much meaning as some of the other words that I didn’t always understand. But the meaning used to change, depending on how I felt. Sometimes the record would make me so sad I’d cry up a storm. Other times the same damn record would make me so happy...⁵⁷

Holliday’s recollection suggests that scat is far from meaningless — so far, in fact, that scat is threatened by a superfluity of meaning, ever contingent on one’s subjective experience. Not only does this challenge Mackey’s assertion that scat serves the singular purpose of giving voice to inarticulacy, but it challenges any definition of scat that reduces the practice to one definitive purpose. While it does complicate the project of interpreting scat from an historical perspective, Holliday’s vivid memory also highlights the significance of scat to the American peoples. The purpose of this paper is not to offer generalizations or to suggest that there exists any pattern of inherent meaning behind scat vocals in American jazz.

The purpose, rather, is to offer one possible interpretation for the semantic significance of scat in a single influential song. In “The Heebie Jeebies Dance,” Louis Armstrong combined the rebellious spirit of jazz with the boundless vivacity of Pentecostalism. Perhaps the audience most receptive to this coalescence was the one written about by Langston Hughes in “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain.” They:

are the low-down folks, the so-called common element, and they are the majority — may the Lord be praised...They live on Seventh Street in Washington or State Street in Chicago and they do not particularly care whether they are like white folks or anybody else. Their joy runs, bang! into ecstasy. Their religion soars to a shout...Play awhile. Sing awhile. O, let’s dance! These common people are not afraid of spirituals, as for a long time their more

intellectual brethren were, and jazz is their child.⁵⁸

From Billie Holliday back to W. E. B. DuBois' grandfather's grandmother, scat is far from "nonsense syllables;" it is a complex and emotionally evocative alternative to traditional modes of transmitting art and experience. As such, scat vocals present an extensive queer archive for the social history of America, a vast wealth of subjective experience codified somewhere beyond the sayable.

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IMAGE SOURCED FROM:

<http://www.allaboutjazz.com/media/large/8/9/b/53d2cafa85f3b49ca84d-baa691538.jpg>

Jazz great Louis Armstrong with trumpet.



1920s

CYRINA
SANTELLO

REPRESENTING AFRICAN-AMERICANS

THE RACIAL PROJECT OF
THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN EX-COLOURED MAN

James Weldon Johnson first published *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* anonymously in 1912 with Sherman, French & Company, a small publisher in Boston.¹ The book centered on an unnamed light-skinned African-American narrator who decides to “pass” as white after witnessing a lynching of another African-American. The novel did not sell well.² It was republished in 1927 by Knopf and attributed to Johnson to increase its readership.³ The republishing of *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* was the result of a series of efforts by various actors in the publishing industry during the Harlem Renaissance, who attempted to redefine what it meant to be African-American during the period. The various actors and intentions behind the novel’s republishing can be unveiled through analysis of the novel’s commodity chain, the “network of labor and production processes whose end result is a finished commodity.”⁴ Through a commodity chain analysis of the republication of the novel, it becomes clear that at each stage of the novel’s production — authorship, patronage, cover art, publishing, and consumption — there are actors that project their own intentions on the novel to produce a new representation of African-Americans for consumption.

This redefinition of African-American representation can be analysed through the lens of Michael Omi’s and Howard Winant’s theory of racial formation, which they define as “the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed or destroyed.”⁵ Racial formation is accomplished through racial projects, which is “simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines.”⁶ By combining a commodity chain analysis with Omi and Winant’s theory of racial formation and racial projects, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* becomes a microcosm of black and white social relations during the Harlem Renaissance in the publishing industry.

In each of their roles in the republication of *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* in 1927, author James Weldon Johnson, patron of the

arts Carl Van Vechten, Knopf Publishing, and artist Aaron Douglas contributed to a racial project as they represented African-Americans within the existing social and publishing structure of the Harlem Renaissance. By publishing literature, recommending particular African-American novels for publication, publishing and advertising particular novels targeted towards a largely white readership, and creating a cover that forged an artistic and African-American identity away from common “primitivist” notions, respectively, these figures partook in a racial project that intended to modify the way that a majority white readership during the Harlem Renaissance would view African-Americans.

The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man can be contextualized as part of a broader racial project. The book was republished at a time when black artists and writers in the United States were attempting to reformulate representations of African-Americans — “to define the Negro as a part of the American future,” and to “find a black identity within the American cultural context.”⁷ This activity centered in Harlem, which became the “cultural capital” of the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s.⁸ During this time, there arose a new figure called the “New Negro,” who “would reject the stereotypes and clichés, and [would] insist on integrity of race and personality.”⁹ Art had an important role in this racial project; Alain Locke wrote that change would come from “the revaluation by white and black alike of the Negro in terms of his artistic endowments and cultural contributions,” and Langston Hughes wrote that, through art, African-Americans “would express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame.”^{10/11} The “achievements of creative blacks” along with the research of sociologists and psychologists “seemed to herald the eventual disappearance of race prejudice.”¹² *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* was a racial uplift novel, which was meant to “elevat[e] the African diaspora in intellectual and cultural ways.”¹³

The first stage in the commodity chain is the source of the commodity: James Weldon Johnson, the creator of *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*. Johnson can be said to have had his own racial project, and to have actively undertaken it through his attempts to change the literary representation of African-Americans within the existing social and economic structure of the time. Johnson advocated for an increase in black authorship in order to forge “an entirely new national conception” of blacks.¹⁴ Johnson believed that a race’s greatness was measured by its literature.¹⁵ He viewed African-Americans as being in a position of “literary destitution;” he felt that blacks had done very little in terms of writing “pure literature,” which was characterized by its entertainment value and appeal.¹⁶ By producing literature, Johnson thought that African-Americans were destroying the stereotype that assumed blacks were “intellectually,

culturally, and morally empty,” and demonstrating that blacks had natural talents that could be contributed to American society.¹⁷ Johnson advocated operating within the existing social structure: the easiest path to success for African-American writers could be done with white patronage and black artists, in which the latter had to attain the recognition and access to the former.¹⁸ Johnson participated in the racial project he advocated by choosing to republish *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* in 1927 and contributing to a literary representation of African-Americans.

The next stage for republishing *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* in 1927 was recommendation for publication. This was the black-white literary connection that Johnson deemed necessary during the Harlem Renaissance to be published as a black writer. This connection came in the form of Johnson’s meeting and friendship with Carl Van Vechten, who had a “reputation as a white impresario of black art” in the Harlem Renaissance.¹⁹ Van Vechten and Johnson met at a benefit party when Walter White, an African-American writer, introduced them to each other.²⁰ Van Vechten connected Johnson to Knopf and “sold” the firm on Johnson.²¹ Van Vechten’s role was so great that he wrote an introduction to the republished version of *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*.

Van Vechten created his own racial project separate from those of Johnson and other African-American artists and intellectuals, as he created his own representation of African-Americans that differed from theirs. Van Vechten participated in the racial project by acting as a connection through which certain black writers and artists of his choosing were able to access the economic and social structure required to get published. It was important for black artists to receive recognition from Van Vechten, as this recognition brought these artists to larger audiences and to more attention.²² While he helped certain black writers get published, he also actively barred others from attaining recognition from publishers.²³ Johnson was one of those writers that Van Vechten deemed appropriate enough to support with patronage and his connections; this was due largely to the fact that Van Vechten was “fascinated” with the novel’s subject and protagonist.²⁴ Van Vechten’s role in the commodity chain of *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* is significant, as it demonstrates that literary representations of African-Americans were shaped by Johnson’s novel, and in turn, by Van Vechten’s tastes.

Van Vechten was only one of many “Negrotarians,” a term coined by Zora Neale Hurston to describe white patrons of African-American artists.²⁵ His role in the commodity chain of Johnson’s novel is indicative of a larger pattern of white control of the publishing structure during the Harlem Renaissance, as well as white cooption and exploitation of the African-American artistic market. This is indicative of a role in the

African-American racial project undertaken by whites in a fashion similar to that done by Van Vechten: relationships between African-American authors and artists and their white patrons often resulted in a stifling of what these artists wanted to accomplish in order to cater to white audiences.²⁶ Critics of Van Vechten asserted that his “power and connections” stifled African-American voices.²⁷ White patrons thus controlled representations of African-Americans, acting as a filter in terms of what African-Americans could be represented as in literature.

The next stage of the commodity chain in the production of *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* was publishing. Alfred A. Knopf took interest in Johnson and *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* upon Van Vechten’s urging.²⁸ Simply by publishing Johnson’s book, Knopf became implicated in the racial project undertaken by African-American artists and writers during the Harlem Renaissance. However, Johnson’s book was part of a larger racial project that Knopf was involved in, as can be demonstrated by the publisher’s actions and opinions. After the book was published, Blanche Knopf encouraged Johnson to write a book about boxer Jack Johnson, who was “identified with the New Negro attitude,” believing it would find “a ready audience.”²⁹ While Knopf did not confine Johnson and other black writers to writing about “Negro things,” Knopf’s suggestion betrays a racial project in which the publisher, in effect, advocated and worked toward creating a representation of African-American literature that was made for an audience.³⁰ This affected the representation of African-Americans in the racial project: audiences were not shown contrived representations of African-Americans based entirely on the whims and desires of a white audience, but rather something authentic. The publishing of *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*, as well as Knopf’s urging of Johnson to write a novel centered on Jack Johnson, demonstrates that Knopf encouraged particular representations of African-American life and culture. By promoting these works, Knopf made an effort to change how African-Americans were perceived and represented during the 1920s.

