

T.C.
KADİR HAS ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
AMERİKAN KÜLTÜRÜ VE EDEBİYAT ANABİLİM DALI

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

**SİYAH VE BEYAZ, SİLAH VE KORKU:
ABD'DE BİREYSEL SİLAHLANMA**

Danışman:
Dr. Mary Lou O'Neil, Öğr. Gör. Mel Kenne

Hazırlayan:
Pınar Uygun

İstanbul-2006

T.C.
KADIR HAS UNIVERSITY
THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN CULTURE AND LITERATURE

MA Thesis

**BLACK AND WHITE, GUNS AND FEAR:
GUN OWNERSHIP IN THE U.S.A.**

Advisor

Dr. Mary Lou O'Neil, Lecturer Mel Kenne

**Prepared by
Pınar Uygun**

Istanbul, 2006

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	I
ABSTRACT (TURKISH).....	II
ABSTRACT.....	III
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1. FEAR AND THE “OTHERING” PROCESS IN THE FRONTIER ERA.....	4
2. CONSTRUCTING THE “OTHER” THROUGH VIOLENCE.....	18
2.1. Violence, Stereotypes and Gun Control Laws.....	19
2.2. Use of Guns to Maintain the Status Quo	45
3. REPRESENTATIONS OF AFRICAN AMERICANS.....	50
3.1. Literature.....	52
3.2. Movies.....	55
3.3. News.....	67
3.4. Other Representations.....	71
CONCLUSION.....	76
WORKS CITED	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Mel Kenne for his help from the beginning until the end of my writing of this thesis. I would also like to thank to Professor Mary Lou O’Neil and Professor Bronwyn Mills for all their support. I am grateful to Ayşe Çavdar for her endless support. I thank my parents for helping me with my education at KHU-ACL.

ABSTRACT (TURKISH)

Silah sahibi birçok ABD vatandaşı, silahlarını kendilerini korumak amacıyla bulduklarını söylüyorlar. İstatistikler ise ABD’de insanların silahlarını kendilerini koruma amacından daha çok intihar olaylarında ve kasıtsız atışlarda kullandıklarını gösteriyor. Buna rağmen yine de ABD’de kendini koruma duygusunun tahrikiyle yoğun bir saplantıya dönüşen bireysel silahlanmanın temel nedeni, ABD vatandaşlarının paranoyası ve korkusudur denilebilir. Bu paranoya ve korkunun kökleri ABD’nin kuruluş döneminde, vahşetin ülkeyi keşfeden beyazların aktivitelerinde önemli bir rol oynadığı günlere uzanıyor. Afrika kökenli ABD’liler sürgün (ailesinden ayırmak), kırbaçlama, dayak, tecavüz, sakatlama ve hatta bir organı kesmeyi içeren uygulamalara tabi tutuluyorlardı. Bu sert koşullar sayesinde kölelik düzeninin sürekliliği sağlanıyordu. Bazı bölgelerdeki koloni yönetimleri köleliğin devam etmesini desteklemek amacıyla kolonistlere silah dağıtmayı düşünürken, kölelerin ve hatta özgür Afrika kökenli ABD’lilerin hayatlarını kontrol etmek amacıyla “kölelik kuralları” adında yasalar yürürlüğe sokuluyordu.

Çalışmamın birinci bölümünde ABD’nin kuruluş döneminde Afrika kökenli ABD’lilere karşı sürdürülen uygulamalara, bazı eyaletlerin yasalarına değindim. İkinci bölümde bu şartlarda silahların beyaz ABD’liler için önemini, Afrika kökenli ABD’lileri silahsızlandırma ve onları beyaz egemenliğine karşı koyma yollarından mahrum etme amacıyla yürürlüğe giren yasaları inceleyerek tanımladım. İkinci bölümde 18. yüzyılın ikinci yarısında Ku Klux Klan ve diğer ırkçı örgütlerin beyaz ırkın üstünlüğünü korumak amacıyla Afrika kökenli ABD’lileri korkuttuklarına, onlara karşı silahlı saldırılarda bulduklarına değinerek, yeniden yapılandırma döneminde (*Reconstruction*) Afrika kökenli ABD’lilerin kalıtsal olarak vahşi, hayvani ve yıkıcı insanlar olduklarını, cezayı ve ölümü hakettiklerini ima eden belirli ırkçı stereotiplerin kurgulandığını anlattım. Üçüncü bölümde medya tarafından çizilen bir çok stereotipik davranışın aslında kölelik sisteminin zenciler üzerinde bıraktığı uzun süreli olumsuz etkiler yüzünden kaynaklandığını ama medyanın bunun belirtmeyerek beyaz üstünlüğünü onayladığını vurguladım. Ayrıca günümüz medyasındaki ırkçı stereotipleri inceleyerek zencilere giydirilen olumsuz imajın beyazlarda bireysel silahlanma ile sonuçlanan bir paranoyaya neden olduğunu belirtmeye çalıştım.

ABSTRACT

Most of the gun owners in the U.S. claim they possess guns for self protection. However statistics show that in the U.S. guns are more likely to be used in a suicide or unintentional shooting than in self-defense. Yet, still mostly, the reason for gun ownership in the U.S. is the U.S. citizens' paranoia and fear which results in excessive obsession with the thought of self-protection. The roots of U.S. citizens' paranoia and fear lies in the frontier era when violence played an important role in colonists' life and actions. During the frontier era a great deal of violence which included family separations, whippings, beatings, rapes, mutilation and even amputations, strict laws and harsh punishments were applied especially to African Americans to ensure the continuation of the slavery system. While some regions' colonial governments were willing to distribute guns in support of slavery, there were laws to control slaves and even free African Americans that were named "slave codes."

In Chapter I, I mentioned some states' laws to exemplify the treatment of African Americans and land owners' anxiety during the period. In Chapter II, I indicated the importance of guns for white Americans as I explained that this can be observed in the laws that were applied to disarm African Americans and deprive African Americans of the means of resisting the white domination. After the second half of 18th century the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacy organizations used guns, tortured and terrorized African American people to maintain white supremacy. Following these events, especially in the Reconstruction period, certain racist stereotypes were constructed which define African Americans as innately savage, animalistic and destructive people who deserve punishment and death. In chapter III, I pointed out that most of the stereotypical behavior of black people that media constructed is in fact the outcomings of destructive, long-term effects of slavery on African American people but the media ignores this reality, simplifies black violence and it simply affirms white supremacy. In Chapter III, I also examined these racist stereotypes in the contemporary media and explained that the negative images of black people result in additional fear among whites. I indicated that this fear has been responsible for a high level of access to guns.

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, in 1994, 44 million Americans owned 192 million firearms, 65 million of which were handguns. According to the National Survey on Private Ownership and Use of Firearms, when asked, handgun owners usually gave self-protection as their primary motive for owning guns, while long-gun owners mentioned recreation, hunting or target shooting. In 1994, of about 14 million adults (approximately one-third of gun owners) carried a firearm in their vehicles or on their person for protection. Other findings support the conclusion that handguns are much more likely than long guns to be kept unlocked and ready for use in the home and to be carried in public, and they are much less likely to be used in sporting activities¹. In *Guns in America* it is noted most gun owners state they possess guns for self protection; however, only a small fraction of adults used guns defensively in 1994. Of 1,356 accidental deaths by gunshot in 1994, 185 involved children 14 years old and younger. Guns were also the means of destruction in 19,590 suicides, 210 involving children 14 or younger². According to research conducted by the American Medical Association in 2001, between 1994 and 1999 there were violent events in 220 schools resulting in 253 deaths, and 74.5% of these involved firearms. Handguns caused almost 60% of these deaths³. In the “Epidemiological Basis for the Prevention of Firearm Injuries,” it is stated that while handguns account for only one-third of all firearms owned in the United States, they account for more than two-thirds of all firearm-related deaths each year. A gun kept in the home is 22 times more likely to be used in a suicide or unintentional shooting than in self-defense⁴. Still, gun owners in the U.S. claim that they get guns for self protection. In Michael Moore’s *Bowling for Columbine* a member of the Michigan Militia states:

I felt it was important to be able to protect myself with the best means possible. And one of those means is having a gun. When a criminal breaks into your house, who’s the first person you’re

¹ Guns in America: National Survey on Private Ownership and Use of Firearms. National Institute of Justice Research in Brief. Dir. Jeremy Travis. <<http://www.ncjrs.gov>>

² Guns in America A.G.E.

³ Statistics: Gun Violence in Our Communities. National Education Association Health Information Network. <<http://www.neahin.org/programs/schoolsafety>>

⁴ Statistics, Facts & Quotes. Illinois Council against Handgun Violence. <<http://www.ichv.org/Statistics.htm>>

gonna call? Most people will call the police because they have guns. Cut out the middleman. Take care of your own family yourself. If you're not going to protect your family, who is?

As Michael Moore interviews various people about gun possession in the U.S., he concludes that the paranoia that is permanently fed by the media is at the root of American citizens' mania to own guns. In *Bowling for Columbine* he states that the origin of this paranoia lies in the early frontier period when violence was essential to maintain the institution of slavery.

In *Violence is the Engine of U.S. History* Ira M. Leonard tells that violence has always been central to American society, and America has fought numerous wars: the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, Korea, and the wars in Vietnam and Iraq. According to Leonard as wars and battles have played an important role in the evolution of the United States, American patriotism has been expressed in military and even militaristic terms⁵. As a result of this, guns became symbols of American freedom, progress and superior character. The media often reinforces the notion that weapons of violence and guns are solutions to problems, and guns are an evident part of a large number of Americans' contemporary lives. In 1968, executive vice president of the NRA, Franklin Orth stated, "There is a very special relationship between a man and his gun – an atavistic relation with its deep roots in prehistory, when the primitive man's personal weapon, so often his only effective defense and food provider, was nearly as precious to him as his own limbs⁶". In *Violence is the Engine of U.S. History* Ira M. Leonard indicates that historians seem to agree that the roots of the American people's obsession with violence lie in the slavery period, between 1619 and 1865, when the constant use of brute force and violence against the African Americans was naturalized and considered to be essential to maintain slavery. During this period, violence applied to African American slaves included family separations, whippings, beatings, rapes, mutilation and even amputations⁷. This institutionalization of racial violence was not an incidental aspect of American society but a key feature of the New World's economy and the source of the wealth and

⁵ LEONARD, Ira M. Violence is the Engine of U.S. History. The Black Commentator. <<http://www.blackcommentator.com>>

⁶ qtd. in BELLESILES, Michael A. Exploding the Myth of an Armed America. The Chronicle of Higher Education. <<http://chronicle.com>>

⁷ LEONARD, Ira M. A.G.E.

power of the dominant class in society. In respect of this I found it necessary to explain U.S. citizens' obsession with guns and protection by exploring the desires of the colonists and their frontier conditions, as well as the violence that was applied to African Americans during the slavery era.

By expanding Michael Moore's thesis about gun ownership in the U.S., this paper explores the place of guns in American history and relates Moore's thesis to the idea that the fear of poverty and wilderness that poor colonists had in the frontier era was directed toward African Americans – especially during the Reconstruction period. It examines more deeply the idea that white people's fear of African Americans has served as the main reason for the American people's obsession with guns. Although whites' fear of the "other" has been common throughout American history, in this paper I have tried particularly to explore whites' fear of African American people and to trace the interplay between fear and violence by examining African American representations in books, movies, news and other media.

1. FEAR AND THE “OTHERING” PROCESS IN THE FRONTIER ERA

The frontier era was the significant period of American history in which the characteristics of American identity were defined. In *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* this period is described as a process of Americanization. According to Frederick Jackson Turner, the hard conditions of the New World, with its wilderness and the Indian wars, shaped the colonists and formed the essential characteristics of American nationality and citizenship⁸. As most of the immigrants were attracted by the cheap lands of the frontier, expansionism and agriculture were the central events in the frontier era. The fact that agriculture necessitated labor was the main reason for the importation of African Americans into colonies. To ensure the continuation of the slavery system that imposed on to African Americans strict laws and harsh punishments were applied and the beast black stereotype was created. The vicious circle formed by the black beast stereotype accompanied the rise of anxiety among the white population. In the early colonial era lands were seen as the major indicators of wealth. As Turner pointed out in 1891 the result of this was expansion which gave strength to American nationalism and assisted the evolution of American political institutions. In *Slavery Comes to Early Maryland: A Brief Look* David Taft Terry explains that originally, most Europeans came into the New World in search of wealth. The poor, middle class and even wealthy Europeans visioned New World as an opportunity to begin a new life⁹. In *African Americans in the Colonial Era* Donald R. Wright tells that most of the colonists were hoping that they would find gold. However in the lands that didn't hold gold or silver, exporting and finally agriculture, especially tobacco planting became an accepted way to get rich¹⁰. In this way while the advance of the frontier was a growth of independence and the creation of American identity, it was also an individual success and necessity for the farmers who expanded by reproducing themselves in subcolonial settlements, and pushed through the wilderness especially whenever the settled areas became too crowded with

⁸ FARAGHER, John Mack. Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner. “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” and Other Essays s:33 Yale University Press, 1998.

⁹ TERRY, David Taft. Slavery Comes to Maryland: A Brief Look s:2. Exploring Maryland's Roots: Slavery in Early Maryland. <<http://mdroots.thinkport.org>>

¹⁰ WRIGHT, Donald R. African Americans in the Colonial Era s:8 Harlan Davidson Inc., 1990.

immigrants and growing families demanded more lands¹¹. In *Race and Economics* Thomas Sowell points out that exhaustion of soil was another reason for the expansion in colonial America. According to Sowell in the plantations where slaves did the field work agriculture was based on one-crop alone, as a diversified farming required a knowledge of farming techniques, versatility, care and initiative. This repeated planting of one crop tended to destroy the fertility of the soil. So as vast areas of land were exhausted, colonists moved on to other land. Under these conditions constant supply of fresh soils became indispensable¹².

As the circumstances conditioned a continually advancing frontier line the colonists expanded into the wilderness and confronted Indians. During the wars colonists fought against Indians immigrants discovered that as a civilized people they became violent human beings in the wilderness. They had to own guns to expand and defend themselves and started to believe that they could never be safe, free individuals without guns. In this period as colonists were away from British civilization and were experiencing a sense of freedom they hadn't known before, they were highly individualistic and economic success, even of criminal type, became the only measure of personal value. Colonists, themselves were quite disturbed by the absence of legal authority and violent ways. According to Ronald Takaki, in the wilderness the colonists feared the possibility of losing self-control over their passions, so they tried to require the boundaries of control and delineate the border between savagery and civilization by creating a division based on race¹³.

As well as colonists' psychological mechanisms, economic incentives of the time drove white men to invent the race concept and represent African Americans as inferior, savage and wild. In *American Slavery* Kolchin tells that in the New World most of the migrants hoped to find gold and become wealthy without having to work. However, soon, migrants realized their survival depended on working the land so plantations and agriculture were important for the colonists' survival. Tobacco planting in the upper South and rice planting in the lower South became especially profitable businesses¹⁴. However cultivating these crops required labor and the

¹¹ FARAGHER, John Mack A.G.E. s:46

¹² SOWELL, Thomas. *Race and Economics* s:6 David McKay Company Inc., 1975.

¹³ TAKAKI, Ronald. *A Different Mirror* s:61 Little, Brown & Co. Boston, 1993.

¹⁴ KOLCHIN, Peter. *American Slavery 1619 – 1877* s:6 New York, Hill and Wang, 1993.

amount of tobacco or rice one could grow depended on the number of laborers one could command. In these conditions in order to supply the labor need before the importation of Africans, colonists experimented with two other sources of unfree labor – Indians and Europeans. Kolchin tells that indeed there were not enough Indians in the colonies to fill the settlers' labor needs; they were unaccustomed to performing agricultural labor and most likely to escape by using their familiarity with the terrain. So European laborers formed the basis of the seventeenth-century work force. Because of the severe economic dislocations in England in the first half of the seventeenth century most of the English servants came voluntarily to the colonies, and indentured servitude was transformed into an institution as Europeans who were unable to afford passage but desiring to come to America sold themselves into temporary slavery in exchange for transportation¹⁵. Kolchin says that beginning in the 1680s, however, colonists turned away from indentured servants and imported Africans to supply labor. Because servants were held only temporarily and then freed, the colonial population which was rapidly growing required an equal increase in the demand for labor. Moreover after 1680s white immigration into the colonies declined as employment opportunities improved in England. In the late seventeenth century, instead of European laborers there was an increase in the availability of Africans, and colonists found their supply of Africans increased as the British dominated the African slave trade in 1670s¹⁶.

In *American Slavery American Freedom* Edmund S. Morgan states that between 1662 and 1670 some 59,900 slaves were put aboard English and colonial vessels in Africa and over the period from 1662 to 1807 about 3.4 million slaves were carried different parts of the British empire¹⁷. According to Kolchin most of these slaves came from the coastal region of West Africa and a much smaller number of slaves came from the Congo/Angola region farther South¹⁸. According to Melvin Sylvester the English slavers brought cargoes of rum, brandy, glass, cloths, beads, guns and other goods to these regions and bargained with African traders for their tribal captives while some slavers just entered the shores and kidnapped the natives to

¹⁵ KOLCHIN, Peter A.G.E. s:8

¹⁶ KOLCHIN, Peter A.G.E. s:12

¹⁷ MORGAN, Edmund S. *American Slavery American Freedom* s:29 W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1975.

¹⁸ KOLCHIN, Peter. A.G.E. s:19

sell them to the colonists¹⁹. So Africans were captives and slavery was involuntary as Africans who were brought in the New World as captives were degraded to slave status by force.

Slavery enhanced the New World's capacity for maximum production as the masters could make slaves work much harder than servants. The masters could also put slave women to work in the fields while it wasn't usual to employ servant women. Besides, slave women, while employed in the plantations, could still raise children, and these children would become the property of the master, as slaves' status was to be inherited by their children²⁰. However, the labor obtained in the slavery system depended on surveillance of the work. Usually poor white people were charged as overseers and the slave system on plantations was carried on by the policies and practices of them. Slaves under the overseer's supervision were overworked and badly treated on plantations as high current production meant that the overseer received not only a larger current income, but also a reputation for "demonstrable" results which would enable him to request a larger salary from future employers. Under these conditions, slaves were often frustrated and passively resisted their treatment from the overseers. With greater or lesser frequency, running away, suicides and various acts of sabotage - of the work, of the slave-owner's property or even the slave's own person - were the common responses²¹. As some slaves fought against their mistreatment they constituted a potential danger to the system and to the safety of the slaveowners. So the security of the slave owners and the system depended on not only severe and through going repression and harsh punishments, but also psychological preventive measures such as keeping the slaves dependent and illiterate. In order to make slaves regard their conditions as inevitable or even "natural" severe limitations were placed on the degree of African Americans knowledge. It was made a crime to teach the slaves to read and write, and the African American population was kept in ignorance²². Meanwhile white slaveowners insistently described African American slaves as beasts to justify their position and rationalize the violence taking place in the slavery system. However the description of

¹⁹ SYLVESTER, Melvin R. *Slave Trade. The African American: A Journey from Slavery to Freedom.* B. Davis

Schwartz Memorial Library. Long Island University. <<http://www.liu.edu>>

²⁰ MORGAN, Edmund S. *A.G.E.* s:310

²¹ SOWELL, Thomas *A.G.E.* s:13

²² SOWELL, Thomas *A.G.E.* s:9

Africans as beasts and other negative perceptions of Africans were not just the consequences of the slavery system alone. In *White Over Black* Winthrop D. Jordan suggests that for the colonists Africans' heathenism and appearances were the prior reasons for Africans' debasement. What's more these caused the emergence of slavery based on race which eventually meant complete degradation of Africans²³. According to Jordan English settlers mostly contrasted themselves with Africans with the term Christian and in the sixteenth century religion and nationality, the qualities of being English and Christian, became inseparably blended²⁴. Thus for the colonists Africans' ignorance of Christian religion and their heathenism was a sign of savagery. Africans' skin color, blackness was another indication of savagery for the colonists. In *Slavery and Servitude in North America* Kenneth Morgan says that blackness had negative connotations for the British and Europeans in the early seventeenth century. Therefore, while Africans were feared for their lust and savagery, blackness suggested connections with the devil. What's more, Africans were also regarded as distinct from English people because of their gestures, languages, and behavior²⁵.

