HAND, DOMINICK M., M.A. Black Masculinity in Contemporary Cinema. (2018)
Directed by Dr. Steve Cureton. 120 pp.

This research explored four movies spanning four separate eras. Content analysis was used to determine if themes emerged with respect to portrayals of Black Masculinity for a Slave era film (1619-1865), a Civil Rights era film (1954-1965), a Ghetto-centric era film (1980-1990), and a Post Racial Society era film (2009-2016). There were a total of 7 characters examined resulting in 123 frequency counts being recorded. The data reveal that Black film makers the likes of Nate Parker, Spike Lee, John Singleton, and Ryan Coogler produced films where Black masculinity was dominated by decency, and a revolutionary mindset. There is evidence that indicators for decency was more likely present in ghetto-centric and post racial society films than in slave and civil rights era films. Black masculinity was also portrayed as archetypal Toms, Bucks and Sambos. The implications of this research is that the European Gaze seems to infiltrate portrayals of Black Masculinity even when the film makers are Black Males. Moreover, Black Male film-makers counter negative stereotyping by contextualizing behavioral outcomes. The result being that race and demonstrations of manhood are both the result of social constructions.

BLACK MASCULINITY IN CONTEMPORARY CINEMA

by

Dominick M. Hand

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Greensboro
2018

Approved by

_____
Committee Chair

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis written by Dominick M. Hand has been approved by the following committee of the faculty of The Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair _____

Committee Members _____

_____

_____
Date of Acceptance by Committee

_____
Date of Final Oral Examination

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines four highly controversial movies that portray Black male

main characters: Nat Turner, Malcolm X, Oscar Grant as well as four residents of South

Central Los Angeles' gangland. Gause (2014) contends that Black masculinity is often

limited and lacks authentic representation to ongoing discourse about gender and race

issues. It appears that representations of Black masculinity are inevitably linked to

heightened criminality, depravity, prone to violence and in need of heavy handed social

control and regulation (Gause, 2014). The result could be that movie spectators come

away thinking that without such social control mechanisms in place Black male

criminality would manifest as a universal predatory problem (Gause, 2014). This further

complicates race relations and could very well be one reason why there is less out-rage

and even indifference with respect to discretionary justice and policing behaviors that

victimize and even kill Black males (Welch 2007).

To examine the portrayals of Black masculinity in film, a comprehensive

definition of cinema must be provided. In Musser's *1896-187: Movies and the*

Beginnings of Cinema, cinema is defined as a project motion pictures in a theatrical

setting that symbolize technological and cultural innovation (Musser, 2009). The primary

function of cinema was to capture and re-present images of life in motion for a viewing

audience. The twentieth century cinema established itself as a legitimate form of popular

entertainment and became a central entertainment institution for the entire world. The power of motion pictures was recognized by White American politicians and religious figures who intend to use cinema as a platform to present world views with different aesthetic and ideological perspectives. The development of the first major motion pictures studio, The American Mutoscope and Biograph Company, was popular for early production of presidential candidates, current events about the world, and cultural implications of western societies (Musser 2009). The most significant icon of American cinema is D.W Griffith. Glamorized for his close up angles and film editing, Griffith was the first director to shift political events to state-sponsored racism that revealed new social stereotypes about African Americans in visual culture (Musser 2009). Coming into the twenty-first, racial imagery in cinema continued to play significant role in the ideological and economic orientation in cinema. According to Kleninhans (2008), the film industry was going through major economic changes as a global entertainment institution. European American Film Production companies such as Paramount, Columbia Pictures, and Miramax, produced racial/ethnic related films that hit crossover audience and trailing box office success. This new economic framework, give cimena a signify a stable imagery of Blacks through a musical rap/ gangster culture (Khleninhans 2008).

The images of Blacks in American cinema shadow the motifs of a European gaze. In *The Show and the Gaze of Theatre: A European Perspective,* Fischer-Lichete, Erika, and Riley discuss contemporary western societies as a culture that displays itself within "theatricalizations" (Fischer-Lichete, Erika, & Riley 1997:218). The European gaze is a

sequence of sociohistorical events within western societies are fabricated through a culture of experience. In other words, each individual and social group from all social domains put themselves in and their everyday lives "onstage" (Fischer-Lichete, Erika & Riley 1997:218). Hence, the symbolical staging and performance that are displayed on film or theatre mirror a spectacular gaze towards political and cultural circumstances that shaped the social fabric of western societies. Lyman (1990) adds that despite the United States of America serving as a cinematic model for decolonization and Eastern philosophy, American movies assume a dominion over meaning making or crafting narratives with respect to Africans, Black Americans and other Non-Europeans. Thus, the political and cultural frameworks of "Eurocentrism in American cinema" (Lyman 1990:50) continues to reflect the gaze of contemporary filmmakers who depict the everyday lives of Black Americans.

According to hooks, an "oppositional gaze" (hooks 1993: 289) informed Black Americans of the oppressive social field in which they must submit and operate. Hence, the mode of identifications depicted in media agencies, like films, mirrors power relations of race, in which the resistant spectators point out the differences of visual experiences of Black Americans that are processed by mainstream media (Ongiri, 2010). Black filmmakers contend with an ongoing struggle to break into the film industry and create more positive images, perspectives, and narratives of African American men. Arguably, when African-American film makers do get a chance to produce films on or about Black masculinity, these filmmakers seemed to follow the same Eurocentric gaze that positions Black masculinity as a departure from humanity.

With the visualization of Black male experience and identity in question, this research examines movie presentations of Black masculinity between spanning four eras od the characters in the movie: Slavery (1619-1865), Civil Rights (1954-1965), Urban Tales/Ghetto-centric (1980-1990), and Post Racial society (2008-2016). During 1915, the theme of Black males, and Blacks in general, as "subhuman, simple-minded, superstitious, and submissive" (Leab 1975:1) was widely accepted by western culture. Overtime, these racialized cinema portrayals seem to transition into a more complex mode of identifications. In the later 1970s to the 2010s, Black characterizations were presented in a limited range of either criminality or subordination to a racially sensitive gaze of a predominantly White audience. Generally, Black males continue to contend with wholesale mis-characterizations, character assassinations, negative stereotyping, discretionary justice as well as other forms of human agency discrepancies.

Given media outlets are a primary source of information dissemination and that society's collective-consciousness regarding Black males is impacted by cinematic portrayals, I am interested in examining Hollywood's version of Black masculinity by exploring the works of four notable Black film-makers: Nate Parker, Spike Lee, John Singleton, and Ryan Coogler, I will determine if their movies trace a European gaze. The primary goal of this thesis is to answer the following questions: (1) what racial identifiers or codes are depicted as a result of typecasting? (2) How is the social and cultural narrative of the mainstream European Gaze reflected in these films?

CHAPTER II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BLACK SCREEN CHARACTER:

RESPECTED OR TYPECASTED?

Review of Literature

*Phenomenon by Popular Demand: Hegemonic Masculinity and Its Impact on
Black Men*

The idealization of Black masculinity serves as an insertion to existing debates in

cinema and gender studies. The discussion of race and masculinity emerges from a

popular demand of cultural and media contentions relative to Black men being an

"endangered species" (Harris, 2006:1). Researchers and scholars on race, gender, and

sexuality refer to hegemonic masculinity as a self-reporting performance that has power

of influence with respect to race and gender socialization (Banjoko 2011, Connell 1995,

Dalley-Trim 2007). Foucault implies that the construction of male sexuality is an

instrumental, untraceable element of power, driven towards the transferable points of

men and women. Messerschmidt (1993) contends that masculinity is a social construction

contingent upon social status within a stratified society. Moreover, cultural codes, and

normative expectations in social networks impact social honor and power relations.

Ajmau Banjoko (2011) adds that the historical roots of masculinity are defined by the

aristocratic ideals of chivalry, honor, war, and one's physical ability to protect his name

(Banjoko 2011, Mosse, 1996). For White males, the perception of manhood is measured

by political and economic control, in which socially constructed behaviors, morals, values, and norms reflect these masculine traits. Characteristics such as physical dominance, aggressiveness, and violence are often used by elite male groups to maintain social control over others (hooks 2004, Collins 2006). The acknowledgement of these complex hegemonic traits can be used to dismantle the roots of Black masculinity

Understanding Black Masculinity

Patricia Hill Collins (2006) implies that Black masculinity is measured by standards reserved for White men. Black males found themselves expressing masculine traits under the restrictions of White masculinity. Hooks (2004) adds that since Black males have been denied the opportunity to express their masculinity to the same degree as their White male counterparts, they resort to alternatives such as crime, vagabondage, and deviance to liberate themselves from the suppression of White patriarchy. Black (1997) mentions that the end message behind every masculine expression of Black masculinity is survival, which is a common theme in mainstream media depictions. These portrayals are performed by young Black males affirming the influence of the media' generational power to recycle racial identifiers (Black, 1997). Banjoko (2011) states Black masculinity insinuates a more exaggerated form of patriarchal expression (Banjoko, 2011). Hence, masculine characteristics such as aggressiveness, sexual domination, and violent criminality appear to be Black male identifiers that resonate in social regulation spheres and media outlets (Banjoko, 2011, hooks, 2004,).

The construction of Black male identity in cinema requires assessing the role of media as a "transmission" of individual identity and culture. Payne (1997) states that critical cultural theory is a framework that examines ethnocentrism, sexism, or racism within the production of knowledge that impact mass communication. Mass communication outlets, such as film media, is the glue that brings together the culture, and subculture, of a society. The relationship between subject (member of society) and the object (power institutions of power) are processed through cultural transmission. These cultural transmissions are a form of communication in which information is given at a distance with the purpose to control. Hence, Hollywood films that produce narratives to control the representation of racial expression (in this case Black male characters) demonstrates the indirect (institutional) political and cultural dominance of an elite class. Payne (1997) examines the presence of Hollywood cinema through evaluating the symbolic communication that occurs when a viewing audience participated in a cinematic-transmitting ritual. This process is symbolic given the mechanisms of society is produced, maintained, repaired, and transformed. Media distributers filter what descriptions of Blacks are offered for public consumption. It logically follows that constructions of Black masculinity are maintained and transformed by the power of Hollywood producers and distributers.

Constructions of Black male sexuality are fixed in the collective memory of Americans (Diawara 1993). Diawara (1993) implies that the depiction of Black heterosexuality continues to be a demoralizing factor of the Black screen character. Elite males are presented as the epitome of dominance and political-economic control. Thus,

thematic messages of mass media favor the cultural image of the White male bourgeoisie. Woods (2013) states that the origins of motion production industries demonstrate a model of America through the eyes of a White male majority, who adopted the racial ideologies that Blacks are inherently inferior and subordinate to Whites. Gerald Butters' (2002) *Black Manhood on the Silent Screen* provides a deeper look into the imagery of African American males in silent screen motion production; his research suggests that the image of Black men is portrayed as a social object routinely used and depicted in the motion picture production. Structuring racial identity in this fashion illustrates a diverse perspective of how Black men are "placed" in society and how their masculinity is shown through the eyes of the dominant White majority (Butters 2002).

Boggle (2001) states that the first social acceptable portrayals of Black males in cinema were Toms, Coons, and Bucks. Toms resemble the heavily abused, flogged, enslaved servant who submits to the tyranny of slavery and finds containment through his religious faith. Coons were less formal than the Tom; representing intellectual inferiority, uncivilized, and existing for the amusement of Whites. Bucks were described as "brutal" (Boogle 2001:13), "oversexed" (Boogle 2001:13), "savage" characters that wreak havoc, and destruction (Bogle 2001). Gause (2014) adds that the depictions of the Toms, Coons, and Bucks were designed by White media and depicted Blacks as lazy, submissive, intellectually inferior, and driven by gluttony. These traditional characterizations were purposely designed to be as non-threatening and appealing to the superiority of a White audience, while symbolically acknowledging the deep-rooted fear of Black masculinity and its potential threat to a White power structure (Gause 2014).

8

According to Gates (2004), the idea of Black masculinity was such a fear-driven social phenomenon for a White community, that White protagonists rationalized these fears as a proxy for protecting White women from predatory Black men. Sheridan (2006) adds that film and television were used to sabotage the masculine behavior of Black men, stigmatizing them as hypersexual savages. In an effort to socially regulate and control Black males, social scientists seemed to play a pivotal role in framing Black men as innately pathological criminals. Psychology influenced the racial mythology in science and used semiotic text (the study of sign/symbols) and media to shape the cultural meaning and response to Black masculinity (Banjoko 2011, Sheridan 2006). In the twentieth century, Black men continue to be portrayed as criminals, gangsters, rapists, and deviants in popular culture. New narratives of Black masculinity in media are highlighted in slave rebellions, competitive sports, civil disobedience, crime, or any politico-economic resistance toward the White power structure. Richardson (2007) implies that the new perceptions of Black men as violent and threatening to society rest on a socially constructed continuum (i.e. weak, depraved, uncivilized, and criminogenic), which directly enabled abusive methods of social control and social regulation (hooks 2004, Sheridan 2006).

The Birth of a Nation: The Controversial Images of Black Men in American Cinema

In *Framing Blackness: The African American Image*, Ed Guerrero (1993) examines the representation of African Americans in Hollywood through the controversial film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) by D.W. Griffith. Hollywood plantation

9

genres like's Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* played a significant role in displaying the

underlying inscription of American slavery, anti-Black stereotyping, romantic mythology

of the Antebellum south, and the systematic, overt racism that shapes American politics

and ideologies toward race relations. Subsequently, Griffiths introduces a new imagery of

African American men. The abolition of slavery had exposed an underlying fear of

African Americans by White men, in which early figurative images of African American

men shifts from being lazy and subservient to vicious beasts and rapists (Butters 2002,

Guerrero 1993). These new depictions of African American men contributed a new social

stereotype that emerged in the description of Black characters in *The Birth of a Nation*.

Before the Reconstruction era, Black male characters were characterized as submissive,

loyal servants (Guerrero 1993). However, Griffith's perception of the Reconstruction

revealed a new version of the black male in the South. In the Southern legislature, a

Black congressman is labelled as, "eating chicken, sipping on whiskey, ogling White

women, and passing a motion that all legislators must wear shoes in the legislative

chamber" (Guerrero 2002:16). With the assistance of former President Woodrow Wilson,

this new image of African American men was viewed publicly in 1915 in front of 3

million, predominately White Americans.

  Griffith's Birth of a Nation aroused much racial tension in Jim Crow America.

Jim Crow represents state and local laws passed in the 19th century to enforced racial

segregation in the Southern United States. In the mid-1880s, African Americans were

barred from White public institutions including schools, restaurants, hotels, and political

meetings. The laws passed in this era reflected the racial ideologies of White southerners

and their content to keep Blacks subordinate. The release of *The Birth of the Nation*

(1915) capture the interest White southerners and their need reclaim what they lost in the

civil war: free labor from Blacks (Wilson 2006). Leab (1975) states that the melodrama

film was responsible for the rise of White terrorism toward ex-slaves, using the image of

Black men as a brutes and menaces. Black men in *The Birth of a Nation* were presented

as un-controllable abusing property owned by Whites, lusting for White women and

refusing to accept a hierarchal position at the bottom of the social order (Leab 1975).

Even in the present view of a multicultural audience, *The Birth of a Nation* is considered

as one of the most controversial films ever made in America (Guerrero, 1993). According

to Butters (1992), *The Birth of a Nation* was a milestone. The film was popularized for

purposes: (1) to influence the socio-political conscious and pervasive power of White

political leaders, movie goers, and social workers; and (2) to fulfill the desire to reclaim

White social dominance over ex-slaves by controlling the imagery of African Americans,

particularly Black men. The influence of *The Birth of a Nation* sets a foundation for

cinematic portrayal of African Americans males and Hollywood's representation of

Black manhood that would last until the genre of Blaxploitation in the 1970s (Butters,

2002).

The Ending of The Birth of a Nation, The Rise of Blaxploitation

Since Griffin's controversial film, Hollywood has over-indulged in casting the

stereotypical Black Buck, rapist, and savage and this has haunted the social reality of

Black males in Jim Crow America. In the 1920's, the political and economic transitions

of the Great Depression forced Hollywood cinema to take a new direction with motion picture production. (Diawara 1993, Gustafsson 2008). While cinema used stereotypes of the Sambo, Uncle Tom and Buck (Bogle 2001, Gustafsson 2008, Leab 1975), Woods (2013) states that additional images of Black males emerged in Hollywood. Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, a notorious tab dancer who made a famous career playing the "uncle" (Woods 2013:31), became an icon in Hollywood in the 1930s. A faithful servant, known to only sing, dance, and consistently defer to his master; the type casted roles of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson's narrative created an ongoing cycle of demoralizing perception of Black masculinity. Although Black males were objects of negative imagery, Black women were typecast in cinema roles that were subservient to Whites (Diawara 1993). Jezebels were fashioned as alluring, seductive, hyper-sexual and manipulative towards men resulting in self-satisfaction (Bogle 2001, Woods 2013). Woods (2013) asserts the transition of African American cinematic version made a political contribution in the 1970s Black Arts Movement in Harlem. Black spectators grew tired of critiquing Hollywood's common renewal of the Bill "Bojangles" Robinsons and "Jezebels" in film productions (Woods 2013:10,30). In response to these demoralizing images, LeRoi Jones (Amara Baraka) revolutionized Harlem's Black Theatre and Arts School with the making of *Melvin Van Pebble's Sweet Sweetback's Baaadassss Song.* This cutting edge movie was the catalyst for the Blaxploitation genre (Guerrero, 1993, Chan 1998 Rhines 1995, Smith 1988).