Knopf’s attitude towards black writers are indicative of a greater social phenomenon between black writers and white publishers, though the racial project undertaken by Knopf seems benevolent in comparison to various other white publishers who published African-American works during the Harlem Renaissance. Speaking in broad terms, most publishers during the Harlem Renaissance had their own ideas of African-Americans and their art, and thus formed their own racial project that played a role in the racial formation of African-Americans in the Harlem Renaissance. In determining which books were properly “black,” these publishers created a representation of African-Americans by publishing and circulating ideas that conformed to their idea of what African-Americans should be

represented as. White publishers often sought to publish works that represented African-Americans as “primitive and exotic,” and were often racist.³¹ These publishers tended to be interested in the “distinctiveness of ‘Negro literature.’”³² The actions of these white publishers contributed to African-American racial formation during the Harlem Renaissance.

While surface interpretations of the artist-publisher relations such as those in Knopf’s publication of Johnson’s *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* may appear exploitative, it was not always perceived as such by contemporary black writers. Johnson advocated African-American writers being published by whites. He believed that “white recognition” of black writing and African-American access to white publishers would result both in an increase of the amount of black literature published, and an elevation of the “standard” of African-American literature.³³ Furthermore, Johnson considered the recognition of black literature by white publishers and critics to be very important for African-Americans to “acquire cultural capital.”³⁴ While he did not think that being published by Knopf or other commercial publishing firms necessarily led to success, Johnson considered being published by these white firms to be one of the best ways for black writers during the Harlem Renaissance to move towards “the literary field’s higher ground.”³⁵ Thus, according to Johnson, white publishers had a major role to play within the Harlem Renaissance racial project. These publishers would enable black writers to rethink and provide a new representation of African-Americans.

The next stage in the production of *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* was art for the cover of the book. At Knopf, Van Vechten acted as intermediary between the publisher and Aaron Douglas, a young African-American artist.³⁶ For the cover of Johnson’s book, Douglas drew inspiration from a passage that discussed the protagonist’s struggle to pass for white or not.³⁷ The protagonist, who is drawn as a black, featureless silhouette, is placed between two worlds, with nature on the left and the buildings of New York City on the right, implying that the protagonist has a choice.³⁸ More than simply drawing inspiration from a passage within Johnson’s novel, this cover represented an attempt by Aaron Douglas to rethink representations of African-Americans. Indeed, the cover demonstrates Douglas’ own contribution to the racial project of African-American representation. In Harlem, Douglas came under pressure from white sponsors and black advisors to portray a stereotypical African-American primitivism within his art.³⁹ Instead, Douglas “problematizes stereotypes that blacks were innately primitive and therefore pre-civilized and premodern.”⁴⁰ In his art, Douglas created a “new American primitivism,” which demonstrated that African-Americans could provide American culture with a connection between the primitive and the

civilized.⁴¹ Douglas' cover for *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* was part of the Harlem Renaissance racial project, in which he attempted to challenge white American stereotypes of African-Americans and create a new representation of blacks through his art.

The next stage in the commodity chain of *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* pertains to Knopf's advertising for the book. Knopf had advertisements placed in *Crisis* and *Opportunity* magazines, which made use of Douglas' cover art, announcing their most recent Harlem Renaissance releases.⁴² In 1927, Knopf placed an advertisement in *Opportunity* that was titled "The Negro," which used Douglas' cover art for *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* as its main feature.⁴³ *Nigger Heaven* by Van Vechten and two books of poetry by Langston Hughes were advertised along with Johnson's novel.⁴⁴ Knopf advertised books by African-Americans as "bizarre, racial novelties" that audiences would find both "modern and 'strange.'"⁴⁵ Knopf's advertisements for Johnson's novel were part of a racial project as it conveyed representations of African-Americans that it deemed acceptable for its audiences. By advertising Johnson's book in *Opportunity*, Knopf was putting forth what it considered to be worthy literature about "The Negro;" these selections were filtered through intermediaries, such as Van Vechten, as well as the publisher. This fostered a representation of African-Americans to the audience of *Opportunity* that was based largely on the publisher's terms. Furthermore, *Opportunity* was especially known for its support of African-American work in art and publishing.⁴⁶ An advertisement promoting Johnson's work in that magazine would add support to and reinforce Van Vechten's and Knopf's conceptions of what African-American literature and representation should be.

The last stage in *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man's* commodity chain is the consumer and the consumption of the novel. By reading the novel, the consumer received the racial project put forth by Johnson, Van Vechten, Knopf, and Douglas, and participated in the racial project by having their perceptions of African-Americans changed as a result of reading the novel. James Weldon Johnson was conscious of the fact that African-American literature, his own included, would be read by both blacks and whites, which Johnson called "the problem of the double audience."⁴⁷ Johnson noted that all black writers wrote for white Americans in some way, "for the good of his race."⁴⁸ Langston Hughes also discussed the issue of the audience and consumer of African-American literature: "the Negro artist works against an undertow of sharp criticism and misunderstanding from his own group and unintentional bribes from the whites."⁴⁹ According to Hughes, blacks encourage black writers to write them in the best light, while whites desired to maintain their stereotypes of blacks.⁵⁰

That Johnson wrote for a white audience is clear: he wanted to demonstrate to white audiences that African-Americans were forced to “pass” due to circumstances and frustration, not simply because they wanted to.⁵¹ By writing, Johnson had both a black and a white audience in mind. In this way, he had his own racial project; he was writing to represent African-American literature and life in a way that would challenge stereotypes and preconceptions held by white Americans.

When Knopf republished *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*, they had a white audience in mind. Van Vechten recommended works and authors to publishers “that would most engage white publishers and a white reading public.”⁵² Publishers began to chase the white demographic as consumers for their books when white audiences responded well to the publishing of *Nigger Heaven* in 1926. After its success, publishers clamoured to publish more books about “the middle-class and lower-class aspects of black life,” thus controlling the representations of African-American life that whites were able to see. He also focused largely on attaining white readerships for black authors such as Johnson.^{53/54} Furthermore, publishers often determined what constituted “the distinctiveness of Negro literature” by what white audiences thought was “Negro.”⁵⁵ The African-American racial project during the Harlem Renaissance was thus marketed largely towards whites, who would be given representations of African-Americans that had been filtered through various interlocutors such as intermediaries and publishers. These representations of African-Americans were not necessarily genuine, as readers would only be able to consume certain representations that were thought to cater to their gaze.

A commodity chain analysis unlocks the various stages of production in the 1927 republishing of *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*. These stages — the creation, connections, publishing, cover art, advertising, and consumer — all reveal elements of relations between African-Americans and whites in the United States during the 1920s. This analysis, when combined with Omi and Winant’s theory of racial formation and racial projects, elucidates an attempt by all actors within the commodity chain, both black and white, to create representations of African-Americans. Such representations could play out for the benefit of blacks, as Johnson and Douglas had in mind, or for benefit of profit, as Knopf had. James Weldon Johnson, Carl Van Vechten, Knopf Publishing, and Aaron Douglas contributed to a racial project by conceiving of ways to represent African-Americans within the structural framework of publishing at the time. By writing, selecting certain novels to be recommended for publishing, publishing and advertising certain novels, creating cover art distinct from contemporary prevailing notions of African-American art, and writing and marketing to a largely white audience, these people made

The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man into a racial project. This commodity chain analysis demonstrates the ways in which racial projects are formed, as well as who can create racial projects, and for what causes.

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<http://www.library.yale.edu/beinecke/brbleduc/images/jamesweldons3612511.jpg>

Portrait of James Weldon Johnson writing at his desk.

Keep us flying!



BUY WAR BONDS

1940s

HALEY
O'SHAUGHNESSY

THE WHITENESS OF THE BLACK PRESS

THE CONSERVATIVE APPROACH TO "VICTORY"
AT HOME AND ABROAD

During World War II, the black press and several prominent black leaders called for a "Double V" victory against fascism abroad and Jim Crow at home. With such a slogan, many historians have regarded this campaign as the groundwork for the protests seen through the civil rights and black power movements. While there is ample evidence that the readers of the black press were receptive to a militant approach, black newspapers undertook a restrained, conservative effort in the attempts of channeling black militancy into ideals of American exceptionalism. By seeking government concessions, the black press sought to create a homogenous American identity inclusive of blackness as a means to resolve struggles for full citizenship, freedom, and racial justice. Nonetheless, the press's condemnation of black citizens rioting against white supremacist systems of labour and war reduced the double victory campaign to another means of white assimilation. Paradoxically, the whiteness of the black press established black soldiers as both casualties and perpetrators in a war based on racial supremacy.

Led by the *Pittsburgh Courier*, *Baltimore Afro-American*, and the *Chicago Defender*, the wartime black press attempted to bolster war morale through depictions of the all-American brand. To do so, however, required a recognition of the hardships faced by black Americans during the interwar years. The Great Depression extended well into the 1930s for black people, as hiring discrimination prevented unemployment rates from improving. When the wartime economy revived several manufacturing sectors, the benefactors of the "arsenal for democracy" were overwhelming white: seventy-five percent of war industries explicitly refused to hire black labour, with fifteen percent only willing to extend the arsenal to menial jobs.¹ Even after Franklin D. Roosevelt's executive order to desegregate the war industry, many regarded the subsequent Fair Employee Practice Commissions (FEPC) as a toothless agency.² Moreover, the FEPC did not reflect the segregated military establishment; in the 1940 draft, the nine percent quota relegated all black soldiers into less prestigious units.³ The black

press certainly was aware of embedded white supremacy within American institutions. Arguably, to ignore such contradictions within American democracy was to alienate their readership.