In *White Over Black* Jordan shows slavery was written into statute law in 1660²⁶. He indicates that "from the first, however, there were scattered signs that Negroes were regarded as different from English people not merely in their status as slaves²⁷". Yet Jordan highlights the effect of slavery on African people as he explains that slavery was a complete loss of liberty and to Englishmen it meant basically the loss of humanity. So for the colonists "to treat a man as a slave was to treat him as a beast²⁸". Jordan adds that complete degradation of Africans improved white servants' condition and by the early 1660s white servants were considering themselves quite different from African American slaves and found slavery inapplicable to themselves²⁹.

²³ JORDAN, Winthrop D. *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550-1812* s:97 The University of North Carolina Press, 1968.

²⁴ JORDAN, Winthrop D. *A.G.E.* s:94

²⁵ MORGAN, Kenneth. *Slavery and Servitude in North America, 1607-1800* s:32 Edinburgh University Press, 2000.

²⁶ JORDAN, Winthrop D. *A.G.E.* s:73

²⁷ JORDAN, Winthrop D. *A.G. E.* s:71

²⁸ JORDAN, Winthrop D. *A.G. E.* s:54

²⁹ JORDAN, Winthrop D. *A.G.E.* s:80

According to Ronald Takaki, in Virginia Bacon's rebel, an event that took place in 1675, played an important role in the determination of African Americans' place in the status quo³⁰. In *A Different Mirror* Takaki says that in the early frontier era most of the colonists who migrated to Virginia were indentured servants, while a many of them were from the middle class and just a few of them were from the aristocracy. Traveling to America was an expensive undertaking. Some colonists sold their possessions to move, while the very poor folk indentured themselves to serve in the colonies. Once the servants landed in America, they planned to become landowners and begin a new life. But first they had to complete their period of indenture. Meanwhile, the colonists who were from the wealthy elite class already possessed the best lands along the rivers and dominated the Virginia Assembly. They began to pass laws to advance and protect their class interests. Thus, the legislature raised the land taxes, minimized competition for lands by increasing the length of service for white runaways, and extended the time of indentured servitude for whites. In this way white laborers were kept in servitude as long as possible, and their dream of becoming landowners was deferred. White servants became frustrated and angry and the Virginia Legislature was worried that this discontented class of indentured servants, slaves, and landless men would be a threat to social order. Especially white servants were considered to be more dangerous, because ownership of guns was widespread among them and they were required by law to have a gun in order to defend the colony, to fight with Indians³¹. According to Takaki in 1675 a friend of Governor William Berkeley, Nathaniel Bacon, proposed to form an army made up of landless whites. This army was to protect settlers against Indians. Berkeley distrusted this lower class of whites and thought organizing them for military service would be inappropriate. He feared that they might revolt and join the enemy. Just like Berkeley, Bacon was aware of the danger that these organized armed men would rebel. But still, he thought it would be an efficient act to redirect landless whites' anger away from the white elite to the Indians. In this way lower class white men would focus on Indians and forget about the legislature's high taxes. Bacon formed the army and killed off Indian tribes, such as the Susquehannas and the friendly Occaneeches. As Berkeley became worried about these armed white men, he declared Bacon a rebel. So, Bacon marched to Jamestown with five hundred armed men. This rebellion that

³⁰ TAKAKI, Ronald A.G.E. s:67

³¹ TAKAKI, Ronald A.G.E. s:62-63

was barely suppressed showed the elite landholders that they couldn't control low class whites any longer and that the social order would always be in danger as long as they had to depend on white labor³². Takaki says that after this rebellion large landowners thought to reorganize society on the basis of class and race. Instead of opening economic opportunities to white workers - for this would undermine their political hegemony - landowners imported and bought more slaves and in this way decreased the proportion of white indentured servants. The landowners' aim was to have slaves whom they could control. Therefore they denied African American slaves the right to bear arms because of their race³³.

After the rebellion the Virginia elite developed "a racially subordinated labor force³⁴". African Americans were located below all the whites in the status quo regardless of their class. After this complete degradation of African American people white landowners' fear was directed to African American slaves. According to Takaki actually "the Virginia elite deliberately pitted white laborers and black slaves against each other." In 1680 the legislature permitted whites to abuse African Americans physically and allowed thirty lashes on the bare back "if any negro or other slave shall presume to lift up his hand in opposition against any Christian." While landless whites were charged as militia patrollers and helped the planters to put down slave revolts, various laws were enacted to control African American slaves³⁵. In 1680 an act entitled "Preventing Negro Insurrections" passed and ordered that "It shall not be lawful for any negro or other slave to carry or arm himself with any club, staff, gun, sword or any other weapon³⁶". In 1705 the Virginia council ruled that "all horses, cattle, and hogs, now belonging, or that hereafter shall belong to any slave, or of any slaves mark...shall be seized and sold by the churchwardens of the parish...and the profit thereof applied to the use of the poor³⁷". These laws were not only the signs of the process of African American people's complete degradation. The landowners feared African American slaves might rise in rebellion, and they demanded absolute control over the African American slaves so that they could deprive of African Americans from any means of resisting the established order. Winthrop D. Jordan

³² TAKAKI, Ronald A.G.E. s:63-64

³³ TAKAKI, Ronald A.G.E. s:65

³⁴ TAKAKI, Ronald A.G.E. s:66

³⁵ TAKAKI, Ronald A.G.E. s:67

³⁶ TAKAKI, Ronald A.G.E. s:66

³⁷ qtd. in TAKAKI, Ronald A.G.E. s:67

explains whites' fear of slave insurrections: "...In many areas it was a gnawing, gut-wringing fear, intermittently heightened by undeniable instances of servile discontent³⁸". Jordan tells that planters knew that the slave laws were basically applied to prevent and deter slave insurrections, and he points out the proclamation of Virginia governor in 1730 ordering that "all persons repairing to their respective churches or chappells on Sundays or holy days do carry with them their arms to prevent any surprize thereof in their absence when the slaves are most at liberty and have greatest opportunity³⁹".

As in Virginia, in most of the states there were laws called "slave codes" to control African American population. In 1721 the legislatures of Charleston prompted the organization "Negro Watch" and instructed the colonial militia to confine African Americans found on the street after 9:00 pm. The colonial militia was also instructed to stop African Americans on sight and shoot anyone who didn't obey their order⁴⁰.

When in the South, where agriculture was carried on great plantations, there were strict laws that restricted African Americans' rights and harsh punishments for the ones who didn't obey these laws, according to Donald R. Wright, in the middle colonies plantations never formed, African Americans were in small numbers and control of slaves was less of a problem than it was in the southern colonies⁴¹. In *African Americans in the Colonial Era* Wright explains that the Middle colonies never concentrated on the production of a major staple but instead became efficient at a variety of tasks like grain and livestock farming, carrying trade, whaling and fishing⁴². Yet African Americans made up as much as the half the work force in agriculturally productive areas of Connecticut, Long Island and the lower Hudson River valley. Ironworking in Pennsylvania and tanning in New York relied heavily on slave labor.⁴³ So African American people's existence was still seen as a threat to white society and legislatures found it essential to control African Americans. They originated slave codes and applied severe punishments to prevent uprisings. New

³⁸ JORDAN, Winthrop D. A.E.G. s:111

³⁹ qtd. in JORDAN, Winthrop D. A.E.G. s:111

⁴⁰ WRIGHT, Donald R. A.G.E. s:68

⁴¹ WRIGHT, Donald R. A.G.E. s:74

⁴² WRIGHT, Donald R. A.G.E. s:71

⁴³ WRIGHT, Donald R. A.G.E. s:74

York had slave conspiracy panics in 1712 and 1741. In 1741 fifty-four African American were arrested and thirty-one African Americans were executed⁴⁴.

In *Race and Economics* Thomas Sowell tells that when the cotton gin was invented in 1793, cotton production became profitable enough to promote the growth of great plantations, and this increased the value of slaves in the South as the land became a “cotton kingdom⁴⁵”. According to Sowell, in the South slavery involved the greatest subjugation, isolation and dependence of the slave. Sowell tells that in regions like South, where economic conditions most greatly promoted the working of slaves like animals, the ideology that blacks were in fact bestial and subhuman was strongest, and a great deal of violence was used on plantations to control and discipline the slaves’ behaviour⁴⁶. The beast stereotype caused an additional fear among the whites landowners. According to Takaki, in the South society was hysterically afraid of a “black giddy multitude.” After the 1822 Denmark Vesey slave conspiracy in Charleston, a South Carolina slaveholder warned that African American slaves “were barbarians who would, if they could, become the destroyers of our race.” A Louisiana slaveholder defined the context as “when there was not a single planter who had a calm night’s rest” and when landowners went to bed with guns at their sides⁴⁷. Lynchings and other kinds of violence were perceived as necessary events for social control. Soon violence became an obsession. Meanwhile as African Americans were located in the lowest places of the status quo, poor whites exclusively felt that they had to distinguish themselves from “the other” who was identified as black, because they were mostly afraid of falling into the African Americans’ position. This made poor whites much more aggressive and compulsively addicted to violence. Unable to come to terms with their own rage and violently afraid of their own aggression, mostly they projected their impulse to persecute and tyrannize onto blacks. In *Black Reconstruction* Du Bois points out this relationship between the economy - the social structure of the New World - and the construction of race, which eventually meant the formation of racist stereotypes.

⁴⁴ WRIGHT, Donald R. A.G.E. s:75

⁴⁵ SOWELL, Thomas A.G.E. s:21

⁴⁶ SOWELL, Thomas A.G.E. s:20-23

⁴⁷ TAKAKI, Ronald A.G.E. s:114

The race element was emphasized in order that property-holders could get support of the majority of white laborers and make it more possible to exploit Negro labor. But the race philosophy came as a new and terrible thing to make labor unity or labor class-consciousness impossible. So long as the Southern white laborers could be induced to prefer poverty to equality with the Negro, just so long was a labor movement in the South made impossible⁴⁸.

In *Remembering To Not Forget* Jonathan Scott says that the poor whites who dreamed of becoming planters didn't become united against the ruling class exploiters because socially constructed whiteness in the frontier era, enabled poor whites to enjoy white racial privilege and to exercise unlimited force upon runaway slaves⁴⁹. In these conditions, especially for the ruling class, justification of the slavery system and the debasement of African Americans were necessary to maintain the status quo. So African Americans were demonized and insistently presented as "the violent other" who threatened white society while poor whites were often charged as overseers or patrollers and encouraged to use guns for their duty was to control African Americans and to prevent slave insurrections.

In *The Origins of Gun Culture in the United States* Bellesiles says that actually gun ownership was exceptional on the frontier and violence in the antebellum America rarely involved the use of firearms⁵⁰. According to Bellesiles, in the frontier era most of the communities lacked gunsmiths, the nation didn't have a high productive capacity, and Americans relied almost entirely on Great Britain for firearms⁵¹. Yet Bellesiles says that the United States government worked to arm its citizens⁵². White males were the people most likely to have guns as most of the states had laws forbidding blacks to own guns and women simply didn't own guns⁵³.

Actually keeping arms was declared to be a right that could be exercised only by white Americans. In *Civic Republicanism and the Citizen Militia: The Terrifying Second Amendment*, David C. Williams argues that the Second Amendment was grounded in the republican tradition and explains that in republican theory, the militia,

⁴⁸ qtd. in SCOTT, Jonathan. *Remembering to Not Forget: A Reflection on Jubilee*. ChickenBones: A Journal for Literary & Artistic African American Themes. <<http://www.nathanielturner.com>>

⁴⁹ SCOTT, Jonathan A.G.E.

⁵⁰ BELLESILES, Michael A. *The Origins of Gun Culture in the United States, 1760-1865*. *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 83, No. 2. s:426-453. (Sep., 1996).

⁵¹ BELLESILES, Michael A. *The Origins of Gun Culture in the United States* A.G.E. s:443-444

⁵² BELLESILES, Michael A. *The Origins of Gun Culture in the United States* A.G.E. s:426

⁵³ BELLESILES, Michael A. *The Origins of Gun Culture in the United States* A.G.E. s:428

which offered protection against all of the dangers, included only citizens, not all residents⁵⁴. In 1790s the Founding Fathers determined “the pure principles of Republicanism” to achieve a national identity and develop a citizenry of good and “useful” men for the young American republic. To be a citizen, applicants were to go through a period and prove that they possessed a good character. To be a citizen the other necessity was to be white. In *A Different Mirror*, Ronald Takaki states that these principles of republicanism fueled economic acquisition and expansion in America. While Republicanism proclaimed worldly goods as markers of virtue, and Protestant ethic defined the accumulation of wealth as a sign of salvation⁵⁵. Republican thinkers also believed that possession of arms made the citizens more independent and less willing to tolerate society’s dysfunctions. In 1789, in the Second Amendment for these reasons it had been declared that “a well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed⁵⁶”. As the Founding Fathers called the white population to be armed, guns became an essential figure of white American identity because two racial minorities; Native Americans and African Americans, didn’t have this right. In *The Second Amendment: Toward an Afro-Americanist Reconsideration*, Cottrol and Diamond state that militias were formed and all white men between the ages of sixteen and sixty were required to be armed. According to Cottrol and Diamond they also served as patrollers in order to keep the order among the slave population in some colonies where large slave populations existed⁵⁷. According to Wendy Brown gun ownership right during the frontier period also signified masculinity. Brown says that “contained within republicanism is this harsh ‘macho’ kernel: the right to arms is a ‘bit ‘gendered’ ... subduing with force, what it cannot discursively persuade, tame, or cohabit the universe with, and possessing with force what it cannot seduce⁵⁸”. So gun ownership laws operated to maintain white male supremacy and control. But they also revealed fears of the Founding Fathers during the frontier era. A jurist, Justice Story, who was appointed to the Supreme Court as an Associate Justice by James Madison in 1811, wrote a constitutional commentary in 1833, regarding the Second Amendment:

⁵⁴ WILLIAMS, David C. Civic Republicanism and the Citizen Militia: The Terrifying Second Amendment. *Yale Law Journal* s:551-615 (1991).

⁵⁵ TAKAKI, Ronald A.G.E s:80

⁵⁶ WILLIAMS, David C. A.G.E.

⁵⁷ COTTROL, Robert J. DIAMOND, Raymond T. The Second Amendment: Toward an Afro-Americanist Reconsideration. *Georgetown Law Journal* 309-361 (1991)

⁵⁸ WILLIAMS, David C. A.G.E.

The importance of this article will scarcely be doubted by any persons, who have duly reflected upon the subject. The militia is the natural defence of a free country against sudden foreign invasions, domestic insurrections and domestic usurpations of power by rulers. It is against sound policy for a free people to keep up large military establishments and standing armies in time of peace, both from the enormous expenses, with which they are attended, and the facile means, they afford to ambitious and unprincipled rulers, to subvert the government, or trample upon the rights of the people. The right of the citizens to keep and bear arms has justly been considered, as the palladium of the liberties of a republic, since it offers a strong moral check against the usurpation and arbitrary power of rulers, and will generally, even if these are successful in the first instance, enable the people to resist and triumph over them⁵⁹.

In 1811 Madison didn't explicitly define what these foreign and domestic threats were, yet according to him, threats to the security of the New World's citizens in the frontier era necessitated gun ownership. In *The Second Amendment: Toward an Afro-Americanist Reconsideration* Cottrol and Diamond inform that for colonists guns were necessary to form a militia that would ward off dangers from the armies of their European powers⁶⁰. In other words European powers were the "foreign invasions" that colonists feared. According to Cottrol and Diamond the other duty of the militia formed in the frontier era was to ward off the attacks from the "indigenous population which feared the encroachment of English settlers on their lands." Cottrol and Diamond say that despite the federal law and despite the fear that free African Americans might help slaves to revolt, some of the southern states and northern states at various times also enrolled free African Americans in the militia and employed them in state forces during times of invasion. Yet, Cottrol and Diamond point out that an armed white population was also essential to maintain social control over African Americans, and while southern states often prohibited slaves from carrying weapons and strictly regulated access to firearms by free African Americans, northern states seldom made racial distinction with respect to the right to own firearms⁶¹. So during the frontier era the gun ownership was the result of the Founding Fathers' and large landowners' fears. They feared that the European powers would interfere in their actions and that African Americans would rise up and spoil the established order that upheld white male supremacy.

⁵⁹ qtd. in Original Intent and Purpose of the Second Amendment. Guncite. <<http://www.guncite.com>>

⁶⁰ COTTROL, Robert J. DIAMOND, Raymond T. *The Second Amendment: Toward an Afro-Americanist Reconsideration*. A.G.E.

⁶¹ COTTROL, Robert J. DIAMOND, Raymond T. *The Second Amendment: Toward an Afro-Americanist Reconsideration*. A.G.E.

2. CONSTRUCTING “THE OTHER” THROUGH VIOLENCE

In the slavery institution, the economic relation in which African Americans were transformed into commodities was useful to both white masters and the other poor white people who later became overseers. Degrading slaves to beasts and inhuman creatures supported the concepts of rate of profit, rate of interest, and other measures of capitalist activity. To insure the continuity of the system, violence played an important role in making the black population fit into the slavery system and into the stereotypes that arose from European rationalizations. Because both the identity and the economy of the New World depended upon African Americans’ remaining at the bottom of the social ladder, any act that would reclaim the subjectivity of African American people was considered threatening and caused anxiety. In *White Over Black* Winthrop D. Jordan states that the main reason for the colonists’ fear of African Americans was that they would uprising and murder white people.

According to Jordan, however, colonists’ fears were exaggerated and were in part a response to more complicated anxieties. Jordan points out that the colonists’ fears were about the proper ordering of society; he states that “Negro rebellion presented an appalling world turned upside down, a crazy nonsense world of black over white⁶²”. In *A Different Mirror* Takaki also indicates that the possibility of African Americans subjectivity constantly threatened social order and says that Thomas Jefferson who was a leading political figure in 1790s cried out “we have the wolf by the ears, we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go. Justice is in one scale, and self preservation in the other⁶³”.

White’s fear of blacks led to an application of greater dose of violence against African Americans, especially during the Reconstruction period. To normalize the violence that is applied to slaves, a demonized African American stereotype was constructed and white mobs were presented as heroes and the saviours of civilization in racist works like *Birth of a Nation*. In this chapter I intend to trace this normalization of violence against slaves through the construction of a demonized African American stereotype.

⁶² JORDAN, Winthrop D. A.G.E. s:114

⁶³ qtd. in TAKAKI, Ronald A.G.E. s:76

2.1. Violence, Stereotypes and Gun Control Laws

In the frontier era, the Founding Fathers advocated expanding the nation. Therefore, every citizen in the New World would have a chance to be a farmer. The Founding Fathers thought if every citizen became a farmer, he would be a responsible citizen. This was the vision of progress. As citizens became property owners, they would be interested in supporting law and order and contributing to the wealth of the state.

After Indian tribes were forced to cede their lands to the federal government and move west of the Mississippi River, the United States acquired millions of acres of land. As planned, the farming of rice, tobacco, indigo and especially cotton took an important place in the economy. In these conditions labor was in short supply and Africans were imported to do the field work in the plantations. In this slavery position African Americans were treated quite differently from the white servants who worked in houses, and so they were labelled as aliens.

For Englishmen, all servants not born in England were considered as aliens. According to Winthrop D. Jordan while Englishmen distinguished themselves from other peoples, they also distinguished among those different peoples who were considered to be aliens, and hostility toward Irish servants was especially strong. Jordan indicates, however, the treatment of other non-English servants and slaves was quite different from African slaves⁶⁴. Compared to blacks, American Indians were less readily enslavable and less useful for a settled agricultural system. Eventually blacks, who were serviceable and much less of a threat were degraded to the slavery situation.

The main thing that distinguished African American slaves from other servants was the field work. The hard work and the harsh treatment they had to face in the fields mostly distorted slaves' cultural identity. African American slaves had to be in fields as soon as it was light in the morning. They had to work until it got too dark

⁶⁴ JORDAN, Winthrop D. A.G.E. s:85-91

to see. After they left the fields they had other work to do, such as feeding mules, cutting wood and packing cotton. In plantations, while slaves often underwent executions, whippings, brandings, and other forms of severe punishment, including sometimes public separation of families, they were given none of the protection accorded to white servants. In 1696, the only right accorded to slaves by an act of 1690, “all slaves shall have convenient clothes once every year” was dropped⁶⁵.