According to Guerrero (1993), Blaxploitation is a collection of films made between 1969 and 1974 that focused on the Black experience, featuring a predominantly

12

Black cast that engaged in actions that thwarted vices in the ghetto and suppressed injustice. Massood (2013) adds that Blaxploitation was critically important in infusing Black identity politics and culture. Blaxploitation was a response of critiques from Blacks about Hollywood's well established negative portrayals of Blacks (Ongiri 2010). African-American demanded the production of a complex body of work that accurately mirrored Blacks' social experiences. The "star" image of Black men as servant and buddy to the White community all but vanished and thus opening the door for a more assertive, *macho* figure. Although Blaxploitation was critiqued by speculators as another cultural degradation of Black identity, the imagery of Black masculinity proved to be a direct response to Hollywood's problematic history of depicting Black male as Uncle Tom's, Sambo, and Bucks (Guerrero 1993, Masscood, 2013, Ongiri 2010)

Blaxploitation films provided a new reflection to the consciousness of inner-city Blacks, especially Black youth. Guerrero (1993) states that "Blaxploitation in the 1960's saw a broaden and dramatic rise in Black militant political activism and cultural consciousness fueled by the rising identity consciousness and social expectation of African Americans" (Guerrero 1993:30). Black youth, who became disillusioned with the civil rights movement, felt there was a limited discussion on the cultural oppression that derived from institutional powers (Guererro 1993). Guerrero (1993) adds that the Civil Rights portrayals of Blacks didn't accurately address the economic, political, and spiritual survival of Black people living in the impoverished areas, especially the inner-city ghettos in the North. In response to these cultural misrepresentations of the Tom, Smabo, and Buck, Black filmmakers developed films such as *Shaft* (1971), *Superfly*

(1972), and *Black Caesar* (1973) that demonstrated an image of the new Black man, the fictional revolutionary anti-villain who takes out his political frustrations and economic circumstances on institutions established by "the man" (Guerrero 1993:31). Black filmmakers seem to take Hollywood's depiction of the common Black criminal was turned into a transformative figure with triumphant qualities (Guerrero 1993, Fisher 2006, Henry 2004). Ongiri (2010) suggest that the genre of Blaxploitation ignited the discourse of urban Black male criminality with "reliance on narratives of destruction and hyper masculine empowerment" (Ongiri 2010:166).

Leab (1975) highlights a new image of the "Black militant" (Leab 1975:197) emerging in Black characters with films focused on slave rebellions or the civil rights movement. Hollywood's biggest challenge with this new imagery was the release of *Mandingo* in the 1970's. Campbell (1995) and Lule (2001) state that media, particularly film production, exposed ideological perspectives of slavery in the early nineteenth century and how the film production industry manufactures the cinematic portrayal of the Buck. The Buck is a cinematic figure of a Black male body, "athlete type, often shirtless on screen; socially engineered by sexual prowess; a rapist; a savage that will later develop into a hardcore, smooth, god like, uncontained machine of a man that is bound by gold and silver" (Gause 2014:115). The Buck, the shadow of an evolving presence of Black masculinity in film, has been routinely associated with being prone to crime; therefore, it should be no surprise that media depictions of the Buck appears frequently as hyper sexual Black men (Bogle, 2001, Campbell 1995).

Guerrero (1993) states the Black macho imagery in *Mandingo* signals to the audience that they are entering new ideological terrain. The film reveals the African American perspective of slavery, viewing the cruel behavior of White southerners and their distancing from exploiting Black bodies. The unusual visual of planation's genres gives a historical reference of the Underground Railroad; Blacks are rebelling against their captivity and gathering together discussing human rights and emancipation (Bogle 2001, Guerrero 1993, Woods 2013). Guerrero (1993) goes further to add that the most starling perceptive of the film were the interracial sex scenes; using the "stereotypically sexually potent Black Buck, Mandingo" as a "Hollywood's sexploitation strategy of depicting scenes that could not be shown on television." (Gurrerro 1993:43) *Mandingo* changed the one-dimensional perspective of Blacks in slavery, sponsors an antithesis of White superiority, and challenges White supremacist notions of power through interracial relationships (Guerrero 1993). The thematic messages of *Mandingo*, along with many other Blaxploitation films, reflected the political consciousness of the Black community in the 1960s, and how Black directors began to combat the racial and political ideologies depicted by mainstream Hollywood cinema. Black independent filmmakers emerged with enthusiasm. America's transition from the Great Depression and the military commitment made by Black men, ushered in a new type of perception about Black masculinity in film production. The Sambo would be replaced with the superspade, who is an "uneasy but fascinating amalgam of Hercules, Robin Hood and at times, militant and Christ Like." (Leab 1973:4).

15

Rhines (1995) states that films like Spike Lee's *Malcolm X*, and Melvin Van Peebles *Panther* were but two examples to exemplify the sociopolitical consciousness of the Black community and the dissatisfaction they have toward Hollywood's representation of their cultural identity. Doherty (2000) adds the source of Black frustration stems from the limited voice Blacks had with *The Joe Louis Story (1953)*. The former New York boxing champ served as a phenomenal icon to Blacks, yet Louis' voice was denied in his own film; which focused mainly on his loss to Max Schmeling, a German boxer that symbolized the national pride Germany acquired from Alfred Hitler. In response to this film on Joe Louis Film, Lee challenges the production of Hollywood with the story of Malcolm X, showing that Black filmmakers can voice the Black male icon that impacted the collective consciousness of America without Hollywood speculators such as Universal films, Columbia films, and Lionsgate. (Doherty 2000).

Fall of Blaxploitation and the Rise of "Ghetto-centric" Films

Donalson (2003) suggest that popularity of modern Black experiences stir new opportunities for Black directors to enter into Hollywood and reach a crossover audience. Film critics define "crossover" in the context of story lines and narrative that appealed to a Black-White audiences. This operative ideal was relevant to Black directors in the 1970's, who wanted more influence on Black male narrative's in action films, a genre that was able to successfully pass the racial lines. Benshooff (2000) states that Hollywood would change course to be inclusive of positive roles endorsed by the Black community and liberal segments of the White community for financial gain and simultaneously

16

attempted to render meaningless contributions of Black film directors. The social capital

of Hollywood, combined with the failure of Black directors to crossover to a larger

supporting audience, provided leverage to white Hollywood distributers to script Black

male experiences (Benshoff 2000, Guerrero 1993, Fisher 2006).

Contemporary Hollywood films maintain social control and influence over the

construction of the Black male identity toward a multicultural American audience (Fisher

2006, Mercer 1994, Woods 2014). Films about inner city Black youth in the 1990s

opened up a new genre of ghetto/hood films for Hollywood. New cinematic portrayals of

Black male characters appear to reveal a social distrust of Black men. Kenneth Chan

(1998) argues that outside of this distrust for a White dominant society, the internalizing

of racist stereotypes contributes to a new fatality for the Black male identity. New

cinematic portrayal of Black male characters is scripted to enhance distrust through

individual beliefs, behaviors, and attitude. Chan (1998) contends that these recurring

images were designed in Hollywood cinema to back away from the racism that prevails

in a White capitalistic society so that White conservative audiences can observe unfair

circumstances of young Black men without claiming personal responsibility.

The short-lived era of Blaxploitation films, due to Hollywood's need to gain

control of the cinematic Black characters, does have an impact on a new sense of pride

for African Americans, especially young Black males. Gurrero (1993) states that

Blaxploitation films combated the imagery of Black males as criminals, pimps, drug

dealers, and hypersexual deviants into "ghetto heroes" (160). The political messages

inspired youth to move out in the urban city in order to set a new political platform for

17

themselves and their communities. Celestine Fisher examined the new "coming to age" films and the role Hollywood cinema plays in displaying Black youth during this progressive movement. According to Fisher (2006), the film that would change the aspect of African American masculinity in cinema was the release of *The Education of Sonny Carson (1974)*. Sonny Carson's narrative channels on the marginalization of young Black males who have to navigate their cultural identities, often performing the cool pose in order to maintain status and adapt in crime-ridden, social disorganized neighborhoods (Fisher 2006, Majors and Billson 1992, Messerschmidt 1993). The common message of young Black males in films such as *The Education of Sonny Carson, Boyz N the Hood, Menace II Society, First Time Felon,* is survival. (Banjoko 2002, Fisher 2006, Gause, 2014, Harris 1992).

These coming of age films in the 1990s would be embraced by larger audiences interested in Black communities without directly encountering them. Harris (1992) mentions that popular demand for these urban tales motivates mainstream media agencies to popularize Black disenfranchisement and ghetto narratives for the financial gains of Hollywood companies, like Columbia Pictures and Universal. Film Historians refer to the popularized Hollywood films, *Menace II Society, Boyz N the Hood,* and *First Time Felon,* as "ghetto-centric", "male-focused", "hood" films (Fisher 2006: 23). Reid (1995) adds that the rise of ghetto-centric, action films portrayed Black men as the Black urban gangster. The analysis of these Black characters depicts the dichotomous Black men in cinema, similar to the social stereotypes of the Uncle Tom in *The Birth of a Nation* (1915). Reid goes further to state that this motivated expression of the good/bad Black

18

urban gangster is a manifestation of frustration and rage Black males feel about their social experiences.

The era of ghetto-centric, hood films reveal the horror of the War on Drugs and how the progression of the Black community would transform into a socially disorganized community with criminogenic opportunities and a subculture of violence dominated by gangs (Fisher, 2006). The War on Drugs represents an era where drug laws were passed and enforced on a massively and pervasively bias toward non-White communities. These laws and policies were designed to handle a national drug problem, however the federal government failed insure domestic tranquility. Consequentially, the enforced drug laws directly attacked economic deprived Black youth, giving them hard sentence for minor drug defenses. This system, known as the prison industrial complex, fuel the American economy through prison labor (Small 2017). Chan (1998) suggests that the class structure powered by race bleeds into the theme of Black films such as Spike Lee's *Clockers,* which reveals the struggle for Black men to achieve legitimate stream of income, resulting in failures to take care of personal responsibilities. Drugs and crime are alternatives avenues to improve economic standing and enhance social mobility within the community. Urban tales or ghetto-centric films offer reflections about residency in resource strained, socially disorganized communities ravaged by criminogenic opportunity, and gangland politics (Fisher 2006; Harris 2006; Leab 1975).

Summary of Review of Literature

The literature review indicates that the construction of Black masculinity has evolved over time but has occasionally held steadfast with respect to casting Black males

as a threat to the civility and security of Whiteness. Banjoko (2002) states that the historical subordination and marginalization of Black men in America continues to enforce the belief that the performance of masculinity for African American males is overly aggressive, inappropriate, deviant, defiant, and/or hypersexual. This image persists in multi-media channels, especially film. Hopkinson and Moore (2006) assert that the relationship between mass media and Black masculinity and masculine performances is perhaps made more complex due to minimal distancing from old fashioned hierarchical racial constructions.

In other words, portrayals of Black male identity either fixes the old images of Black masculinity or remakes them for profit (Banjoko, 2002). Gause implies that Hollywood's traditional depictions of Black masculinity have evolved from Tom into stereotypical thug, gangsta, drug dealer, and juvenile delinquents (Gause, 2014:115). Black males seen as violent criminals that desire nothing but a sexual connection with women has been routinely shown in US media – especially film and television- for decades. Milton (2012) argues that modern day media coverage, analysis and social construction of Black masculinity coincides with a set of normative cultural codes that cast Black males as having elevated criminality, moral depravity and bereft of socially redeeming values.

From the perspective of African American scholars and Art historians, the image of Black men in commercial film is a paradoxical combination of racial stereotype and adoration (Guerrero 1993, Gause 2014). The literature review indicates that research seems focused on race, sexuality, and the traditional hegemonic practices of Black

20

masculinity in cinema. Since the presidential election of Barak Obama, there has been limited research and literature regarding how Black masculinity is portrayed is a post racial society. To this end, this research contributes to the already existing literature on cinematic portrayals of Black masculinity. I will use content analysis to examine character portrayals within the context of slavery, a plantation economy, racial hierarchy, social change, permanent underclass residency, and includes an examination of discretionary policing occurring between White police officers and Black after the election of a Black President, which sparked political claims that America had entered into a post racial society.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Critical Race Theory

This research is powered by critical race theory. The Critical race theory aimed to promote understanding complex messages that raise racial awareness, role construction, and racial power relations. The critical race theory composed of scholars and activist who are interested in studying and transforming the relationships of race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic 2001). Although, the conceptions of the critical race theory began as a movement in the law for African Americans in the 1970s, it developed into a discipline that holds race to exist in every aspect of American life (Delgado & Stefancic 2001). Moreover, an examination of race provides a framework for exploring connections between the reality of race relations as a product of fact based fears, and manufactured moral panic with respect to the consequences of losing grip on inter-racial domination, and probable interaction outcomes that come with equitable assimilation. Critical Race Theory implies that the social construction of race conduct the thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors of race-conscious markets through cultural codes and transmissions (Lopez, 1994, Gomez 2001) Critical Race Theory suggest power elite groups occupy roles as arbiters and agents that administrate institutions a that primarily subordinate nonwhite groups and implicate laws to enforce social regulation and control (Brooks 2009, Lopez

2001). This research project attempt to examine the impact of race through popular social media outlet (film) on cultural transmission and role adoption over time.

Critical Race Theory focuses on race as a variable, which is applicable to the representation of Black male screen character in American films. The application of race can not be separated from American culture, particularly film culture. Delgado (2001) stress that race can composed of three cultural tenets: First, racism is a normal science that ordinates the way society does business and communicate everyday experiences of people of color. Second, race and racism serve a purpose to American society and is difficult to dismantle. Third, race is a product of social thought and relations: a category that society invent, manipulates, or retires when convenient (Delgado & Stefancic 2001). Critical race scholars implies race as the central aspect that organizes a system of institutions in which society constructs politically, economically, socially, and culturally. These systems include, but are not limited to, education, criminal justice system, media, and government sectors (Brooks 2009, Delgado & Stefancic 2001). Hollywood's role as a central media source for political and cultural influence among racial groups continue to concrete and magnify the power of race and what kind of relationship groups form among one another (Khleninhans 2008, Lopez 1994).

Lastly, Critical Race Theory looks at the ways society and culture influence the perspective of race. Mills (2017) suggest that race cannot be absent because it provides some degree of cultural reflexivity and racial balance that stands to counter-balance those who have only adopted the "Eurocentric optics of analysis" (240). Jeffers (2013) adds that the social construct of race is engineered by "Eurocentrism" (419), which brings a

cultural dynamic toward the treatment of Blacks in an Anglo-Saxon culture. A strong

critique on "Eurocentrism" (419) through critical race theory explains how sociohistorical

implications of race are ideological and institutional products of modern European

expansion that influences and shaped the Black identity. Hence, the construction of race

as a by-product of racialized experiences must be understood as a cultural phenomenon.

It logically follows that media portrayals in film represent a logical place to gauge

cultural reflections about race, particularly Black masculinity over time. Indicators for

varying types of Black masculinity were derived from mediums of cultural

communication. In other words, in order to content analyze the four movies selected for

this research, modes of cultural transmission (e.g. cultural interpreters of content in

books, and pioneers of music, art and film) were used to develop indicators for Black

masculinity (e.g. archetypical Tom, revolutionary liberator, archetypical Buck, urban

youth/Black gangster, decent male and modern day Sambo).

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

Methods

The method of inquiry is content analysis. Content analysis is a research method that permits a standardized coding strategy because the data can be analyzed and quantified as frequency counts by way of category construction (Hsieh & Shannon 2005). The goal of content analysis is to "identity themes or categories within a body of content and to provide a rich description of a social reality based on these themes and categories." (Zhang & Wildemuth 2005:11). Hollywood's cinema portrayal of Black masculinity from 1915 to 2016 will be subject to examination. Each selected film (4): *The Birth of a Nation* (2016) by Nate Parker, *Malcolm X* (1992) by Spike Lee, *Boy N the Hood* (1991) by John Singleton, and *Fruitvale Station* (2016) by Ryan Coogler, in this research will depict the following eras; Slavery, Civil Rights, Ghetto-centric, and Alleged Post Racial Society. The films are selected because they provided: 1) diverse Black masculinity characters, 2) an opportunity to examine the work of Black film makers in Hollywood, and 3) an opportunity to examine films covering controversial periods of social injustices for Black males, in America. Black male characters will be placed in categories, codes will be based on role identifiers and the content of characters' movie lines will be examined and analyzed based on the category and code identified. Essentially, this work examines role identifiers as evidenced by typecasting, actions, and communication. One

caveat of this research is that it examines a snapshot in time of a select movie, and is limited to the storyline of a director/film. The social artifact here then is that no one film will have mutually exclusive indictors of type casting. Moreover, this method only allows for logical inferences, and not statements about significant relationships.

Another caveat of this research is that the sample of selected films are limited to four films by all Black male directors. Hence a feminist social construction of masculinity will most likely be missing. However, the researcher will provide some general discussion relative to logical assumptions that can be offered with respect to Black feminist ideology. For example, scholars such as bell hooks and Patricia Hill Collins imply that public consumption of Black masculinity is a launching point for critically assessing the patriarchal European gaze with respect to Black males. Both hooks and Collins further contend that the European gaze is a social currency manipulator benefiting one group while handicapping another and that anytime there is a public display of stereotypes, then there is an opportunity for liberation and reclamation of identity (Hooks 1992, Collins 2004).