Yet the articulation of this dilemma came when reader James G. Thompson under the heading “Democracy: Victory at Home-Abroad,” posed this question to the editors of *Pittsburgh Courier*: “Should I sacrifice my life to live half American?”⁴ The explicit challenge to American whiteness significantly differs from the World War I “Close Ranks” call from W. E. B. Du Bois, “to forget [their] special grievances and close ranks” in order to work with White America. In the Double V campaign, black struggles could not be forgone; following Thompson’s rhetorical question, the *Courier*’s editor Edgar T. Rouzeau underlined that the “two wars are inextricably intertwined.”⁵ The Double V Campaign was not to safeguard white supremacy in the Union, but to establish black Americans’ place within a more cohesive, integrated society. It was not long until other papers embraced the new rhetoric, and the ‘Double V’ wartime slogan of the black press was born.

Indeed, the influential imagery of this campaign had much more to do with its militant rhetoric than its approach. Unlike Union leader A. Philip Randolph, whose threat of a March on Washington led to the creation of the FEPC, the actions of the black press were mainly limited to lobbying committees and letter-writing campaigns.⁶ Therefore, its tremendous influence was due to its mass distribution: according to the Office of War Information (OWI), an estimated four million black citizens read the weeklies, with sixty percent of newspapers moving across state lines.⁷

Such a platform to address racial injustices led many scholars to assume the black press during wartime was actually radical or inflammatory. This fallacy may have formed because of the gap between the conservative approach of editors and the radical approach of its readership. When the OWI and the War Department were fretful that the black press was seeking to destroy black morale, the editors contended that they were a reflection rather than the source of black anger. In their clarification, the editors justified their work as a means to not only promote a unified front for the war, but also to contain radical approaches by parts of the black community. As E. Washington Rhodes of the black newspaper *Philadelphia Tribune* plainly stated: “the mass of Negroes is more radical than those of us who publish Negro newspapers.”⁸

Even when the black masses sought direct action to curb racial discrimination, it was the black press that remained some of their fiercest critics, particularly during the Detroit race riots of 1943. Sparked by white resistance to the northern migration of black labour into the city’s factories, the Detroit riots killed thirty-four people, wounded hundreds

more, and damaged property worth millions. Instead of focusing on the abundant structural racism that provoked these African-Americans into revolt, the black press overwhelmingly regarded the riots as a threat to American unity against the Axis Powers. Even as these riots were occurring across the country, many black newspapers continued to blame the riots on erroneous rumours and erratic-mob tendencies. The newspapers' quotations from Eleanor Roosevelt to remain unified and hope "those who can control these riots will keep their heads and behave in a kindly way" reinforces said gap between the black press and black civilians in their approach.⁹ In fact, black editors from *Amsterdam-News* even condemned the 'radical' leadership of Randolph because "they are cropping up all over with ill-planned, ill-conceived, and dangerous principles which range all the way from national race riots to civil disobedience campaigns throughout the nation."¹⁰

The black press hoped to redirect potential violence to constructive aims by proposing unconditional patriotism. To identify first as an American, one recognizes the permanent stake black citizens had in reshaping post-war America. However, the creation of a national identity through black erasure created a paradox of whiteness, one where black soldiers were fighting against racial supremacy abroad in order to be subjected by white America at home. Therefore, while the black press projected black citizens within an "all-American" white performance, new civil and social institutions were geographically reconstructed around war industries in homogenous white communities and, consequently, prevented African-Americans from benefiting in the postwar economy.¹¹

The Double V Campaign's attempts to both address black people's grievances and bolster war morale required the press to constrain the radical elements of the black community. To disable the support of black civilians' direct actions ultimately prevented a double victory to occur, and delayed many institutional changes seen within the civil rights and black power movements. The militant rhetoric mixed with the conservative approach of the press decisively foiled the national recognition needed for a double victory. With victory abroad, the white supremacy of the Union adapted and institutionalized itself in early postwar America.

ENDNOTES

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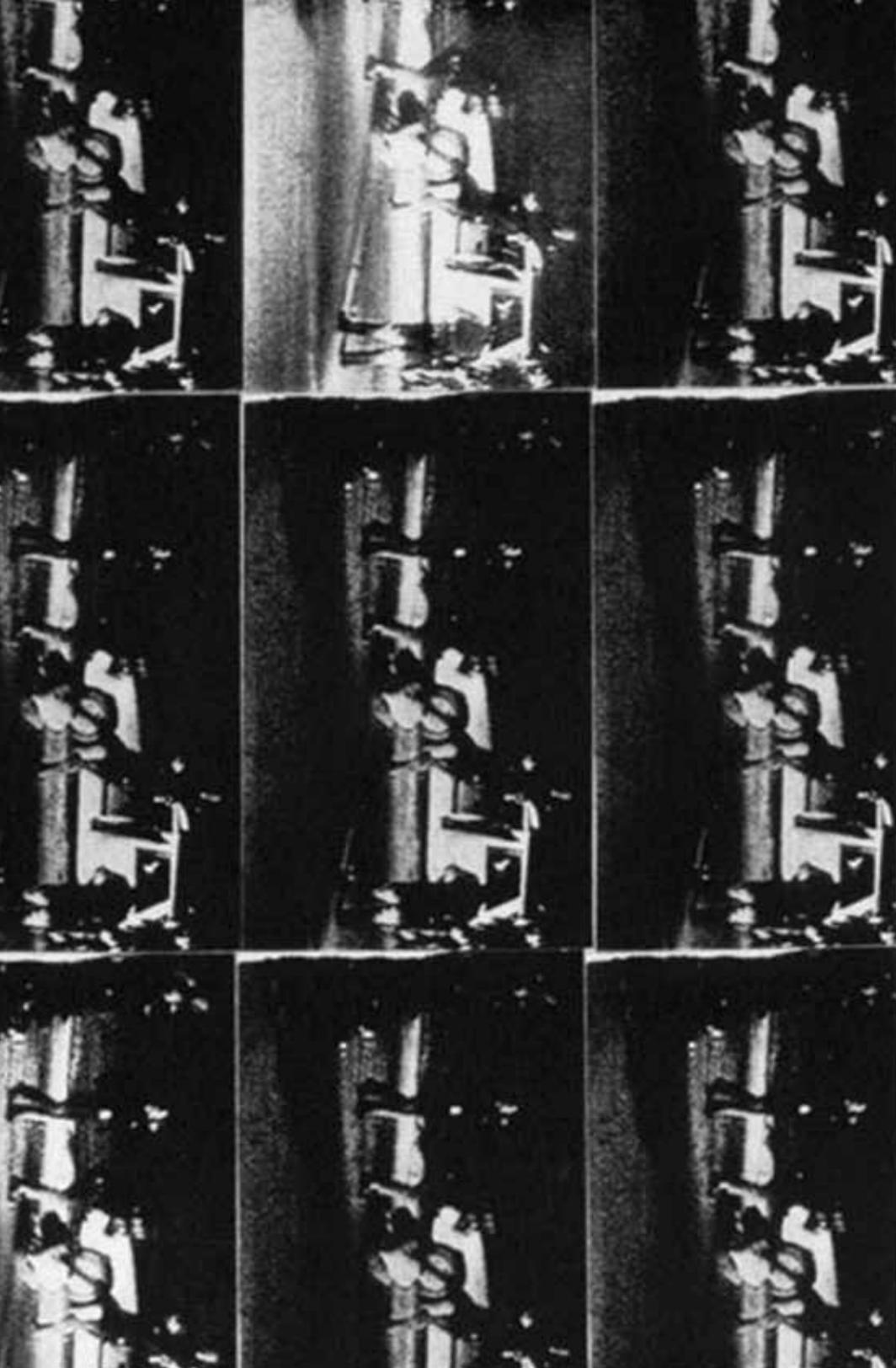
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IMAGE SOURCED FROM:

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Poster of a Tuskegee Airman (probably Lt. Robert W. Diez) by an unidentified artist, 1943.



1990s

EMMETT CHOI

SENSATIONAL NARRATIVES FOR SENSATIONAL TIMES

MEDIA COVERAGE OF CIVIL UNREST
IN THE UNITED STATES

Los Angeles. April 29th, 1992. Four white LAPD officers have just been found not guilty on charges of assault with a deadly weapon in the beating of Rodney King, a black suspect, following a high-speed pursuit in the San Fernando Valley. Within hours, the majority of LA's lower class, mostly comprised of African-American and Latino minorities, takes to the streets to voice its frustration with the police, judiciary, and economic system of the nation's second largest city. Over 50 people are killed, 3,700 fires are set, and \$1 billion in damage is incurred during six days of unrest.¹

The LA Riots are often understood and presented as a novel moment in American history, a shameful low point in race and class relations. But in fact, riots and violent strikes motivated by racial, ethnic, and/or economic tensions have been a recurring phenomenon in the American experience. A hundred years earlier and 2,000 miles away, Carnegie Steel's workers in Homestead, Pennsylvania — mostly Eastern European — locked down their factory and town in response to having had their wages reduced, then violently fought a private security force sent to retake it.

In researching incidents such as these, it is routine to study the legacy of the violence and the causal roots of popular tension. Often overlooked is the media coverage during these most urgent of breaking news events. During these spectacles, are the news media truly objective in their reporting? Is it even possible for them to be so? Does their coverage inform viewers or simply reinforce existing feelings of aggression and vengeance? How, if at all, did depictions of the Eastern European steelworkers of Homestead in 1892 parallel those of the chronically unemployed and mass-incarcerated black and Latino lower class of South Los Angeles in 1992?

One would assume — given its point in history--that the media coverage of the 1992 riots would have involved less race baiting and veiled bigotry than the newspaper articles recounting the Homestead incident a hundred years earlier. In reality, while communications technology was substantially more dynamic and intimate during the LA Riots, journalism was not significantly more mature or responsible. In its depictions of

rioters, media coverage of civil strife in the modern era is just as sensationalist and biased against the lower class as it was during the Gilded Age.