In slave narratives this terrible condition of slaves is commonly described by former slaves. In his book *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, Frederick Douglass notes that he was seldom whipped by his old master while he often suffered from hunger and cold. He acknowledges “in hottest summer and coldest winter, I was kept almost naked – no shoes, no stockings, no jacket, no trousers, nothing on but a coarse tow linen shirt, reaching only to my knees⁶⁶”.

Actually, mostly the plantation owners treated their slaves worse than their cattle. Frederick Douglass offers a sample of this treatment as he says that his master, Colonel Lloyd, his three sons, and his three sons-in-law were enjoying the luxury of whipping servants whenever they pleased. Frederick Douglass says that once his master made an African American slave between fifty and sixty years of age, old Barney, kneel down upon the cold, damp ground and receive upon “his naked and toil-worn shoulders” more than thirty lashes⁶⁷.

Not only slaveowners but also poor whites frequently behaved cruelly to slaves and suppressed them, especially when they were charged as overseers. According to Henry Clay Bruce, poor whites treated African Americans in much more inhumane ways than the slaveowners did. In his autobiography, *The New Man: Twenty-Nine Years a Slave, Twenty-Nine Years a Free Man*, Henry Clay Bruce says that once he was whipped because of the lie that had been told by a poor white man who was a friend of his master and states that the poor whites of the time were illiterate and were the leaders in all disorders and lynchings. While Bruce describes poor whites as the enemy of African Americans for they didn't allow African

⁶⁵ JORDAN, Winthrop D. A.G.E. s:85

⁶⁶ DOUGLASS, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, Written by Himself s:71 Penguin Books, 1982.

⁶⁷ DOUGLASS, Frederick A.G.E. s:61

American children to go school and tried to prevent the rise of African American people⁶⁸ Frederick Douglass says that Mr. Gore, who was the overseer of the plantation, often punished slaves. According to Douglass Mr. Gore was quite servile to his master and was so proud that he demanded “the most debasing homage of the slave⁶⁹”.

In plantations where a great deal of violence took place, as the slave narratives illustrate, the amount of work that was done by a typical slave depended upon the demands of the individual slave owners. Overseers were routinely paid commissions which encouraged them to overwork slaves. Thus, typically, slaves worked hard from dawn to dusk. In these conditions, African American slaves expressed their inner emotions of rage and discontent by slowing work, doing shoddy work, destroying work tools, and faking illness, if not by running away.

On the other hand, slaveholders often described their slaves as irresponsible and the happiest people in the world, working little and spending the rest of their time “singing, dancing, laughing, chattering⁷⁰”. This description of slaves as lazy, easily frightened, helpless, perpetual children not capable of living as independent adults formed the stereotype of Sambo. This stereotype was one of the stock characters in minstrel shows which were created and patronized by working-class white people in the 19th century. In *The Representation of “Race” in Mass Media* Mike Daley says that the white, largely immigrant working class people who were already near the bottom of the oppression ladder, with only black slaves below them, felt anxiety most of the time and developed other stereotypical images that presented blacks as stupid and childlike people⁷¹. One of these stereotypes in minstrel shows was Coon. In *The Coon Caricature* David Pilgrim says that in minstrel shows, like Sambo, Coon was depicted as lazy and good-for nothing, but he was not happy with his status and gave voice to his discontent. If the minstrel skit had an ante-bellum setting, the stereotype Coon was portrayed as a free African American but, if the skit’s setting postdated

⁶⁸ BRUCE, Henry Clay. *The New Man: Twenty-Nine Years a Slave, Twenty-Nine Years a Free Man* s:28 York, Pennsylvania: P.Anstadt & Sons, 1895. Documenting the American South. The University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. <<http://docsouth.unc.edu>>

⁶⁹ DOUGLASS, Frederick A.G.E. s:66

⁷⁰ qtd. in TAKAKI, Ronald A.G.E. s:112

⁷¹ DALEY, Mike. *The Representation of “Race” in Mass Media*. York University. <<http://www.mikedaley.net>>

slavery, he was portrayed as an urban African American. He was depicted as a character who didn't know his place and as a gaudily dressed "Dandy" who "put on airs." As a black person he thought he was as smart as white people. David Pilgrim describes the Coon stereotype:

...his frequent malapropisms and distorted logic suggested that his attempt to compete intellectually with whites was pathetic. His use of bastardized English delighted white audiences and reaffirmed the then commonly held beliefs that blacks were inherently less intelligent. The minstrel coon's goal was leisure, and his leisure was spent strutting, styling, fighting, avoiding real work, eating watermelons, and making a fool of himself⁷².

In point of fact, most of this stereotypical behaviour was rooted in the way of protesting that African American people used to resist discipline and brutal treatment. In his autobiography, a former slave, Henry Clay Bruce, describes these different attitudes of African American slaves and the peculiar relationships between slaves and masters that the economy of slavery imposed. He says that there were different kinds of slaves: there was the lazy fellow, who wouldn't work unless he was forced to do so and was required to be watched, there was the good man, who worked obediently and trusted in the Lord to save his soul, there was the unruly slave who wouldn't yield to punishment of any kind, would go to the swamps armed with an axe, corn knife or some dangerous weapon and would work only when he pleased to do so⁷³. However, slave masters often ignored psychological distress and the trauma plantation life had caused the African American people and attributed slaves' poor work performance and other remonstrations against their treatment to the stupidity and genetic deficiencies of the black race. When a slave couldn't suppress his rage and assaulted his white master he was described as a beast, as a dangerous and subhuman creature who was not able to fit into civilized society. The bestial African American image was developed during the Reconstruction era, and both the bestial black and happy-go-lucky Sambo images which reflected the anxiety of white men naturally offered a defense for slavery and segregation.

⁷² PILGRIM, David. "The Coon Caricature." Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia. Ferris State University. <<http://www.ferris.edu>>

⁷³ BRUCE, Henry Clay A.G.E. s:38

White slave owners became much more anxious, as African Americans outnumbered white people. To give an example, on a rice plantation in South Carolina, there were ten slaves for every white person until whites began filling up the state in the 1740s. In the areas where African Americans outnumbered white people, one of the major daily concerns of responsible men was the effective control of masses of slaves. There were laws to control slaves that were named “slave codes.” According to slave codes slaves were forbidden to wander off their plantation without a “ticket” from their masters or overseers, and they were never to be allowed to come together in large numbers. During this period poor white people who didn’t possess much land were mostly charged to serve in patrols and punish the slaves who didn’t obey these rules. Armed with guns and whips, they exerted their power over the slaves. As white anxiety mounted, African Americans faced harsh punishments. In his autobiography, Henry Clay Bruce describes the patrollers and these harsh punishments. He tells that during the years 1860 and 1861, when slaves had to remain on their masters’ land and were punished if they were found out of the plantation without a written pass from their masters, the poor whites who performed patrol duty whipped some slaves so mercilessly that masters ordered the patrols that in punishing a slave no skin should be broken nor blood be brought out by the lash⁷⁴. However, anxiety of white people grew stronger and yielded greater violence while laws to prevent possible insurrection limited the right of slaves.

In *African Americans in the Colonial Era* Donald R. Wright tells that slaves often searched a way to escape and revolt. According to Wright, as the slave population grew, suspicion, distrust, and fear filled the minds of white colonists. In the eighteenth-century slave codes were passed to control African Americans. Masters and overseers corrected and punished slave misbehavior in the ways these laws allowed⁷⁵. In *New Jersey Slavery and the Law*, Gary K. Wolinetz states that in New Jersey, when there were approximately 4600 African American slaves, a 1751 law, which aimed to prevent slave insurrections, provided that those who met in groups of more than five or were seen outside after 9:00 p.m. without their master’s permission were subject to twenty lashes by the constable⁷⁶. Punishments for those who didn’t

⁷⁴ BRUCE, Henry Clay A.G.E. s:98

⁷⁵ WRIGHT, Donald R. A.G.E. s:99

⁷⁶ WOLINETZ, Gary K. *New Jersey Slavery and the Law*. 50 Rutgers L. Rev. 2227-2258 (1998)

obey these rules were various and ranged from whipping to burning at the stake. The severest punishments were reserved for runaway slaves. Getting the slaves to work efficiently was the owner's problem, but the runaway slaves affected the safety of everyone and the discipline upon which the institution of slavery rested. Those who ran away and resisted authority of white persons were branded with an R on one cheek, some parts of their face were burned with a hot iron, and their bodies were sometimes hanged in chains or their severed heads impaled upon a pole in some public place as a gruesome reminder to all passers-by. In her autobiography, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Harriet Jacobs defines white's fear of slave insurrections. After Nat Turner's insurrection broke out, the news threw towns into great commotion and white people started to search slaves' cabins to find runaway slaves.

Nat Turner's insurrection took place in 1831. While 75 slaves joined the rebellion, Nat Turner and seven other slaves launched the rebellion by killing Turner's master and his family. Nearly 50 whites were killed, and as Harriet Jacobs indicates, this insurrection caused great anxiety throughout the South. Jacobs indicates that this occasion was a grand opportunity for low whites, who had no black slaves of their own to scourge. She acknowledges that "every-where men, women and children were whipped until the blood stood in puddles at their feet. Some received five hundred lashes; others were tied hands and feet, and tortured with a bucking paddle, which blisters the skin terribly"⁷⁷.

Slave insurrections could cause to a shift in power relationships and could contribute to the rise of African American people in the status quo. Therefore, they threatened white Americans' lives, liberties and property. While the fear of slave insurrections preoccupied slaveholders, many colonies made efforts in the first half of 18th century to prevent African Americans from becoming free. Between 1722 and 1740 the South Carolina legislature stated that newly freed blacks had to leave the province unless they were permitted to remain by a special act of assembly⁷⁸. Because slaveowners thought free blacks would provide shelters to black slaves, during the

⁷⁷ JACOBS, Harriet A. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*: 98 The Schomburg Library of 19th Century Black Women Writers. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. Documenting the American South. The University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. <<http://www.docsouth.unc.edu>>

⁷⁸ BROWNE, Tsekani. Racism & Xenophobia – In the United States: Historic Timeline. Cultural Studies in the African Diaspora Project. University of California, Los Angeles. <<http://sscnet.ucla.edu>>

same period North Carolina inhibited the free slaves from remaining in the colony but in 1741 allowed them to remain if their manumissions had been proved by a country court. The fear of freed slaves was that they would be a model for the other slaves who worked on plantations and would provoke them to rebel and spoil the whole slavery system.

The fear of loss of an American identity - identified as Anglo-Saxon - can also be observed in laws that inhibited blacks from having sexual relations with whites. In most states marriages between blacks and whites were prohibited. The fear was that if intermarriage continued unchecked, whites who were considered as the most advanced creature on the face of the earth would disappear and progress would be defeated. Laws that prohibited inter-racial marriages stayed on the books until the advent of the civil rights movement. Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia kept their laws about interracial marriage on the books until the Supreme Court threw them out in 1967. These laws were to prevent the “corruption of blood,” and the penalty for those who didn’t obey this rule follows: “If any white person intermarry with a colored person, or any colored person intermarry with a white person, he shall be guilty of a felony and shall be punished by confinement in the penitentiary for not less than one nor more than five years⁷⁹”.

White Americans tried to maintain traditional patterns of racial control by applying punishments and extra-legal violence. In this period, gun possession became a necessity for white Americans. The importance of guns for white Americans can be observed in laws that were applied to disarm African Americans and deprive African Americans of the means of resisting white domination.

As it is noted in Clark the legislature of Virginia banned gun possession for African Americans in 1640. It was stated, “That all such free Mulattos, Negroes and Indians ... shall appear without arms.” In the same way, in 1712, gun possession was banned for blacks in South Carolina as “An act for the better ordering and governing of Negroes and slaves.” In 1792, the Uniform Militia Act “called for the enrollment of every free, able-bodied white male citizen between the ages of eighteen and forty-

⁷⁹ LovingDay. <<http://www.lovingday.org>>

five” to be in the militia, and specified that every militia member was to “provide himself with a musket or firelock, a bayonet, and ammunition,” while it excluded African Americans from militia and denied their right to own guns. Louisiana’s Constitution of 1806 applied complete gun and self-defense bans for slaves and provided that a slave was denied the use of firearms and all other offensive weapons. In 1811, it forbade sale or delivery of firearms to slaves. South Carolina’s Constitution of 1819 prohibited slaves outside the company of whites or without written permission from their masters from using or carrying firearms unless they hunted or guarded the master’s plantation.

In Florida, slaves’ and free African Americans’ homes were searched for guns for confiscation in 1825. “An Act to Govern Patrols,” in the 1825 Acts of Fla. 52, 55 - Section 8, provided that white citizen patrols “shall enter into all Negro houses and suspected places, and search for arms and other offensive or improper weapons, and may lawfully seize and take away such arms, weapons, and ammunition ...”. Section 9 provided that a slave might carry a firearm under this statute either by means of the weekly renewable license or if “in presence of some white person.” Florida’s Constitution of 1831 repealed all provision for firearm licenses for free blacks. “An Act Concerning Slaves,” in Texas Acts of 1850, prohibited slaves from using firearms altogether. This act was in effect from 1842-1850. Florida’s Constitution of 1847 provided that white citizen patrols might search the homes of African Americans, both free and slave, and confiscate arms held therein. In 1848, the Georgia Supreme Court ruled that “free persons of color have never been recognized here as citizens, they are not entitled to bear arms, vote for members of legislature, or hold any civil office⁸⁰”.

Especially in Southern States, while constitutions acknowledged the existence and importance of the militia in the scheme of constitutional liberty, they had already experimented with measures designed to disarm the African American population. In “*Never Intended to Be Applied to the White Population:’ Firearms Regulation and Racial Disparity*” Cottrol and Diamond tell that the North Carolina Constitution of

⁸⁰ CLARK, A. Bruce. Laws Designed to Disarm Slaves, Freedmen, and African-Americans. The Right to Keep and Bear Arms. <<http://www.old-yankee.com>>

1776 stated “the people have a right to bear arms for the defense of the State.”⁸¹ Kentucky’s Constitutions of 1792 and 1799 announced a right of “citizens to bear arms in defense of themselves and the State...”⁸²

Constitutions in Kentucky in 1850 and Texas in 1836 included the right to bear arms. In 1820 Missouri declared this right to belong to “the people⁸³”. At that time, even free African Americans were not considered as citizens of the United States, and they were not part of “the people” that were mentioned to have the right to own a gun. African Americans required a license to keep or carry arms. This was certainly the case in North Carolina. The 17th article of the 1776 North Carolina Constitution declared “That the people have a right to bear arms, for the defense of the State, and as standing armies, in time of peace, are dangerous to liberty, they ought not to be kept up, and that the military should be kept under strict subordination to, and governed by, the civil power⁸⁴”.

In 1840 the North Carolina Supreme Court recognized that to own and carry arms was a constitutional right as long as such arms were carried in a manner not likely to frighten people. In the following years, however, the court announced that free African Americans were not citizens; thus, although the individual right extended to the ‘people,’ African Americans were excluded from exercising the right. In *State v. Newsom* (1844), the North Carolina Supreme Court declared:

That if any free Negro, mulatto, or free person of color, shall wear or carry about his or her person, or keep in his or her house, any shot gun, musket, rifle, pistol, sword, dagger or bowie-knife, unless he or she shall have obtained a license therefore from the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions of his or her county, one year preceding the wearing, keeping or carrying therefore, he or she shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and may be indicted therefore⁸⁵.

⁸¹ COTTROL, Robert J. DIAMOND, Raymond T. “‘Never Intended to Be Applied to the White Population:’ Firearms Regulation and Racial Disparity – The Redeemed South’s Legacy to a National Jurisprudence?” *Chicago-Kent College of Law Rev.* 1307-1335 (1995)

⁸² CRAMER, Clayton E. *The Racist Roots of Gun Control. KeepAndBearArms.*
<<http://www.keepandbeararms.com>>

⁸³ COTTROL, Robert J. DIAMOND, Raymond T. “‘Never Intended to Be Applied to the White Population:’ Firearms Regulation and Racial Disparity – The Redeemed South’s Legacy to a National Jurisprudence?” *A.G.E.*

⁸⁴ CRAMER, Clayton E. *A.G.E.*

⁸⁵ qtd. in CRAMER, Clayton E. *A.G.E.*

Other states, like Tennessee, Arkansas and Florida also denied African Americans the right to arms that was guaranteed all citizens. The Tennessee Constitution declared in Article XI, 26 of 1796 “That the freemen of this State have a right to keep and bear arms for their common defense.” In 1834, the Tennessee Constitution changed this legislation to say “That the free white men of this State have a right to keep and bear arms for their common defense,” emphasizing that the right to bear arms was to be an individual guarantee only for white people⁸⁶. In similar language, Arkansas’s Constitution of 1836 and Florida’s Constitution of 1838 stated “that the free white men of this State shall have a right to keep and bear arms for their common defense⁸⁷”. Mississippi forbade arms to both slaves and free African Americans after 1852⁸⁸.

Meanwhile, use of guns had been an integral part of the American culture. Especially in the South, it had become a part of law-ways and folkways. In this region, white men rather than the courts used arms to resolve personal disputes. While this Southern atmosphere encouraged the use of arms, Southern legislatures and jurists began to recognize the desirability of placing limits to gun ownership. Laws that were applied by these legislatures aimed to maintain white domination and to insure racial control as they limited African Americans’ access to firearms, whether they were slaves or free⁸⁹.

Another fear about African Americans was that they could carry other concealed weapons to attack white people since they didn’t have access to firearms. For this reason, arms were considered to be weapons that were used for defense in wartime but weapons like bowie knives were declared to be dangerous. Tennessee Supreme Court prohibited carrying concealed weapons and emphasized that “to bear arms in defense of the State is to employ them in a war...(and to do so such arms) must necessarily be borne openly” and declared that concealed weapons were manifestly different. The court stated:

⁸⁶ CRAMER, Clayton E. A.G.E.

⁸⁷ COTTRILL, Robert J. DIAMOND, Raymond T. “‘Never Intended to Be Applied to the White Population:’ Firearms Regulation and Racial Disparity – The Redeemed South’s Legacy to a National Jurisprudence?” A.G.E.

⁸⁸ CRAMER, Clayton E. A.G.E.

⁸⁹ COTTRILL, Robert J. DIAMOND, Raymond T. “‘Never Intended to Be Applied to the White Population:’ Firearms Regulation and Racial Disparity – The Redeemed South’s Legacy to a National Jurisprudence?” A.G.E.

To hold that the Legislature could pass no law upon this subject by which to preserve the public peace and protect our citizens from the terror which a wanton and unusual exhibition of arms might produce, or their lives from being endangered by desperadoes with concealed arms would be to pervert a great political right to the worst of purposes, and to make it a social evil of infinitely greater extent to society, than would result from abandoning the right itself⁹⁰.

In a similar way, Georgia's Constitution of 1837 passed a law that restricted the sale and carrying of concealable weapons. But in 1846, the Georgia Supreme Court found that the legislation of 1837 violated the Second Amendment:

The right of the whole people, old and young, men, women and boys, and not militia only, to keep and bear arms of every description, and not such merely as are used by the militia, shall not be infringed, curtailed, or broken in upon, in the smallest degree: and all of this for the important end to be attained: the rearing up and qualifying a well-regulated militia, so vitally necessary to the security of a free State. Our opinion is, that any law, State or Federal, is repugnant to the Constitution, and void, which contravenes this right, originally belonging to our forefathers, trampled under foot by Charles I. And his two wicked sons and successors, reestablished by the revolution of 1688, conveyed to this land of liberty by colonists, and finally incorporated conspicuously in our own Magna Charta! And Lexington, Concord, Camden, River Raisin, Sandusky, and the laurel-crowned field of New Orleans, plead eloquently for his interpretation⁹¹.

Finally, the Georgia court defined the limits of laws restricting the bearing of arms – in a state where much of the population remained enslaved:

We are of the opinion, then, that so far as the act of 1837 seeks to suppress the practice of carrying certain weapons secretly, that it is valid, in as much as it does not deprive the citizen of his natural right of self-defense, or of his constitutional right to keep and bear arms. But that so much of it, as contains a prohibition against bearing arms openly, is in conflict with the Constitution, and void...