To summarize then, this research has shortcomings with respect to time limited data, race and gender restrictions (e.g. directors' are four Black males), and sample size of four movies. However, content analysis allows for logical inferencing grounded by emerging themes and not statements of significant relationships that demonstrate authentic social interactions. Still the advantage here is that media outlets are representative of society's movie market interest as evidenced by movie popularity. Content analysis, however, does provide the researcher with a social scientific research

tool to examine movie tendencies in typecasting over time. Content analysis allows the researcher to collect data without boundaries to specific time periods and place it within the context of social and cultural realities of the time. Finally, the small sample size will be balanced by examining frequency counts per movie; therefore, there will be enough observation points to permit offering logical empirically based statements about movie representations of Black masculinity.

Sample Session

The sample consist of four films directed by four Black males. Every film was selected to represent a different historical period throughout 1915 to 2016. The first film represents American slavery era, the second film represents the Civil Rights era, the third film represents Ghetto-centric era, and the fourth film represents the Alleged Post-Racial Society era. Table 1 shows the timeline:

Table 1

Film Selections

Movie Title	Era/Genre	Year of Production	Director
The Birth of a Nation	Slavery (1619-1865)	2016	Nate Parker
Malcolm X	Civil Rights (1954 – 1965)	1992	Spike Lee
Boyz N the Hood	Ghetto-centric (1980-1990)	1991	John Singleton
Fruitvale Station	Alleged Post-Racial Society (2008-2016)	2016	Ryan Coolger

The Birth of a Nation, directed by Nate Parker, is a controversial film made to re-purpose the racist propaganda evoked by the original "*The Birth of a Nation"* by D.W Griffith (1915). Parker replaces the controversial political messages associated with Griffith with the narrative of Nat Turner. Nat Turner is an enslaved Virginia preacher destined to be a great, courageous leader. Learning to read at a young age, Nat Turner grows up to be an economic asset to the Turner plantation. He and his former slave master, Samuel Turner, traveled to neighboring plantations to convince slaves to be subordinate and obedient to their masters. As Nat witnessed the horrific treatment by White slave masters, he decides to no longer accept the harsh conditions of slavery. Finding revelation in the religious doctrine he was subjugated too, Nat Turner developed a new sense of self-pride and manhood. Depicted as a man of religious devotion, Turner confessed receiving messages by God to fight for the liberation of himself and for his fellow men in bondage (Styron 1967). On August 21, 1831, Nat Turner organized one of the most historic slave insurrections that occurred in American History. Nate Parker

directed The Birth of a Nation on slave conditions, the socialization of Black men during slavery, and a plantation economy. Moreover, the film detailed the reaction to dehumanization resulting in insurrections, which is why this movie is a logical selection to represent the slave era.

Malcolm X, directed by Spike Lee, is a three hour and thirty minute biographical drama that vividly displayed the life of Civil Rights/Black Muslim activist Malcolm X. Malcolm X experienced a rough childhood in a Jim Crow America. Both of his parents were loyal followers of Marcus Garvey, organizer of one of the largest African American movements, the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). The UNIA concentrated on injustice encouraged people of African descent to unite and return to Africa. Malcolm's father, Earl Little, was a proponent of Garveyism, who was murdered by Ku Klan Klux members. Earl Little's murder negatively impacted his family to the point that social services intervened to separate Malcolm from his mother and siblings. Malcolm was sent to a government foster house where he would attend a predominantly White school in Boston. After being told that his dreams of being a lawyer was unrealistic, followed by daily racial slurs from his White peers, Malcolm dropped out of school, landed a job as a porter, and began his life on the streets as "Detroit Red."

Malcolm "Detroit Red" Little became a notorious hustler in Boston and Harlem, constituting a rite of passage through drug abuse, sexual exploitation, and violence. In his autobiography, Malcolm mentions "when you become an animal, a vulture, in the ghetto, as I had become, you enter into a world of animals and vultures. It was truly survival of only the fittest" (Haley and Malcolm X, 1964:105). Malcolm would team up with big

29

time hustlers, like West Indian Archie, and establish a career as a criminal to finance his lavish lifestyle at nightclubs and dance halls. Malcolm would be arrested for larceny, which he claims later that his punishment stems from his affairs with a White woman, and sentenced for 10 years in prison.

During his tenure in prison, Malcolm is mentored by an inmate Brother Baines, who introduced Malcolm to the Nation of Islam. Malcolm would convert to Islam and become a loyal disciple to Elijah Muhammad, the founder of the Nation of Islam. Fully emerged and committed to Elijah Muhammad's teachings, Malcolm quickly rose to prominence to become a national speaker for The Nation of Islam. As the most prolific National Spokesman for the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X concentrated on equal rights for the African American community, Black Nationalism, and separation from White society.

Malcolm takes a hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca were his beliefs on race relations and human nature changes. Although his primary focus remains with the liberation of the Black race, He opens his campaign and platform for all races to join and practice universal brotherhood. Slowly breaking away from the tyranny of the Nation of Islam and FBI, Malcolm X now assuming the namesake of El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz faces continuous character assassinations. Ultimately, he was murdered on February 21, 1965 in the Audubon Ballroom, New York City. Spike Lee's cinematic portrayal of *Malcolm X* was deemed one of the most controversial films made about a prominent American figure during the Civil Rights era and therefore logically represents the film to be examined for the Civil Rights era.

Boyz N the Hood, directed by John Singleton, is a fictional story of three young

Black men, Tre, Doughboy, and Ricky. The life course trajectory of these males would

turn out drastically different as each negotiated manhood in a gang-land environment

known as South Central, Los Angeles (Gurrero, 1993). Tre resembles the complexity of

young male adulthood. He strives to maintain the decent values taught to him by his

father, Furious Styles. Tre seems to value education as the key to escaping the lethal

entrapments of South Central. Furious Styles is significantly involved in Tre's life. Reva

Styles, Tre's mother realizes that Tre should go live with his father because he needed a

male role model to guide him through his teenage years. Doughboy chooses gangsterism

as the best option to confront the challenges of growing up in a neighborhood dominated

by gangs. Doughboy was a victim of dysfunctional family dynamics given there was no

father present, and his mother seemed to favor his brother Ricky, more than him. Hence,

more than likely contributing to his gravitation towards the gang for support and

acceptance. Ricky is a star football player and teen father. He is athletically gifted enough

to be recruited by the University of Southern California. Ricky was a serious minded

individual who had also contemplated joining the Army as a way to support his family;

however, Ricky would fall victim to the lethal predation all too common in South

Central, Los Angeles. *Boyz N the Hood* is a movie about negotiating manhood and

attempting to survive the pitfalls of lethal predation in an environment dominated by

gangs (Gurrero, 1993, Kendall 1994, Fain 2015). Therefore, this movie logically

represents a ghetto-centric/urban tale drama.

Fruitvale Station, directed by Ryan Coogler, focuses on the final day of ex-convict Oscar Grant's life, a Black youth who was murdered by a Bay Area Rapid Transit police officer on New Year Day. Oscar Grant is a 21 -year old unemployed, father who spends his final hours struggling to overcome the temptations of selling drugs and associating with negative peers. The entire film centers around the complex challenges Oscar faces and the decisions he must make in order to maintain a decent life. The opening scene preview a phone recording of the shooting then flashes back to the night before the shooting. Oscar commits to his girlfriend Sophia that he wants to marry her, and be a father to his daughter, Tatiana.

Although, Oscar was fired for being late at his job, he attempts to get it back while preparing to celebrate his mother's birthday. After being told he wouldn't get his job back, Oscar stressed over finding legitimate means to earn money. After coming back from a New Year's celebration in downtown Oakland, California, Oscar helped negotiate a bathroom break for a newlywed couple. Oscar convinced the business owner to allow two women to use his restroom even though the business was closing for the night. The appreciative husband offers advice to Oscar about marriage and Oscar ends up getting a contact for a job. Oscar celebrates with his friends and girlfriend until they were met by a rival gang on a train; a fight broke out and Oscar was eventually singled out by Bay Area Rapid Transit police officers, when the train had reached its destination. Oscar gets into an intense argument with a police officer, who called for back-up assistance while attempting to detain Oscar. According to the assisting officer, thinking he was removing his Taser to neutralize Oscar, instead ended up discharging his firearm into the body of

Oscar. Oscar would lose his life as a result of the officer's actions. *Fruitvale Station* is based on true events about Oscar's interactions prior to his death; however, the climax of the shooting resulting in Oscar's death reflects the truth of an officer shooting an unarmed Black male, who eventually died because of being shot. *Fruitvale Station* addresses discretionary policing, brutality and lethal actions towards Blacks in a time where the country has proclaimed progress with respect to race because of a two term African-American President in Barak Obama.

Coding

There are six coded categories for Black masculinity in cinema: Archetypal Tom (1- Christ like figure/ Black savior) Revolutionary Liberator (2- the chosen heroes/ the collective consciousness of Black resistance) Archetypal Buck (3- Super manliness; lives to satisfied sexual appetite), Urban Youth/ Black Gangsters (4- The Urban Criminal), Decent Male (5 – Father Figures; sympathetic), and Modern Day Sambo (6- The unmotivated, irresponsible, comedic). Words and phrases that corresponds with theses codes will be classified as indicators of codes and frequency counts will be recorded for each category. The higher the frequencies found in each presentation of Black manhood, the stronger the thematic pattern. Table 2 provides definitions or indicators for each code. The listed characteristics of Black masculinity were not selected arbitrarily. Film critics on Blacks images in Hollywood have previously defined characteristics that describe the diverse mode of Black masculinity.

Table 2

Labels of Black Masculinity in Cinema

Codes (identifiers)	Definitions (Node)
archetypal Tom (1)	The "beautiful beast"; Christ-Like representation; a convict in the system that heals the poor and disenfranchised, even the individuals that keep him in bondage
revolutionary liberator (2)	The voice of the resistance; The chosen leader that stands up to the injustices of an American system. Has a criminal background and finds sanctuary in prison / religious conversation; this character can potentially participate in activities that only satisfied personal gains, even if it means getting others hurt or killed; Typically holds a position of authority
archetypal Buck (3)	The Super masculine brute that driven by the pleasures of money, power, and women. Often can't control greed (and sexual impulses) which leads to self-destruction. Only see women as an object for pleasure or abuse them to release frustrations and anxieties from a world that condemn their existence
urban youth /Black gangster (4)	The poor, socially isolated young men who look to the violent culture of the streets to establish a reputation. No faith in the future and only finds a sense of life through reckless behaviors, escapism, and gang politics
decent male (5)	A morally driven Black man that serve as an asset to himself and the community he lives in. A respected character for his knowledge and refusal to participate in self-destructive behaviors. Usually a father or youth bred with mainstream American values.
modern day Sambo (6)	The young man that live life in the moment. Doesn't plan much for the future and avoid any form of responsibility. Either lives with mother or significant other (female representation that attribute mother like characteristics). `

The archetypal Tom is subservient, Christ-like missionary living within the cruel system of slavery. He is recognized as the healer of the poor and disenfranchised, even the individuals that keep him in bondage. His representation depicts the oldest and earliest image of the Black male screen characters. In his book, African American Pioneers in Art, Film, and Music, Naurice Woods discovers.

> …Tom was a very gentle and pious slave whose Christian faith remained strong even after he lost two opportunities for freedom….He consistently forgives him [his brutal slave master Simon Legree] for his abusive ways and even refused to flog a helpless woman when ordered. Tom also refused to divulge information about two runaway slaves, an act that eventually led to his death. Although Stowe portrayed Tom with child-like qualities, her inherent message, even if it comes off as a bit condescending, is that the innate purity of a slave's soul embodies a quality that can overcome cruelty through a devout Christian forgiveness (2013:9).

The revolutionary liberator epitomizes the voice of the Black frustration and anger; a fearless figure that stands up to injustice. Harris (2006) referenced the community [revolutionary] liberator as the "messianic figure, harkening salvation, and bringing control back into the community" (Harris, 1992:93).

According to Boskin (1988) the archetypal Buck is a fictional brute that surrounds himself with the fast life, drugs, and women. He often draws attention to himself for his super manliness. The Black male Buck in many instances serve as the epitome for American fetishization of Black male bodies.

At its opposite end was the character affixed to the African male, being either "Savage" [Buck characteristic] or "Sambo": epitome of the primitive self…with respect to the Savage [Buck], it was held that the Black man was endowed with violent and sexual impulses. It was argued, buttressed with quasi-scholarly data from mid-nineteenth to the later decades of the twentieth century that dark-skinned people were stunted in their intellectual capacities. The myth gave rise to the specific cultural traits that ascribed Black men: to their supposed natural rhythm, their flashy dress habits, their sexual prowess, and their proneness to rioting and fighting (Boskin 1988: 258).

The urban youth/Black gangster is defined as a poor, socially isolated Black male who embraces the normative expectations of the subculture of violence and lethal predation as social currency proxies. This character typically has no faith in the future and only finds a sense of life through reckless behaviors, escapism, and gang politics.

Kimberly Fain's *Black Hollywood: From Butlers to Superheroes, the Changing roles of African American Men in the Movies* (2015) mentions that rap/hip-hop artist locate the foundations of the Black male gangster in cinema. Fain states:

Rap artists such as Ice Cube and Ice-T are featured in films for the purpose of starring as criminals; meanwhile, these movies play rap music to embody various themes and to reinforce identification with an audience. The significant connection bears the fact that rap music and the new Black films picture Black men and women trapped by systems; their performance acts enable them to reinvent themselves…The movies reinforced the idea that Blacks generally live in drug- and gang-infested areas. Furthermore, inner city youth and parents are held captive to a cycle of poverty by Black criminal thugs who enjoy profiting from urban decay (Fain 2015:130-131).

The decent male refers to a morally-driven nurturer, respected for his knowledge and maturity from self-destructive behaviors. He usually represents a father figure with

mainstream American values. In terms of decency, the father figure is the head of the fraternal male order. Harris adds:

> The representation of Black men and masculinity is in dialog with the representation of male heterosexuality; [decent male] gives an age and maturation continuum of Black men. This allows the audience to see the men through childhood adolescence and manhood (1992:92).

The Sambo is described as generally a young Black male, isolated and as being welded to short-run hedonistic values with very little personal accountability. Historically, the Sambo image has dominated the perspective of an American audience, yet competes with other comparative male image that draws from the same popularity: the Buck. Boskin (1988) addresses the image of the Sambo by suggesting that **"**Sambo is one of the many dominant images of the Black male that has prevailed in American Culture over the centuries" (1988:257-258). Woods (2013) adds that the Sambo character arose from the antebellum White fantasies of an "unmotivated, lazy, and mentally stagnated buffoon. Hence, Sambos appear to be completely harmless, weak, easily frightened, inarticulate, docile, non-threatening, child-like, slow walking, talking, and thinking" (2013:8). In contrast to the strong Buck figure, "whites needed to control and emasculate Black males and the Sambo stereotype succeeded in doing that" (2013:8). As Black male actors continue to enter the film industry, they often found themselves typecast to role that compare to the historical Sambo. The modern day Sambo, according to Boksin (1988) and Smith (1998), still carries the personality of "childishness and dependency as the dominant response, equating them as children or animals." (1998:270)

In Bogle's *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks* (2002), Black stereotypes reproduced on screen since slavery and were popularized in American arts. Therefore, Hollywood cinema is familiar with the traditional depictions of Black masculinity to collective audience and construct new screen characters based on these stereotypes for capital gains. With respect to the previous definitions developed by film scholars and historians, the researcher will use the characterizations of traditionally archetypal Tom, revolutionary liberator, archetypal Buck, urban youth/Black gangster, decent male, and modern day Sambo to observe if the selected movies have evolved or run parallels to racialized cinematic portrayals of Black men.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

This chapter views an analysis of the content in the films and indictors of Black

masculinity from all seven characters. All four films provide data from that reveals the

typecasting of Black masculinity and the dominate factors of a Hollywood gaze. First, an

analysis of each film will various instances of Black masculinity and how these racial

codes are depicted as a result of typecasting. Each identifier or code of Black masculinity

is recorded in Tables 3-8. Additionally, I will discuss how the portrayal of Black males in

each film reflects the cultural narrative of the mainstream European (Hollywood) Gaze.

The explanations made about codes or indictors will not speculate outside the data found

in this research provides.

The Birth of a Nation: Slavery Era (1619-1863)

Nate Parker's *The Birth of a Nation* focuses on the plight of Nat Turner who was

perplexed by the perils of slave plantation residency. Nat Turner, experiences an

evolution of sorts that is directly tied to his ascribed social positions assigned within the

context of slavery. As Nat Turner is confronted, challenged and experiences unsettling

social circumstances, he becomes motivated to disrupt the racial hierarchy through

violent means. In the beginning, Nat Turner was treated differently from other slaves. His

initial resistance to White authority as a child was tempered by being afforded privileges

such as reading the Bible. For Nat, learning to read represented mental and spiritual

freedom as well as a source of pride that came with being a learned individual. When

Nat was first afforded the opportunity to preach moral lessons supposedly supported by

scripture, he was obligated to deliver sermons that fundamentally confirmed White

domination and Black subordination. Turner illustrates this behavior best in a sermon to

slaves in neighboring plantations.