Before examining the media's work during the riots, we must first set the context for the unrest. The jury in the Rodney King beating trial included ten whites, one Hispanic, one Asian, and no blacks from the suburban bedroom community of Simi Valley, north of the city. From expert and eyewitness testimony, along with the world-infamous amateur video of the beating, the jury determined that King was indeed resisting arrest and could have stopped the beating at any time by simply lying motionless on the ground and obeying the officers' orders.

Within two hours of the not guilty verdict, violent riots erupted in the largely poor, black, and Latino area of the city known as South Central.² The unrest would soon spread to all corners of the Los Angeles Basin, from Downtown to Koreatown, Hollywood to West Adams. Accordingly, the news media shifted their coverage from the Simi Valley courthouse to the intersection of Florence and Normandie Avenues and the area surrounding it. In the six days of rioting that followed, however, the news media, particularly on television, acted more like sensationalist and speculative tabloids than sources for useful, objective reporting. Violent, emotional images and information were repeated on an endless loop, adding fuel to an already volatile time of racial tension. An industry whose members resembled and perhaps identified more with the Simi Valley jury than Los Angeles itself acted in ignorance of the effects their coverage would have on the long-marginalized and emotionally vulnerable people of the inner city, choosing instead to enter a horror-based ratings competition with each other.

This was perhaps most clear during the beating of Reginald Denny on the first day of rioting. At about 6:45 pm, Denny, a white truck driver, was pulled from his cab at Florence and Normandie by a group of young black men, and was beaten, nearly to death. The violent attack was seen in its entirety not only by hundreds of witnesses at the intersection but by thousands of viewers watching multiple Los Angeles-based news programs such as KTLA, KCAL, and KNBC. Viewers had a bird's eye view of the beating from reporter Bob Tur's helicopter which had been orbiting above the intersection for quite some time already.³

Later that night, ABC 7 aired a live phone interview with Bobby Green, a Good Samaritan who rescued Denny and brought him to the hospital. As the previously recorded beating played onscreen, anchor Paul Moyer began the interview quite ludicrously by bluntly asking Green, an African-American, if he was "one of the people who beat him up."⁴ Green adamantly responded that he was not, and Moyer moved on, remarking, "Alright, so that theory is out the window."⁵ Moyer initiated the interview with suspicion, to the point of race-baiting, as if Green would voluntary

give his name (and later his place of employment) on air if he was indeed one of the attackers. Shortly after, Moyer asked Green to describe Denny's injuries, to which Green obliged, answering that Denny was unconscious with "big holes under his eyes."⁶

As the riots continued, so did ABC 7's efforts to actively search for additional scenes of racial violence to broadcast. In one segment two African-Americans are interviewed on a sidewalk as the fire department battles a blaze. The reporter asks them why the burning storefront they are standing in front of was targeted, to which one of the two interviewees responds, "Probably because they're Korean, you know. Their lady shot that little girl out there too."⁷ At the time, relations between blacks and Koreans in Los Angeles already involved much animosity. The incident the interviewee was referring to was the killing of black teenager Latasha Harlins by Korean storeowner Soon Ja Du in 1991. Du had confronted Harlins, accusing her of shoplifting. A short scuffle ensued, and after Harlins turned and began to leave the store, Du produced a handgun and shot her. As in the Rodney King trial, justice eluded the black victim. Du was found guilty only of the lesser charge of voluntary manslaughter and sentenced to probation, community service, and a \$500 fine without any imprisonment.⁸

Further emphasis on the hostility between blacks and Koreans occurred during another broadcast by ABC 7. Preceded by a montage of daytime looting, two Korean men are shown firing upon unseen looters in the parking lot of a strip mall. The narrator then explains that shortly after the storeowners began shooting at looters, "a car full of some young black kids pulled up on the other side, and they started shooting back."⁹ The car is out of frame and no shots are heard from shooters other than the aforementioned Koreans, though screeching tires are clearly audible.

This kind of reporting serves not the public interest but a primal instinct. It encourages viewers to confirm biases and assume the worst, and also to keep watching. When Bob Tur's camera caught the graphic beating of Reginald Denny, LA's news programs would have been more responsible in cutting back to their respective anchors in the studio. Their duty as journalists would have been sufficiently served had they simply told their viewers to avoid the area of Florence and Normandie, lest they become victim to the attacks that were taking place there. That is not to say that it was wrong to film the beating. In fact, the perpetrators were later identified partly from Bob Tur's video. It was certainly questionable, however, to air the beating live and later on, to repeatedly show segments of it, unsubtly highlighting the fact that Denny had been severely beaten as a white man in a black neighbourhood. Surely it was not lost on the local and national news networks that the Reginald Denny beating's video would be seen as similar to that of Rodney King's to its viewers, and would quite likely

ignite further feelings of racial animosity. In having Green describe Denny's grievous injuries, ABC 7 gave viewers an additional reminder of the Rodney King trial, more specifically the testimony from USC Medical Center doctors regarding King's injuries. Continued television coverage of Denny's beating, the targeting of Korean businesses, and other violence between distinct ethnic groups did not provide Angelenos with useful information on how to keep safe, but instead fuelled emotions of fear, suspicion, and outright hatred that many in Los Angeles had already had cemented by the Rodney King beating and trial. As the days went on, the trial could easily be seen as an afterthought, with more immediate motivations to riot coming on the television screen every hour.

A newspaper in 1892 could not reach its audience as quickly as a television camera in 1992, but it could certainly serve a similar purpose. The contempt with which the striking Carnegie Steel workers are described in *The Manufacturer and Builder*, a New York-based business periodical, is quite clear. The Homestead strike is plainly labelled as an example of "the infamous tyranny that is practised by that small fraction of the working force of the country that is 'organized.'"¹⁰ It is not explained that the Homestead workers, like the racial underclass of Los Angeles, were responding to a decision and larger system that directly affected them, but in which they felt they had no say, and moreover could not remedy peacefully.

During collective bargaining negotiations with the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers in the spring of 1892, Carnegie Steel announced it planned to reduce wages at its Homestead plate mill, southeast of Pittsburgh. If the union refused to accept the pay decrease, Henry Clay Frick, the plant manager, would lock out the factory and cease to recognize the union. The Amalgamated Association struck in protest, negotiations failed, and Frick enacted the lockout. The union members then took to the streets, surrounding the mill and occupying the town of Homestead. When Allegheny County sheriff's deputies were unable to end the strike, Carnegie Steel hired the Pinkerton National Detective Agency, a private security company, to retake the town and mill. Just before dawn on July 6th, the Pinkertons attempted an amphibious landing at the mill via the Monongahela River. Almost immediately, a gun battle quickly broke out, leaving a dozen killed and dozens more wounded.¹¹

Journalists had arrived to cover the strike and lockout some weeks prior, and so were able to provide a vivid first-hand account of the battle on July 6th. Even before any violence began though, *The Pittsburgh Dispatch* had begun dehumanizing the thousands of striking workers as an "unthinking mob" who disregarded the sheriff's orders to disperse on July 5th.¹² *The World* joined in, reflecting the exoticism of the era in comparing the deafening crowd at Homestead to the "cry of the black fanatics of the

Sudanese desert.”¹³ After the vastly outnumbered Pinkertons surrendered, they were forced to march a gauntlet to their holding quarters with the victorious union members and townspeople harassing them along the way. In *Harper's Weekly*, the gauntlet was detailed as a “cruel and cowardly business” representative of the indignity with which unions approached labour disputes.¹⁴

Given that newspapers needed days and weeks for their information to be distributed, it cannot be argued that they served to motivate and sustain the Homestead strike in the same way as television news during the Los Angeles riots did with its sensationalism and race-baiting. But the depictions of the Homestead strikers did put its sensationalism to other uses. The Gilded Age was a time in which nativism among the middle and upper classes was increasingly high. The immigrant poor were seen as a scourge; perpetual slum dwellers in the tenements of cities like New York with no hope of assimilating into the ideal Republican society of the United States. Journalism from Homestead like that in *The Manufacturer and Builder* and *Harper's Weekly* firmly re-enforced the biases that middle and upper class Americans already had about the working class predominantly from an ethnic minority.

How then, was Los Angeles in 1992 similar to Homestead a hundred years earlier? In both incidents, parties who were frustrated with years of institutionalized oppression utilized violence where formal mechanisms had failed. In both incidents, the oppressed sought to control property they had for a long time provided for but which they themselves did not own or benefit from. Both incidents involved reckless violence against persons not directly responsible for the rioters' frustrations. Finally, both the rioters and strikers were largely unsuccessful in their uprisings. After Homestead, public support for unions fell dramatically. After the LA Riots, while the LAPD was reformed and crime dropped, South Central Los Angeles is still by far the poorest and most violent section of the city, and has been experiencing a two decades-long exodus of black residents.¹⁵ The exaggerated and distorted image of the rioters, then, serves the same role it did in the late 19th century: encouraging the powerful's understanding of the underclass as an unsolvable, untameable, unemployable problem which can only be addressed by reactive state violence and preventative segregation. We should demand more of our Fourth Estate.