⁹²

While in 1846, the Georgia court declared that gun ownership was a “right of the whole people, old and young, men, women and boys,” in 1848 the court implied gun ownership as a narrowly restrictive right of a “citizen.” African American people weren't considered citizens at the time. Therefore, African Americans were excluded

⁹⁰ qtd. in COTTROL, Robert J. DIAMOND, Raymond T. “ ‘Never Intended to Be Applied to the White Population:’ Firearms Regulation and Racial Disparity – The Redeemed South's Legacy to a National Jurisprudence?” A.G.E.

⁹¹ qtd. in CRAMER, Clayton E. A.G.E.

⁹² qtd. in CRAMER, Clayton E. A.G.E.

from the right to have arms. The fear of slave rebellion was the main reason for the legislatures to forbid firearms to African Americans. In *The Second Amendment: Toward an Afro-Americanist Reconsideration* Cottrol and Diamond say that to forestall this threat of rebellion, Southern legislatures also undertook to limit the freedom of movement and choice of free blacks by limiting the number of free blacks who might congregate at one time and curtailing the ability of free blacks to choose their own employment or trade and socialize with slaves⁹³.

As President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation had in 1863 ordered the freedom of all slaves, by the end of the Civil War the black people were free. However, Southern legislatures tried to guarantee that the freedmen would assume nearly their same positions as slaves to maintain the existing status quo. In this period, again, violence and torture also became the instruments of oppression of the former slaves and maintenance of the Southern way of life. Although under the authority of national law every citizen had the right to vote, the newly-made citizens could hardly exercise this right as one Southern State after another raised the cry against "negro domination" and claimed there was an "unwritten law" that justified any means to resist it.

In this period, with the presence of heavily armed white men, the Ku Klux Klan and other nightriding terrorists who replaced the militia mutilations, floggings, lynchings and shootings of African Americans were common across the South. For white Americans, lynchings of African American people became an institutionalized method to terrorize African Americans and maintain white supremacy. Especially between the Reconstruction and World War II, the lynchings of African Americans were relatively common. According to Tuskegee Institute, between the years 1882 and 1951, 4,730 people were lynched in the United States 3,437 black and 1,293 white. The Tuskegee Institute declared that accusations against lynching victims between the years 1882 to 1951 were as follows: 41 per cent for felonious assault, 19.2 per cent for rape, 6.1 percent for attempted rape, 4.9 per cent for robbery and theft, 1.8 per cent for insult to white persons, and 22.7 per cent for miscellaneous offenses or no offense at all. In the last category are all sorts of trivial "offenses" such

⁹³ COTTROL, Robert J. DIAMOND, Raymond T. *The Second Amendment: Toward an Afro-Americanist Reconsideration* A.G.E.

as “disputing with a white man,” attempting to register to vote, “unpopularity,” self-defense, testifying against a white man, “asking a white woman in marriage”, and “peeping in a window⁹⁴”. It is conspicuous that rape was the prevailing reason for most of the lynchings. As Gunnar Myrdal and Sissela Bok suggest in *An American Dilemma*, the rape figure has been inflated because it was secure from any further investigation and actually African Americans who were accused of rape were not always guilty. In many cases African Americans were lynched for no reason at all other than race prejudice⁹⁵. In *Lynch Law in America*, written in 1900, Ida B. Wells describes lynching as a “national crime.” The editor of anti-segregationist newspaper tells that during the years in which “lynching mania” has spread men were taken from their homes by mobs and stripped, beaten and exiled while African American women were murdered because they refused to tell mobs where relatives could be found. Boys of fourteen years as well as adult men and women were put to death without judge or jury. The mobs frequently cut off ears, toes, and fingers, stripped off flesh and distributed the portions of the body as souvenirs to the crowd. Sometimes coal-oil was poured over the victim’s body and victim was roasted to death. In Texarkana, for example, men and boys amused themselves by thrusting knives into a black victim while at Newman, the mob tried every conceivable torture to compel the victim to confess before they burned him, but the victim never uttered a cry⁹⁶.

According to the web-cite, *Lynching in America*, the lynchings were frequently committed as a public display and were often advertised in newspapers. In some cases railroad agents sold excursion tickets to the announced lynching sites, while white families brought small children to watch and newspapers carried advance notices. In local newspapers, lynchings were usually covered with headlines spelling out the details of the horrific event. Photos of victims, with white observers posed next to them, were taken for distribution in newspapers or on postcards. Headlines such as the following were not uncommon: “Negro Is Slain By Texas Posse: Victim’s Heart Removed After His Capture By Armed Men,” was published in The New York

⁹⁴ GIBSON, Robert A. *The Negro Holocaust: Lynching and Race in the United States, 1880-1950*. Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute. <<http://www.yale.edu>>

⁹⁵ qtd. in PILGRIM, David. *The Brute Caricature*. Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia. Ferris State University. <<http://www.ferris.edu>>

⁹⁶ WELLS, Ida B. *Lynch Law in America*. African-American History. <<http://www.afroamhistory.about.com>>

World Telegram on December 8, 1933; “Negro and White Scuffle; Negro Is Jailed, Lynched,” was published in the Atlanta Constitution on July 6, 1933⁹⁷.

On March 9 1892, three African American businessmen were lynched in Memphis for opening a grocery store that would compete with a white store. After this event, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, an African American journalist, organized a boycott of the white businesses in protest. She wrote an editorial stating that sexual relations between black men and white women could exist outside of rape. In *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*, she maintained the innocence of many victims of lynchings and denounced the failure of leading white southerners to act forcefully against lynch mobs. After she published these investigative works, her office was destroyed, her life was threatened, and she finally moved to New York⁹⁸. White authors who protested against the lynchings were also in danger of being lynched. On November 7, 1873, Elijah Paris Lovejoy, editor of the Alton Observer, was killed by a white mob after he had published articles criticizing lynchings⁹⁹. In *The Second Amendment: Toward an Afro-Americanist Reconsideration* Cottrol and Diamond state that African Americans tried to defend themselves against lynching violence by using firearms. The attitude of individuals at the time is summed up by Ida B. Wells-Barnett who wrote of her decision to carry a pistol:

I had been warned repeatedly by my own people that something would happen if I did not cease harping on the lynching of three months before...I had bought a pistol the first thing after the lynching, because I expected some cowardly retaliation from the lynchers. I felt that one had better die fighting against injustice than to die like a dog or a rat in a trap. I had already determined to sell my life as dearly as possible if attacked. I felt if I could take one lyncher with me, this would even up the score a little bit¹⁰⁰.

According to Cottrol and Diamond although African Americans’ efforts to halt lynchings were largely unsuccessful, there were times that African Americans succeeded through concerted or group activity. Cottrol and Diamond say that Philip Randolph, onetime executive secretary of the National Association for the

⁹⁷ People & Events: Lynching in America. American Experience. <<http://www.pbs.org>>

⁹⁸ Ida Wells. Spartacus Educational. <<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk>>

⁹⁹ PARRISH, Geov. Geov Parrish’s this Day in Radical History – November. WorkingForChange. <<http://www.workingforchange.com>>

¹⁰⁰ qtd. in COTTRIL, Robert J. DIAMOND, Raymond T. *The Second Amendment: Toward an Afro-Americanist Reconsideration* A.G.E.

Advancement of Colored People, recalled that he was left with a vision, not “of powerlessness, but of the 'possibilities of salvation,' which resided in unity and organization” as their fathers had participated in collective efforts to use firearms to successfully forestall lynchings and other mob violence¹⁰¹.

As African Americans struggled and tried to protect their rights, their lives, and their property by using firearms, gun control statutes of the black codes aimed to disarm African Americans and leave them defenceless against lynchings and other mob violence.

Actually most of the causes of lynchings and mob violence were associated with white women. Southern folk tradition has held that blacks were lynched only for the crimes of raping white women and developed the image of black beast rapist, which is coupled with the ideal of the purity of the southern womanhood. Rape was secure from any further investigation. So, while all sexual relations between black men and white women were defined as rape, black men were frequently condemned to death.

During this period, although inner motives that drove individuals to act violently against African Americans may have been different, the rape of white women by African American men was reported as the main reason for lynchings. Faulkner, who grew up in South and was able to analyze the social context of the time, realistically describes the period in *Dry September*. He says a great deal about this period and the Southern mythology in which it is assumed that black men’s greatest desire is to rape a white woman as he points out the motives that drove white individuals to act collectively violent against black people. In this short story, which was written in 1926, an innocent black man, Will Mayes, is wrongly accused of attacking a white woman and lynched. The accuser, Minnie Cooper, lives in a society offering no alternatives but to create her own victimization, for she has been rejected, and is now growing old alone. Since no white man finds her attractive, to hold herself together she conjures up an African American man as her attacker. She knows that her accusation of black attack will turn the entire town to her defense. Melendon, who

¹⁰¹ qtd. in COTTRON, Robert J. DIAMOND, Raymond T. The Second Amendment: Toward an Afro-Africanist Reconsideration A.G.E.

raises the mob against Mayes, cannot assimilate into civilian life after the war; he needs violence and finds domestic life insufficient. Hawkshaw, the barber, cannot protest against the lynching of Mayes although he doesn't believe that Mayes harmed Millie. He feared that the stigma of "niggerlover" may stick to him, and so he is propelled by the constraint of the mob and uses violence against Mayes¹⁰². Since Faulkner grew up in the post-Civil War Southern culture, which was dominated by memories of the Old South and the war, in *Dry September* he offers a complex, ambivalent image of the South. Through what Faulkner's characters say and do, readers learn about the different attitudes and emotions of Southern people and the details of the lynching and incidents of mob violence¹⁰³. In these terms, *Dry September* is a brilliant illustration of the Southern myth in which the rape of a white woman is used as an excuse for lynching and according to Janet Elizabeth Barnwell, in *Dry September* Faulkner reveals the truth that lies beneath the "beast stereotype"¹⁰⁴ as he illustrates that in the South the individuals in lynching mobs were mostly unified "leading to one brutal act and one primary goal: the maintenance of white over black power¹⁰⁵".

The black rapist image that was created during this period not only justified the lynching of African American men but it also palliated white men's own crime of miscegenation. According to John David Smith the domestic slave trade depended on the sexual exploitation of African American women because every black child meant more free labour for slave owners, but in slavery not only the black women were sexually exploited but the black men as well. While white women allegedly were shocked by these sexual activities of their husbands and sons, white men always positioned their women on a pedestal. White men created the mythology of purity of the "mothers" who gave birth to southern white culture and the "untouchable" white women.¹⁰⁶ As this Virgin stereotype imposed strict limits on the white females' mobility, knowledge and curiosity, white females could never acknowledge their

¹⁰² FAULKNER, William. "Dry September." Selected Short Stories of William Faulkner (Modern Library) Random House Inc., 1933. Dry September. 23 February 2006.
<<http://amb.nbu.bg/american/4/faulkner/september.htm>>

¹⁰³ BARNWELL, Janet Elizabeth. Narrative Patterns of Racism Resistance in the Work of William Faulkner s:57-61 <http://etd.lsu.edu/docs/available/etd-1114102-151515/unrestricted/Barnwell_dis.pdf>

¹⁰⁴ BARNWELL, Janet Elizabeth A.G.E. s:76

¹⁰⁵ BARNWELL, Janet Elizabeth A.G.E. s:73

¹⁰⁶ SMITH, John David. American Experience. <<http://www.pbs.org>>

sexuality and had always to remain as girls who were constantly dependent and eternally waiting to be saved. While white women were considered to be asexual virgins during the antebellum period, African American women were objects of sexual violence. In *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Harriet Jacobs exemplifies this abusive treatment of black women slaves as she describes how sexual abuse was an intrinsic part of slavery and how her own master wanted to abuse her. She adds that when she rejected him, her master became obsessed with controlling her and refused to sell her or children to anyone for any price. In her autobiography she describes this violent treatment of African American women in the slavery institution:

The slave girl is reared in an atmosphere of licentiousness and fear. The lash and foul talk of her master and his sons are her teachers. When she is fourteen or fifteen, her owner, or his sons, or the overseer, or perhaps all of them begin to bribe her with presents. If these fail to accomplish their purpose, she is whipped or starved into submission to their will¹⁰⁷.

Harriet Jacobs explains that in plantation life the mistresses had to deal constantly with the knowledge or suspicion of what their husbands were doing to the female slaves. According to Jacobs because of this, white women grew angry toward the slaves and occasionally released their aggression by treating them harshly.¹⁰⁸ While white women vented their rage upon the black women slaves, according to John David Smith, white men provided themselves with an essential psychic distance to exploit black people by defining white women as ideal, pure and virgin. Smith says as a result, white women stood in contrast to African American women, who had no control over their bodies because of their place in the hierarchy¹⁰⁹.

In this context, the rapist black men myth enabled the whites to veil their own violence as they defined black people as immoral monsters who were unworthy of the respect and sympathy of the civilized world. Actually, at the core of white men's fear of black sexuality lay the fear that once African American men were their sexual equals the white's entire social structure would collapse, and that without controls on sex, racial classification would become complicated. Considering these facts, the lynchings of African American people, which were usually defined as a punishment

¹⁰⁷ JACOBS, Harriet A. A.G.E. s:79

¹⁰⁸ JACOBS, Harriet A. A.G.E. s:49-58

¹⁰⁹ SMITH, John David A.G.E.

for miscegenation, were, in fact, a ritual of interracial social control and a recreation of white domination. Lynchings, violence and the other punishments were tools with which white people instilled fear into black people as a way of inhibiting the rise of African American men in society. What Richard Wright, who was born near Natchez in southwest Mississippi says in *Black Boy* shows how successful this policy was at the time. In *Black Boy*, he recounts how two lynchings – those of his step-uncle and the brother of a neighborhood friend – affected him:

I did not search for a job that day; I returned home and sat on my porch too, and stared. What I had heard altered the look of the world, induced in me a temporary paralysis of will and impulse. The penalty of death awaited me if I made a false move and I wondered if it was worth-while to make any move at all. The things that influenced my conduct as a Negro did not have to happen to me directly; I needed but to hear of them to feel their full effects in the deepest layers of my consciousness. Indeed, the white brutality that I had not seen was a more effective control of my behaviour than that which I knew¹¹⁰.

Lynchings occasionally complemented the profit motive because lynching of a successful African American farmer or immigrant merchant opened opportunities for local whites. Moreover, once white society cast African American men as sexually pathological monsters, then it was easier for them to destroy a new and unwelcome economic competitor. In this way, as whites rationalized lynching as a charge of miscegenation, they created the fantasy of the black beast so that they could read any attempt of an African American to cross the color line symbolically as miscegenation. In this sense, lynching became a central motif in literary representations by African American writers. In Richard Wright's *Native Son*, "the color line is manifested in racial geography, and whites are the exclusive cartographers."¹¹¹ The protagonist of *Native Son*, Bigger Thomas, a poor, uneducated, twenty-year-old black man in 1930s Chicago, has no control over his life and cannot aspire to anything other than menial, low-wage labor. Anger, fear, and frustration define Bigger's daily existence while he and his gang rob black-owned businesses. When he accidentally kills Mary, his landowner's daughter, he feels for the first time as though his life actually has meaning. In *Slouching toward Beastliness* Clare Eby suggests that after this event Bigger becomes conscious of the color line:

¹¹⁰ WRIGHT, Richard. *Black Boy: The American Hunger* s:172 New York: Buccaneer Books, 1995

¹¹¹ EBY, Clare. "Slouching Toward Beastliness, Richard Wright's Anatomy of Thomas Dixon." *African American Review* 35.3, 2001:439-58. 22 September 2001.

He looked around the street – where he lived – and saw a sign on a building: This property is managed by the South Side Real Estate Company...He paid eight dollars a week for one rat-infested room...Mr. Dalton ...owned property all over the Black Belt, and he owned property where white folks lived too. But Bigger could not live in a building across the ‘line.’ Even though Mr. Dalton gave millions of dollars for Negro education, he would rent houses to Negroes only in this prescribed area, this corner of the city tumbling down from rot. In a way Bigger was conscious of this. Yes, he would send the kidnap note¹¹².

As Richard Wright clarifies in *Native Son*, behind the white anxiety about miscegenation lay a desire to continue economic exploitation. Lynchings, rather than punishments for the crimes, were responses to African American mobility since they enforced racial hierarchy and protected the color line.

Lynchings occurred most commonly in smaller towns and isolated rural communities of the South where people were mostly poor and illiterate. The people who composed mobs in such neighborhoods had found that African American men were economic competitors since they were usually small land holders, tenant farmers and common laborers whose economic status was very similar to that of black people. The conditions of white perpetrators and the fact that the pattern of the almost exclusive lynching of African Americans was set during the Reconstruction period confirm the suggestion that whites strongly feared that black people were “getting out of their place” and felt their social status threatened. They saw lynching as a method to defend white domination and keep African Americans from becoming “uppity.” Although most participants in lynching mobs were from lower strata of the white society, actually, many middle and upper-class whites also took part in the mobs and supported the “lynch-law.” State authorities often attempted to prevent lynchings but seldom punished the mob participants. The judge, prosecutor, jurors and witnesses often sympathized with the lynchers while politicians and officials came to power on a platform of race prejudice. In these conditions there were few repercussions for white perpetrators. As a result of this, white mobs were successful at keeping black voters away from polls and keeping African Americans politically, socially and economically powerless. Officials felt no obligation to respect minority interests or safeguard minority rights, while some of the African American officeholders were hanged and many more brutally beaten. White Southern Democrats won elections

¹¹² qtd. in EBY, Clare A.G.E.

easily and passed the laws that took away many rights that African American people had won during Reconstruction. These laws, which can be considered as the roots of the segregation laws, restricted African Americans' right to travel, to assemble and to engage in certain businesses. In this period, gun control laws and the violence which was applied to African Americans went hand in hand to maintain the status quo. Since former masters realized that for black people arms served as a hedge against the oppression both authorities and white mobs like the Ku Klux Klan sought to take the arms from African Americans and often killed and cowed the ones who didn't give them. In this period there was a lack of gun control for white people while most of the states passed laws that prohibited gun ownership for African American people.

A Mississippi Statute of 1865 prohibited African Americans who were not involved in military service, "and not licensed to do so by the board of police of his or her county," from keeping or carrying "fire-arms of any kind, or any ammunition, dirk or bowie knife." Using the same language, a Louisiana Statute of 1865 prohibited African Americans from "carrying fire-arms, or any kind of weapons ... without a special permission of his employers, approved and endorsed by the nearest and most convenient chief of the patrol." A Black Code of Alabama in January 1866 prohibited African Americans from owning or carrying firearms or other deadly weapons and forbade "any person to sell, give, or lend fire-arms or ammunition of any description whatever" to any black. Commenting on these prohibitions, The Special Report of the Anti-Slavery Conference of 1867 noted with particular emphasis under the black codes, that African Americans were "forbidden to own or bear firearms, and thus were rendered defenseless against assaults"¹¹³.

The period from the 1870's to the mid-1930's was characterized by strong fear against African American people. The stereotype of black people as lazy and inclined to violence was associated with armed robbery. Especially in the North East, where free slaves and other immigrants moved to work as laborers, a campaign was started by organizations such as the Immigration Restriction League and the American Protective Association, for the enactment of a flat ban on the ownership of firearms, or at least handguns, by aliens. Most of the states passed laws that would restrict the sale and the ownership of guns to African American people. In 1870, the Constitution

¹¹³ CLARK, A. Bruce A.G.E.

of Tennessee passed the first “Saturday Night Special” economic handgun ban. In the first legislative session, white supremacists passed “An Act to Preserve Peace and Prevent Homicide,” which banned the sale of all handguns except the expensive “Army and Navy model handgun” which whites already owned or could afford to buy, and blacks could not. The cheap revolvers, however, which were sold to a particular class of people, especially blacks and poor whites were banned by this legislation¹¹⁴.

Meanwhile, “the Cruikshank event” showed that High Court rules had no power to stop KKK members from disarming African American people. When a member of the KKK, Cruikshank had been charged with violating the rights of two African American men to assemble and bear arms, the U.S. Supreme Court stated that the federal government had no power to protect African American citizens against private action that deprived them of their constitutional rights under the 14th Amendment and that these individuals were to ask for protection from state governments. In 1875, the U.S. Supreme Court stated this event of Cruikshank and the protection of African American people:

The doctrine in Cruikshank, that blacks would have to look to state government for protection against criminal conspiracies gave the green light to private forces, with the assistance of state and local governments, that sought to subjugate the former slaves and ... With the protective arm of the federal government withdrawn, protection of black lives and property was left to largely hostile state governments¹¹⁵.