Nat Turner announced: *"Brothers and Sisters, I lead you to Peter 2:16… slaves*

submit yourself to your master with all respect. Not only those who are good and

considerate but also to those who are harsh*"* (Code 1-refer to table 9). With this

statement, Nat Turner represents the archetypal Tom (Code 1) because he's willing uses

religious scripture to justify the harsh conditions of slavery. Although Turner realizes that

his voice is nothing by a psychological method to convince slaves to serve Whites, he

submits to preaching this kind of work for best interest of White slave owners and slaves.

Christianity has been used to pacify slaves, making them easy to regulate and

control. In other words, Christianity provided self-governance. Black male slaves who

were selected to preach became acceptable vessels because of shared social status on

plantations. The cultural significance of allowing Black males to teach Christianity is that

it represented a way to regulate Black masculinity by suppressing the desire to challenge

the fierce realities related to slavery. Essentially, Black manhood was devoid of being in

control of one's environment because White social order had precedent over Blacks' life

course outcomes. This narrative seems to be supported by the data. Nat Turner had (6 out

of 22 frequency counts or 27%) for archetypal Tom (refer to table 13 in Appendix C).

Alternatively, the persona of a submissive, harmless slave preacher pivots when Nat Turner decides to fight against the tyranny of slavery. The shift from archetypal Tom to revolutionary liberator (13 out of 22 frequency counts or 59%) emerges when Turner decides that the only solution to counter the slave condition is by way of an insurrection (refer to table 13 in Appendix C).

Infuriated by the torment of slavery, Nat Turner used his platform as a Christian preacher for self-liberation. Turner's new sense of manhood motivated him to use scripture to advocate self-regulation and independence for other slaves. In other words, Nat Turner was able to construct a new identity as an independent thinker and liberator. His identity as archetypal Tom was exhibited in the following quotes:

"Let the high plains of God be in the mouths of the saints and a two edge sword in their hands to execute vengeance on the demonic nations and punishment on those people who bond their nobles with chains" (Code 2-refer to table 9). This quote exhibits a revolutionary liberator (code 2) because Nat Turner uses biblical parables as a verbal code to condemn the White nationalists of who practice American slavery. Turner's conviction demonstrates his new discovery of masculinity as revolutionary who uses verbal confliction to stand against injustice slaves endure.

"Take hath therefore unto yourselves, and to all that flock the holy ghost are you overseers, to feed the church of God in which has purchase with his own blood…You were brought" (Code 2-refer to table 9). This quote displayed a revolutionary liberator (code 2) because Tuner is calling his slave masters hypocrites for using the Christian doctrine as a way to pacify slaves in bondage rather than spiritual communion. Again,

41

Turner reclaims his masculinity by using the bible as a tool to deliver revolutionary messages that challenge the system of slavery.

"We pray for and thank you for your protection and your promise. That in our obedience, you will be an enemy to our enemies. That you will oppress those who oppress us" (Code 2-refer to table 9). This quote depict a revolutionary liberator (Code 2) because Nat Turner opens up a prayer for his White owners with a message of justice and retaliation. At this point of Turner's development, his tired frustrations with White slave owners mistreating slaves is erupting into subminimal messaged of vengeance and spiritual warfare.

"You are now free men and women servants of the lord, the sword of the lord has dawn on our enemies, our ancestors and unborn rejoice" (Code 2-refer to table 9). This quote represents a revolutionary liberator (code 2) because Turner is exemplifies a messiah leader. He speaks on the concept of freedom, justice and a new sense of personhood. Turner is the ideal representation of Black masculinity that stands up for himself and has the ability to lead his race to freedom.

Despite the mixture of submissive and rebellious behaviors, Nat Turner's expressed instances of decency, thoughtfulness, and love (3 frequency counts out of 22 or 13%). The movie did depict Turner as a loving husband to his wife Cherry. In the film, Nat is able to convince Samuel Turner to buy Cherry from a slave auction; using his position as a trust worthy slave (archetypal Tom) as leverage to rescue Cherry from being exploited by other slave owners. Additionally, Nat Turner teaches Cherry how to read, which demonstrate his desire for her to have equal education and independence. This

illustration of Nat Turner as decent male (code 5); a kind-hearted, earnest, and
compassionate man who cares for the well-being of his wife contradicts the traditional
cinematics portrayals of Black masculinity as hyper sexual, criminal, or irresponsible.
The portrayal of Nat as a respectable, soft hearted husband to his wife Cherry defines his
decency; however, his pride compelled him to pivot from archetypal Tom to a
revolutionary liberator to counter family insecurity, dehumanization and the overall
exploitation of slavery.

Malcolm X: Civil Rights Era (1954-1964)

Spike Lee's portrayal of controversial figure Malcolm X included the archetypal
tom, revolutionary liberator, archetypal Buck, urban youth/Black gangster, decent male
and even modern day Sambo. Malcolm X was in many ways the epitome of a social
constructed Black male. After his father was murder by Ku Klux Klan members, a young
Malcolm would be separated from his immediate family and placed in child care
facilities. Malcolm would be raise by White foster parents who enrolled him in a
predominantly White school. The frustration of being parceled out by White society
encouraged Malcolm to embrace gangsterism and routinely participated in crime that
would lead to his incarceration.

His incarceration ironically led to him embrace the Nation of Islam. The data
suggest that Spike Lee's portrayal of Malcolm X's life course was dominated by
revolutionary liberator (14 out of 32 total frequency counts or 44%) and decent male (8
out of 32 total frequency counts or 25%) characteristics more than archetypal Buck,

urban youth/gangster and Sambo (refer to table 13 Appendix C). Thus, it is no surprise

that Malcolm's traumatic childhood would account for at least one instance of archetypal

Tom. For instance, Lee depicts a young Malcolm as an exceptional child; harmless,

effeminate, and less likely to combat the discriminatory behaviors he faces from his

White counterparts. The archetypal Tom identity is displayed when young Malcolm

states "I was special, the only colored kid in the class. I become sort of a mascot, like a

pink poodle. I got called a nigger so much I thought it was my name" (refer to Table 10 -

Code 1). This quote signifies a archetypal Tom (code 1) because a young Malcolm

assimilates to White culture. Also, he is assaulted and call derogatory names by his White

counterparts, he still strive to be a great student and achieve success at a predominately

White school. Malcolm lack of response the mistreatment his faces shows his expression

of masculinity remain subordinate to White social norms

During adolescence, Malcolm "Detroit Red" Little epitomized the life of a street

orientated youth. He has weak social bonds with his parents and immediate family as

well as an extreme distrust for the U.S government. Malcolm's childhood would later

encourage him to embrace his criminality and gangsterism. During his childhood,

Malcolm displayed 5 counts of an urban youth/Black gangster. (5 out of 32 total counts

or 15%--refer to table 13).

An example of revolutionary liberator happens when Malcolm "Detroit Red"

states: "We were parceled out, all of us. I truly believe that If ever a state agency

destroyed families, it destroyed ours" (Code 2-refer to table 10). Malcolm expression of

revolutionary views stem from his mistrust for governmental institutions. The intellectual

Malcolm use his platform to condemn these systematic institution by describing his own experiences, one of the few ways Malcolm expresses his masculinity.

Now that Malcolm is detached from his family, he has to build social bonds with members of the Black community that provide the emotional, cultural, and social support. Unskilled, undereducated, and exposed to a socially disorganized environment that lacks legitimate opportunities, Black youth, like Malcolm "Detroit Red" little are likely lead to a gravitation towards street culture (Hirschi 1969).

Malcolm's proclamation of why he become a Harlem gangster is an indication of urban youth/Black gangster the reputation his acquire from being involved with the street culture of Harlem. Malcolm involvement with violence crime, drugs, and prostitution aligns to street ethics and gang politics. Even as a gangster, Malcolm is self-aware of his commitment to the street laws.

Malcolm "Detroit Red" stated "Like every hustler, I was trapped, Cats that hung together to find security, to find an answer, found nothing. We were all victims to the American social order" (Code 4, code 2-refer to table 10). This statement is an example of a urban youth/Black gangster and revolutionary liberator (code 4 & 2) because Malcolm is self-aware of his disposition as a hustler. He acknowledge the danger lifestyle of gangsterism and the state of depravation Blacks experience in the socially disorganized environments. The masculine presence of Malcolm revolutionary stance suggest that gangsterism and other violence subcultures form from an American system that fails to supply Blacks with the proper resources to sustain their communities.

45

Malcolm "Detroit Red" is a street hustler who would eventually become West Indian Archie's right hand man in an illegal lottery system. West Indian Archie and his gang admired the spirit of young Malcolm and gave him a position to run numbers (gambling) for Harlem Black underground economy. The image of Detroit Red seems consistent with cinematic reflections of Black male criminality. Malcolm "Detroit Red" catered to the normative expectations of violence that coincides with street politics and his pursuit of respect required a willingness to be violent when confronting challenges to his manhood. In another scene Malcolm "Detroit Red" is observed playing Russian Roulette to compete with Ruby for the lead role in burglarizing homes. Malcolm threatened Ruby by stating:

"Rudy, don't you every cross someone who ain't afraid to die" (Code 4-refer to table 10). This statement exhibits a urban youth/Black gangster (code 4) because Malcolm show cases his hard care gangster persona to intimidate Ruby. Competition is a common theme for masculine expression; an expression Malcolm "Detroit Red" wants to eliminate. Hence, Malcolm uses the fear of death as a psychological tactic to overpower Ruby who attempt to compete for Malcolm as the head organizer for the burglary.

Malcolm's "Detroit Red" hyper aggressive behavior persuaded Shorty, Ruby, Sophia, and Sophia' sister to rob wealthy people in order to make quick money. Malcolm "Detroit Red" seems to be oblivious to the consequences of engaging in home burglaries. This representation of Detroit Red mirrors Hollywood acceptance of the Black criminal; young Black men committed to the violence, drug abuse, explicit sex, and criminogenic activities. The narrative of the Black criminal promotes the notion that criminality is and

46

will be acceptable to Black males as long as the criminal isn't caught. Malcolm's character believed in the philosophy of intellectual criminality and spent most of his years in the streets avoiding the day when his life as a hustler ends. Getting caught or serving time in prison is common for the average Black delinquent.

Malcolm "Detroit Red" Little noted: "The average first offender gets a maximum sentence of 2 years for burglary, that what the women got. But our crime wasn't burglary. It was sleeping with White women" (Code 3, Code 4-refer to table 10). This is an example of a (code 3) archetypal Buck because Malcolm is self-aware that his biggest crime in the eyes of society, is having sexually interaction with a White woman. This statement represents an urban youth/Black gangster because Malcolm refers to the process of the criminal justice system, a process young Black youth involve with minor crimes are familiar with.

Spike Lee appears to capture notions that criminal Black men are villains that are capable of seducing others to engage in crime and even sex. Malcolm "Detroit Red" manipulates Sophia: Malcolm "Detroit Red" What's your story. You one of those White girls who can't get enough colored stud. Kiss my foot. Go ahead, kiss it. Now Feed Me" (Code 3, Code 6-refer to table 10). This exhibits an archetypal (Buck code 3) because Malcolm see himself as the Black stud Sophia desires. He uses the image of a Black stud to leverage Sophia privilege as a White woman. Malcolm uses a common psychological tactic Black man use to affirm their masculinity. White women are seen as a trophy wife for men. The opportunity to sexually engage or control a White woman was another alternative for Black men to upheld their masculinity.

Malcolm "Detroit Red's" tenure as a gangster included inter-racial affairs. Thus, his gangster lifestyle included an affair with Sophia. Sophia plays a pivotal role in depicting Black men as archetypal bucks (3 out of 32 total frequency counts or 9%-refer to table 13). Sophia would often venture into predominantly Black night clubs. Her affair with Malcolm "Detroit Red" appeared to emphasize the inter-racial allure based on the premise that Black men are sexual studs.

Malcolm even as "Detroit Red" seemed to understand the racial dynamics operating in America. Malcolm seems quite clear in his belief that "colored studs" are a White woman's fetish. Before diving too deeply into the intensity of Malcolm's Buck indicators, Malcolm did display civility, decency, respect and fondness toward Laura, a Black woman. For instance, Malcolm "Detroit Red" doesn't take advantage of Laura. Instead of introducing Laura to the street life, he advises her to stick to her grandmother philosophy of decency.

Malcolm "Detroit Red" Little stated "No it's not that. Just save it for Mr. Right. Your grandmother is smarter than you think." (Code 6-refer to table 10). This display the decent male (code 6). Malcolm' Detroit Red" does have a consciousness and refusal to exploit Laura by having sex with her shows deference to her grandmother's old-fashioned ways as appropriate for a respectable woman.

Eventually, Malcolm "Detroit Red" stint as a street gangster would come to an end. Malcolm found himself standing in front of a judge, preparing for sentencing for his crimes. Malcolm whispering "fuck you" to the judge echoes the hardcore Black gangster showing no emotional connection to the system and laws that constantly marginalized

48

him. His view of prison appeared to suggest that it was an inevitable outcome, a rite of passage and a badge of rebellion. His ultimate rebellion would come in the form of becoming a Muslim. Becoming a Muslim most likely played a role in him becoming a decent male (8 out of 32 total frequency counts or 25%-refer to table 13). After his conversion to Islam, Malcolm admits that the Nation of Islam prevented him from returning to a life of crime after being release from prison, stating:

"Had it not been for the honorable Elijah Muhammad, I would be an in insane asylum, or dead. Maybe the murderer of one of you" which is an indicator of code 2 and Code 4. (Code 2, Code 4—refer to table 10) There statement signifies a revolutionary liberator (code 2) and urban youth/Black gangster (code 4) because Malcolm acknowledge the importance of his spiritual growth and how it saved him from a life of crime and death. Usually, Black men who are following a new path of decency, reclaim their masculinity but confronting the wrongdoing they committed in their past lives.

Malcolm X was committed to his transitional stage even when his old crime partner Shorty wanted him to do cocaine. When Malcolm said I don't do that [cocaine] anymore. I've been clean for eight years, he exhibited characteristics as a decent male. (Code 5—refer to table 10). Spike Lee's coverage of Malcolm X did a decent job of presenting the evolution of Black masculinity as a socially constructed phenomenon.

Religiosity plays a significant role to the development of Black male screen characters, particularly for the slavery and civil rights' era films examined for this research project. Knowledge of and submission to a spiritual deity necessitates a reformed identity, settles the troublesome spirit and helps worshipers elevate their self-

esteem above and beyond the restrictions of being cast and treated as inferior. Malcolm demonstrates spiritual convictions through the following:

Malcolm X: "When the Negro listen and accept the teachings of Elijah Muhammad, He'll want to get on God side. He'll want to get off drugs and get away from a life of crime. He'll want to get away from committing adultery, fornication, and welfare. He'll want to get a job, take care of his family and his family would respect him." In this statement, expression of a new spirituality is an example of the decent male (Code 5-refer table 10). As Malcolm X continues to grow as a Muslim, he continues to express characteristics that exhibit the decent male (Code 5). Malcolm "Detroit Red" Little said "I will not touch the White men's liquor, his swine, his women. I will not commit fornication, I will not lie, cheat, or steal" - Malcolm prays for the first time in his life after reading the letter from Elijah Muhammad (Code 2, Code 5-refer to table 10). Malcolm X also stated "…. my pilgrimage in Mecca, the brotherhood that existed there among all people, all races, all levels of people who accepted the religion of Islam. It has, despite people differences, help people to practice and study, and to see everyone as part of the same human family." (Code 5-refer to table 10). The statement here reveals that Malcolm strive for spiritual growth opened his mind to the unity of humanity. He realizes that his personal beliefs in America are minuscule to the divine power of Islamic communion. Malcolm exposure to his new philosophy of life encourages his to share his experience with others so they can witness the beauty of universal brotherhood and sisterhood.

Religiosity is the progressive transition to acknowledging the importance of morality over depravity. Maturing within a religious doctrine leads to spiritual growth and for Malcolm X that meant accepting that Islam was an accepting religion more than a race dominant nationalist segregated proclamation. Despite Malcolm X's past segregationist's contentions and the need for a race based form of self-governance, Malcolm X transformed into a less combative more embracing type of leader. His pilgrimage to Mecca represented a spiritual awakening that highlighted the universal fatherhood of God for all men who are Muslim. This transformation infused decency into Malcolm X's rigid nationalistic doctrine as exhibited in the following statement.

Malcolm X: "Now that I have independence of action, I intend to take more of a flexible approach toward working with others to solve our problems. I've forgotten the bad things other leaders sad about me and I pray they'll forget the bad things I've said about them. We must work together and find a common solution to our common problem" (Code 5-refer to table 10). This exhibits a decent male (code 5) because Malcolm is willing to set aside his difference under to cooperate with other leader in the Civil Rights movement. This act demonstrates ideal Black manhood: a leader who decides to work with his adversaries to brought social justice to the oppressed masses.

Malcolm X represented a post Mecca Malcolm who was openly dismissive of Black Nationalism in the name of Allah and more receptive to coalitions with similar goals of racial progress. He admits to the flaws of a racially restrictive doctrine. This should not be taken to mean that the post Mecca Malcolm X moved away from disciplined Black manhood, self-reliance, and protection duties but it does mean that

51

Islam is a global religion and the plight of Black males should be attached to a world view of human rights more so than civil rights. Malcolm X El Hajj Malik El-Shabazz states:

> The American Negro should not be blamed for his racial animosities. He's only reacting to 400 years of oppression/discrimination. As racism leads Americans up to a suicidal path, I believe the younger generation will see the writing on the wall and many will want to turn to the spiritual path of truth… the only way left to ward off the disaster that racist must surely lead too. In prison, the truth come and blinded me. It has happen again. (Code 2, Code 5-refer to table 10).