ENDNOTES

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IMAGE SOURCED FROM:

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SPECIALS

 FISH	 WOOD KEBAB \$2.99	 GYRO \$3.99	 HOT DOG \$1.99	 ITALIAN KEBAB \$4.50
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ATM

NOOR
FOOD
MART



ONE WAY
→

2000s

ABDULLAH
SHIHIPAR

UNJUST DESERTS

HOW OUTDATED PUBLIC POLICY AFFECTS
URBAN FOOD SECURITY

Obesity is a growing problem in the United States; millions are now diagnosed as overweight and usually have correlated illness such as diabetes or hypertension. Obesity is now classified as a public health epidemic and has evoked the interest of government officials, politicians and figures in the media. In this assault against obesity, many aspects of American life have come to be scrutinized: the lack of physical activity in schools, whether caloric counts should be posted on restaurants, and even advertising tactics. Lately, however, particular concern has been evoked around the term “food deserts,” which are defined by public officials as areas which lack access to grocery stores. However, while food deserts are a public health issue, the manner in which policymakers frame the problem is highly simplistic. They describe food deserts as an issue of “physical access” to food. In reality, access to food in food deserts is restricted due to a variety of factors such as cost, food safety, crime, class status, as well as market forces. People in these areas also tend to be from underprivileged backgrounds, and are often people of colour.¹ Food deserts are also very much a creation of a large, monopoly-based economy — in which big box stores tend to dominate the landscape and set prices.² Scientists and researchers have recognized this and have created definitions such as “food brownfields” and “food swamps” to reflect the realities on the ground. These definitions come together when looking at an area’s food security — that is, how stable a person’s access to food and nutrition is.³ This paper will demonstrate that using a simplistic definition of food deserts allows policymakers to create solutions that will make the problem worse, by aiding large national corporations as opposed to cultivating local, community based initiatives to tackle food security.

In 2011, Michelle Obama under her existing campaign, Let’s Move, announced a joint initiative between the White House with Walgreens and Wal-Mart to tackle the food deserts distribution. Both corporations promised to open new stores in inner city areas and stock fruits and vegetables in their existing stores.⁴ Food deserts have become an alarming epidemic

within American society; however, the concern needs to address the population at large, and not just those who live in the immediate area. A study by Morand, Roux and Wing found that in communities that lacked a grocery store, rates of obesity, diabetes, and associated cardiovascular diseases were indeed higher than in communities with grocery stores.⁵ This is not a singular case; another study by the Gallagher Research Group for LeSalle Bank in the cities of Detroit and Chicago have also shown similar results. The Gallagher report on Detroit compared areas of the city to a measure of what is called Years of Potential Life Lost (YPLL), which is the rate of premature death caused by, in this case, diet-related disease. They then compared the rates of YPLL in the area to the presence of what they termed Fringe and Mainstream retailers, and then assigned a numerical score. Fringe retailers were defined as gas stations, liquor stores, convenience stores, and dollar stores. Meanwhile, mainstream retailers, such as Safeway and Wal-Mart, included small, medium and large grocery stores. The scores assigned were either classified, low, medium or high. A low score meant the YPLL rate was low and there were more mainstream retailers in the area, and the high meant the YPLL rate was high and there were more fringe retailers around. What the Gallagher report found was that neighbourhoods in Detroit were more likely to have high scores than neighbourhoods in Metro Detroit and the surrounding suburbs.⁶ This leads again to the conclusion that food deserts are correlated to certain diet-related diseases.

Residents who are living with the daily experience and limitation in access provide a different story, demonstrating an imbalance between the media, government, and the reality of many Americans. In an article entitled “How access to fresh food divides Americans” in *Fortune Magazine*, Stephanie Ann Sorano is quoted as saying “There’s a struggle every day. Not only with finding food but with finding it at a decent price. In areas where they don’t have many supermarkets, they have bodegas, and bodegas usually raise their prices. They could be paying double the amount.”⁷ Sorano’s statement demonstrates how a food desert is not necessarily an area that is devoid of fresh fruits and vegetables. Rather, it can be an area where access to such produce is restricted, in this case by financial means. Therefore, a rethinking of the definition of food deserts from being a purely geographical issue, to an issue of practical access, is necessary.

As suburbs developed, so too did supermarkets and large chain grocery stores. These stores, able to offer better prices and greater variety, forced independent grocers in the area to close. Large chain stores now dominated the landscape and seeing inner city areas as unsafe and unprofitable, they largely abandoned them, leaving smaller, independent stores to fill the void. These stores, often convenience, liquor, or gas stations, are not designed to serve the food needs of a community, and lack the variety and selection that

large grocers possess. When these retailers do stock fruits and vegetables, they are often overpriced and inaccessible to residents. The large chain grocery stores do offer discounted produce, but are often located far outside the city, and therefore a car or public transportation is required to make the trip, adding the cost of transportation to food. When transportation costs and time are factored in, the discount in buying healthier food may not really be a discount at all. Moreover, income may not be the only deciding factor; some families, for example, are single parent families. The resulting time constraints, particularly if said single parent is employed full-time, may not allow them to go to the grocery store and prepare healthy meals.⁸ Thus, there are a wide variety of factors such as income, family structure, and transportation that restrict people from being able to purchase healthy foods, something that is not captured in the commonly used “food desert” definition.

A different model of examining urban food systems, which may take these different factors into account, was proposed by Corradini, Osorio and Williams. In their investigations into why the urban poor pay more to be food secure, they looked outside the term “food deserts.” Instead, they incorporated the terms “food brownfields” and “food swamps” into an overall understanding of urban food security. Food brownfields are areas where the food is unsafe to eat – for example, the food may be close to the expiration date or improperly handled, leading to foodborne illness. Food swamps are those areas in which there are disproportionately higher amounts of high calorie prepackaged foods, and a low amount of fruits and vegetables. This definition focuses on the types of food available rather than the establishments in the area. Bringing together these three definitions of food brownfields, food swamps and food deserts, the authors argued that looking at urban health issues through a definition of food security made more sense. The definition of “food secure” is attached to a person when safe, nutritious food is made to be easily accessible to them.⁹

Policymakers are not asking these critical questions or framing the issues from the perspective of researchers in the field. While members of Congress and other public representatives understand food deserts to be a problem contributing to the urban health crisis, their solutions are a reflection of the popular discourse on the issue that relies on a limited definition of what a food desert is. That is to say, these representatives believe that a food desert is an area that lacks big chain grocery stores. Multiple bills such as HR 3100 and HE 3015 have been proposed over the past few years in Congress that aim to tackle the issue; the solutions these bills propose reflect the limited definition of the food desert.

In 2009, HR 3100 was proposed, the bill titled the “Food Deserts Oasis Act” aimed to tackle food deserts through tax credits for businesses. It first defines a “food desert zone,” and then goes on to identify a number

of cities as such.¹⁰ The bill then proposes a variety of tax cuts to businesses that sell food in these areas with the stipulation that 25% of their products must be fresh fruits and produce. Some of these tax credits include tax credits for employment, for building rehabilitation as well as tax exemption status for certain situations. HR 3100 was proposed but never got to the house floor for a vote.¹¹

An additional bill, HR 3015, was proposed in 2013, entitled the “Supermarket Tax Credit for Undeserved Areas Act.” Proposed by Democratic congressman Steve Cohen of Tennessee, once again proposes tax credits for supermarkets that choose to do business in food desert areas. It provides tax credits for rehabilitated buildings, for sales on fruits and vegetables, and for a tax credit for employment. The bill specifically states that supermarkets are the intended recipients of these tax credits and goes on to define supermarkets as being in between “12,000 and 80,000 feet.” For the tax credits for sales on fresh produce and employment, the bill states that for the business in question to benefit from these, it must be a new supermarket in the area. However, bill HE 3015 was also never voted on in Congress.¹²

While HE 3015 is more explicit in its intention to bring supermarkets to food desert areas, both HR 3100 and HE 3015 aim to tackle the problem merely by encouraging supermarkets to come to the area. The idea once again assumes that it is merely physical access to fruits and vegetables that are impeding people from accessing healthy food. The use of “rehabilitation” tax credits implies this assumption, as only large-scale chains would likely have the capital available to demolish and/or modify old structures to make way for their new stores. These solutions are inadequate in part because they help to reward the businesses that contribute to the formation of food deserts in the first place.

Large chain supermarkets, like Safeway, alter the market conditions for all grocers. Due to their purchasing power, they are able to sell enough to make use of promotional discounts offered by the producers. As a result, they are able to pass on the discount to the consumer and prices become lower. While this may seem harmless, it alters the market conditions for smaller grocers. Smaller independent grocers already have a smaller consumer base to start with, so they cannot qualify for these promotions, and as a result, have higher prices. This drives some customers to supermarkets due to their lower prices, further worsening the cycle and driving up prices at small grocers. These large chain supermarkets can also rely on strong transportation networks, which help to deliver products efficiently to the stores. Smaller grocery stores do not have this benefit, resulting in products that become more expensive and more difficult to obtain. Being in an urban area further complicates the matter, since transportation becomes more difficult and thus less frequent. People in inner city areas often report expired

food being on sale, reflecting compromise in the food's safety. When products are scarce, the cost not only rises but the quality decreases, and grocers will put out expired food in an attempt to save revenue. Expired food costs a lot more when you have fewer products to begin with.¹³ The current discourse can make it seem as though small grocers raise their prices on purpose, taking advantage of a population in need. However, the true culprits are the supermarkets, not just for abandoning urban areas, but also for creating conditions that make it difficult for other grocers to survive. Not only have supermarkets made a conscious choice to leave urban areas, they are getting the government to subsidize their return, much to the detriment of the few, small local grocers in the area.

The two aforementioned bills attempt to solve the problem by attracting supermarkets to the areas. However, one study by Wrigley et al., demonstrated that this did not necessarily improve access to fruits and vegetables. Residents were not more likely to visit the new supermarket than they were other establishments in the area, suggesting that prices were not that different. Residents also stated having a sense of loyalty to their neighbourhood establishments.¹⁴ This tells us once again, that it is not the lack of supermarkets that creates food deserts, but rather the restrictive costs of healthy food in the area, the conditions of which are in turn created by supermarkets.