Tennessee’s Constitution of 1879 passed the second “Saturday Night Special” economic handgun ban. Tennessee revamped its economic handgun ban nine years later, passing “An Act to Prevent the Sale of Pistols.” In 1882, the Constitution of Arkansas passed the third “Saturday Night Special” economic handgun ban. Arkansas followed Tennessee’s lead by enacting a virtually identical “Saturday Night Special” law banning the sale of any pistols other than the expensive “army or navy” model revolvers. Most whites already had or could afford these models while blacks couldn’t, so these laws aimed to prevent African Americans from owning guns. In 1893, the Constitution of Alabama placed “extremely heavy business and/or

¹¹⁴ CLARK, A. Bruce A.G.E.

¹¹⁵ qtd. in CLARK, A. Bruce A.G.E.

transactional taxes” on the sale of handguns in an attempt to put handguns out of the reach of African American people¹¹⁶.

After World War I, tensions about African American people became much stronger as the younger generation of African Americans who returned from the war were familiar with guns and willing to fight for equal treatment. In reaction, the Klan again became a major force in the South in the 1910’s and 1920’s when its membership exceeded four million. Even outside the South the KKK exercised great political power, dominating the states of Oregon, Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Indiana, Ohio and California. While murders, beatings, and lynchings were perpetrated upon helpless African American citizens by KKK members, once again gun control laws made sure that victims of the Klan’s violence were unarmed and didn’t have the ability to defend themselves.

In 1911, the legislature of New York passed the “Sullivan Law,” which required police permission of those people who wanted to own guns and routinely denied permits for African American people and other unpopular minorities¹¹⁷. Fear of African Americans found expression in legislation that applied gun control statues to African American people by not only prohibiting the bearing of concealed weapons, but also requiring a permit for ownership or purchase of weapons. In 1941, Florida Supreme Court Justice Buford declared that the original Act of 1893 passed for the purpose of disarming African American laborers. Justice Buford stated that more than 80% of white men living in rural sections of Florida had violated this statute and that actually, the statue was never intended to apply to the white population. He said that the original Act of 1893 was passed when there was a “great influx of negro laborers into the State.” The Act was passed for the purpose of reducing the unlawful homicides that were prevalent in turpentine and saw-mill camps and to give white citizens in sparsely settled areas a better feeling of security¹¹⁸.

¹¹⁶ CLARK, A. Bruce A.G.E.

¹¹⁷ CLARK, A. Bruce A.G.E.

¹¹⁸ qtd. in COTTRILL, Robert J. DIAMOND, Raymond T. ““Never Intended to Be Applied to the White Population:’ Firearms Regulation and Racial Disparity – The Redeemed South’s Legacy to a National Jurisprudence?” A.G.E.

In *The Racist Origins of US Gun Control Laws Designed To Disarm Slaves, Freedmen, And African-Americans* Steve Ekwall states that according to anti-gun journalist Robert Sherrill Gun Control Act of 1968 was “passed not to control guns but to control blacks.” Under a heading “the following historical events are included as context for passage of the gun control act of 1968” Steve Ekwall points out the race riots that took place in 1965 and 1967. Steve Ekwall notes that in 1960 sit-ins began and by 1961 more than 700,000 students, black and white, had participated in sit-ins. In 1962, 3,000 troops were required to quell riots after University of Mississippi accepted its first black student. Being in the centre of these tense events and aware of racial hostility generally, blacks were willing to take up arms to protect themselves¹¹⁹. But as Cottrol and Diamond state in *The Second Amendment: Toward an Afro-Americanist Reconsideration* the protection that Second Amendment guarantees US citizens historically has not been available for African Americans¹²⁰.

Once African Americans were free, whites, especially poor whites, were anxious that blacks would rise above their places and that white people would lose their economically advantageous position. For this reason, while racist white organizations like the Ku Klux Klan tried to suppress African American people gun control laws were applied to disarm African Americans. Gun ownership was widespread among white people and African Americans were left defenseless against attacks which aimed to reduce them to an economic state that was not much superior to slavery. In this way violence and guns became emblematic of power relationships in America as possession of guns indirectly defined someone’s or some people’s place in the status quo. According to Ekwall in 1990 U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia upheld a ban imposed by the Richmond Housing Authority on the possession of all firearms in public housing projects. The Richmond Tenants Organization had challenged the ban, arguing that such requirement had made the city’s 14,000 public housing residents second-class citizens. In 1995 poor citizens singled out for gun ban in Maine¹²¹. As recent gun laws were applied to prevent poor citizens and African Americans from owning guns, these laws were

¹¹⁹ EKWALL, Steve. *The Racist Origins of US Gun Control Laws Designed To Disarm Slaves, Freedmen And African-Americans*. History of Gun Control. Black Man With A Gun. <<http://www.blackmanwithagun.com>>

¹²⁰ COTTROL, Robert J. DIAMOND, Raymond T. *The Second Amendment: Toward Afro-Americanist Reconsideration* A.G.E.

¹²¹ EKWALL, Steve A.G.E.

mostly motivated by the fear of the poor whites and blacks that was also common in the frontier era.

2.2. Use of Guns to Maintain the Status Quo

While state legislation denied gun ownership to African Americans, use of guns became a symbol of whiteness and the protection of civilization. White supremacy organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan, the Men of Justice, the Constitutional Union Guards and the Knights of the White Camelia used guns to torture and terrorize African American people and thus to maintain white supremacy. Their main purpose was to keep the African Americans in 'their place' socially and economically by taking away African Americans' right to vote, changing elections results, and defeating the Republican party, whose members were against slavery. The Klan was the most powerful white supremacy organization, and after white governments had been established in the South, the Ku Klux Klan continued to undermine the power of African Americans¹²².

In *Reconstruction* McElrath tells that in 1865 several Southern states passed legislation creating black codes which restricted blacks right to own property, restricted where blacks could live. In 1866 the black codes were quickly eliminated. A group of Northern congressmen tried to provide blacks with citizenship and guarantee that federal and state laws would be applied equally to blacks and whites¹²³. In *Ku Klux Klan*, McElrath states that the Klan was organized in Pulaski, Tennessee in 1866. In 1867, General Nathan Bedford Forrest converted the Klan into a paramilitary force serving to oppose directly the formation of Republican governments set up by Congressional Reconstruction acts. According to McElrath when Republican governments sprouted up and Northern congressmen struggled for African Americans' rights the Klan spread its orders throughout the South, but mostly rural areas. Locally organized Klan members terrorized African American men by assaulting them. Klansmen dressed in white robes and hoods rode on horses and

¹²² The Ku Klux Klan, a brief biography! The African American Registry. <<http://www.aaregistry.com>>

¹²³ MCEL RATH, Jessica. Reconstruction. African-American History. <<http://afroamhistory.about.com>>

dragged African American people from their homes and lynched them¹²⁴. In 1870 a Grand Jury reported about this white supremacy organization:

There has existed since 1868, in many counties of the state, an organization known as the Ku Klux Klan, or Invisible Empire of the South, which embraces in its membership a large proportion of the white population of every profession and class. The Klan has a constitution and bylaws, which provides, among other things, that each member shall furnish himself with a pistol, a Ku Klux gown and a signal instrument. The operations of the Klan are executed in the night and are invariably directed against members of the Republican Party. The Klan is inflicting summary vengeance on the colored citizens of these citizens by breaking into their houses at the dead of night, dragging them from their beds, them in the most inhuman manner, and in many instances murdering¹²⁵.

The Klansmen wanted to ensure that nonwhites would maintain their distinct identities because they believed that the racial purity of whites was a matter of divine law and had to be protected by segregation. They requested an apartheid policy, which was essentially large scale ghettoism. In these terms, the KKK philosophy was based on separatist racism which believes that it is the will of God that all races be kept separate in terms of family, national boundaries or social and economic development. According to separatist racists, some people are cursed with black skin and segregation is needed because intermarriage with the dark-skinned, cursed races results in wickedness and rebellion against God. Just like other separatists, Klansmen believed that white society could only be advanced within the narrow confines of race “purity,” so they feared miscegenation and the rise of black culture. In *My Awakening* David Duke, who is a member of KKK, voices the separatist racists’ fear about the possible results of whites’ sexual affairs with nonwhite races:

I wondered if, in a few hundred years, some half-black descendant of mine would be sitting among the ruins of our civilization, brushing away the flies, to die. Every day our nation grows a little darker from the torrential immigration of non-whites, high non-white birthrates, and increasing racial miscegenation; and with each passing day, we see the quality of our lives decline. Crime is ever on the increase, drug activity proliferates, educational quality declines and the American standard of living suffers. The healthy racial values of our forefathers are ridiculed and replaced by

¹²⁴ MCEL RATH, Jessica. Ku Klux Klan. African-American History. <<http://afroamhistory.about.com>>

¹²⁵ qtd. in Ku Klux Klan. Spartacus Educational. <<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk>>

the pseudo-science of egalitarianism. Treason to our heritage prospers and corruption feeds in the highest places¹²⁶.

Like the separatist racists who proclaim that it is Christ's command for his followers to own and be ready to use the most advanced available weapons of their day, such as an M-16 rifle, David Duke also supports gun ownership. The Klansmen's ideology has also been based on this theology of racial separation since the Klansmen furnished themselves with arms and used them against black people in the Reconstruction period, for they feared there would become an anti-white, meaning an anti-American, nation. Another organization, the National Rifle Association, seems to follow the same racist ideology. The NRA is one of the organizations that promotes and encourages gun ownership and rifle shooting. It supports the right to keep and bear arms declared in the Second Amendment, claims to be a sporting group and opposes any gun control law. In fighting gun control, the NRA often portrays the battle as one between true Americans, gun owners, and those who are misguided. However, the significant reality about NRA is that since the late sixties NRA leadership started to promote hatred against foreigners and increase the level of fear directed against all dark-skinned people. Its members feared that the government would destabilize the United States by disarming its people, leaving them open to attack from black people, illegal immigrants, and urban gangs. Because of this, today the NRA even opposes government intervention in gun possession and race matters. While the NRA strongly opposes gun control laws, it doesn't approve of gun ownership for minorities and African American people. In February 1968, the way the NRA commented about the 1968 laws that outlawed the importation of Saturday Night Specials confirms this policy:

Shoddily manufactured by a few foreign makers, hundreds of thousands of these have been peddled in recent years by a handful of U.S. dealers. Prices as low as \$8 or \$10 have placed concealable handguns within reach of multitudes who never before could afford them. Most figure in "crimes of passion" or amateurish holdups, which form the bulk of the increase in violence. The Administration ... sufficient authority to bar by Executive direction these miserably-made, potentially defective arms that contribute so much to rising violence¹²⁷.

¹²⁶ DUKE, David. My Awakening. Aryans and Indian Civilization. Ed. Dave Cooper.

<<http://www.davidduke.com>>

¹²⁷ qtd. in National Rifle Association Information. Violence Policy Center. <<http://www.vpc.org>>

A similar attitude can be observed in Charles Heston's speeches. In *Bowling for Columbine*, when Michael Moore asks Charles Heston, the former president of the NRA, why he owns guns, he answers "because the Second Amendment gives me the right." While his statement makes it clear that he interprets the Second Amendment in a broader sense as a right to bear arms for private purposes, as a symbol of individuality and freedom, he adds that to have a loaded gun in his home makes him feel safe, revealing that fear is the main reason for him to own guns. What's more, while he considers gun ownership as an individual right, he doesn't seem to consider bearing arms as a right for African Americans and other minorities. In 1998 he declared his rage against minorities:

Mainstream America is counting on you to "draw your sword" and fight for them. These people have precious little time and resources to battle misguided Cinderella attitudes, the fringe propaganda of the homosexual coalition, the feminists who preach that it is divine duty for woman to hate men, blacks who raise a militant fist with one hand while they with seek preference with the other, and all the New-Age apologists for juvenile crime, who see roving gangs as a means of youthful expression, sex as a means of adolescent merchandizing, violence as a form of entertainment for impressionable minds, and gun bans as a means to Lord-knows-what. We have reached that point in time when our national social policy originates on Oprah. I say it's time to pull the plug¹²⁸.

Both in KKK and NRA leadership speeches we come across the celebration of gun ownership connected with a white supremacist ideology. These organizations not only want to preserve their gun ownership rights, but they also promote guns. The NRA, which claims to be a "sporting group," blocks almost every single attempt to regulate guns while it opposes the gun ownership of the people who don't match NRA's vision of America. In these terms, NRA and other gun supporter groups seem to be forming their own militias, whose mission is to "protect" homes and reduce the terrorism threat. At the same time they still seem to increase the level of fear directed toward all African Americans in the name of "homeland security."

¹²⁸ HESTON, Charlton. Charlton Heston's Keynote Address at the Free Congress Foundation's 20th Anniversary Gala. Civil Rights Documents Web Published by ACCR. American Civil Rights Review. <<http://www.americancivilrightsreview.com>>

3. REPRESENTATIONS OF AFRICAN AMERICANS

The formation of the racist ideology and the fear that white supremacy culture instilled into American society dates back to the frontier era. In chapter I, I tried to explore the roots of this fear and the formation of this racist ideology. In chapter II, I pointed out the importance of guns for maintaining the status quo during and after the frontier era. In this chapter, I want to trace white and black people's images in the media and point out that the negative images of black people result in additional fear among whites. This fear has been responsible for a large number of additional guns in homes and a high level of access to guns as many Anglo-American people tend to believe the stereotypes of violent, criminal, drug-addicted African Americans are true.

Racist stereotypes that often appear in the American media justify Anglo-Saxon rationalism. As opposed to black stereotypes in the media, white people are often portrayed as intelligent, powerful, yet innocent human beings. Being able to apply violence is considered a positive feature for a white person, and white heroes often use guns in the name of protecting civilization and the world. In *Playing in the Dark*, Toni Morrison points out these portrayals and states that some concerns have become major themes in the American media and literature, as they reinforce the white supremacist structure. According to Morrison, in the social myth that white supremacist culture developed autonomy is freedom and individualism, newness is translated into innocence and authority, and absolute power is considered as a romantic, conquering heroism¹²⁹.

In this social myth where the heroic enterprises of white people are celebrated and the use of violence to control others is encouraged, black presence has tended to enforce the invention of heroic whiteness, and violence that is applied to African American people is justified by defining blacks as innately savage, animalistic and destructive people who deserve punishment and death. Early African American stereotypes tend to claim that blacks are genetically inferior to whites physically, mentally and morally. After the Reconstruction period, authors and film makers like

¹²⁹ MORRISON, Tony. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. Reed Business Information, Inc., 1992.

D.W.Griffith agreed with the view that African Americans are inferior and only good enough to work in cotton fields and rice swamps, while, at the same time, they seemed to argue that without slavery, African Americans were reverting to criminal savagery.

In the Reconstruction period the criminal black stereotype of “the Brute” was constructed to re-enslave African American men. A stark contrast to the happy-go-lucky Sambo, the Brute illustrated that African American males were couldn’t be trusted and could become violent at the slightest provocation. In “King Kong and the White Woman: *Hustler Magazine* and the Demonization of Black Masculinity,” Dines Gail argues that both of these images serve to define black men as outside of the realm of white masculinity by constructing them as the “Other.” In these terms, during the Reconstruction period the description of African American people as the violent other and the formation of the Brute stereotype not only perpetuated the threat of a newly expanding labor force, but also justified the violence of mob action and lynchings that were imposed on black people¹³⁰. In *Are We Not Men? Masculine Anxiety and the Problem of African American Identity*, Philip Harper suggests that the image of the Brute can be analyzed within contemporary society with the O.J.Simpson trial since he was easily depicted as a hypersexual, aggressive black man. He indicates that following the arrest of O.J. Simpson, magazines like *Newsweek* and *Time* fed into the national obsession of the black male as a dreaded criminal. For example, O.J.Simpson’s picture with a much darkened face was put on the cover of *Time Magazine*. The darkening of Simpson’s face, Philip Harper argues, was meant to equate dark skin with inherent criminality¹³¹.

As Harper Philip highlights, while exploring criminal events concerning African American suspects the media often focus on skin color and race and avoid pointing out that poverty, prejudice and inequality may cause many African American people to act in a violent way. In this way the news media often portray African American people as inherently criminals while the depiction of African Americans in

¹³⁰ DINES, Gail. “King Kong and the White Woman: *Hustler Magazine* and the Demonization of Black Masculinity.” *Journal of Violence Against Women*, 1998, Vol. 4 No 3, (291-307)

¹³¹ qtd. in MARCHIORO, Kathleen. “From Sambo to Brute: The Social Construction of African American Masculinity.” *The Edwardsville Journal of Sociology*, Volume 1.
<<http://www.siue.edu/SOCIOLOGY/journal>>

movies and the other media reinforce the notion that blacks are animalistic and weak-minded.

3.1. Literature

Thomas Nelson Page and George Washington Cable portrayed African American people as intellectually inferior, childlike and dependent human beings as they rationalized the slavery system and highlighted white race supremacy. Similarly, in Edgar Allan Poe's *The Gold Bug*, the African American slave is portrayed as unequipped for freedom; he is devoted to his master and contented with his status¹³². In *Ole Virginia*, Page's first collection of short stories published in 1895, Page depicts the antebellum South described by a former slave¹³³. In *Enter the New Negroes*, Martha Jane Nadell comments on Page's fiction:

The stories are shot through with nostalgia for an imaginary and idyllic Southern past, when masters were benevolent and slaves de-voted. Sam is a former slave who looks back fondly on his plantation days and on his master, whom he adored: 'Dem wuz good ole times, marster—de bes' Sam ever see! Dey wuz, in fac'! Niggers didn' hed nothin' 't all to do—jes' hed to 'ten' to de feedin' an' cleanin' de hosses, an' doin' what de marster tell 'em to do; an' when dey wuz sick, dey had things sont 'em out de house, an' de same doctor come to see 'em whar 'ten' to de white folks when dey wuz po'ly. Dyar warn' no trouble nor nothin'¹³⁴.

In *Red Rock*, the book Page wrote during the Reconstruction period, however, African American men are depicted as brutal and violent since he believed that blacks were inferior and were not qualified to assume the unlimited enjoyment of freedom¹³⁵. In his essay *The Negro: The Southerner's Problem* he advocated that African American people deserved lynchings and other kinds of punishments.

¹³² POE, Edgar Allan. *The Gold Bug*. *The Dollar Newspaper*, June 1843. Wikisource. <<http://en.wikisource.org>>

¹³³ PAGE, Thomas Nelson. *Ole Virginia or Marse Chan and Other Stories*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895. Documenting the American South. The University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. <http://docsouth.unc.edu>

¹³⁴ NADELL, Martha Jane. *Enter The New Negroes: Images of Race In American Culture* s:19 President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2004. <http://www.hup.harvard.edu/pdf/NADENT_excerpt.pdf>

¹³⁵ DAVIS, Gode. FORTIER, James M. *Literary References. American Lynching*. <<http://www.americanlynching.com>>

The charge that is often made, that the innocent are sometimes lynched, has little foundation. The rage of a mob is not directed against the innocent, but against the guilty; and its fury would not be satisfied with any other sacrifices than the death of the real criminal. Nor does the criminal merit any consideration, however terrible the punishment. The real injury is to the perpetrators of the crime of destroying the law, and to the community in which the law is slain¹³⁶.

Thomas Dixon also reflects the feelings and fears of many racist southerners. In “What Mark Twain Said Regarding Regime Changes and Other Righteous American Foibles” Peter Schmidt points out that in Thomas Dixon’s novels the postwar Reconstruction South was described as “a colonial nightmare in which, with help from ignorant outsiders, the natives of color overthrew their legitimate white rulers and instituted a regime of terror and corruption¹³⁷”. In Dixon’s *The Leopard’s Spot*, blacks are depicted as terroristic threats while the Anglo-Saxon race is glorified. According to Schmidt at the climax of this novel “the hero, inspired by America’s victory over Spain, expounds on the world mission of an Anglo-Saxon America” and states that God had raised up the Anglo-Saxon race and commissioned it to establish and maintain civilization for weaker races¹³⁸. Since “mixed blood” is portrayed as the embodiment of the worst qualities of both races in Dixon’s fiction, the fear of miscegenation is displayed in *The Leopard’s Spot*, as the black man who lusts for white flesh was set in contrast to the idealized white woman. In this way he gives the message that emancipation had transformed blacks into beasts to be feared and guarded¹³⁹. Dixon’s later work *The Clansman* depicts the rape of a young white virgin by a black brute. The Ku Klux Klan lynches the black brute as the girl and her mother both commit suicide. The book justifies the violence that the Ku Klux Klan applied to African Americans after the Reconstruction period¹⁴⁰.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Charles Carroll’s *The Negro a Beast* theorized that blacks were more akin to the apes than human beings and claimed that

¹³⁶ qtd. in DAVIS, Gode. FORTIER, James M. A.G.E.