This quote is an example of a revolutionary liberator and decent male (Code 2 & 5). Malcolm announces that his perspective of life is, although limited, is justify based on the current events that affect Blacks. However, Malcolm has the ability to see the power of the future generations. He believes in their ability to see the evil of racism and he will use his platform to guide them to the truth. (Code 2 & 5).

Malcolm X did not shy away from taking on governmental failures with respect to equitable citizenship protections for Blacks. He certainly continued to detail Blacks' oppressive conditions and exposure to discretionary policing and for that reason, Malcolm X was an empowering figure. Malcolm X epitomized controversial leadership by engaging in daring discourse relative to America's existing chasm between creed and practice as it related to the conditions of Blacks in America. Malcolm X addresses American racism the following quotes.

"If the so-called American Negro was an American citizen, we wouldn't have a race problem. If the Emancipation Proclamation was authentic, we wouldn't have a race

problem. If the Supreme Court decision was authentic, we wouldn't have a race problem"

(Code 2-refer to table 10). This quote represents the revolutionary liberator (code 2)

because Malcolm's radical statements about equal citizenship for Blacks, affirms his

presence as a male leader for justice and truth. His outspoken comments brings to

question about race relations and how American systems treat Blacks. This revolutionary

content illustrates the ideal Black masculinity that resist and deviance American

injustices

"Those Nations, African, Latino, Asian, are hypocritical when they stand up in the

UN and denounce the racism practiced in South Africa but say absolutely nothing about

the racism in American society. I would not be a man if I didn't speak up" (Code 2-refer

to table 10). Clearly these quotes demonstrate a radical voice from Malcolm x speaks

who articulates the consciousness of African Americans and how they see the world

around them. He announces that if he didn't confront the issues that affects him and his

community, he would not be a man. Hence, Malcolm X compares characteristics of

transparency and truth with manhood.

Spike Lee's portrayal of Malcolm X affirms the notion that people are in many

ways socially constructed. Malcolm's life course was distinctly transitional and reflected

situational circumstances that yielded a revolutionary liberator in prison and only

transformed into inclusive decency as a husband, father, and pioneer for the Black Power

Movement. While this researcher is not advocating incarceration, prison helped put a

gangster, criminogenic, Buck style "Detroit Red" to rest and birthed a revolutionary

liberator during a pivotal time in American race relations.

Boyz N the Hood: Ghetto-centric Era (1980-1990)

  Boyz N the Hood illustrates how masculinity is contingent upon subcultural normative expectations. According to James Nadella, social disorganization, and strained community resources produce criminogenic, violent subcultures that effect residential victimization (Nadella 1995).

  Elijah Anderson's *Code of the Street* (1999) is an ethnographic classic that racializes the subculture of violence by suggesting that permanent underclass and working-class Blacks are socialized to negotiate respectable status using codes of conduct that govern decent and violent behaviors. Anderson contends that social capital is a product of social currency embedded in perceptions of respect. Unfortunately, respect is earned by troublesome behaviors and rationalized violence (Anderson, 1999). Street families adopt street values and are more than likely to participate in the violence culture of the code. They exist in socially-disorganized environments. Parents encourage children to respect the code and live by it. Anderson (1999) predicts that the chances a Black youth will practice the violent nature of the code is based on the values they are taught. Additionally, Anderson contends that there are decent families, who adapt American family values, avoid violent conduct, and when prompted to take actions necessary to garner respect, will engage in such actions to defend the right to be respected. Decent families value hard work and typically sacrifice for the future of their children (Anderson, 1999). *Boyz N the Hood* covered life course outcomes for Furious Styles (decent single father), Tre Styles (Furious' son) and Doughboy and Ricky who were the products of a single-female headed household. As Hollywood attempt to capture their condition of

inner city Blacks; the development of character Furious, Tre, Doughboy, and Ricky

reflects the complexities of Black masculinity and Anderson descriptions of the street

codes. The content analysis of this movie focused on Furious' parenting, and the social

discourse, behavior and interaction of Tre, Doughboy and Ricky from the pre-teen years,

to becoming young adults. *Boyz N the Hood* casted more characters than *The Birth of a*

Nation, *Malcolm X*, and *Fruitvale Station* and therefore, had more observations of Black

masculinity. (46 out of a total of 123 inductors or 37% out of 100% -refer to table 13).

As shown in table 3, *Boyz N the Hood* had cultural indicators for a revolutionary

liberator (7), and modern day Sambo (6). However, this ghetto-centric era film (1980-

1990) had more frequency counts for decent male (14) and urban/youth gangster (9),

which seems to supports Anderson's notion that decent families and street families often

code switch depending on the situation (Anderson, 1999).

When the ghetto-centric films focused on young boys, the narrative seemed to

center on sexual promiscuity. Table 5 illustrates that each male character contained at

least 2 indictors of hyper sexuality, sexual pre-occupation, sexual pleasure seeking,

objectifying women and boasting of sexual conquest (code 3 for archetypal buck). For

Tre, Ricky and Doughboy, sexual conquest seemed to measure their status as a man.

Doughboy is the only one that appeared to be negative about being in a committed

relationship with women. For example, Doughboy gets into a dispute with Ricky about a

young Brandi (Tre alleged girlfriend) being their "women." Ricky claims ownership of

Brandi because he seen her first, meaning she therefore belongs to him. Doughboy at 9

years old counters:

"She may be yours but I stuck my ding a dang in her every night so that means she's mine" (Code 3-refer to table 11). The statements exhibit the archetypal Buck (code 3) because the 9-year-old doughboy equate sexual prowess as a form of social control. Doughboy believe that when a man makes sexual contact with a women, her body is no subject to his desire.

Additionally, Doughboy's premature thoughts about sex and women as a youth will transition into his personality as a young adult. He states:

As an early adult Doughboy states *"Hey baby, let me knock the stuffin from that egg muffin. Got a number?"* (Code 3-refer to table 11). The statements exhibit the archetypal Buck (code 3) because Doughboy refers to sex as a tool to dominate and exploit women. For most marginalized young Black men, sex and violence are primary outlets to gain social status and upheld their masculine persona.

The ideal of sexual prowess reflects the socialization of young Black males to see sex as a symbol for social gratification. Anderson describes these values and beliefs as part of the mating game. Since most of underclass young men reside in isolated neighborhoods where Black men are marginalized politically, economically, and socially, there seems to be a realignment of successful outcomes, one of which targets women for sexual conquest. The objective is to manipulate the girl to have sex with the male with "no strings attached" (Anderson, 1990:147).

Tre's initial interpretation of the mating game seemed to focus on the results of sex. Tre seemed focused on the basic principle of baby making as the ultimate outcome of the mating. Tre was accustomed to receiving stern advice from his father about the

consequences of sex, which seemed to work relatively well in that sense that Tre lied

more about having sex to avoid peer pressure and make himself seem experienced in

front of his father. At 9 years old Tre remarks

"I took a girl, stuck my thing in her, 9 months later a baby comes out" (Codes 3

and 6-refer to table 11). The statements exhibit the archetypal Buck (Code 3) because Tre

thoughts about sex only takes in account physical outcomes. Tre's limited thinking about

sex and raising children reveal that his perspective of sex meets an end. There is not

consideration of raising child or even having an intimate relationship with the woman.

Upon hearing his son disclose his limited view of mating. Furious responds:

"Remember this, any fool with a dick can make a baby, but it takes a man to raise a

child" *(*Code 5-refer to table 11). The cultural conflict between the archetypal buck (code

3) and decent male (code 5) is a common theme for young Black males as they enter into

their rites of passage to manhood. Ideally, young males fashion their masculinity through

sexual desire until they are influence by the presence of older Black males. Based on the

interaction between Tre and Furious, the decency of fatherhood and mentorship from old

Black males serves as the antidote to hyper sexual behavior and other sexual

characteristics that associate with a hedonistic Buck.

In spite of Furious' attempts to guide his son, Tre pursued sex and told elaborate

untruths to his father so as to conceal his virginity. Tre appeared to be deeply invested in

trying to have sex with his girlfriend Brandi, and is boastful when hanging out with peers,

even lying to his father about a sexual encounter. This occurs when Furious questions Tre

about having grandchildren. Tre believes that telling a worthwhile sexual fantasy will

impress his father. Tre embraces the minor characteristics of the archetypal Buck to symbolize his rites to manhood, even if it means lying to the man he respects most.

Tre develops a narrative lacing him as the alpha male of the sexual engagement. The young women approach and admires Tre for having his own car. Tre, who is around his homeboys, reads the mixed signals the young lady is sending and seizes the opportunity to have sex with the female admirer. His description of having sex represented male conquest.

As an early adult Tre states "As soon as I get inside BOOM we got at it. Nonstop kissing, huggin, I picked her up, take her upstairs, 20 minutes in, her grandmother comes back home" (Code 3-refer to table 11). This statement is an exhibits the archetypal Buck (code 3) because Tre exaggerated sexual engagement symbolize his desire to be a man. The reference about his car and "smooth talking" mannerisms to attract women express the social expectations young male feel they need to fulfil in order to prove themselves worthy of manhood. Tre narrative to his father demonstrates a constant need prove one's masculinity even if it means lying about it.

Furthermore, Tre negotiates his relationship with Brandi by tempting her to consent to a sexual relationship without commitment. He attempts to run game on Brandi by using a combination of ignoring her, making future promises about commitment and peer pressure.

Tre states "You say you want to wait until you get married right? And I say I'm going to be the one who marries you. So it doesn't matter if we do it (have sex) now or later, we'll still going to get married right?" *(Code 3 and 6-refer to table 11). The

statement represents the modern day Sambo (code 6). Tre displays the characteristics of a Sambo because his actions are reactionary and spontaneous. The desire to explore his sexual curiosity, which symbolizes his manliness, draws social pressure toward his relationship with Brandi. Hence, he wants Brandi to live in the moment rather than consider her beliefs to be celibate until she finishes college and gets married.

Lastly, Ricky's character embodied the mating game as well as Tre and Doughboy. When Ricky made sexual exchange with his girlfriend, Ricky's mother comments, "that's why y'all have a baby now." This statement represents an archetypal Buck (code 3) because, Ricky behavior toward his girlfriend exhibits show he motivate to engage in sexual activity at ant moment's notice. In result, unlike Tre and Doughboy, Ricky is a teen father and appears to be in committed relationship with his baby's mother. Anderson (1990) refers to teen pregnancy as a product of the mating game.

Anderson (1990) mentions that some men embrace functional fatherhood and relationship commitment. Rick embodies this ideal based on his relationship with Tre and Furious, who both practice the code of civility and decency. By virtue of claiming a girlfriend and a son, Ricky is often ridiculed by Doughboy. Doughboy, who is also living with his mother, criticized Rick in front of neighborhood peers by stating

"Don't be like this nigga (Ricky), this nigga got babies, in house pussy. If I were to do some shit like that, mom be like I aint havin it" (Code 6-refer to table 11). This statement exhibits a modern day Sambo (code 6) because Doughboy criticism the privileges Ricky take advantage of. Because Ricky is favored more by his mother, she takes away the pressure of Ricky being a responsible father. Ricky's son and girlfriend

59

are permitted to live with the house with him while he continues to chase his dreams as a football player. Doughboy feel this is unfair treatment makes Ricky irresponsible and blind to the hardship of life in the inner city.

Ricky does appear to represent a modern day Sambo through the favor and overprotection of his mother. This behavior is visible when Ricky instructed Doughboy to get some food for Ricky son even though their mother told Rick to get it. Ricky lazy, irresponsible behavior left Doughboy upset and encouraged him to fight Ricky (code 4 and 6). Violence has always be a common alternative to handle social problems, either in the street or at home. The fight between doughboy and Ricky exemplify the urban culture of express frustration and problem through petty fights. The mother of the two brother come to defends Ricky, showing again her willingness to let Ricky be irresponsible and sheltered. This activity only shows that Ricky position falls under co-dependency of his mother.

Ricky also contribute characteristics of a modern day Sambo when conversing with Tre about adulthood. As Ricky run down the list of responsible his is obligated to fulfil, he expresses to Tre his wishes to escape the social pressure he is currently experiencing stating "If I won the lottery, I don't have to worry about nothing…no colleges, no 700 on a SAT, nothing" (Code 6-refer to table 11). This statement represent the modern day Sambo because Ricky desire to escape from the problems by winning big money. Ricky only desire is to play football. The responsibility of taken care of a son and have a girlfriend only adds additional pressure to his current life. The expression of

winning the lottery serve as an excuse for him not wanted to go through the obstacles it takes to be a college bound football player and a father.

Instant gratification or being involved in short-run hedonistic pursuits represents a default mechanism replacing delayed gratification with over-indulgence in criminogenic opportunities. Instate gratification typical means obtaining material possession that symbolize wealth or garnering respect from a speedy process through notorious criminogenic activities. Respect is an affirmation of manhood. Far too many residents of marginalized neighborhoods invest in street codes to govern behavior. Ricky and Doughboy best exemplify the unforgiven nature of street politics as a venue for establishing respect. In one specific situation a young Doughboy advised his brother keep his football home before walking the neighborhood.

Ricky refused to listen which resulted in getting his football taken by some older teenagers. Understanding the situation as an attempt to bully and push dominance, Doughboy was not willing to concede and decides to fight the local gang banger for stealing his brother's ball. After getting beat up, Doughboy successfully gets Ricky back his ball but he remained upset about getting beat up as a part of the urban youth/Black gangster persona Doughboy expressed: "Man I wish I could kill that mothafucker" (code 5-refer to table 11). This displayed the urban youth/Black gangster because Doughboy reaction to getting beat up by the gang member is murder. This thought process occurs from the emotion of feeling helpless, a sign of weakness to one's masculinity. Doughboy express intentions to kill for respect and protection of his family.

The meaning behind the fight for Doughboy was more than getting Ricky's ball back. It was about building respect. Since the gang banger was older and bigger than Doughboy, murder was an acceptance means to gain respect. Doughboy's life course in the neighborhood was deeply invested in campaigning for respect and selling drugs to support his flashy lifestyle. Unfortunately, Doughboy's lethal approach to gangsterism ended in his brother Ricky's murder and then two weeks later, he was murdered.

Furious Styles, the father of the Tre Styles, represents the positive masculine figure in the movie. Furious was dominantly portrayed as a decent male (6 out of 14 frequency counts or 43% instance of decent male for *Boyz*-refer to table 11) and a revolutionary liberator (4 out of 7 frequency counts or 57%-refer to table 11). Furious was a single father who raised Tre, he worked and was a positive role model for Tre's friends and the community. Furious socialized his son to be personally accountable for his actions and tried to steer him away from the engaging in acts that would eventually cost him his life. Hence, Furious concentrated on his son, but took on the extra responsibility of trying educate the community on gentrification, and genocide. According to Anderson (1999), the decent orientated father or "old heads" serve as a community guardian who strives to help marginalized Black males navigate through street subcultures that nurture violence, deviance, crime, and gang activities. The main objective for old heads is to teach initiative and a sense of responsibility to younger generation (Anderson, 1999). The following statement between Furious and Tre demonstrates the role of the decent father:

Furious to 9-year-old Tre: "I don't have to do nothin' around here except pay the bills, put food on the table, and clothes on your back, ya understand" (Code 5-refer to table 11) This statement displays the decent male because Furious explains to Tre, his son, the responsibilities a man must upheld to live a middle class lifestyle. In the content of this quote, the qualifies of a decent male is judge based upon how he maintain his source of income, morals/values, access to resources, and ability to take care of family.

Furious embodies the decent male (code 6) with respect to responsible fatherhood. Furious acknowledges the dangerous circumstances of living in South Central and the street ethics that rule the environment. His knowledge of violence affords him the opportunity to educate his son about socially acceptable behaviors above and beyond the neighborhood they live in. Furious also demonstrates fatherhood when he teaches Tre how to conduct himself in front of other people.

Tre (9 years old) replies to Furious when he is ask how to address other "Always look a person in the eye, that way they respect you better. Never be afraid to ask for anything, stealing isn't necessary. Never respect anyone who doesn't respect you back" (Code 5-refer to table 11). This statement exhibits a decent male (code 5) because Furious is show Tre to conduct himself when interacting with others. The idea of being a decent man means that one has to present himself in a fashion that demands respect from others.

Living in South Central, LA, considered to be a permanent underclass community ruled by gangs, Furious acknowledges the street codes that govern street related behaviors, while simultaneously attempting to counteract gang related normative

63

expectations with advice that promotes survival. Anderson refers to the acknowledge of

street culture and middle class norms as code-switching. Code switching is when a decent

orientated resident, defers to subcultural norms in instances where social circumstances

mandate deviance, crime and violence (Anderson, 1999:36). For example, Furious

quickly pivoted from a decent male to a protective father when his home was burglarized.

Furious fired his hand gun at an intruder but missed.

When a young Tre implied he should have killed the intruder, Furious quickly

pivoted to suggest that he would have been contributed to killing another Black man.

Before long, Furious pivots again to educate Tre and Ricky about gentrification, social

disorder and genocide. Furious did not decline from that strong message as other young

people including gangsters gathered to listen to him.