So, if adding more supermarkets to an area is not the solution, what solutions should be pursued? The answer lies not directly in the location and access to food, but rather in the public discourse and understanding around the concept of a food desert. Rather than using the words "food desert," perhaps a better conceptualization would focus on the idea of food security, how it is created, and how it is maintained.¹⁵ The definition would bring together issues of safety, cost and physical access, while removing the barrier between urban and more affluent suburban areas. The term "food deserts" restricts the discussion to inner city areas and focuses on what they do not have, whereas the term "food security" allows us to compare relative levels of food security in each area and ask what makes each area secure or not secure. Food deserts are not an isolated problem; rather, they are the product of a capitalist system. Keeping in mind that food deserts are formed by market forces when looking for possible solutions to this problem, these ideas should follow the principles of the "food sovereignty" movement.

The goal of the food sovereignty movement is to ensure that everybody has enough food to feed themselves and their families by putting an emphasis on local control of the food system. The proponents of this movement argue that the issue lies with the current food system, where corporate forces largely control what prevents people in low income neighbourhoods from accessing the food they need.¹⁶ Consequently, the

relationship between people and their food needs to be reimagined without big business. Solutions for the food desert issue can range from growing more community gardens in vacant lots, to providing subsidies for small, independent grocers that order local produce. This contrasts with the solutions proposed by policymakers; instead of bringing in external corporate forces, it aims to strengthen the small local businesses in the community.

While food deserts continue to be a problem for certain cities in the United States, it is important that policymakers take a systemic view rather than focusing on what the area lacks. Simply bringing in supermarkets ignores the dynamics of the market and what created the lack of access in the first place. To change their viewpoint, lawmakers need to be operating on an updated definition of what a food desert is. As such, it may be recommended that instead of focusing on conventional food deserts alone, policymakers should evaluate food security levels in different areas and ask what allows each area to achieve or not achieve those levels. It is the outdated method of viewing food deserts as a simple issue of physical access, as opposed to an issue that intersects class, race, safety and health, that allows inefficient solutions focused on large food corporations to be proposed. Until those in power can come to understand food deserts this way, food deserts will continue to persist despite efforts to eliminate them.

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https://img.washingtonpost.com/wp-apps/imrs.php?src=https://img.washingtonpost.com/rf/image_908w/2010-2019/WashingtonPost/2014/10/28/Business/Images/WHOLEFOODSWHOLEFOODS0351414514312.jpg&cw=1484

A small corner store in the Englewood neighbourhood of Chicago.



2000s

TOMAS
LAMMERS

INEQUALITY IN QUALITY

RACIAL DISPARITIES IN THE
U.S. HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

The health of minorities in the United States has consistently lagged behind that of the white population throughout the country's history, as racial and ethnic minorities experience lower quality health care, even when insured at the same level as whites. The most evident of these effected minorities are African-Americans. There are many systemic factors that contribute to this disparity; however, the primary factor to be considered in this paper will be socioeconomic status (SES). Poor SES significantly affects the quality of care a patient receives, and race is often a major determinant of a person's SES. This correlation will be illustrated by analyzing how race influences the components of SES, which include income, education, occupational status as well as detrimental environmental exposures. Moreover, race and thereby SES, are also determinants of a person's access to health care, meaning that blacks are more likely to be uninsured than whites. Beyond socioeconomic-related factors, blacks also face racial biases carried out by the health care system, resulting in lower quality care and negative health outcomes. In addition, racist stereotypes, language barriers, and cultural differences exacerbate these issues, while a lack of minority health professionals contribute to the biases they face. Through analyzing data and other relevant literature, this paper will outline how socioeconomic factors, access to health care, quality of care, and racial bias within the healthcare system contribute to disproportionate life expectancy outcomes between white and black Americans.

The pathways through which SES and race affect health care are sophisticated, making it difficult to isolate racial disparities in health care from socioeconomic inequities.¹ Therefore, when examining health and healthcare disparities it is necessary to look at these factors collectively, considering that in the United States a significant portion of minority groups are also socioeconomically disadvantaged. Indeed, lower SES, and race are linked to poorer housing and nutrition, lower educational and economic opportunity, and greater environmental hazards.² Consequently, this leads to long term negative health outcomes and shorter life expectancy.

In the United States, socioeconomic status is a direct reflection of the quality of care a patient receives and blacks are systemically disadvantaged relative to whites.³

Since 1950, infant mortality rates have dropped significantly; however, the relative gap between white and black infants has grown wider.⁴ In 1970, the disparity in life expectancy between whites and blacks was 7.6 years, with whites living 71.7 years on average versus 64.1 for blacks.⁵ While this gap has narrowed, the disparity has remained significant; in 2008, America's white population lived an average of 5.1 years longer than their black counterparts (79.4 vs. 74.3).⁶ Socioeconomic and geographic isolation supplemented by discrimination are the primary causes of these disparities. More specifically, blacks experience increased discrimination and racial disparities during their childhood, resulting in higher rates of illness and death that impede positive SES and health outcomes in adulthood.⁷

Although SES and race have extensive implications in quality of care, there has been little discussion on failing existing processes to identify socioeconomic and racial disparities regarding quality.⁸ The first step in assessing these issues is recognizing that these inequities are a determinant of quality of care.⁹ Moreover, a collection of relevant and accurate data is necessary for challenging these disparities. As physician Kevin Fiscella notes in his medical article entitled "Inequality in Quality Addressing Socioeconomic, Racial, and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care," supplementary approaches for eliminating and addressing the aforementioned disparities should include stratifying performance measures by SES and race, adjusting population-wide quality measures to incorporate race and SES, and accounting for correlations between SES/race and morbidity.¹⁰ These approaches would "bring health care disparities into mainstream quality assurance" and ensure that SES and race disparities become a focus for quality improvement.¹¹

In the United States, inequities concerning access to health care are prevalent when analyzing racial stratification, and although access to care is dependent on numerous factors such as geography and SES, its largest disparity lies in race. In 2013, 15.9% of black Americans were uninsured compared to just 9.8% of uninsured whites.¹² Being uninsured has a prominent correlation with mortality rates as The Institute of Medicine estimates that the uninsured have an excess mortality rate of 25%.¹³ This results in avoidable and often treatable deaths for the uninsured. Additionally, once an uninsured individual finds access to health care or treatment, an illness that was likely treatable has progressed into a more severe and often more expensive problem, thus perpetuating the cycle of avoiding the doctor until it is too late.¹⁴

Racial disparities in access to care are also influenced by geography.

More specifically, these disparities are influenced partially as a result of differences in where blacks and whites receive care.¹⁵ Amitabh Chandra, author of “Who You Are and Where You Live: Race and the Geography of Healthcare,” uses the example of racial disparities in the treatment of acute myocardial infarction (AMI). Chandra cites 85% of black AMI patients are treated by just 1000 hospitals nationwide, while only 40% of all white AMI patients were treated at the same hospitals. Additionally, nearly 3000 hospitals in the U.S. treated no black AMI patients. Indeed, Chandra’s research reveals that blacks, on average, went to hospitals with lower rates of evidence-based medical treatments more frequently than whites, resulting in an increased mortality rate when compared to whites that were treated at non-minority serving hospitals.¹⁶ Despite blacks being at a disadvantage with regard to health care access, they also experience lower quality care, as they have a 50% greater chance of an in-hospital death compared to whites.¹⁷ This finding proposes that even when blacks do receive care, it is often the “wrong” type of care, an example being end-of-life care (feeding tubes, incubators, intensive care unit admissions).¹⁸ This is indicative of minority-serving hospitals focusing spending on end-of-life care while standard quality measures are deprioritized.

Another major determinant of quality of care is SES and racial bias existing within doctor-patient relationships. Firstly, doctors are more likely to give information regarding problem resolution to patients with high SES as well as engage in social discussion.¹⁹ Also, communication regarding drugs was less successful with low SES patients.²⁰ A study conducted by Howard Waitzkin found that patients of higher socioeconomic position received more physician time, more in depth explanation, and more explanations in non-technical language than other patients.²¹ Furthermore, a study conducted by Michelle van Ryn and Jane Burke found that doctors perceived black patients as less intelligent, less educated, more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, and more likely to fail to comply with medical advice, even after patients’ SES and their personalities were accounted for.²²

Racial biases are not the only aspect of doctor-patient relationships that contribute to health disparities. Thomas D. Sequist’s study suggests there is a “systemic failure to tailor treatments to patients’ cultural norms.”²³ His research of diabetes patients found racial disparities even between patients being treated by the same doctors. Sequist suggests that information that fits some patient’s needs may not conform to another’s. The study concluded that black patients experienced less ideal health outcomes relative to the white patients within the same physician panel, and that these tendencies are present across the entire U.S. health care system.²⁴ Similarly, a study by the Institute of Medicine focusing on racial disparities among equally insured patients suggests that a patient’s race can result

in lower quality care due to the increased instance of less desirable treatments. The study discloses that blacks are more prone to avoidable procedures, such as amputation, and are less likely to receive the most sophisticated treatments available. The report also concluded that this disparity in care has contributed to increased rates of cancer, heart disease, diabetes and H.I.V. infection among minorities.²⁵ These findings are partially due to whites' increased likelihood of having a long-lasting relationship with a specific physician, as well as "indirect" evidence of doctors' decisions being influenced by their perception of race, intentional or not.²⁶

African-Americans are also at a greater risk of negative health outcomes stemming from substance abuse compared to whites.²⁷ However, this disparity reflects characteristics of the harmful social-environment more commonly associated with racial minorities. For instance, blacks are far more likely to use crack-cocaine due to socially shared environment conditions such as availability of drugs and community norms.²⁸ This can often result in overdose, transmitted diseases, and chronic health issues stemming from substance abuse. Accordingly, health care policies should focus on social and environmental prevention and other community based programs to supplement actions by the health care system to ensure equal distribution of services to racial minorities.