¹³⁷ SCHMIDT, Peter. What Mark Twain Said Regarding Regime Changes and Other Righteous American Foibles s:8 Alumni Reunion Lecture Swarthmore College, 3 June 2005. <http://www.sawrthmore.edu/alumni/faculty_lectures/peter_schmidt/download.html>

¹³⁸ SCHMIDT, Peter A.G.E. s:10

¹³⁹ PILGRIM, David. The Brute Caricature. Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia. Ferris State University. <<http://www.ferris.edu>>

¹⁴⁰ DIXON, Thomas. *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1905. Documenting the South. Ed. Natalia Smith. The University Library, The University of North carolian at Chapell Hill. <<http://docsouth.unc.edu>>

the mulattos were the rapists or murderers of the time. In his journal *Medicine*, Dr. William Howard claimed “that the attacks on defenseless white women are evidence of racial instincts¹⁴¹”. In *The Leopard’s Spot* and *Clansman*, Dixon’s argument was that black brutes were raping white women because the Northern carpetbaggers destroyed the natural order of society by giving monstrous blacks franchise and equality with whites resulting in the great suffering of the South and subjugation of whites until the Klu Klux Klan, which was furnished with guns, arose to rescue the white Southerners¹⁴². In these respects lynchings and other kinds of violence were represented as the practice of the American hero’s self-governing feature that protects civilization from the threat of savagery. These noteworthy changes in the representations of African Americans in this period can be explained by white people’s fear of blacks; for the black people gained some political rights in the Reconstruction period, and now they would share power with whites. In this context, “while the white reaction against black equality is often expressed with horror at the prospect of interracial contact between men, it is centered on fears of miscegenation¹⁴³”.

In these terms, the fiction of Thomas Dixon clearly brings out these fears as he advocates that races should be kept separate in terms of family and social development. A character in *The Leopard’s Spot* voices this fear of interracial sexuality: “Shall the future American be an Anglo-Saxon or mulatto?¹⁴⁴” In *The Leopard’s Spot* Dixon explains that the mulatto nation “simply meant Africanization. The big nostrils, flat nose, massive jaw, protruding lip and kinky hair will register their animal marks over the proudest intellect and the rarest beauty of any other race. The rule that had no exception was the drop of Negro blood makes a Negro¹⁴⁵”. Since Anglo-Saxon blood is glorified and interracial sexuality is signified as the pollution of the superior race, the use of guns against African American people, lynchings, and Ku Klux Klan violence are presented as defences against the invasion of the white body. In this context Dixon portrayed the members of the Ku Klux Klan as the heroes who punish this crime and the development of the Ku Klux Klan as a glorious event. In the

¹⁴¹ qtd. in PILGRIM, David. *The Brute Caricature*. A.G.E.

¹⁴² NIDEROST, Eric. ‘The Birth of a Nation’: When Hollywood Glorified the KKK.
<<http://www.historynet.com>>

¹⁴³ EBY, Clare A.G.E.

¹⁴⁴ qtd. in EBY, Clare A.G.E.

¹⁴⁵ qtd. in EBY, Clare A.G.E.

preface of *Clansman* he suggested “An ‘Invisible Empire’ had risen from the field of Death and challenged the Visible to mortal combat¹⁴⁶”.

3.2. Movies

In minstrelsy the white performers used to color their faces and use make-up to give the impression of big lips and large eyes. This physical appearance of African Americans served as the most obvious of all signs of implied black inferiority, and any attempt by black people to enter the white world was amusing to white people as the message given to the audience was that black man’s natural inferiority would never allow him to rise from his lower place in the racial hierarchy.

Minstrelsy first emerged in 1822 when the English actor Charles Mathews performed his one-man show, “A Trip to America” in blackface. Thomas Dartmouth, known as “Daddy Rice,” popularized the minstrel show in 1828. His character was a crippled plantation slave who sang and danced. Rice and other performers used minstrelsy to respond to anti-slavery movements as the minstrels’ depiction of African Americans as child-like people who dropped whatever tasks they were working on in order to dance, sing and party reinforced the racial ideology of white superiority¹⁴⁷. Whites could feel unified while the minstrel performers created an almost sub-human image of the black man or woman by exaggerating black body features. These features were identified as superficial markers of primitiveness and savagery¹⁴⁸. In the minstrel song “Oh! Wake up in De Morning,” the image of the black body is exploited in the two stanzas of the song: “And Sal she had a lubly moufe/Twould reach de poles from norfe to soufe/And when it oped from ear to ear/You’d jump about a foot from fear/Oh! Wake up/While Sal was dancing in a reel/A nigger stept upon her heel/She turned around to gib a grin/Open’d her mouth and her head fell in/Oh! Wake up¹⁴⁹”.

¹⁴⁶ DIXON, Thomas A.G.E.

¹⁴⁷ MCEL RATH, Jessica. A Look Back at Minstrelsy. African-American History. <<http://afroamhistory.about.com>>

¹⁴⁸ LEE, H. Jason. Minstrelsy and The Construction of Race in America. African American Sheet Music. A Brown University Library Digital Collection. <<http://dl.lib.brown.edu>>

¹⁴⁹ qtd. in LEE, H. Jason A.G.E.

As well as depicting African Americans as physically different and inferior, minstrels also set African Americans off culturally, for they portrayed African American people as superstitious, possessing a belief in animal fables, and as foolish and compulsively in love with dance and watermelons¹⁵⁰. In Dan Lewis' tune "Moses Cart Dem Melon Down," the main character cheerfully sings about the arrival of a cart of melons as he dances: "Moses gwine to cart dem mellon down! Den/Hitch up the cart cause I must go, Moses gwine to cart dem mellon down! De/Now my bretheren I bid you farewell, Moses gwine to cart dem mellon down¹⁵¹". In these shows, as white audiences laughed at the foolish black-faced performer, they became re-assured of their superiority to African Americans. While minstrel shows portrayed black people as weak-minded, they also criticized the Emancipation Proclamation, the civil right movements, and the Freedmen's Bureau activities and highlighted how blackness contrasted with the values of a "good" republican, which were defined as control, discipline, rationality and hard work¹⁵².

In *Gone with the Wind* the roles for African Americans were not much different from those acted out by the white minstrels. The practice of slavery is presented as acceptable, and white superiority goes unquestioned while the slaves are depicted as happy and contented. This romanticized "Old South" depiction was a relief to many whites, who were struggling at the time to redefine their social roles in a society where nearly four million black people had been changed from chattel to citizen. Besides, according to Emanuel Levy, in the 1930s when *Gone with the Wind* was released, America was in an economic depression and the glorification of the Old South served to encourage Americans feel united while it aroused the instinct of survival¹⁵³.

Gone with the Wind tells the story of an aristocratic white woman who struggles to keep southern conceptions of domestic and social order. In order to get money to save Tara, the family's plantation, the protagonist, Scarlett marries a man she doesn't love, works in the fields of Tara herself to ensure a good harvest of cotton, and kills a Yankee who has come to steal from Tara. She is strong but at the

¹⁵⁰ LEE, H. Jason A.G.E.

¹⁵¹ qtd. in LEE, H. Jason A.G.E.

¹⁵² LEE, H. Jason A.G.E.

¹⁵³ LEVY, Emanuel. *Gone With the Wind* (1939): Cultural Legacy. <<http://www.emanuellevy.com>>

same time loyal to the traditional Southern life. In these terms she served as a representative of the loyal women, the only remaining component of the patriarchal household after the Civil War as the war and the abolition slavery act changed the structure of Southern society. Just like *Scarlett*, the white women assumed greater public roles in the war effort. In *Southern Local Color: Stories of Region, Race and Gender*, Barbara C. Ewell and Pamela Glenn Menke tell that the war and its aftermath empowered white women's social status while the returning Confederate soldiers thought of themselves as failures not only because of military defeat but also because of the loss of property and slaves as after the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, former slaves started to demand wages and control over their toil. Meanwhile, white women's traditional feminine roles, protecting children and upholding moral values, weighed heavily against financial interests, and they realized that to ensure security, white male supremacy was a necessity. Barbara Ewell and Pamela Menke suggest that as a result of this white women often followed racist rules and guidelines¹⁵⁴. They quote from Elna C. Green, who explains that class, gender and race relations in Southern life "were set in a permanent configuration, each mutually enforcing the others," as the traditional structure of Southern society depended on the maintenance of blacks at the bottom of the social ladder¹⁵⁵. In these respects the romanticization of the Old South in which unquestioning acceptance of the essential inferiority of African Americans is displayed was a way to deflect attention away from these conflicts as it glorified the traditional Southern life. The way *Scarlett* is romantically drawn to Ashley Wilkes, who is a representative of the Southern aristocrat who fights bravely in the war but finds himself confused and directionless in its aftermath, highlights *Scarlett's* loyalty while both Melanie's and *Scarlett's* love is vital to Ashley's continued existence. Unlike *Scarlett* and other strong white female characters, African American women in the film are foolish, unfailingly loyal to the whites who were their masters, and unable to survive on their own. For example, there is Miss Prissy, who is ignorant, devoid of ambition, and unable to keep up with her responsibilities. This famous line which the character of Miss Prissy voiced in a childish manner, "Lordse, we got to have a doctor! I don't know nothin' 'bout birthin' babies!" highlights the notion that whites are more talented and intelligent, as in this

¹⁵⁴ EWELL, Barbara C. MENKE, Pamela Glenn eds. "Introduction." *Southern Local Color: Stories of Region, Race and Gender*. Athens:U of Georgia P, 2002. xii-1xvi.

<<http://www.loyno.edu/~bewell/LocalColorIntro.html>>

¹⁵⁵ qtd. in EWELL, Barbara C. MENKE, Pamela Glenn A.G.E.

critical moment of the movie when the white woman, Scarlett, behaves in a dignified manner and helps Melanie to bear her baby. The other black slave woman, Mammy, is portrayed as a strong, authoritarian and skillful housekeeper; nevertheless, her presence on the screen only serves to perpetuate white supremacy, as her every act affirms that whites are really adult and superior. Most of the other slaves are presented as grateful and faithful souls who love their masters. They are most likely to view the Yankee's efforts at the Reconstruction of the South as an unwanted intrusion upon their lives.

In *Gone with the Wind* the Freedman's Bureau is a corrupt Yankee institution, and the Ku Klux Klan is an organization that respectable white men join. While driving home with Uncle Peter one afternoon, Scarlett comes across Northern women. When they ask if they can find a nurse to look after their children, she answers, "If you can find a darky just in from the country who hasn't been spoiled by the Freedmen's Bureau, you'll have the best kind of servant possible." Later, Scarlett explains that the Southern people consider slaves as almost members of their families. Uncle Peter shows pride and indignation in the face of his humiliation by the Yankee woman as she explains why she can never trust a black slave and let him or her handle her babies. This scene implies that slaves are happiest on the plantation under the paternalistic power of whites, and Northerners, who promise freedom to the African Americans wrong them because they don't really mind what becomes of them without the protection of southern whites. In these terms Uncle Peter's depiction as a contented slave who is willing to serve his master affirms white superiority, justifies the slavery system, and allows the white audience to displace any guilt about the history of colonialism and slavery. In his journal *The 10 Biggest Myths about Black History*, Lerone Bennett Jr. argues that "to whites there is always at the back of the mind this image, this myth of *Gone With The Wind*, with Clark Gable and Scarlett O'Hara in the Big House and blacks – happy, irresponsible, faithful and grateful – in their appointed places in the kitchens and the fields." He proposes that the portrait of happy slaves who cried bitter tears when Lincoln freed them is a white fantasy. He adds that African American slaves staged more than two hundred revolts and

conspiracies, poisoned whole families and slew their masters and mistresses in hand-to-hand combat to resist the coercive slavery institution¹⁵⁶.

D.W.Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* is known to be the first movie in which African Americans were portrayed in terms of the crudest racial stereotypes. According to Richard Slotkin in 1913 and 1914 Griffith was searching for a subject that would serve his purposes. He wanted to re-create a historical episode that would have a unique potential for public education. When he chose Dixon's novel *The Clansman*, the title was changed from *The Clansman* to *The Birth of a Nation* to highlight the movie's ideological mission in telling the nation's history¹⁵⁷. In the first scenes of *Birth of a Nation*, African Americans seem to be happy and contented as they serve the white people and work in the cotton fields. From *Birth of a Nation's* viewpoint it was the Northerners who spoiled the natural order of the state by promising freedom to African Americans and starting the war. Considering these facts, we can say that in this movie there are two kinds of blacks. The first ones are defined as "Faithful Souls" who know their place and accept their inferiority; the other kind of black is the renegade who thinks he is as good as a white person and denies his master's guidance. In this way the movie blames the carpetbagging Northerners for the uprising of these black slaves as it depicts the war between the slave owners and abolitionists.

The plot of *Birth of a Nation* revolves around two families. The Stonemans, the Northern family, live in Washington, D.C., and own a rural getaway in Pennsylvania. The Honorable Austin Stoneman is an abolitionist politician who has a daughter named Elsie and two sons named Phil and Tod. The Camerons, the Southern family, preside over a modest but idyllic plantation in Piedmont, South Carolina, where slaves pick cotton in satisfaction and happily dance to entertain their masters. Ben, Duke and Wade are the three Cameron brothers who defend the South's ideals at all costs. Margaret is the older sister, while Flora is the younger sister who is playful and innocent. The two families become friends as their sons board together at school.

¹⁵⁶ BENNETT, Lerone. The 10 Biggest Myths about Black History. ChickenBones: A Journal for Literary & Artistic African American Themes. <<http://www.nathanieltturner.com/10biggestmythsblackhistory.htm>>

¹⁵⁷ SLOTKIN, Richard. *Gunfighter Nation: the Myth of the Frontier in the Twentieth-Century America* s:238 New York: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1992

When the Stoneman boys travel south during the antebellum period to visit their old pals, Phil falls for Margaret and Ben falls for Elsie. Ben carries the picture of Elsie with him until he finally meets her. Then the war breaks out and interrupts relations between the families.

In the first scenes of the movie, Austin Stoneman, who is an abolitionist leader from the North, argues with Lincoln and points out that the defeated South must change. Lincoln abolishes slavery. After his assassination, Austin Stoneman wields power, and African Americans start to take offices, as the good Southerners mourn “Our best friend is gone.” Stoneman insists on making the mulatto politician, Silas Lynch, the peer of the Southern whites. However, Lynch is presented as greedy, corrupt and ungodly. He represents the stereotype of savage sexuality and evil because of his mixed-race parentage. In one scene he is literally drunk and stops short of raping Elsie only when her father suddenly enters. The film builds to a powerful climax when a former slave, a newly promoted black officer, Gus, proposes marriage to Flora, the youngest Cameron sister. Gus begins to chase Flora through the forest, and as Gus reassures Flora that he intends her no harm, Flora finds herself pinned on the edge of a cliff. Gus advances toward Flora, and she loses her balance and falls. The title card says that Flora “found sweeter the opal gate of death,” implying that death is preferable to a possible rape or even a black man’s touch. These are the scenes that highlight the black people’s lust and arrogant power and point out the necessity for Cameron to form the Ku Klux Klan. Finally the Ku Klux Klan catches Gus, lynches him, and dumps his body at Silas Lynch’s door. Lynch’s preparations for a “forced marriage” to Elsie is another scene which plays into the white viewer’s fear of black-white miscegenation. Even the abolitionist Congressman Stoneman recoils in horror at the thought of this race-mixing, this miscegenation and the possibility of a black son-in-law. As Elsie is bound and preparations for the marriage begin, Stoneman faints and the Ku Klux Klan rides to the rescue and frees Elsie. This rescue of the white woman is a significant event and highlights the white supremacy ideology, which argues that since American character is genetically transmissible to future generations and its different qualities are rooted in its blood, American blood must be protected from “pollution.”

The film's premise is to develop this myth that civilization is to be built by the white man, and progress depends on the maintenance of barriers between the races. Griffith sees blacks using the ballot box as a threat to this civilization, and he presents Reconstruction as a period in which African American people collectively became violent, greedy and arrogant. In these respects the film asserts that violence and the use of guns is necessary against African American people for the sake of civilization and progress. As Griffith glorifies Ku Klux Klan violence, he builds up certain African American stereotypes that would affirm Anglo-Saxon superiority.

One of the stereotypes that is served in this movie is the faithful black mammy who is loyal to her master and speaks to a Northern Negro: "Yo' northern low down black trash, don't try no airs on me!" She represents "the good negro" who is hardworking and servile to the whites yet bossy to her people. The Black Brute stereotype is introduced to the audience by the character of Gus. Gus is portrayed as a sexualized primitivist black who can't direct or control his lust. This stereotype is practical to justify the lynchings and Ku Klux Klan violence, and it enables white people to cover up the white plantation owner's rape of enslaved African American women. African Americans who struggled for equal rights during the Reconstruction period are also portrayed as "bad niggers" who are beguiled by the promises of freedom. In some scenes African Americans celebrate the black party's triumph as they dance and cheer on the streets while whites are portrayed as silent and helpless against the wild, crazed, black crowd. The message that blacks need to be controlled by white authority is presented by this scene since African American people are depicted as dangerous, subhuman creatures who lack the ability to comprehend the superior, civilized, white world. The depiction of the Ku Klux Klan as heroes who punish these "black savages" is the most noteworthy event in the movie. Certainly Griffith considered the formation of the Ku Klux Klan a significant turning point in American history. For him the Ku Klux Klan was the guardian of civilized society, and the blacks deserved violence because they were inherently inferior and incapable of appreciating the freedom that was given to them. By portraying blacks as savages who threaten civilization, he rationalized the Klan's use of guns.

The movie *King Kong* can be seen as another allegory about the anxiety of whiteness as it expresses the working class whites' growing fear about the black

migration from the South. Like *Birth of a Nation*, this classic Hollywood movie depicts the rescue of a white woman from the primitive other. While Fay Wray symbolizes vulnerable white womanhood who is assaulted and needs to be protected, African American man is expressed by the image of King Kong as he is colonized and enslaved. King Kong's death at the end of the movie remasculinizes the white man as he conquers the black menace and regains the woman. In this way, the image of King Kong serves to construct the white male as the protector of white womanhood while it symbolizes the beastiality of the black race. The natural habitat of Kong is on the fictional Skull Island, located in the South Pacific. When the white adventurers, who may be seen as symbolizing the white British slavery traders, come to the island, they encounter a primitive band of blacks who worship the giant monkey. The natives themselves are presented as violent savages, as they regularly sacrifice virgins to King Kong. When heroine Ann Darrow is captured by a group of natives and offered as a sacrifice to Kong, he transforms the blonde woman into an object of sexual desire rather than killing her. Kong not only protects her but also shows compassion to her while he disregards countless native sacrifices. Kong's love for Darrow implies the black male's desire for a white woman. Just like in the brute stereotype, Kong expresses his love through forceful means; he often grabs hold of Darrow and drags her. In these terms Kong's act of taking the white woman as his captive can be considered as an illustration of rape violence while Kong's increase in size symbolizes the severity of its threat to the white public. On his native island he is huge, but when he escapes and arrives in New York he reaches his most impressive height. In *King Kong: Race, Sex, and Rebellion*, David N. Rosen states that "the image of King Kong on a Broadway stage may correspond very closely to white America's attitudes toward black men in the 1930s," when violence and numerous race riots followed black migration¹⁵⁸.