Furious*:* "It's called gentrification. It's what happen when the property value in a

certain area is brought down…they buy all at a lower price, move the people out and

raise the property value, sell it for a profit. What we need to do is keep everything in our

neighborhood Black. Black owned with Black money" (Code 2-refer to table 11). This

statement exhibits a revolutionary liberator (code 2) because Furious takes pride in

speaking about the social issuses that affect Black communities. Furious takes pride as a

respectful man in educating his neighborhoods about racial issues in America, providing

difference ways Black can cooperate and practice group economics.

His desire to teach these young men and women about economic and community

empowerment attracted a group of teens who wanted to listen to the charismatic Furious

discusses with a gang banger that killing and violence represents self-destruction:

64

Furious replies to the young gang member "That's exactly what they want you to do. You have to think young brother, about ya future" (Code 2, Code 6-refer to table 11). The statements above demonstrate a revolutionary liberator because Furious is a respected figure in the Black community. He speaks on social injustices that affects African Americans and why their find themselves living under impoverished conditions. Moreover, Furious address the psychological conditions of Blacks. He refers that must of the intra-racial conflicts Blacks have among themselves roots from systematic mechanisms that socially programs Blacks lives to be poor, devalued, and subject to the bottom of the American social order.

Because Ricky and Tre were best friends. Ricky was often exposed to positive messages from Tre and Furious. Moreover, Ricky's mother treated him in an endearing manner (more so that his brother Doughboy) and Ricky was a teen father. Ricky was a gifted athlete and apparently had a mindset to go to college or the military so he could provide for his family. Ricky definitely pondered a future that didn't include being trapped in South Central. Ricky was visited by a University of Southern California recruiter who asked him tough questions about his plans for the future given playing football is a small part of a life course equation.

Ricky states "I heard that before. Actually I thought about majoring in business. I have this friend Tre, whose talking about going into business and all. Plus I like computers." (Code 5-refer to table 11). This statements exemplify a decent male (code 5) because Ricky is considering taking advantage of the advice from his decent orientated associated, Tre and Furious. Ricky is beginning to understand the power of a college

65

education and what kind of opportunities it can open up for him. This can lead to alternative ways to take care of his family and other responsibilities that demonstrate manhood

Ricky seems committed to supporting his girlfriend and their son. Ricky did in fact, strongly consider going to the military as a means to become a responsible father. Tre disagrees Ricky suggestion, referring back to his father views of Black men obligating themselves to institutions like the military, that are more exploitive more than beneficial contends of social mobility. Rick views the army as an opportunity to support himself and his family in case his plans for college falters.

Rick (early adulthood*)* states "I have a son to look after, I don't want to be like my brother and shit. Hanging out and not doing shit. Being in the can just like him" (Code 5 -refer to table 11). This statement exhibits a decent male because Ricky wants to make life choices that can best help him improve his current lifestyle. With consideration of his son and girlfriend, Ricky acknowledge that he has to make critical decision for the best interest of his family. The comparison with Doughboy shows Ricky ability to recognize what outcomes can happen if he doesn't make better life choices from himself.

Doughboy, seemed destined to follow the path of gang banging, which was initiated by him being sent to a juvenile facility for thievery. After his release from juvenile facility, Doughboy appeared to adopt a gangster mindset inclusive of gang banging, and selling drugs. He understands gangsterism as something that is not suited for everybody and even demonstrates compassions for Tre, who did not fully commit to lethal retaliation after Ricky was murdered.

Doughboy seemed to be reflective and at times remorseful when talking about the ongoing murders in South Central. He is conflicted and heartbroken by his brother, Ricky's murder, did have a desire for revenge but also wished Ricky was alive and he didn't have to seek revenge. Doughboy to Tre: "Hey cuz. I know why you got out the car. Shouldn't have been there in the first place. You don't what that shit to come back and haunt you…. (reflecting on his murderous retaliation for his brother), I don't even know how to feel about it. Shit goes on and on, Shit one day someone gon smoke me. Don't matter through. We all gotta go some time." (Codes 4 and 5-refer to table 11). This statement exhibits urban youth/ Black gangster and decent male because Doughboy is self-aware of violence laws that govern street culture. Murder is a common taboo in street laws and Doughboy's role as a gang banger obligates him to upheld these laws. Despite these way of life, Doughboy commends Tre for not choosing to get involved with street violence. He envy for Tre decision and for Ricky to be alive shows that Doughboy has aspires to leave gang life and live by decent orientated values.

In his continued moments of contemplation about murdering those responsible for killing his brother, Doughboy reflected on the balance of media coverage with respect to national acts of aggression and the murder of his brother. Doughboy appeared depressed and in a deep sense of sorrow that there was no media attention given to his brother's murder.

Doughboy protests "Either they don't know, don't show, or don't care about what's going on in the hood" (Code 2-refer to table 11). This is an illustration of Black masculinity in the form of the revolutionary liberator because Doughboy is delivers a

message that the world fails to understand why violence, drugs, and crimes consume the civility of poor Blacks inner cities. The lack of exposure from the news and other media sources about Ricky death validates to Doughboy and other member of the community that Black humanity is not valuable enough for the collective memory of Americans.

Anderson's code of the street perspective helped make sense out of the nuances of negotiating masculinity in an environment beset by criminogenic opportunities, violence and gangs. The cinematic portrayal of four Black males in *Boyz N the Hood* illustrate Black masculinity through complex sets of behaviors that are shaped by neighborhood residency and adverse social circumstances. The development of these Black characters at minimum traced back to behaviors in *The Birth of the Nation*, and *Malcolm X* with respect to revolutionary liberator (code 2), hypersexual males (code 3), and criminal gangsters (code 5). There was also evidence of decent males (code 6).

Fruitvale Station: Alleged Post Racial Society Era (2008-2016)

Ryan Coogler's *Fruitvale Station* represented the post racial society era film for this research project. Michael B. Jordan plays the main character, Oscar Grant a 22-year-old male who was shot on New Year's Day 2009, by a Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) police officer. Fruitvale Station is one of the three films that examined only character. Fruitvale Station seemingly attempted to provide a narrative about the life course events of Oscar leading up to his death. There was a total of (23) frequency counts of Black masculinity in the portrayal of Oscar, most frequency counts were indicators of the decent male (11 out of 23 total frequency counts or 48%-refer to table 13). Another 8 out

of 23 total frequency counts or 35% were indicators of urban youth/Black gangster. Indicators for archetypal Buck (2) and modern-day Sambo (2) were also recorded (archetypal Buck and modern day Sambo combined had 4 out of 23 total frequency counts or 17%-refer to table 13).

Fruitvale Station portrays Oscar as having decent family values. He seemed to be a respectable son. Although there were times that his mother was disappointed in his behaviors that warranted being arrested and jailed. One of the most intense representation of Oscar's masculine persona is the prison scene. While serving time in San Quentin penitentiary for crimes that weren't mentioned in the film his persona throughout the scene emphasized code switching between decent obedient son, caring father and then when prompted by challenges, Oscar became angry and argumentative towards his mother (Code 4 and 5). Moreover when confronted by a rival gang member in prison Oscar became verbally violent and defiant. For example, in one scene during a prison family visit, Oscar's mother asked about the bruises on his face to which Oscar was dismissive. It logically follows that Oscar seemingly adopting a nonchalant stance on facial bruises represents a symbol of accepting consequences of using violence to negotiate his masculinity while serving time.

Oscar understands the need to engage in prison survival strategies (e.g. petty fighting, negotiating gang politics, and constantly engaging into verbal confrontation) in order to maintain respectable social capital while in prison. (Anderson 1999, Cureton 2009). Surviving prison culture is best represented when Oscar has a verbal confrontation

with a rival gang member who disrespect his mother. Defending his mother's honor during her family visit is mandatory.

Oscar Grant to a prisoner*: "*What you say about my mom. Yeah, you talking real tough with these here guards. Imma gonna see your bitch ass on the outside, bruh" (Code 4-refer to table 12). This statement is an example of urban youth/Black gangster because Oscar is using aggression and threats to demand respect. In prison, one sign of weaknesses or disrespect leave unattended brings serious repression to the individual. The typical results range from being outcast from a gang or being exploited by more aggressive prisoners. To avoid these outcomes, Oscar must be aggressive and ready for any confliction that may approach him.

The White gang member's verbal assault directed at Oscar's mother became an automatic trigger for violence. Oscar must defend his mother because she is representation of himself. He stands up to the rival gang member, while simultaneously announces his gang posse affiliation. According to Anderson, this behavior is called "representing" (Anderson, 199:77). Oscar is fully aware that failure to defend his mother's honor would cause him to be viewed as weak and therefore vulnerable to other attacks while in prison. Despite Oscar's attempt to defend his mother, she is more than displeased with his actions as she perceives his behavior as the reason he remains locked up and separated from his family, particularly his daughter Tatiana. Oscar pivots and turns his aggressive stance towards his mother by stating

"So you gonna leave me in here? You gonna leave me again? What kind of mom is you? You gonna fuck around and leave me in here? You never had my fucking back

anyway. I'm here by myself" (Code 4-refer to table 12). This statement displays urban youth/Black gangster because a common expression of gang banging or imprisonment is a sense of isolation. Oscar exemplify this feeling of loneliness when his mother makes the announcement of never returning to the prison again. The common reason why young Black males gang bang or participate in street culture associate with the isolation, alienation, and loneliness.

Behind his masculine persona, Oscar is portrayed as a conflicted young man, who fears isolation, being alone and the thought of being a disappointment. Hence, Oscar immediately becomes defiant when guards came to restrain him. He can be seen being non-compliant with the prison guards while also begging his mother for a hug as she departs. This is an example of code switching between urban youth/Black gangster (code 4) and decent male (code 5).

During a visit from prison, Oscar fails to hold himself accountable for his actions and appears to expect his mother to cover for his long absences from his daughter. In fact, it appears that Oscar often deflects while preferring that his mother craft a noble tale about his absence from his daughter as having to do with anything other than serving time for violating the law. Failure to hold self as personally responsible for wrongdoings, is an indicator of a modern day Sambo persona (Oscar was identified as having 2 counts of code 6/modern day Sambo-refer to table 12).

After Oscar is release from prison, the movie pivots in the direction of fatherhood and family man, and confirms observations leaning toward an archetypal Buck (code 3) and decent male (code 5). Oscar certainly was a dedicated father to his daughter Tatiana

71

and seemed to be positively engaged in a relationship with his girl-friend/baby's mother

Sophina. The relationship seemed more serious given they actually lived together and

appeared to be engaged in dual parenting. However, Oscar did have some fidelity issues,

which contributed to making Sophina feel insecure. In the beginning of the film, Oscar is

laying in the bed with Sophina, who is upset with Oscar for cheating. The accusations

stem from a history of betrayal and infidelity (Buck or code 3-refer to table 12). Oscar

claims that he only cheated one time, he was done with it, and wanted to concentrate on

being a good man to Sophina and father to his daughter Tatiana forever. Hence his

inability to be faithful represented pursuing sexual gratification outside of his

relationship; however, when confronted by Sophina, he offered the desire to be a decent

family man to Sophina and Tatiana.

The accusation of cheating by Sophina shows that Oscar is playing the mating

game. He accepts the alternative lifestyle centered on the "fast life" (Anderson

1999:143). The fast life represents sexual experiences and other delinquency acts. The

game involves engaging in street activities to the satisfaction and even approval of male

peers, while simultaneously engaging in sexual conquest and family obligations. Oscar

commitment to the mating game represents the fundamental flaw that Sophina has with

him. However, Sophina understands the mating game and confronts Oscar. Oscar is able

to eliminate Sophina's doubt by using the final tactic, expressing interest in marriage.

The concept of marriage pacifies Sophina shifting her mistrust to believing in his

dedication to be faithful.

Sophina does have evidence of Oscar's decent side, after all he has shown flashes of being a great father to his daughter. Generally, Oscar is a decent orientated father. He allows his daughter to sleep in the bed with him and Sophina. He is active with respect to Tatiana's morning school preparation including her morning hygiene, preparing her lunch, transport to school, playful bantering, and one-on-one interactions assuring her that he will always be there for her. These activates portray several indicators of decency (code 5-refer to table 12) as it pertains to his relationship with his daughter Tatiana.

Unfortunately, Oscar failed to demonstrate the necessary skills that promoted consistent employment and therefore turned to selling drugs to offset not having enough money to cover his household bills, financially assist his sister and pay for food and leisure activities.

Essentially, Oscar attempts to engage in socially approved endeavors to support his family but when he encountered hard times, he sold marijuana which ultimately contributed to his inability to fully divest from the criminogenic and street conflict subcultures. Ultimately, Oscar finds himself having to code switch from decency to urban youth/Black gangster relative to family dynamics, family processes and social circumstances (Anderson, 1999).

Oscar is observed code switching throughout the film based on the intensity of the situation he is confronting. When situations are calm, Oscar responds favorably by demonstrating decency. Alternatively, when faced with stressful events, like losing his job or being in jail, Oscar descends from decency and appears to subscribe to an

aggressive and even violent persona. He exemplifies this behavior with is former

manager Emi when Oscar angrily states:

"I need this fucking job bruh. You want me sellin dope, bruh? You need me

outside waiting for you to get done, bruh?" *(Codes 4-refer to table 12)*. This statement

displayed the urban youth/Black gangster because Oscar result to using aggression and

anger in order to get his way. Show aggressive and threaten people was a common

gesture for gang culture, as it garner respect, hence Oscar using this tactic that persuade

his manager reconsider the decision to not rehire Oscar.

Oscar's disposition is an example of many marginalized, poor Black males who

don't have a legitimate consistent stream of income. Powerlessness and loss of control

quickly ensue but it eclipsed by conflict, disruption and violence in an effort to restore

social currency and a sense of control. In addition to facing the reality that he will not get

his job back, His sister Chantey call him asking for financial help with her rent. She

apparently doesn't know that Oscar is unemployed but she does know he will hustle to

get her the money she needs by any means necessary. Thus, Oscar is showing this he is a

decent male who provides for him family (code 6).

Oscar's drive to help his family motivates him to help Chantey although he

doesn't have the money. He wants to be a resource, which embodies his desire to be

viewed as a provider. Due to his limited access to legitimate stream of income, Oscar

contacts Manny, a street orientated figure in order to get back to selling drugs. On the

way to meeting Manny, Oscar stops to get gas and he has no hesitation to interact with a

stray pit-bull. Soon after petting the dog, which is a demonstration of his sentimental

side, the dog runs off only to be hit by a car, killing the dog. Oscar shows immediate

compassion but soon switches to defiance and displays an urban youth/Black gangster in

his statements to the driver who hit stray dog:

"Aye Slow down, Slow down, you bitch motherfucker" (Code 4-refer to table 12).

This exhibits a code 4 urban youth/Black gangster because Oscar aggressive tone and

persona affirms that the only means of handling conflict is through violence.

Although Oscar has intense moments with his mother, it is apparent that he loves

and honors her. Oscar arranges his entire day on making his mother birthday special. He

starts by texting her "Happy Birthday" the night before demonstrating the decency of an

appreciative son. Next, He calls her at her job and pleading for her to leave early so they

can spend the rest of the day celebrating which shows the character is engaging in decent

male behavior. After she denies, his offer due to heavy work traffic, Oscar wanted to pay

for his mother favorite seafood. Aware of Oscar's financial background, his mother

knows he doesn't have the cash flow to offer the seafood so she offers to pay him back

but he humbly denies. He states *"C'mon ma, it's your birthday. You don't have to pay me*

back." In this situation, Oscar is engaged in decent male (code 5) behavior. Oscar sees

his family as the only asset in his life. Oscar valued being viewed as a provider, whether

that meant going out of his way to buy his mother favorite seafood or make a drug call in

order to help his sister Chantey pay her bills.

 Oscar's litany of behaviors reflect an ongoing struggle that involved conventional

values, acts of kindness, decisions to disassociate with criminogenic vices, while trying to

maintain some type of foothold of aggressive masculinity when confronted by

75

disrespectful social circumstances. Oscar does reflect on being incarcerated before deciding to dispose of the marijuana he was going to sell to get money. He later disclosed his unemployment and why he decided to get rid of the marijuana to Sophina. Sophina was appreciative of his honesty and willingness to try in have a conventional socially approved life style with her and Tatiana. This interaction displays Oscar engaged as decent male (code 5).

There are two instances were Oscar is hanging out the old heads. They are laughing, joking, and expressing the important of African American who came from neighborhood like Oakland and somehow establish a life of fulfilment and grace. Oscar is motivated by this conversation and commits another act of decency. Later that night, while celebrating New Year's, he assists a couple, specifically a pregnant woman gain access to a public bathroom, although the business was closing up for the night. This act of kindness lead to an important exchange where Oscar gained an appreciation for marriage and faith that his un-employed fortunes would change, which would ultimately improve his life. In these interactions Oscar displayed a decent male (code 5).

Fruitvale Station provides evidence of the constantly evolving nature of Oscar's masculinity. The movie provides unique circumstances leaves the impression that Oscar himself often engaged in impression management as he negotiated his masculinity. Certainly, it is logical to conclude that Oscar's masculinity, like race, is a social construction. Not only is his masculinity contingent upon his lived experiences, his masculinity seemed significantly related to the types of social circumstances he encountered. Towards, the end of the film, with the majority of the observations tilting in

favor of decency and positive reflection about his future, Oscar's life is immediately halted due to the consequences of his actions in prison. Unfortunately, confrontations don't have time stamps so while in the moment of celebration Oscar is confronted by a former prison peer. Oscar attempted to decline from confrontation on the train but his rival wanted conflict leading to a fight on the train traveling back to Oakland. In spite of several witnesses, the instigators of the fight were not pulled off the train by the police but Oscar and his friends were identified by the police and removed from the train. It was obvious that Oscar was attempting to startle the fence, verbally disrespecting officers at times, while also trying to get out of the situation without conflict with police officers. The intensity of the exchange warranted a call for police back up where ultimately Oscar is shot in the back while in handcuffs. The bullet in his back provided clarity as he proclaimed, "I have a daughter." In the fleeting moments of his conscious life, observations leave us with a questionable policing error, and a tragedy of a young man attempting to breathe, with fatherhood foremost on his mind.