After analyzing the myriad factors affecting life expectancy rates between white and black Americans, it is evident that there are societal and systemic issues that contribute to this disparity. The pathways in which race influences socioeconomic status are income, education and occupational status, as well as environmental hazards linked to poor SES. Furthermore, geography also influences SES partially as a result of differences in where blacks and whites receive care. This also has an impact on the disparity of access to care between blacks and whites. However, the most significant impact on the disparity of access to care is shown in the gap between uninsured white and black Americans. Ultimately, racial biases within the health care system itself account for the disparity in quality of care received by white and black patients. Perceptions of race, as well as language and cultural barriers compounded by a lack of minority physicians, have a direct impact on the quality of care a patient receives. African-Americans receiving less desirable treatments, more in-hospital deaths, as well as dysfunctional doctor-patient relationships, illustrate this disparity in quality. The combination of these factors are responsible for the disparity in life expectancy outcomes present in the United States. Recognizing the existence of these disparities is the first step towards federal policy changes, as well as the implementation of social and community programs that will alleviate the mitigating factors, which are leaving black Americans at a disadvantage.

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http://newsinteractive.post-gazette.com/longform/stories/poorhealth/1/img/HEALTHCARE_CITY,-NWS,-PORTE.6.jpg

Patients wait in line at a monthly clinic at City on a Hill, which is in one of Milwaukee’s poorest neighbourhoods.



2000s

ANGELA NADER

THE DECAY OF THE MOTOR CITY

INEQUALITY IN POSTWAR DETROIT

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the later half of the 20th century, Detroit was subject to the full extent of urban decay, which was brought on by white flight and the deindustrialization of the auto industry. “White flight,” or the transition of white populaces from urban centres to their suburban counterparts, is a phenomenon that can be observed in nearly every American city with a substantial black population. This phenomenon, combined with the collapse of Detroit’s leading industry, resulted in the loss of the city’s tax base and subsequently, the deterioration of municipal services necessary for the city to recover.

This paper will focus on residential segregation and the deindustrialization of the auto industry — which provide the social and economic conditions necessary to produce urban decay — within the context of Detroit in the later half of the 20th century. The central premise of this paper is to monitor the responses — or the lack thereof — of policymakers to the issue of urban decay, which befell Detroit in the post-World War II era. The inability of policymakers to respond accordingly to the needs of populaces residing within inner city Detroit, due to their employment of a clientelistic structure of governance, demonstrates the inequality in political representation.

WHITE FLIGHT

The migration of blacks to Northern cities throughout the 20th century contributed to the disproportionate shift of white populaces from inner cities to their urban counterparts — a phenomenon presently referred to as “white flight.” Literature pertaining to white flight suggests racial residential segregation has negative implications for the entire structure of society. In their article, Jago and Roehner effectively reduce white suburbanization and its consequences on urban centres to a three-step process: “(1) Move of blacks to northern industrial cities... and concurrent move of white people to suburban areas [which]...resulted in the replacement of high or medium wage earners by low wage earners, (2) Fall in municipal

revenue and accompanying decline in public services, [and] (3) Decline in overall city population.”¹

The migration of blacks from the South to urban centres in the North was prompted by the search for better wages and better living conditions. Detroit was the destination of choice and became a hotbed for immigrants as the city’s industries began to hire black workers. Following the migration of African American populaces from the South to urban centres, racial tensions over housing escalated. The government, as well as the white residents of Detroit, employed restrictive policies — whose long-term effects continue to be felt today — in response to the migration of black populaces. Violence was the most commonly employed tactic in efforts to drive blacks out — a report on black-targeted violence in Chicago states that “between 1917 to 1921 an average of one black home was bombed every 20 days.”² Such violence culminated in the riots of 1967, in which violence and destruction destroyed parts of the city. Blacks saw such riots as a rebellion against the brutal and oppressive white regime, whereas such activities only served to reinforce the negative stereotypes of African Americans held by whites. Research on the migration of whites suggests that the “socially unacceptable behavior” of blacks within inner cities gave the former the grounds necessary to “believe that blacks refused to take responsibility for their own plight, that they were often leeches on liberal programs, and that they rejected the honourable values of other immigrant groups — hard work and individual betterment.”³ Therefore, such sentiment was used to explain the migration of white populaces from inner cities into the suburbs. Scholars have also suggested that white flight was prompted by the belief held by whites that they were not being politically represented relative to their black neighbours. This demonstrates the multitude of factors that prompted the migration of whites to the suburbs. There is a social element in which whites felt unsafe with their fear of “black crime and street upheaval,” as well as their general dismay with the effects of urban decay that began to set in following the migration of blacks into inner cities. The inability of policymakers to address the concerns of whites introduced a political element to the mix as well, as this demographic felt they were not receiving the political representation they deserved in contrast to their black counterparts.

We also observe a financial motive coming into play that is systemized through the government and real estate agents with their manipulation of the housing market. Such manipulation was made possible by capitalizing on the fears of white residents with threats of plummeting home values, which provided the justification necessary for whites to leave inner cities. The use of violence combined with the institution of residential covenants were used as methods to keep blacks confined to specific pockets within the

city. Zoning laws were used to prevent African Americans from accessing affordable housing. Real estate agents also employed such tactics by steering blacks away from certain neighbourhoods and towards others, a method known as “block busting.”⁴ Real estate agents were able to manipulate the real estate market by frightening white homeowners with threats of plummeting property values if blacks moved into the area — prompting homeowners to sell at a loss.

The government also had its own policies, which promoted and instituted residential segregation. Within the postwar period, 11 million houses were built and most were purchased with government-sponsored Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loans.⁵ These loans were granted to “ideal families” and neglected older people, single people, working class or lower income families, smaller families, and most importantly, African American families whom had the most trouble securing a loan to buy a suburban house.⁶ Whites were incentivized to flee to the suburbs as a result of government subsidies and received more liberal terms for loans; “down payments were smaller, monthly payments [were] lower, and repayment periods [were] longer.”⁷ In the event that black families were able to secure such loans, they were limited to buying homes in black neighbourhoods to maintain racial homogeneity. As a result, the federal government had effectively sanctioned racial discrimination. Whites unable or unwilling to move from their places of residence viewed black movement into their neighbourhood as the “moral equivalent of war.”⁸ Following the migration of whites to the suburbs, Detroit experienced a second wave of black migrants from the South. The black population doubled, from 149,000 to 300,000.⁹ By 1960, blacks composed 40 percent of Detroit’s population.

The effects of a reduced tax base resulting from white flight and residential segregation contributed to the city’s fall to urban decay. As Welch, Sigelman, Bledsoe, and Combs succinctly state in their book: “These patterns of residential segregation, which were largely products of the 20th century, greatly complicated almost every major issue of life in a major metropolitan area, whether it was the quality of the public schools, the provision of other public services, or the control of crime.”¹⁰

DEINDUSTRIALIZATION AND SUBSEQUENT URBAN DECAY

In her article, Thompson posits that Detroit’s downfall resided in the loss of “its white population, tax base, and political support.”¹¹ The shifting demographics resulted in a loss of revenue as jobs moved according to the migration of white populaces. Deindustrialization of the “Motor City” further aggravated unemployment rates within Detroit, which in turn contributed to the lack of political representation, as politicians whom previously catered to Detroit’s white populaces began serving clientelistic

interests rather than assuaging the effects of urban decay which had taken over the city. The lack of political representation within Detroit will be discussed in the next section — this section is reserved for discussion of de-industrialization and subsequent urban decay within postwar Detroit.

The shifting demographics and the loss of revenue, as spurred by the migration of whites within Detroit to their suburban counterparts, were the contributing factors to the decline of the auto industry and the city's fall to urban decay. At the height of the automotive boom, 2.5 million residents composed Detroit's population.¹² By the end of the 20th century, we can observe a disproportionate loss of residents — Detroit's population was now down to one million residents, which starkly contrasted the three million that resided in the surrounding suburbs.¹³ This influx of whites into the suburbs drastically changed the racial makeup of the city. Within the 1950s, blacks composed 20 percent of Detroit's population. By 1990, this figure almost quadrupled to 75 percent.¹⁴

Although many industrial cities experienced a loss of white residents following the migration of blacks during the postwar period, what makes Detroit particularly unique is its inability to recover following the recession that hit the nation in the post-1970 period.¹⁵ The Big Three — Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler — found themselves unable to propel American industry as they once had, as they were now being challenged by “Japanese imports, high labor costs, and an unpredictable national economy.”¹⁶ As outsourcing became a more attractive option in an effort to drive down production costs, capital previously held by the urban North was redirected to “low-wage and nonunion areas of the country and the world.”¹⁷ Sugrue identifies factors besides outsourcing that contributed to the deindustrialization of America's urban centres in the postwar period:

Beginning with the New Deal, the federal government channeled a disproportionate amount of resources to the South, culminating in the Sunbelt-dominated military-industrial complex of the Cold War era. Postwar highway construction, spurred by state and local expressway initiatives in the 1940s, and federally funded highway construction after 1956, made central industrial location less necessary by facilitating the distribution of goods over longer distances.¹⁸

Industrial cities within the urban North — such as Detroit, which was dominated by the automobile industry at the time — fell victim to “the recession of the 1970s and deindustrialization of the 1980s,” but few felt the long-term repercussions as the Motor City did. As a result of deindustrialization, Detroit's manufacturing sector experienced a “21 percent loss in industrial operations during the five-year period from 1977 to 1982”

and a decline in jobs “from 113,000 in 1980 to less than 70,000 in 1990, with the percentage of jobs in the city’s manufacturing sector falling from 28.6 percent to 20.5 percent.”^{19/20} Detroit also topped unemployment lists, with an unemployment rate of 16.1% in 1980 compared to the national rate of 7.1 percent, and 12.1 percent in 1990 compared to the national rate of 5.5 percent.²¹