During the First World War, as the war shut off the flow of cheap European immigrant labor and the need for industrial workers became acute in urban cities, some agents and newspapers that represented various northern industrial concerns published letters to Southern African Americans from newly transplanted African American people saying that life was better in the North. As in the North there were

¹⁵⁸ ROSEN, N. David. King Kong Race, Sex, and Rebellion. Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media. <<http://www.ejumpcut.org>>

far fewer lynchings and the rates of pay far exceeded anything African Americans could make in the South, hundreds of thousands of Southern blacks migrated northward in 1916 and 1917 to take advantage of the job openings. In *Black Migration* Gerald Early states that New York's black population grew from 91,709 in 1910 to 152,467 by 1920, and to 328,000 by 1930. Chicago's black population jumped from 44,103 to 109,458 by 1920 and to 234,000 by 1930. St. Louis's black population increased from 45,000 in 1910 to 94,000 in 1930. Cleveland's went from 8,500 in 1910 to 72,000 in 1930. Philadelphia's went from 84,500 in 1910 to 220,600 in 1930¹⁵⁹. This increased population of blacks threatened white society. While tensions among African Americans and white people increased, the Ku Klux Klan greatly expanded its membership and continued to apply violence to African Americans while it considered the protection of white women as a major part of the task of saving "white civilization." During this period, the presentations of African Americans in popular culture reflected white people's complex feelings. While some of the movies like *Gone with the Wind* and *Jazz Singer* followed the minstrel tradition and presented African American people as objects of entertainment, movies like *King Kong* depicted African Americans as savages who had the potential for violence to destroy the order of things in White society.

A more recent Hollywood movie, *Witness*, exploited racial stereotypes to identify whiteness as innocent and pure. In this movie the black male character commits a murder while a little white boy watches him. After the murder he looks around anxiously to make sure no one has seen him. As he comes around the stall where the white boy is hiding, the camera moves from the black hand to the scared little boy's face. In *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*, Bell Hooks describes this scene as enhancing the movie's thriller dimension as it contrasts demonized, perilous blackness with innocent whiteness¹⁶⁰.

Traffic is another film that portrays black people and ghetto life as bestial and brutal. In *Traffic* African American male is depicted as a hypersexualized, white-flesh-desiring drug dealer who has taken advantage of the confusion and the ultimate

¹⁵⁹ EARLY, Gerald. *Black Migration: African Americans Journey North Searching for Prosperity and Freedom*. Jazz Film By Ken Burns. <<http://www.pbs.org>>

¹⁶⁰ HOOKS, Bell. *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* s:69 New York: South End Press, 1990.

innocence of the Euro-American female who is caught up in her unintentional addiction. Early in the film *Caroline Wakefield*, the daughter of the nation's newly appointed Drug Czar, is introduced to the viewers as a wealthy, intelligent 16-year-old drug user. As her father has assumed his responsibilities to his new governmental post, she experiences freebasing cocaine with her boyfriend. She hits her lowest point when she starts to trade her body for sex to a ruthless African American male drug dealer. She needs drugs, so we see her in ghetto, buried beneath the naked body of a muscular, dark-complexioned man. A hard, mechanical, unfeeling kind of sex is interrupted as the African American dealer, whose body is glistening with sweat, arises from the bed and goes toward the door to sell drugs. This scene of cruel sexuality, devoid of all affection, sends the message that black sexuality is cold, deviant and animalistic. While the young white woman is depicted as a prostitute who is in desperate need of rescue, interracial sexuality is demonized and described as dominant-submissive. In *"Race:" Representation and the Sporting Body* Ben Carrington suggests that the use of images of African American males in animal-like positions which emphasize their sexuality can also be observed in commercials. According to Carrington, the black models are often shot with a high intensity film and black skin is exposed to a microscopic gaze. In this way a "pornographic" effect is produced by showing veins, pores and presenting the black male body as vulnerable¹⁶¹. In "King Kong and the White Woman: *Hustler Magazine* and the Demonization of Black Masculinity," Gail Dines argues that according to the studies that compare the representations of white men and black men in pornography, it is also the black male characters who are granted the least humanity and most lack the ability to be intimate¹⁶². These representations of blacks as animalistic savages deny black people's humanity and fuel white's fear of African Americans.

3.3. News

News in the media plays an important role in representing African Americans as violent and savage people. Although African Americans are more likely to be

¹⁶¹ CARRINGTON, Ben. "Race," Representation and the Sporting Body s:22 Goldsmiths College University of London, New Cross, London SE14 6NW,2002.

<<http://www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/cucr/pdf/carrington.pdf>>

¹⁶² DINES, Gail A.G.E.

victims, the television news focuses on black poverty and crime and presents black people as criminals.

In news media soundbites taken from a longer speech or interview are very useful to help guide footage editors to focus on parts of dialogue that help advance the overall message. According to Robert M. Entman and Andrew Rojecki, African Americans aren't shown making an important contribution to the serious business of the nation as the soundbites of black people are rarely used in the news media. Entman and Rojecki show that while the number of soundbites on foreign affairs uttered by whites is 99, by blacks it is 1; the number of soundbites on economics uttered by whites is 86; by blacks it is 1, the number of soundbites on electoral politics uttered by whites is 79, by blacks it is 0, while the number of soundbites on sports and entertainment uttered by whites is 35, by blacks it is 11, and the number of soundbites on crime uttered by whites is 149, by blacks it is 24¹⁶³.

While African Americans appear mostly in sports, sports commentators usually treat black athletes differently. By highlighting African American athletes' physical prowess instead of their inherent or proven mental abilities, strategies, or training, they deny black people's humanity. Moreover, sports commentators often use animalistic similes to describe black athletes. Paul Gallico, the *New York Times* sports editor, described Joe Louis as "the magnificent animal... He eats. He sleeps. He fights... Is he all instinct, all animal? Or have a hundred million years left a fold upon his brain? I see in this colored man something so cold, so hard, so cruel that I wonder as to his bravery. Courage in the animal is desperation. Courage in the human is something incalculable and divine¹⁶⁴". These representations that describe blacks as strong, powerful, quick but with "wild" moments when they supposedly lack cognitive capabilities reduce the blacks to biological essences¹⁶⁵. They divorce black athletes' achievements from their humanity as they affirm the notion that blacks have animalistic strength they can hardly restrain.

¹⁶³ ENTMAN, M. Robert. ROJECKI, Andrew. *The Entman-Rojecki Index of Race and the Media*. University of Chicago Press. <<http://www.press.uchicago.edu>>

¹⁶⁴ qtd. in CARRINGTON, Ben A.G.E. s:41

¹⁶⁵ CARRINGTON, Ben A.G.E. s:17

In *The Black Image in the White Mind* Entman and Rojecki suggest that network news tends to “ghettoize” African American people and often depicts them as criminals¹⁶⁶. In *Off Balance: Youth, Race & Crime in the News*, Lori Dorfman states that according to the University of Missouri School of Journalism’s “Guide to Research on Race and the News,” news programs often describe African Americans as perpetrators who as a group are dangerous and indistinguishable. While black people appear more frequently in crime news stories than whites, blacks are underrepresented as victims. However, statistics reveal that blacks are most often the victims where more serious crimes are concerned¹⁶⁷. For example, according to a study by Marable Manning in *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America*, from 1973 to 1978 white males were victimized by violent crime at rates between 42 and 45 per year per thousand . . . For black men, the rate was between 53 and 57 per thousand . . . Any black man in the U.S. - in the aforementioned time frame - had a 6 to 8 times greater chance of being murdered than any white man¹⁶⁸. Contrary to these facts, rather than portraying African Americans as victims, documentary-style programs like *Cops* and *Law and Order* constantly represent African American people as drug dealers, rapists murderers or other kinds of dangerous criminals. During the interview with Michael Moore in *Bowling for Columbine*, the producer and creator of *Cops* actually admits to the possible racist effect of his show but then basically says, “Oh well, it’s good TV.”

In *The Black Image in the White Mind* Entman and Rojecki express that the images shown by the news media play a significant role in shaping the attitudes of whites toward black people as they state that a mug shot of a black defendant is four times more likely to appear in a local television news report than that of a white defendant, that the accused is two times more likely to be shown physically restrained in a local television news report when the accused is white, and that the name of the accused is two times more likely to be shown on screen in a local TV news report if the defendant is black rather than white¹⁶⁹.

¹⁶⁶ ENTMAN, M. Robert. ROJECKI, Andrew A.G.E.

¹⁶⁷ DORFMAN, Lori. *Off Balance: Youth, Race & Crime in the News*. Berkeley Media Studies Group, Public Health Institute Vincent Schiraldi, Justice Policy Institute, 2001.

<<http://www.buildingblocksforyouth.org>>

¹⁶⁸ qtd. in HIGHSMITH, Gary. *Black Skin White Justice: Race Matters in the Criminal Justice System*. Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute. <<http://www.yale.edu/ynhti>>

¹⁶⁹ ENTMAN, M. Robert. ROJECKI, Andrew A.G.E.

News about African American people often covers similar issues of conflict and violence, and in the majority of the instances the items lack context and explanation. Mostly, the cause of the crime and the why and where are left out, as crime reporting focuses mainly on the crime event. This kind of reporting reinforces the belief that genetically blacks are criminals. African Americans are rarely asked for their opinions about the events, and in some cases there is a tendency to explain African American people's behaviour by saying that blacks want revenge against white people. News programs frequently focus on the number of people involved when they report on events in which black people are the victims. Crimes that occur in whites' areas are considered to be serious and white victims are personified while the black victims are reported as if they are faceless. These kinds of reporting methods that support the belief that blacks are used to being killed or injured can be observed in the media coverage of Hurricane Katrina. During the coverage of Katrina there was much discussion about whether the appropriate term to describe suffering people was "refugee" or "evacuee." African American leaders objected to the use of "refugee" because of its negative connotations. The *Oxford English Dictionary* explains that the word "refugee" means "one who, owing to religious persecution or political troubles, seeks refuge in a foreign country" or "a runaway; a fugitive from justice." In a "Fresh Air" commentary of September 8, 2005, on National Public Radio, Linguistics professor Geoffrey Nunberg reported that although newspapers defended the use of "refugee" as meaning simply someone who seeks refuge, the statistics revealed that the use of this term by the media wasn't neutral. According to Geoffrey Nunberg's research in Nexis, in wire service articles mentioning Katrina over a week period, articles containing "evacuee" outnumber those containing "refugee" by 56% to 44% (n=1522). But in contexts in which the words appear within 10 words of "poor" or "black," "refugee" is favored by 68% to 32% (n=85). These disparities reveal that even if unwittingly the term "refugee," which reflects the image of people as poor, forlorn and desperate, was used for blacks in the coverage of Katrina¹⁷⁰. In *Racism in Media Language and Law Enforcement Officers' Actions after Hurricane Katrina*, John R. Rickford says that in a meeting held in Tull Auditorium, Stanford Communications Professor Marcyliena Morgan pointed out the different use of "looting" and "finding" in the news media coverage of

¹⁷⁰ NUNBERG, Geoffrey. When Words Break Down. Longer version of "Fresh Air" commentary, September 8, 2005. <<http://www-csli.stanford.edu/~nunberg/looting.html>>

Katrina. According to Morgan, the editor of Newswire uses the words “finding” and “residents” to portray white protagonists in a more innocent way when he tells about white men, saying “two residents wade through chestdeep water after finding bread and soda from a local grocery store,” while the black man is “a young man who walks through chest deep flood water after looting a grocery store¹⁷¹”.

News media largely determine how people think about particular issues. Three quarters of the public say they form their opinions about crime from what they see or read in the news¹⁷². As the news media constantly portrays black people negatively, white Americans fear African Americans and believe they are more likely to be victimized by black people than by whites.

3.4. Other Representations

Blacks are often portrayed and conceptualized as physically threatening criminals. In *Culture of Fear*, Barry Glassner suggests that by the 1990’s people could blame rappers for any violent and misogynistic act because of their odious song lyrics¹⁷³. Similarly, some of the self-representations of African Americans are read as the glorification of violence rather than explorations of trauma caused by slavery. In *Shadow and Act*, Ralph Ellison describes how prejudice causes African American people to experience catastrophic psychological trauma. According to Ralph Ellison, African Americans were in desperate search of an identity in America where they were not considered citizens but were Americans, where they were full of the tensions of modern man yet regarded as primitives¹⁷⁴. In the prologue of *Invisible Man* Ellison points out that stereotypes often distort the reality of black individuals and blacks are caught in an identity crisis:

I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allen Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids—and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because

¹⁷¹ RICKFORD, John R. Racism in Media Language and Enforcement Officers’ Action after Hurricane Katrina. <http://csre.stanford.edu/pdfs/JRR_KatrinaRemarks05.pdf>

¹⁷² DORFMAN, Lori A.G.E.

¹⁷³ GLASSNER, Barry. *Culture of Fear: Why Americans are Afraid of the Wrong Things* s:122 Basic Books, 1999.

¹⁷⁴ PAQUET-DEYRIS, Anne-Marie. Toni Morrison’s Jazz and the City. *African American Review*. <http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2838/is_2_35/ai_77828278>

people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination indeed, everything except me¹⁷⁵.

The life of Frederick Douglass would serve up useful information in this point to illustrate black slaves' struggle for identity and the place of violence in this struggle. Frederick Douglass was a mulatto slave child who had an education unlike other slaves of the time. He had been sent to his grandparents, but after this short period that passed securely for him, he was placed in Baltimore, in the house of his master's brother. Sophia Auld, the mistress of the house, treated him as a child. Therefore, Douglass was living away from the reality of slavery. Meanwhile, Sophia started to teach Douglass reading, but when her husband learned of this, he scolded Sophia and forbade her from giving him any further lessons. She stopped giving him lessons and became violently opposed to any activity that would develop Frederick's reading skill. But Frederick had already determined to educate himself and took spelling lessons from his white playmates. He bought an antislavery book, *The Columbian Orator*, and he believed that knowledge was a kind of path to freedom. At the age of sixteen, he was sent to the plantation, for Master Thomas Auld realized that he was turning out to be someone quite different from the other slaves. He was to be transformed psychologically into an obedient slave. In this plantation he was cruelly whipped and overworked by the slave-breaker Edward Covey. One day he strongly resisted Covey's efforts to tie and whip him. He says that at the moment he attacked the overseer he felt equal to the white man and forgot the color of his skin. Douglass says that this was a significant event in his life because it made him believe that counter-violence is essential for slaves to become free. After escaping from slavery he supported the violent strategy of radical abolitionist John Brown, and he justified Brown's attack on Harper's Ferry¹⁷⁶. In *Black Atlantic*, Paul Gilroy describes this significant moment that affected Douglass's attitudes:

Douglass's departure from the pacifism that had marked his early work is directly relevant to his critical understanding of modernity. It underscored the complicity of civilization and brutality while emphasizing that the order of authority on which the slave plantation relied cannot be

¹⁷⁵ ELLISON, Ralph. *Invisible Man*. Prologue. New York, Vintage, 1995.

¹⁷⁶ TAKAKI, Ronald A.G.E. s:122-125

undone without recourse to counter-violence of the oppressed. Douglass's description of combat with Covey expresses this once again, offering an interesting though distinctly masculinist resolution of slavery's inner oppositions¹⁷⁷.

As Paul Gilroy states in *Black Atlantic*, violence had a great importance in master-slave relations, and in some respects it simply represented authority. During the Reconstruction period racist white mobs applied violence to maintain authority and power over African Americans. While white mobs increased the dose of violence that was applied to African Americans, legislatures passed gun control laws to disarm the resistance movements. Following these incidents "the brute" stereotype was developed to rationalize violence.

In *Native Son* Richard Wright explores the continuation of this stereotype in contemporary media and emphasizes the vicious, double-edged effect of racism on black people. He highlights that Bigger's violence stems from racial hatred. While he is beset with the hardship of economic oppression and forced to act subserviently, the media consistently portrays black people as animalistic brutes and forces him into a pressured, dangerous state of mind. In these conditions it becomes inevitable for Bigger to react with violence. However, his violence only increases the racism in American society as it confirms racist whites' fears of blacks¹⁷⁸.

Since Richard Wright points out the inability of white Americans to see black Americans as anything other than stereotypes, the debates about black rappers are a useful means to explore his argument. Rap lyrics are often viewed as the glorification of violence in the media and are considered as the affirmation of black criminality. In an election year liberals and conservatives debated Ice T's song "Cop Killer." In a Harvard Law School Forum, NRA president Charlton Heston said that he mentioned the lyrics of "Cop Killer" in another meeting he attended in Beverly Hills:

To a hushed room of a thousand average American stockholders, I simply read the full lyrics of "Cop Killer" - every vicious, vulgar, instructional word. "I got my 12 gauge sawed off I got my headlights turned off I'm about to bust some shots off I'm about to dust some cops off." It got

¹⁷⁷ GILROY, Paul. *Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* s:63 Harvard University Press, 1995.

¹⁷⁸ WRIGHT, Richard. *Native Son*. Harper Perennial, 1940.

worse, a lot worse. I won't read the rest of it to you. But trust me, the room was a sea of shocked, frozen, blanched faces¹⁷⁹.

Then he called on the audiences to act against the attacks, for it was they who were responsible for building a corruption-free society:

...disobedience means you must be willing to act, not just talk. When a mugger sues his elderly victim for defending herself ... jam the switchboard of the district attorney's office. When your university is pressured to lower standards until 80% of the students graduate with honors ... choke the halls of the board of regents. When an 8-year-old boy pecks a girl's cheek on the playground and gets hauled into court for sexual harassment ... march on that school and block its doorways¹⁸⁰.

While the debates were going on, Ice-T stated that the song was a tool for him to highlight the violence that had been directed toward African Americans by the police and added that he hoped it would scare the police and stop the white-on-black violence in the streets. When he was asked, "Do you advocate the murder of law enforcement officials in your song Cop Killer?" he said, "No way...what I'm trying to tell people is that police brutality in the hood is nothing new. And the thing is that whether this guy in my song is real or not, believe it, there are people at that point, OK?"¹⁸¹

In her essay, "Imagined Violence/Queer Violence: Representation, Rage, and Resistance," Judith Halberstam claims that representations of violence by minorities in the media constitute a postmodern revolt that would challenge the conventional power relationships in which white men usually have the right to dominate, to display their might and masculinity. She considers these representations as "the threat of the return of the repressed" and the act of moving away from peaceful activism to the aggressiveness that demands the right to exist¹⁸². However, the media often avoids the complexity of black violence and continues to portray African American men as threatening brutes, absolving whites from any responsibility. When we consider that beliefs about African Americans mostly develop from media exposure, and that the

¹⁷⁹ HESTON, Charlton. "Winning the Cultural War." HARVARD Law School, 16 February 1999. WEBCommentary. <<http://www.webcommentary.com>>

¹⁸⁰ HESTON, Charlton A.G.E.

¹⁸¹ qtd. in HALBERSTAM, Judith. "Imagined Violence/Queer Violence: Representation, Rage, and Resistance." *Social Text* No. 37, A Special Section Edited by Anne McClintock Explores the Sex Trade 1993:187-201

¹⁸² HALBERSTAM, Judith A.G.E.

depiction of African Americans is rooted in negative stereotypes, particularly “mammy,” “coon” and “sambo” in the entertainment field and the “brute” on news and reality programming, we inevitably come to the conclusion that whites were led to think about blacks in negative ways. A study conducted by Allport and Postman confirms this suggestion and reveals that African American men are often expected to be violent by American citizens. In this study of rumor transmission, psychologists showed people a picture of people on a subway in which white man is shown holding a straight razor. Participants in this study looked at the picture and then told a second person about it, and then told a third person, and so on. After six tellings, the razor in the white man’s hand shifted to the black man’s¹⁸³. As this study reveals, people tend to perceive blacks as more inclined to violence and expect them to be the perpetrators of violence. Given these conditions, in the U.S.A. whites often find comfort in owning guns for self-preservation. The stereotypes of African Americans as violent and criminal constantly fuel whites’ fear of blacks while gun-supporter organizations like NRA calls on people to own guns.

¹⁸³ MARKUS, Hazel Rose. “Race and Representation.” *Confronting Katrina Race, Class and Disaster in America*. CCSRE course session on Media, Culture and Politics of Representation: Viewing a Racialized Disaster. <<http://ccsre.stanford.edu/pdfs/MarkusKatrinaComments.pdf>>

CONCLUSION

American attitudes toward firearms are old and deep-seated. Unlike in Europe, on the American frontier having guns and hunting were not considered as aristocratic privileges but a part of the ordinary freedom of citizens. However, historians and sociologists like William Tonso tell us that guns can't be considered simply as "weapons or pieces of sporting equipment." William Tonso suggests that for Americans they have also been symbols of "the Civil War, the elemental life styles of the frontier, war in general, crime, masculinity in the abstract, adventure, civic responsibility or irresponsibility, slavery or freedom¹⁸⁴". Of all these symbols, the civic responsibility and the use of guns for self-preservation and defense are considered the most important as they are consistently approved of by a majority of the American public. According to *A Newsweek Poll: Deadly Force*, by David Alpern, when two 1985 polls asked whether vigilantism is justified by circumstances, seventy-one percent of the American population responded "always" or "sometimes"¹⁸⁵.