Essentially, every film accommodates to the cultural frameworks of the European Gaze. Based on the research, All seven characters foretell a common struggle for Black males to operate within White social norms while experiencing realities that identify their masculinity. Hence, each character represents a disposition of power when challenge with systematic barriers dominated by Whites. Trapped in a cycle of depravity with no room to express their masculinity, the common results for these character end in intra-racial violence, a feeling of powerlessness, and social death. These illustrations accommodates to the interest of an audience who view Black masculinity through a Eurocentric,

77

Hollywood Gaze. The deceptions comprise of a narrative that reminds the viewing audience that the revolutionary and decent activities demonstrate by Black male are minuscule to the social expectations of Black criminality, Black hyper sexuality, and other depictions of hyper masculinity demonstrated by Black men.

Results of Black Masculinity in The Birth of a Nation, Malcolm X, Boyz, and Fruitvale Station

This section simply details general findings that emerged from conducting a content analysis of four different movies representing four different eras. Tables 3- 8 examine instances of Black masculinity from the Character Nat Turner, Malcolm "Detroit Red" Little, Malcolm X, Furious, Tre, Doughboy, Ricky, and Oscar Grant. According to Table 3, the films, *The Birth of a Nation* and *Malcolm X*, possess cultural indictors of an archetypal Tom (Nat Turner had six instances and Malcolm Detroit Red with one instance). There is no evidence of archetypal Tom in *Boyz N the Hood* and *Fruitvale Station*. The Oscar Grant and the four main characters in *Boyz N the Hood,* Furious, Tre, Doughboy, and Ricky, are byproduct of a crime-ridden, socially-organized Black community. Each character shaped their identity and ideals of life based off street ethics, gang politics, and violence subcultures. These personality traits do not fit the cinematic descriptions of a subservient, messiah-like Tom.

Table 3

Archetypal Tom Cultural Indictors per Character

The Birth of a Nation Slavery (1619-1865)	*Malcolm X* Civil Rights (1954-1965)	*Boyz N the Hood* Ghetto-centric (1980-1990)	*Fruitvale Station* Alleged Post Racial Society (2008-2016)
Nat Turner (6)	Malcolm "Detroit Red" Little (1)	Furious (0)	Oscar Grant (0)
	Malcolm X (0)	Tre (0)	
		Doughboy (0)	
		Ricky (0)	

Table 4 shows the that films *The Birth of a Nation* and *Malcolm X* were far more dominant by revolutionary liberators when compared to *Boyz N the Hood* and *Fruitvale Station*. In respect to the Slavery and Civil Rights genre, Black director envisioned a new representation of Black masculinity that matches the new consciousness of Blacks. The ideal representation of Black manhood is a courteous, fearless, outspoken, and radical voice for the oppressed masses. Tre, Doughboy, Ricky, and Oscar Grant show the lowest instances of a revolutionary liberator which shows that young Black males are cast as either criminals and delinquents who focus solely on sexual exploration to achieve social gratification.

Table 4

Revolutionary Liberator Cultural Indictors per Character

The Birth of a Nation Slavery (1619-1865)	*Malcolm X* Civil Rights (1954-1965)	*Boyz N the Hood* Ghetto-centric (1980-1990)	*Fruitvale Station* Alleged Post Racial Society (2008-2016)
Nat Turner (13)	Malcolm "Detroit Red" Little (4)	Furious (4)	Oscar Grant (0)
	Malcolm X (10)	Tre (2)	
		Doughboy (1)	
		Ricky (0)	

Table 5 indicates that archetypal bucks were represented in three out of four films. There was no evidence of the archetypal Buck represented by Nat Turner in *The Birth of a Nation*. This would seem logically consistent given; Nat Turner is cast as a preacher with liberating ideas that eventually led violent insurrections. Preaching, liberating and insurrection planning runs counter to the selfish, self-gratifying, hedonistic Buck.

Table 5

Archetypal Buck Cultural Indictors per Character

The Birth of a Nation Slavery (1619-1865)	*Malcolm X* Civil Rights (1954-1965)	*Boyz N the Hood* Ghetto-centric (1980-1990)	*Fruitvale Station* Alleged Post Racial Society (2008-2016)
Nat Turner (0)	Malcolm "Detroit Red" Little (3)	Furious (1)	Oscar Grant (2)
	Malcolm X (0)	Tre (3)	
		Doughboy (3)	
		Ricky (2)	

Table 6 reveals that *Malcolm X, Boyz N the Hood*, and *Fruitvale Station* had a collective 23 instances of urban youth/Black gangster. Certainly, the structural, cultural and social circumstances related to residing in socially disorganized, resource strained areas would produce subcultural values and street code ethics that mandate participation in criminogenic subcultures and joining gangs (Anderson, 1999).

Table 6

Urban Youth/Black Gangster Cultural Indictors per Character

The Birth of a Nation Slavery (1619-1865)	*Malcolm X* Civil Rights (1954-1965)	*Boyz N the Hood* Ghetto-centric (1980-1990)	*Fruitvale Station* Alleged Post Racial Society (2008-2016)
Nat Turner (0)	Malcolm "Detroit Red" Little (4)	Furious(0)	Oscar Grant (8)
	Malcolm X (1)	Tre (2)	
		Doughboy (5)	
		Ricky (3)	

Table 7 illustrates that all four films had representations of the decent male. Oscar Grant ironically had more decent male indicators (11) than gangster youth indicators (8-refer to table 6) but this combination apparently did not prevent him from being fatally shot by a police officer. Perhaps the intensity of his youthful gangsterism out-weighed his decent male characteristics. Apparently, maturity for Malcolm from Detroit Red to Malcolm X meant an increase in indicators for being a decent males (Detroit Red had two instances while Malcolm X had six). The power of fatherhood seems evident as Furious (six frequency counts) role a decent male with middle class values influences his son's, Tre, behavior (three frequency counts). It's also important to note that even though Ricky

had no father in the home, his association with Tre and Furious as well as being a young

father seemed to affect his decency (four frequency counts).

Table 7

Decent Male Cultural Indictors per Character

The Birth of a Nation Slavery (1619-1865)	*Malcolm X* Civil Rights (1954-1965)	*Boyz N the Hood* Ghetto-centric (1980-1990)	*Fruitvale Station* Alleged Post Racial Society (2008-2016)
Nat Turner (3)	Malcolm "Detroit Red" Little (2)	Furious (6)	Oscar Grant (11)
	Malcolm X (6)	Tre (3)	
		Doughboy (1)	
		Ricky (5)	

Lastly, Table 8 demonstrates that *Malcolm X, Boyz N the Hood* and *Fruitvale Station* have minimal instances of Sambo. The modern day Sambo character was the least likely to be represented in film. The Sambo character appeared more in the Detroit Red version of Malcolm and the young males residing in South Central Los Angeles.

Table 8

Modern Day Sambo Cultural Indictors per Character

The Birth of a Nation Slavery (1619-1865)	*Malcolm X* Civil Rights (1954-1965)	*Boyz N the Hood* Ghetto-centric (1980-1990)	*Fruitvale Station* Alleged Post Racial Society (2008-2016)
Nat Turner (0)	Malcolm "Detroit Red" Little (1)	Furious (0)	Oscar Grant (2)
	Malcolm X (0)	Tre (2)	
		Doughboy (1)	
		Ricky (2)	

Appendix B consist of tables 9-12, where dialogue and actions are gather from each character in the films. The researcher frequently watched and documented content that aligns to the cultural indictors of Black masculinity. *The Birth of a Nation* and *Fruitvale Station* show 20 instances of Black masculinity. *Malcolm X* revealed a total of 25 cultural indictors and *Boys N the Hood* demonstrate 40 indictors of Black masculinity. In Appendix C, Table 13 provides the total sum of all cultural indictors found in the four films.

Table 9 shows that the main character in the Slavery Era Movie, *The Birth of a Nation,* had more counts of revolutionary liberator than archetypal tom, Sambo, decent male, archetypal Buck, and urban youth/Black gangster. Table 9 indicates that Nat Turner yielded 6 indicators of an archetypal Tom, 13 instances for revolutionary liberator, 3 instances for decent male, and no indicators of an archetypal Buck and urban youth/Black gangster. Essentially, Nat Turner was the only Black male character examined in this movie and his masculinity identifiers were dominantly revolutionary liberator (13 counts).

In Table 10, The Civil Rights Era movie, *Malcolm X*, revealed that the main character, Malcolm X was far more of a revolutionary liberator than decent male, urban youth/Black gangster, archetypal Tom, or archetypal Buck. As shown in table 10, the 32 frequency counts of Malcolm X revealed one instance associated with archetypical Tom, 14 instances for revolutionary liberator, three indicators for archetypal Buck, five instances for delinquent youth/Black gangster, 8 instances for decent male, and only one stance for modern day Sambo. Comparatively, Malcolm X edged Nat Turner as a

revolutionary liberator by one count. Moreover, Table 10 illustrates that Malcolm "Detroit Red" Little displayed five instances of urban youth/Black gangster, 4 instances associated with revolutionary liberator, three instances for the archetypal Buck category, two instances for decent male, one stance of the archetypal Tom, and one stance for modern day Sambo. Malcolm X was observed to have 10 indictors of revolutionary liberator, six instances for decent male, and only one instance for urban youth/ Black gangster.

The representatives for Ghetto-centric films, *Boy N the Hood*, revealed more indictors for decent male than delinquent youth/Black gangster, archetypal Buck, modern day Sambo, archetypal Tom, and revolutionary liberator. Table 11 reveals that there were 46 indicators of Black masculinity, seven instances for the revolutionary liberator, nine instances for the archetypal Buck, 10 indicators of urban youth/Black gangsters, 15 coded indicators for decent male, and five instances for the modern day Sambo. Table 11 illustrates that Furious had six indictors as a decent-orientated role models, four instances as a revolutionary liberator, and only one indicator of an archetypal Buck. Tre accounted for three indictors as a decent male, two instances for revolutionary liberator, three indicators for archetypal Buck, two instances of an urban youth/Black gangster, and two indicators for modern day Sambo. Doughboy's character accounted for five cultural indictors as the urban youth/Black gangster, three instance for archetypal Buck, one indicator for revolutionary liberator, one indicator for decent male, and one instance for modern day Sambo. Lastly, Ricky was revealed to have four indictors of a decent male,

two instance for archetypal Buck, (3) counts for urban youth/ Black gangster, and (3) indicators for modern day Sambo.

The post-racial society time frame (2008-2016) movie selection, *Fruitvale Station* was observed to have more indicators of a decent male than archetypal Tom, revolutionary liberator, archetypal Buck, urban youth/Black gangster, and modern day Sambo. Oscar Grant was the only Black male character examined in this movie and his overall frequency counts totaled (23), nearly half (11) of that count represented indicators of a decent male, and there were (8) indicators of urban youth/Black gangster (refer to Table 12).

Overall, table 13 (Appendix C) illustrates that there were 123 frequency counts coded for this research project. The data shows that all four films rendered more cultural indicators of the decent male than Sambo, revolutionary liberator, archetypal Tom, urban youth/Black gangster, and archetypal Buck. Overall there were (7 or 6%) indicators for archetypal Tom, (34 or 28%) counts for revolutionary liberator, (15 or 12%) indicators for the archetypal Buck, (23 or 19%) observations for urban youth/Black gangster, (36 or 29%) observations for decent male, and (8 or 7%) recorded frequencies for modern day Sambo. Moreover, there was an observable difference in frequencies for revolutionary liberator for the movies representing the slave and civil rights era, for the movies *The Birth of a Nation* and *Malcolm X*, respectively. These two movies alone accounted for (27 out of the total 34 or 79%) indicators for revolutionary liberator. There were more indicators of archetypal Buck and urban youth/Black gangsters in *Boyz N the Hood*, the ghetto-centric film representative (19 total observations out of 37 or 51%) than *The Birth*

85

of a Nation, *Malcolm X* and *Fruitvale Station* combined. Additionally, ghetto-centric and post racial society films were observed to have more indicators of a decent male (25 observations out of a total of 36 or 69%) than slave and civil rights era films. This could very well be driven by the fact that only two main characters were examined for the slave and civil rights era films in comparison to five main characters being observed in the ghetto-centric and post racial society films. Still there is irony in *Boyz N Da Hood*, a ghetto-centric film having more indicators of a decent male than slave, civil rights and post racial society movies, *The Birth of a Nation*, *Malcolm X*, and *Fruitvale Station*, respectively. In closing, all instances examine in all four films upheld racial codes and identifies, Archetypal Tom & Buck, revolutionary liberator, decent male, Black gangster, and modern day Sambo, that mimic traditional cinematic portrayals of Black masculinity. Based on the results, all films provide a high representation of decent males, however the notions of Black criminality, uncontrollable sexual impulse, and violence found in each character affirms that Hollywood cinema continue to typecast Black male actors through cultural narratives. Despite the controversial messages, the popularity each film attracts to movie goers shows that the collective consciousness accepts the revolutionary illustrations of Black masculinity just if it assimilates to the Eurocentric gaze.

The European Gaze Analysis

Based on the findings, Black masculinity is shaped, molded, and transferred by the cultural transmissions of the European (Hollywood) gaze. The negative imagery of the Black gangster, Tom, Buck and Sambo displayed by Hollywood films is more widely

accepted by a collective consciousness despite the revolutionary messages and decency

presence within all Black male characters. *The Birth of a Nation* and *Malcolm X* both

demonstrates cinematic portrayal of radical leadership from Black male leaders fails to

fight against the social injustice and that can not survive within a White dominance

society. Although *The Birth of Nation* and *Malcolm X* show clear imagery of Black male

protagonists transitioning from archetypal tom to revolutionary leaders, the pursuit to

liberate themselves and their fellow kinsmen would be demonize by a collective

consciousness, which results to death. The death of Black male leaders affirms that any

revolutionary representation of Black masculinity that stands against injustices composed

by White authorities is a danger to every member of society. For instance, the death of

Turner concludes that the violence response of slave insurrections are a danger for both

slaves and White slave owners. The radical ideology to kill White families, including

women and children, from Turner illustrate the traditional imagery of the uncontrollable

Black brute consisted from the European gaze. The visual reveal to the audience that

Turner ideas and actions was a social threat which justifies the manhunt from the Virginia

militant to annihilate Turner's image.

Spike Lee's image of Malcolm X has a hustler, drug dealer, and Black stud

accommodates to the traditional Hollywood lens of Black male characters. Despite

Malcolm's spiritual transformation and revolutionary stance for social justice, Lee

portrays Malcolm conflicts with the Nation of Islam would lead to his assassination.

Shifting the death of Malcolm X to the Nation of Islam reveals to a collective

consciousness that the end of prominent Black American leaders can stem intra-racial

conflicts. This narrative fit in the frameworks of the European gaze and affirms that Whites aren't the direct blame for death of Black American leader like Malcolm X.

In respect to the fictional narrative of Black men in *Boyz N the Hood*, Singleton highlights the representation of criminality, hyper sexuality, and intra-racial violence by all four Black male characters. The visuals of Black gangsterism by Doughboy and code switching of Furious, Tre and Ricky affirm to a viewing audience that Black males who negotiate their masculinity through ganglands like South central are inseparably to crime and violence. The imagery of young Black males gang banging, selling drugs, starting fights, and objectifying women as symbols of pleasure signifies a rites of manhood, in which one tend to experience instant gratification despite long term risks that garner self-destructive behaviors. These portrayals reveals a social isolation inner city young Black males experience from mainstream society. The social isolation young Black men face leads to limited outlooks on life and limited opportunities to achieve social mobility. (Hunter 1994, Sheridan 2006). Despite the awareness *Boyz N the Hood* brings to an American audience about the lives of young Black males, the European gaze interprets that illustrations of Black depravity is an integral part of the Black community and Black criminality is a consequence for Blacks living in such gang infected, crime-ridden environments like South Central Los Angeles.

Oscar grant's narrative in *Fruitvale Station* appeals to Hollywood interest in Black male experiences. Oscar's criminal background and street-orientated values limits life choices and compels him from living a life of decency. Like Boyz N the Hood, the visual of Oscar's as a drug dealer, adulterer, and ex con shows that Black male are still

subject to crime and violence, which is common narrative for Hollywood selling movies. Despite decent characteristics, Oscar fails to escape from violence subcultures and gang politics; which ultimately results to his fatal death by Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) officer. Like Boyz N the Hood, the visual of Oscar's as a drug dealer, adulterer, and ex con shows that Black male are still subject to crime and violence, which is common narrative for Hollywood selling movies

Arguably, the European Gaze serves as an implication that supports the economic infrastructure of Hollywood cinema. Since American cinema is a capitalist industry that invest in Hollywood films for profit, visuals of the archetypal Tom, Buck, Sambo and Black criminal are still profitable images that continue to flourish in film culture. Additionally, the economic contributions of the Jewish-White producers and a dominating White movie going audience forces black directors like Parker, Lee, Singler, and Coogler to shape narratives of Black males to reflect, or assimilate to, the European Gaze.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

Parker, Lee, Singleton, and Coogler have in common that they are Black male movie makers attempting to offer a narrative about the social construction of Black masculinity through their films *The Birth of a Nation, Malcolm X*, *Boyz N the Hood*, and *Fruitvale Station*, respectively. Similarly, *The Birth of a Nation*, *Malcolm X* and *Fruitvale Station* have characters were based on a non-fictional character. Moreover, these three films were more reflective of docudramas, while *Boyz N the Hood* was a fiction film based on generic themes inherent in socially disorganized neighborhoods ruled by gangsterism. The common theme that emerged after observing the storyline of seven Black Males is that they were for the most part decent males (36 out of 123 frequency counts or 29%-refer to table 13) or males who were revolutionary liberators (35 out of 123 frequency counts or 27%-refer to table 13).