The deindustrialization of Detroit had negative implications for all aspects of society within the inner city. Aside from the city’s harrowing employment rates, more than a fifth of Detroit’s citizens lived below the poverty line.²² Rich states in his book, “In the 1970s living off the street and by the help of relatives who were welfare recipients became a means of survival in an economy in which some people were no longer able to cope.”²³ Such issues failed to be resolved, as the migration of whites also meant that “the majority of the important service, professional, and leadership activities of the Detroit Metropolitan system [left] with them.”²⁴

CORPORATIST VERSUS CLIENTLISTIC GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Following the riots of 1967, there was an ongoing battle between black and white residents “to shape the social and political landscape of the city.”²⁵ Every aspect of life within the city presented an opportunity for contention — “neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces, courtrooms, and most important, vis-à-vis law enforcement.”²⁶ This struggle for control combined with the lack of policymaker response to the issue of racial polarization within the city contributed to Detroit’s fall. According to Thompson, the ultimate blow was dealt when “whites finally lost full political control of the city in a bitterly contested mayoral election.”²⁷ Six years after the riots, “Young was able to mobilize black voters and become mayor.”²⁸ The election of Coleman Young spurred yet another exodus of white Detroiters from the inner city to the suburbs. Along with them went the “urban tax base, commercial enterprises, and manufacturing base.”²⁹

Young, Detroit’s first black mayor, was a revered public figure due to his eclectic style. He was concerned mainly with the Detroit renaissance agenda and was “prepared to announce an ideological truce and solicit the local economic elite’s assistance in rebuilding the city.”³⁰ Despite his likeability among Detroit’s black citizens, Young was unable to revive the city’s economy like other urban centres in the North, which had also experienced economic stagnation following the recession of the 1970s and the deindustrialization of the 1980s, due to his subservience to business interests. According to the clientelistic structure of governance, this subservience is inevitable as “alliances such as that between the mayor and business community always facilitate the agenda of the businessman at the expense of the masses.”³¹ Before we continue, it is necessary that we provide a succinct

definition of the two urban governing structures being discussed in this paper. According to DiGaetano and Lawless:

Clientelistic structures of governance implicate personalized... reciprocal, and hierarchical relations among politicians and clients (Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984). The governing logic is one of pragmatic exchange among political leaders and constituents... [t]he party boss brokered governing relations by granting favors to constituents through the dispensation of political patronage. Corporatist structures, in turn, institutionalize strategic rather than pragmatic modes of cooperation between governmental and nongovernmental elites such as business or community leaders (Schmitter 1977, 1981; Birch 1993).³²

Young initially employed a corporatist governance structure in which he forged relations with Detroit's white business leaders to achieve the goals set out in the city's pro-growth policy agenda. Such relations were institutionalized through the creation of public development corporations such as the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, the Downtown Development Authority, and the Economic Development Corporation.³³ This model of governance was soon replaced by clientelism, as the deindustrialization of the auto industry combined with federal cutbacks to urban aid paved the way for private interests to thrive. Although Young was working on what was presented as a pro-growth agenda with the city's white economic elite, the interests of his constituents were placed on the backburner.

However, it comes as no surprise that clientelism is the governance structure being employed in cities like Detroit where there is competition with "other cities who also desire commercial and industrial development. [Thus,] the most entrepreneurial city, the one that makes the best offers, usually wins the economic prize."³⁴ Young, whose campaigns were financed by firms that conducted business with the city, and developers whose projects received public subsidies, was more interested in holding on to power and keeping business within the city than Detroit's economic and social decline. This is evident through his advocacy for the construction of the city's first casino and the Henry Ford II Renaissance Center. Such initiatives seemed to be designed to repel white, middle class voters. Young's tax policy seemed to target everyone but the urban centre's poor, black residents. He hiked the commuter tax from 0.5 percent to 1.5 percent and raised income tax rates from two percent to three percent despite previously held knowledge of its "adverse migration effects."³⁵ As he cut back on public service expenditures white Detroiters valued to redirect spending on his supposedly "progrowth" agenda — such as the police department, the fire department, and trash collection — Young effectively

gave those contributing to the city's tax base yet another reason to flee to the suburbs.³⁶ Consequently, Young allowed his city to deteriorate as there remained no expenditure for the improvement of existing, or the creation of new, public goods and services. This is demonstrated through the following quote from Glaeser and Shleifer's literature on the "Curley Effect:"

[Detroit's] population fell from 1.51 million in 1970 to 1.03 million in 1990, a 32% decline. The unemployment rate as a percentage of the civilian labor force rose from 10.3% in 1969 to 20.6% in 1990. The percentage of households living below the poverty line rose from 18.6% to 29.8%. Nearly all the victims of this unemployment and poverty were Young's black supporters. Over Young's 20 years, surely in part due to his policies, Detroit became an overwhelmingly black city mired in poverty and social problems.³⁷

Therefore, in his inability to retain the city's residents with money and his lack of responsiveness to inner city residents, Young created an issue of inequality in political representation as he sought to serve clientelistic, business agendas rather than a pro-growth agenda that would benefit Detroit.

Towards the end of his term, he lost favor with the corporate elite, which resulted in a loss of productivity in Detroit's pro-growth agenda. Competing interests within Detroit resulted in an inequality in political representation. This lack of political representation meant the needs of inner cities residents were being neglected in favor of business interests, which would supposedly serve to stimulate the city's economy. This, however, was not the case as the city filed for bankruptcy in July of 2013.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

White flight as triggered by the influx of blacks from the South and their loss to newcomers in their struggle for social and political control of the city, combined with the deindustrialization of Detroit and Young's clientelistic governance structure, ultimately led to the city's downfall and created an issue of inequality in political representation. White flight is a determinant of the wellbeing of an urban centre, as white populaces are generally considered to be the primary contributors to the city's tax base. The unwillingness of white Detroiters to remain within the city as blacks moved in represents a serious issue, as it affects the availability of necessary public goods and services. The riots of the 1960s combined with the recession of the 1970s and the deindustrialization of the auto industry in the 1980s further contributed to Detroit's loss of their white population and subsequent urban decay. As unemployment rates began to peak during this period, white Detroiters migrated outwards into the suburbs as a result

of their negative perceptions regarding black Detroiters. This second exodus further aggravated growing symptoms of urban decay within the city. Their migration also indicated their dissatisfaction with the political representation they received during this time period. The election of Coleman Young, Detroit's first black mayor, was hailed as a monumental victory by black Detroiters. Many believed his election presented an opportunity for growth within the city. However, despite his ability to win over Detroit's black citizens, he was unable to achieve much in regards to bettering their overall condition. His policies seemed to be designed to give the remaining white Detroiters the push necessary to leave the city — which they successfully did. Although he stood by a progrowth agenda, Young's clientelistic structure of urban governance benefited his business partners more than his constituents. His failure to assuage the effects of urban decay within Detroit and better the condition of inner city residents represents an issue of inequality in political representation that continues to exist to this day.

ENDNOTES

¹ Charles Jago and Bertrand M. Roehner. "White Flight or Flight from Poverty?" *Journal of Economic Interaction and Coordination* (2006): 86.

² Susan Welch et al., *Race and Place: Race Relations in an American City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 22.

³ H.A. Thompson, "Rethinking the Politics of White Flight in the Postwar City: Detroit, 1945-1980," *Journal of Urban History* (1999): 165.

⁴ Welch et al., *Race and Place*, 23.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid, 26.

⁹ Ibid, 23.

¹⁰ Ibid, 20.

¹¹ Thompson, "Rethinking the Politics of White Flight in the Postwar City," 164.

¹² Welch et al., *Race and Place*, 19.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Thompson, "Rethinking the Politics of White Flight in the Postwar City," 164.

¹⁶ Wilbur C. Rich, *Coleman Young and Detroit Politics: From Social Activist to Power Broker* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 128.

¹⁷ Thompson, "Rethinking the Politics of White Flight in the Postwar City," 164.

¹⁸ Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality*

in Postwar Detroit: With a New Preface by the Author (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 127.

¹⁹ Rich, *Coleman Young and Detroit Politics*, 129.

²⁰ Alan DiGaetano and Paul Lawless, "Urban Governance and Industrial Decline: Governing Structures and Policy Agendas in Birmingham and Sheffield, England, and Detroit, Michigan, 1980-1997," *Urban Affairs Review* (1999): 551.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Thompson, "Rethinking the Politics of White Flight in the Postwar City," 163.

²³ Rich, *Coleman Young and Detroit Politics*, 136.

²⁴ Thompson, "Rethinking the Politics of White Flight in the Postwar City," 163.

²⁵ Ibid, 168.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ E.L. Glaeser and Andrei Schleifer, "The Curley Effect: The Economics Of Shaping The Electorate," *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 21 (2005): 12.

²⁹ Thompson, "Rethinking the Politics of White Flight in the Postwar City," 168.

³⁰ Rich, *Coleman Young and Detroit Politics*, 139.

³¹ Ibid.

³² DiGaetano and Lawless, "Urban Governance and Industrial Decline," 548.

³³ Ibid, 559.

³⁴ Rich, *Coleman Young and Detroit Politics*, 142.

³⁵ Glaeser and Schleifer, "The Curley Effect," 13.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

IMAGE SOURCED FROM:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/picturegalleries/worldnews/10191002/Detroit-in-pictures-the-urban-decay-of-Motor-City-as-it-files-for-bankruptcy.html>

A man walks along a graffitied street in Detroit — the biggest U.S. city ever — to file for bankruptcy.