Meanwhile, the talk about crime in America has almost always carried a racial code. Black has symbolized sin, mystery and danger for white people. Since the media often portrays lower-class African Americans as criminals and perpetrators of violence, news programs avoid clarifying the damaging effects of the long American history of slavery and white supremacist politics on African American people. The fear and dislike of African Americans and the desire for immediate racial punishment has become the main reason for gun ownership by Americans.

At the same time, the manufacturers of weapons constantly feed this fear and supplement it with the notion that gun ownership is an inalienable right. Therefore, guns persist as a traditional icon of personal liberty, self reliance and masculinity, especially for suburban white Americans in the South and West. The findings of a national survey of Americans' attitudes about guns conducted for The Hearst

¹⁸⁴ qtd. in BRAMAN, Donald. KAHAN, Dan M. More Statistics, Less Persuasion: A Cultural Theory of Gun-Risk Perceptions. <<http://www.law.uchicago.edu/academics/circulation5.pdf>>

¹⁸⁵ qtd. in KOPEL, David B. "The Ideology of Gun Ownership and Gun Control in the United States." 18 Quarterly Journal of Ideology 3-34. <<http://www.guncite.com/journals/dk-ideo.html>>

Newspapers by International Communications research reveal that people who live in the Northeast are far less likely to have ever owned a gun than those in the rest of the country. Fewer than one in seven Northeasterners has been a handgun owner, compared with almost one-third of Westerners and 40 percent of Southerners. The Northeast is the only region where a majority of people favor government control of handguns. More than 60 percent of Northeasterners back handgun regulations of some sort, and those from the Northeast who have owned guns are the most likely to have kept them locked up¹⁸⁶. According to the National Survey on Private Ownership and Use Firearms, in 1994, when there were enough guns to provide every U.S. adult with one, only 25 percent of adults actually owned firearms and 74 percent of these gun owners possessed two or more¹⁸⁷. In “Rights and Regulations,” Harvy Lipman states that while most of the people who live in the urbanized parts of the nation, such as the Northeast, don’t support gun ownership, the South is the only region where a clear majority say that having a gun in your home makes it safer to live there. Southerners are also more likely to possess two or more guns and to keep their guns in several locations, in their cars, at work, or even on their persons, in addition to having them at home. According to Harvy Lipman, whites are more than twice as likely as blacks to own a rifle or shotgun. While less than fifty-percent of white Americans favor government control of handguns, nearly 60 percent of blacks do. More than fifty-percent of whites say having a gun in a home makes the people who live there safer, but African Americans are evenly split on that question. Several sociologists and public opinion pollsters pointed out that the most important factor in determining people’s feelings about guns is whether they grew up in a home where there were firearms. Different attitudes may be partly explained by the fact that whites are more likely to have grown up in a culture where there were guns around the house¹⁸⁸.

Throughout American history, white people’s gun ownership has been rationalized in many ways and whites have often been encouraged to own guns. Pro-gun groups like the NRA violently object to any law that would require current owners of assault rifles to give up those weapons. Gun magazines routinely print

¹⁸⁶ LIPMAN, Harvy. “Rights and Regulations Americans Want Firearms – and Federal Restrictions, Poll Finds.” Albany Times Union. Guns in America.

<<http://www.chron.com/content/chronicle/nation/guns/part1/gunside2.html>>

¹⁸⁷ Guns in America. A.G.E.

¹⁸⁸ LIPMAN, Harvy A.G.E.

articles on self-defense, while in most states gun control laws have been applied as a means of effectively disarming African American people. In this way gun ownership has become a tradition for a particular group of people in America, and the main reason for gun possession - white people's fear of blacks – has been neglected. However, statistics and history reveal that in America guns have been used to maintain the status quo and that the roots of American gun culture lie in the racist ideology that was formed in the frontier era.

WORKS CITED

Hard Copy Sources

Bellesiles, Michael A. **Exploding the Myth of an Armed America.** The Chronicle of Higher Education. <<http://chronicle.com>>

The Origins of Gun Culture in the United States, 1760-1865. The Journal of American History, Vol. 83, No. 2. (Sep., 1996).

Cottrol, Robert J. Diamond, Raymond T. “**Never Intended to Be Applied to the White Population:’ Firearms Regulation and Racial Disparity – The Redeemed South’s Legacy to a National Jurispudence?**” Chicago-Kent College of Law Rev. 1307-1335 (1995)

The Second Amendment: Toward an Afro-Americanist Reconsideration. Georgetown Law Journal 309-361 (1991)

Dines, Gail. “**King Kong and the White Woman: Hustler Magazine and the Demonization of Black Masculinity.**” Journal of Violence Against Women, 1998, Vol. 4 No 3, (291-307)

Douglass, Frederick. **Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself.** Penguin Books, 1982.

Eby, Clare. “**Slouching Toward Beastliness. Richard Wright’s Anatomy of Thomas Dixon.**” African American Review 35.3, 2001: 439-58. 22 September 2001.

Ellison, Ralph. **Invisible Man.** New York, Vintage, 1995.

Faragher, John Mack. **Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner. “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” and Other Essays.** Yale University Press, 1998.

- Gilroy, Paul. **Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness.** Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Glassner, Barry. **Culture of Fear: Why Americans are Afraid of the Wrong Things.** Basic Books, 1999.
- Halberstam, Judith. “**Imagined Violence/Queer Violence: Representation, Rage, and Resistance.**” Social Text No. 37, A Special Section Edited by Anne McClintock Explores the Sex Trade 1993: 187-201.
- Hooks, Bell. **Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics.** New York: South End Press, 1990.
- Jordan, Winthrop D. **White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550-1812.** The University of North Carolina Press, 1968.
- Kolchin, Peter. **American Slavery 1619 – 1877.** New York, Hill and Wang, 1993.
- Morgan, Edmund S. **American Slavery American Freedom.** W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1975.
- Morrison, Toni. **Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination.** Reed Business Information, Inc., 1992.
- Slotkin, Richard. **Gunfighter Nation: the Myth of the Frontier in the Twentieth-Century America.** New York: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1992.
- Sowell, Thomas. **Race and Economics.** David Mckay Company, Inc., 1975.
- Takaki, Ronald. **A Different Mirror.** Little, Brown & Co. Boston, 1993.
- Williams, David C. **Civic Republicanism and the Citizen Militia: The Terrifying Second Amendment.** Yale Law Journal (1991).

Wright, Donald R. **African Americans in the Colonial Era**. Harlan Davidson Inc., 1990.

Wright, Richard. **Black Boy: The American Hunger**. New York: Buccaneer Books, 1995.

Native Son. Harper Perennial, 1940.

Movies

Bowling For Columbine. Dir. Micheal Moore. With Charlton Heston, Marilyn Manson, Matt Stone. Kathleen Glynn, 2002.

Gone With the Wind. Dir. Victor Fleming. With Clark Gable, Vivien Leigh, Leslie Howard. David O. Selznick, 1939.

King Kong. Dir. Merian C. Cooper, Ernest B. Schoedsack. With Fay Wray, Robert Armstrong, Bruce Cabot. Merian C. Cooper, 1933.

The Birth of a Nation. Dir. D.W. Griffith. With Lillian Gish, Mae Marsh, Henry B. Walthall. D.W. Griffith, 1915.

Traffic. Dir. Steven Soderbergh. With Benicio Del Toro, Jacob Vargas, Andrew Chavez. Edward Zwick, Marshall Herskovitz, Laura Bickford, 2000

Witness. Dir. Peter Weir, John Seale. With Harrison Ford, Kelly McGillis, Alexander Godunov. Edward S. Feldman, 1985

Electronic Sources

Barnwell, Janet Elizabeth. **Narrative Patterns of Racism Resistance in the Work of**

William Faulkner. <http://etd.lsu.edu/docs/available/etd-1114102-151515/unrestricted/Barnwell_dis.pdf>

Bellesiles, Michael A. **“Exploding the Myth of an Armed America.”** 29 September 2000.

The Chronicle of Higher Education. 2 February 2006.

<<http://chronicle.com/free/v47/i05/05b00701.htm>>

Braman, Donald, Dan M. Kahan. **More Statistics, Less Persuasion: A Cultural Theory of Gun- Risk Perceptions.** 10 April 2006.

<<http://www.law.uchicago.edu/academics/circulation5.pdf>>

Browne, Tsekani. **“Racism & Xenophobia - In the United States: Historic Timeline.”** 17 September 2001. Cultural Studies in the African Diaspora Project. University of California, Los Angeles. 10 February 2006.

<http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/caas/diaspora/research_topics/race_timeline.htm>

Bruce, Henry Clay. **The New Man: Twenty-Nine Years a Slave, Twenty-Nine Years a Free Man.** York, Pennsylvania: P. Anstadt & Sons, 1895. Documenting the American South. 28 March 2005. The University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. 15 February 2006. <<http://docsouth.unc.edu/bruce/menu.html>>

Carrington, Ben. **“Race,” Representation and the Sporting Body.** Goldsmiths College University of London, New Cross, London SE14 6NW, 2002. 3 April 2006.

<<http://www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/cucr/pdf/carrington.pdf>>

Clark, A. Bruce. **“Laws Designed to Disarm Slaves, Freedmen, and African-Americans.”** 30 May 2005. The Right to Keep and Bear Arms. 5 January 2006. <http://www.old-yankee.com/rkba/racial_laws.html>

Cramer, Clayton E. **“The Racist Roots of Gun Control.”** 1995. KeepAndBearArms. 5 February 2006.

<<http://www.keepandbeararms.com/information/XcIBViewItem.asp?ID=916>>

Daley, Mike. **The Representation of “Race” in Mass Media.** York University. 3 March 2006. <http://www.mikedaley.net/essay_raceinmassmedia.htm>

Davis, Gode, James M. Fortier. **Literary References.** 22 May 2006. American Lynching. 25 May 2006. <<http://www.americanlynching.com/literary-old.html#nelson>>

Dixon, Thomas. **The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan.** New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1905. Documenting the American South. Ed. Natalia Smith. 19 May 1997. The University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. 28 March 2006. <<http://docsouth.unc.edu/dixonclan/dixon.html#dixon187>>

Dorfman, Lori. **Off Balance: Youth, Race & Crime in the News.** Berkeley Media Studies Group, Public Health Institute Vincent Schiraldi, Justice Policy Institute, 2001. <<http://www.buildingblocksforyouth.org/media/media.html>>

Duke, David. **“My Awakening.”** 8 August 2005. Aryans and Indian Civilization. Ed. Dave Cooper. 25 February 2006. <<http://www.davidduke.com/?p=478>>

Early, Gerald. **“Black Migration: African Americans Journey North Searching for Prosperity and Freedom.”** 1995. Jazz Film By Ken Burns. 13 February 2006. http://www.pbs.org/jazz/places/faces_migration.htm

Ekwall, Steve. **The Racist Origins of US Gun Control Laws Designed To Disarm Slaves, Freedmen And African-Americans.** History of Gun Control. Black Man With A Gun. <<http://www.blackmanwithagun.com>>

Entman, M. Robert, Andrew Rojecki. **The Entman-Rojecki Index of Race and the Media.** University of Chicago Press. 2000. 12 March 2006. <<http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/210758.html>>

Ewell, Barbara C., Pamela Glenn Menke, eds. “Introduction.” **Southern Local Color: Stories of Region, Race and Gender.** By Ewell and Menke. Athens: U of Georgia P, 2002. xii-lxvi. Online version, July 2004. 27 March 2006. <<http://www.loyno.edu/~bewell/LocalColorIntro.html>>

Faulkner, William. **“Dry September.”** Selected Short Stories of William Faulkner (Modern Library) Random House Inc., 1933. Dry September. 23 February 2006. <<http://amb.nbu.bg/american/4/faulkner/september.htm>>

Gibson, Robert A. **The Negro Holocaust: Lynching and Race Riots in the United States, 1880-1950.** 1978. Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute. 20 February 2006.
<<http://yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1979/2/79.02.04.x.html>>

Guns in America: National Survey on Private Ownership and Use of Firearms. May 1997. National Institute of Justice Research in Brief. Dir. Jeremy Travis. 3 March 2006. <<http://www.ncjrs.gov/txtfiles/165476.txt>>

Heston, Charlton. **“Winning the Cultural War.”** Harvard Law School, 16 February 1999. WEBCommentary. 2004. 17 March 2006.
<http://www.webcommentary.com/special/speech.htm>

“Charlton Heston’s Keynote Address at the Free Congress Foundation’s 20th Anniversary Gala.” 20 December 1997. Civil Rights Documents Web Published by ACCR. American Civil Rights Review. 10 March 2006.
<<http://www.americancivilrightsreview.com/docs-folder-guns-heston.html>>

Highsmith, Gary. **Black Skin White Justice: Race Matters in the Criminal Justice System.** Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute. 2005. 22 March 2006.
<<http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1996/1/96.01.10.x.html>>

Ida Wells. Spartacus Educational. 10 March 2006.
<<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/FWWwells.htm>>

Jacobs, Harriet A. **Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl.** The Schomburg Library of 19th Century Black Women Writers. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988. Documenting the American South. Ed. L. Maria Child. 28 March 2005. The University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. 20 February 2006. <<http://docsouth.unc.edu/jacobs/jacobs.html>>

Jr. Bennett Lerone. **“The 10 Biggest Myths about Black History”** ChickenBones: A Journal for Literary & Artistic African American Themes. 4 March 2006.
<<http://www.nathanielturner.com/10biggestmythsblackhistory.htm>>

Kopel, David B. "**The Ideology of Gun Ownership and Gun Control in the United States.**" David B. 18 Quarterly Journal of Ideology 3-34.
<<http://www.guncite.com/journals/dk-ideo.html>>

Ku Klux Klan. Spartacus Educational. 5 March 2006.
<<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAkkk.htm>>

Lee, H. Jason. **Minstrelsy and the Construction of Race in America.** African American Sheet Music. A Brown University Library Digital Collection. 7 March 2006.
<<http://dl.lib.brown.edu/sheetmusic/afam/minstrelsy.html>>

Leonard, Ira M. **Violence is the Engine of U.S. History.** 30 June 2005. The Black Commentator. 3 February 2006. <<http://www.blackcommentator.com>>

Lipman, Harvy. "**Rights and Regulations Americans Want Firearms -- and Federal Restrictions, Poll Finds.**" Albany Times Union. 1997. Guns in America. 15 April 2006. <<http://www.chron.com/content/chronicle/nation/guns/part1/gunside2.html>>

LovingDay. 2004. 19 March 2006. <http://www.lovingday.org/map_access.htm>

Marchioro, Kathleen. "**From Sambo to Brute: The Social Construction of African American Masculinity.**" April 2001. The Edwardsville Journal Of Sociology, Volume 1. 13 March 2006.
<<http://www.siue.edu/SOCIOLOGY/journal/marchioro.htm>>

Markus, Hazel Rose. "**Race and Representation.**" Confronting Katrina Race, Class and Disaster in America. CCSRE course session on Media, Cultura and the Politics of Representation: Viewing a Racialized Disaster. 24 October 2005. 5 April 2006.
<http://ccsre.stanford.edu/pdfs/MarkusKatrinaComments.pdf>

McElrath, Jessica. **A Look Back at Minstrelsy.** African-American History.
<<http://afroamhistory.about.com>>

Ku Klux Klan. African-American History. <<http://afroamhistory.about.com>>

Reconstruction. African-American History. <<http://afroamhistory.about.com>>

Nadell, Jane Martha. **Enter The New Negroes: Images Of Race In American Culture.** President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2004. 27 March 2006.
http://www.hup.harvard.edu/pdf/NADENT_excerpt.pdf

National Rifle Association Information. Violence Policy Center. 12 March 2006.
<<http://www.vpc.org/nrainfo/chapter1.html>>

Niderost, Eric. 'The Birth of a Nation': When Hollywood Glorified the KKK.
<<http://www.historynet.com>>

Nunberg, Geoffrey. **"When Words Break Down."** Longer version of "Fresh Air" commentary, September 8, 2005. 20 March 2006.
<<http://www.csl.stanford.edu/~nunberg/looting.html>>

Original Intent and Purpose of the Second Amendment. 10 December 2004. GunCite. 24 December 2005. <<http://www.guncite.com/gc2ndpur.html>>

Page, Thomas Nelson. **In Ole Virginia or Marse Chan and Other Stories.** New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895. Documenting the American South. 2003. The University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. 19 February 2006. <<http://docsouth.unc.edu/pageolevir/page.html>>

Parrish, Geov. **Geov Parrish's this Day in Radical History – November.** 11 January 2004. WorkingForChange. 5 May 2006.
<<http://www.workingforchange.com/article.cfm?ItemID=18066#7>>

Paquet-Deyris, Anne-Marie. **Toni Morrison's Jazz and the City.** African American Review. 22 June 2001. 9 May 2006.
<http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2838/is_2_35/ai_77828278>

People & Events: Lynching in America. American Experience. 23 February 2006.
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/till/peoplevents/e_lynch.html>

- Pilgrim, David. **“The Brute Caricature.”** Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia. November 2000. Ferris State University. 20 May 2006. <<http://www.ferris.edu/news/jimcrow/brute/>>
- “The Coon Caricature.”** Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia. October 2000. Ferris State University. 27 May 2006. <http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/coon/>
- Poe, Edgar Allan. **“The Gold Bug.”** The Dollar Newspaper, June 1843. Wikisource. 17 December 2005. 20 February 2006. <http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Gold-Bug>
- Rickford, John R. **Racism in Media Language and Enforcement Officers’ Actions after Hurricane Katrina.** 28 November 2005. 3 March 2006. <http://ccsre.stanford.edu/pdfs/JRR_KatrinaRemarks05.pdf>
- Rosen, N. David. **“King Kong Race, Sex, and Rebellion.”** Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media. 7 March 2006. <<http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC06folder/KingKong.html>>
- Schmidt, Peter. **“What Mark Twain Said Regarding Regime Changes and Other Righteous American Foibles.”** Alumni Reunion Lecture Swarthmore College, 3 June 2005. 27 March 2006. <http://www.swarthmore.edu/alumni/faculty_lectures/peter_schmidt/download.html>
- Smith, John David. **American Experience.** <<http://www.pbs.org>>
- Scott, Jonathan. **“Remembering to Not Forget: A Reflection on Jubilee.”** July 2005. ChickenBones: A Journal for Literary & Artistic African American Themes. 14 July 2006. <http://www.nathanielturner.com/rememberingtonotforget.htm>
- Statistics: Gun Violence in Our Communities.** 14 April 2005. National Education Association Health Information Network. 2 March 2006. <<http://www.neahin.org/programs/schoolsafety/gunsafety/statistics.htm>>
- Statistics, Facts & Quotes.** Illinois Council against Handgun Violence. 28 February 2005. <<http://www.ichv.org/Statistics.htm>>

Sylvester, Melvin R. **Slave Trade.** The African American: A Journey from Slavery to Freedom. B. Davis Schwartz Memorial Library. Long Island University. 7 June 2006. <<http://www.liu.edu/cwis/CWP/library/aaslavry.htm>>

The Ku Klux Klan, a brief biography! The African American Registry. <<http://www.aaregistry.com>>

Terry, David Taft. **Slavery Comes to Early Maryland: A Brief Look.** Exploring Maryland's Roots: Slavery in Early Maryland. 5 June 2006. <<http://mdroots.thinkport.org/interactives/slaverytimeline/slavery.pdf>>

Wells, Ida B. **Lynch Law in America.** 1900. African-American History. 20 March 2006. <http://afroamhistory.about.com/library/blidabwells_lynchlawninamerica.htm>

Wolinetz, Gary K. **"New Jersey Slavery and the Law."** 50 Rutgers L. Rev. 2227-2258, 1998. State Law and Slavery: One Example. 14 April 2006. Race Racism and the Law. 15 May 2006. <<http://academic.udayton.edu/race/02rights/slave08.htm>>