Still when digging even deeper the theme of decency seems to prevail as all seven characters pursued a reasonable standard of living that included dignity, respectability and security. All characters seemed infused by a desire to live a meaningful live that is deserving of equitable humanity. The common denominator with their respective displays of manhood, regardless of era, was the right to personal fulfillment, protection of family, moral transcendence, and social mobility. It does not matter whether we are talking about Nat Turner or Malcolm X who were revolutionary liberators, or Furious, Tre, Ricky and

Doughboy who were contending with the social decline in a gangland, or Oscar's

continuous evolution, each male, held decent principles. To this end, it seems logical to

suggest that Parker, Lee, Singleton and Coogler produced films that had undertones of

decency even when these Black males were confronted by systems, institutions and

circumstances that challenged their manhood.

Critical Culture scholars suggest the representations of race and gender (Black

masculinity) is connected to ideological bias of mainstream power agencies (Hollywood

film production) (Baxter and Babbie 2003). Hollywood as a power institution of meaning

making that infects society's collective conscience seems invested in the criminal,

predatory nature of Black males. It appears that violence continues to rule the day when it

comes to narratives about Black males. Nat and Malcolm, Ricky, Doughboy and Oscar

shared a common fate. These males would die, one as a consequence of racial

insurrection (Nate), one as a consequence of revolutionary discourse (Malcolm X), two as

a consequence of residency in a gangland (Ricky and Doughboy) and one more because

of lethal policing tactics (Oscar). This research reveals that (five out of the 7) characters

died as insurrectionists, martyrs, or victims of the subculture of violence or police

brutality. Unfortunately, end of the day takeaways could rest with notions that Black

males are more violent even in their pursuit of a decent equitable life.

Ultimately, then even with Black male film makers as primary writers and

directors, generations of movie going audiences may continue to harbor a subconscious

fear of Black males, even if behaviors represented rebelling against injustice or attempts

to be socially mobile (Miedzian, Myriam 1991). The common gaze of the Black menace

or delinquent is rooted by the political and cultural frameworks that shaped Hollywood (Fischer-Lichete, Erika & Riley 1997). Thus, as the traditional Sambo, Tom, and Buck remain popular to movie goers and profitable for Hollywood, Black male character will continue to fulfil roles that are typecast along these cinematic depictions. Hence, the Black film makers embrace the European gaze no matter how mythical Black male characters are showed. It will be decades before positive imagery of Black masculinity is accepted by mainstream Hollywood and the collective consciousness of a movie going audience.

Although no as frequently observed as the common themes of decency and revolutionary liberator, the criminality of Black males seemed to take center stage (urban youth/gangster had 23 out of a total 123 frequency counts or 19%-refer to table 13). Notably urban youth/gangster were dominant in ghetto-centric and post racial society films. Malcolm "Detroit Red" also contributed frequency counts (a total of 5 out of 23 counts for urban youth/gangster or 22%-refer to table 13). Black gangsters are still popular representations for Black males in Hollywood. Doughboy and Oscar Grant seemed to illustrate that Black males are inclined towards uncontrollable anger and therefore are dangerous enough to warrant heavy handed policing tactics. Thus it can be logically inferred that a ghetto-centric film directed by a Black male still has examples of negative race legacy typecasting.

The description of the ''lazy, irresponsible, unmotivated, and immature" (Leab,1973; Boksin 1988:257-258) The Sambo remains present in contemporary cinema. The modern day Sambo was represented in Singleton's ghetto-centric film, *Boyz N the*

Hood (6 out of 9 frequency counts or 67% for Sambo-refer to table 13) and Coogler's

Fruitvale Station (2 out of 9 frequency counts or 22% for Sambo—refer to table 13). In

similar fashion to Sambo, in that it was not a dominant trait expressed in the four films

examined, the archetypical Tom is primarily represented in *The Birth of a Nation* (slave

era film 6 out of a total 7 frequency counts or 86%-refer to table 13).

Moreover, Lee, Singleton, and Coogler revealed that Black men's sexuality or

aggressive sexual actions and discourse towards women reflected that of an archetypal

Buck (14 out of a total 123 frequency counts 11%-refer to table 13). Older female

characters in *Malcolm X, Boyz N the Hood*, and *Fruitvale Station* seemed focused on

motherhood. In those cases, Black males seemed to be more subjected to being demeaned

or their manhood challenged, ridiculed and scrutinized. Alternatively, younger female

characters in *Boyz N the Hood* and *Fruitvale Station* seemed to serve as cohort

temptation. Essentially, the females who were mothers to Malcolm "Detroit Red, Tre,

Doughboy, Ricky and Oscar, were at times scorning and/or positioned themselves to

deflect or shield the destructive habits of young Black men and provided protectionist

advice against violent outcomes (Gause 2014, Diawara 1993).

To summarize then, based on this research, all Black male characters are

connected with violence and criminogenic behaviors. For instance, Nate Parker's *The*

Birth of a Nation (2016) responds to derogatory imagery of Black men as criminal and

rapists from the original *Birth* by D.W Griffith. Although the narrative of Nat Turner

exposes the underlying concept of White fear and the socialization of violence that

shaped Black male identity, Nat Turner is depicted as a Black terrorist to Whites; and

therefore a public lynching is far more suitable than being critical of the system that led to insurrection. Other movies, highlighted the controversial and dangerous threat that Black masculinity imposes on American civility. Malcolm X transforms from a hustler to Black Nationalist, to a prophetic leader that started to turn the corner of racial acceptance with respect to coalitions. Malcolm X's murder was viewed as highly probable and in some circles, justified. *Boyz N the Hood* follows three young boys as they attempt to navigate through a troublesome gangland that would eventually claim the lives of Ricky and Doughboy.

A mother is left to grieve the loss of two sons (Ricky and Doughboy) and Ricky's son will grow up without a father. The perils of South Central seems to guarantee generational replacement with respect to a continuous code that condones lethal predation producing dysfunctional family dynamics and effecting single parent households. Finally, *Fruitvale Station* details the routine activities of Oscar Grant leading up to him being killed as a result of a police officer discharging his firearm into the body of Grant. Oscar was shown to be reflexive about his behaviors that at times represented decency and at other times represented criminal pursuits, gangsterism and defiance against correctional and police officers. Taken together, all seven characters exhibit anger, frustration, criticism and distrust toward the American System, five out of seven would lose their life.

Indicators of archetypal Tom, revolutionary liberator, archetypal Buck, urban youth/Black gangster, decent male, and modern day Sambo reveal Black masculinity as a product of macro and micro level situational circumstances. If anything, Black film writers and directors of the films observed for this research seemed to highlight the

decency of Black males, while remaining authentic to the fatal outcomes experienced as a

result of insurrection, revolutionary and gangster activities, and discretionary policing.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Arguably, cinematic portrayals of Black masculinity continue to be attached to unflattering depictions that ultimate justify any form of social regulation and control. By continuing to portray Black males as predatory, the collective conscience or mood of this country towards Black males remain welded to traditional views that Black males deserve a different brand of formal justice. Even in worse case scenarios where Black males are victimized, the public trust rest firmly in the camp of legal agents who can then police Black males (in particular) with impunity. However, the films examined for this research revealed an underlying theme of decency that obviously does not dominate the collective conscience of mainstream Hollywood. One contribution of this research then is that it reveals a carefulness about Black Film makers with respect to putting energy in explaining the ingredients of Black males' social world and the logical coping strategies that are used to offset perceived imbalances that seem to detract from self-worthiness and deservedness.

This research set out to provide insight with respect to two questions (1) what racial codes or identifiers emerge as a result of typecasting over the course of four different era films? (2) is there a social and cultural narrative that consistently reflects a mainstream European gaze? With respect to question one, there was firm evidence Black male decency, Black men as revolutionary liberators and Black men as urban youth

/gangsters. Additionally, Black male sexuality, and Black males with nonchalant, hedonistic, and deflecting attributes was also observed in the films. These films reveal the code switch and conflict in the personas of these character as they navigate through these racial identifiers. With respect to question 2, it appears that no matter the source of Blacks' defiance or even legitimacy in terms of challenging systems of oppression, the cost for engaging in such behavior appears to be death. Birth of Nation, Nat's insurrection was countered by a public lynching. Malcolm X's revolutionary tactics led to his assassination. The perils of gangsterism in South Central, claimed two lives. Finally, Oscar Grant would eventually die due to being shot by a police officer. The officer's explanation of the killing was that it was in error and the outcome was definitely favorable given the jury was receptive to that explanation.

There is evidence that race relations remain linked to perceptions of Blacks' criminality (Welch, 2007). Continuing to recycle notions of Black masculinity as dominated by dispositions inclined to be hypersexual, criminal, defiant, and depraved confirms racial fears, which will only continue to fuel negative estimations regarding the value of Black lives. Hence, in order to further address the question two, researcher will need to investigate the market response to these movies (e.g. examine movie reviews, ticket sells, and if there is viable evidence of how the Black community responded to such movies). This research can be expanded by doing a content analysis of more movies and episodic series forged by the likes of Shanda Rhimes who uses an oppositional gaze to tell the story of Blacks, and Tyler Perry who focuses on Black males who attempt to engage in functional husbandry and fatherhood and have a healthy respect for the values

of matriarchs. Moreover, although a Marvel comic movie, Ryan Coogler's Black Panther

has broken box office records and produced a crossover film that centers on the power of

African ancestry. African ancestry and Africa as a cornerstone of superior minerals,

generational lineage steeped in traditional royalty and ruling powers, advanced

technology, positive tribalism, Black love and ultimate heroics is rare. Perhaps Black

Panther is the first cinema production that is evidence of a post racial society.

REFERENCES

Anderson, Elijah. 1999. *Code of the street: decency, violence, and the moral life of the inner city.* New York: Norton

Banjoko, Ajamu A. 2011. "CHAPTER 9: Adolescent African American Males and Hegemonic Aggressive Masculinity." *Counterpoints,* 392:136-148.

Baxter, Leslie A. and Babbie, Earl. 2003. *The basics of communication research.* Boston, MA: Wadsworth.

Brooks, Roy. (2009). CRITICAL RACE THEORY. In *Racial Justice in the Age of Obama*. PRINCETON; OXFORD: Princeton University Press. 89-108.

Benshoff, Henry M. 2000. "Blaxploitation Horror Films: Generic Reappropriation or Reinscription?" *Cinema Journal, 39* (2): 31-50.

Bogle, Donald. 2001. *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks: An Interpretive History of Black in American Films.* New York: Continuum,

Butters, Gerald R. 2002. *Black manhood on the silent screen.* Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.

Castro-Gómez, Santiago. 2001. "Traditional vs. Critical Cultural Theory." *Cultural Critique*, 49: 139-154

Chan, Kenneth. 1998. "The Construction of Black Male Identity in Black Action Films of the Nineties." *Cinema Journal, 37*(2): 35-48.

Dalley-Trim, L. 2007. "The Boys" present…Hegemonic masculinity: a performance of multiple acts." *Gender and Education* 19(2): 199-217

Delgado, Robert & Stefancic, Jean & Harris, Angela. (2017). *Critical race theory: An introduction*.

Diawara, Manthia. 1993. "The Construction of Black Sexuality." Pp. 247-256 in *Black American cinema*. New York: Routledge. 247-256

Fain, Kimberly. 2015. *Black Hollywood: from Butlers to Superheroes, the changing role of African American Men in the Movies.* Praeger.

Fischer-Lichte, Erika and Jo Riley. 1997. *The Show and the Gaze of Theatre: A European Perspective*. University Of Iowa Press: Studies in Theatre History and Culture.

Fisher, Celeste. 2006. *Black on Black: Urban youth films and the multicultural audience*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.Gause, C. P. 2014. "Black Masculinity in Cinema: De-sexed, Feminized, and Absent." Pp. 118-136 in *Black masculinity in America: Can I get a witness?* Bradenton, FL: Book Locker.

Gates, Philippa. 2004. *Always a partner in crime*. Journal of Popular film and Television. 32

Gray, Herman. 1995. "Black Masculinity and Visual Culture." *Callaloo,* 18(2): 401-405.

Gustafsson, Tommy. 2008. "The Visual Re-Creation of Black People in a "White" Country: Oscar Micheaux and Swedish Film Culture in the 1920s." *Cinema Journal,* 47(4): 30-49.

Harris, Samuel. 1992. "Black male socialization theory and concepts." *Western Journal of Black Studies* 16 (2): 74-81

Harris, Keith M. 2006. *Boys, Boyz, Bois: an ethics of Black masculinity in film and popular media*. New York: Routledge.

Henry, Matthew. 2004. "He Is a "Bad Mother*$%@!#": "Shaft" and Contemporary Black Masculinity." *African American Review, 38*(1): 119-126

Hill, Patricia C. 2006. "A Telling Difference: Dominance, Strength, and Black Masculinities." In A.D. Mutua (Ed.), *Progressive Black Masculinities*. New York: Routledge

Hill, Patricia C. 2000. *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment.* New York: Routledge.

Hill, Patricia C. 2004. *Black sexual politics: African Americans, gender, and the new racism*. New York: Routledge

hook, bell. 1993. "*The oppositional gaze: Black Female Spectators." Pp.* 288-302 in Black American Cinema. New York: Routledge.

hooks, bell. 2004. *We real cool: Black men and masculinity*. New York: Routledge.

Jacobs, David, Jason T. Carmichael, and Stephanie L. Kent. 2005. "Vigilantism, Current   Racial Threat, and Death Sentences." American Sociological Review 70: 656-677.

Jeffers, Chike. 2013. *"The Cultural Theory of Race: Yet Another Look at Du Bois's "The Conservation of Races." Ethics* 123: 3

John W. C. Johnstone. 1981. "Youth Gangs and Black Suburbs." *The Pacific Sociological Review, 24*(3): 355-375.

Hopkinson, Nathalie and Moore, Nathalie, Y. 2006. *Deconstructing Tyrone: a New Look at Black Masculinity in the Hip-Hop Generation.* Cleis Press Start

Howard, Dick. 2002. "The Frankfurt School and the Transformation of Critical Theory into Cultural Theory" in *The Specter of Democracy: What Marx and Marxists Haven't Understood and Why*, Columbia University Press.

Hsieh, Hsiu-Fang & Shannon, Sarah. 2005. Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. Qualitative Health Research, 15(9)

Hirschi, Travis. 1969. Causes of delinquency. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Hunter, Andrea & Davis, James. 1994. Hidden Voices of Black Men: The Meaning, Structure, and Complexity of Manhood. *Journal of Black Studies, 25*(1): 20-40.

King, Ryan D. and Darren Wheelock. 2007. *"Group Threat and Social Control: Race, Perceptions of Minorities and the Desire to Punish."* Social Forces 85(3): 1255-1280.

Kendall, Steven D. 1994. *New Jack cinema: Hollywood's African American filmmakers*. Silver Spring, MD: J.L. Denser, Inc.

Kleinhans, Chuck. 2008. "1993: Movies and the New Economics of Blockbusters and Indies." Pp. 91-114 In *American Cinema of the 1990s: Themes and Variations* edited by Chris Holmlound. Rutgers University Press

Leab, Daniel. J. 1975. *From Sambo to Superspade: The Black experience in motion pictures.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Lierow, Lars. 2013. "The "Black Man's Vision of the World": Rediscovering Black Arts Filmmaking and the Struggle for a Black Cinematic Aesthetic." *Black Camera, 4*(2): 3-21.

Haney-Lopez Ian. (1994). "The Social Construction of Race" Pp. 239-247 in *Critical Race Theory* edited by Richard Delgado & Jean Stefancic. Temple University Press.

Lyman, Stanford M. 1990. "Race, Sex, and Servitude: Images of Blacks in American Cinema." Pp. 49-77 *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 4(1):49-77

Majors, Richard and Billson Janet M. 1992. *Cool Pose: The Dilemmas of Black Manhood in America*. New York: Lexington Books

Mercer, Kobena. 1994. *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies.* New York: Routledge

Messerschmidt, James. 1993. "Varieties of "Real Men" Pp 119-153 *in Masculinities and Crime: Critique and Reconceptualization of Theory.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Miedzian, Myriam. 1991. "*Boyz will be boys: breaking the link between masculinity and violence"* New York: Anchor Books

Mills, Charles W. 2017. "Criticizing Critical Theory." In *Critical Theory in Critical Times: Transforming the Global Political and Economic Order*, edited by Deutscher Penelope and Lafony Cristina, 233-50. New York: Columbia University Press.

Musser, Charles. 2009. "1896–1897: Movies and the Beginnings of Cinema Pp 45-65 in *American Cinema 1890-1909: Themes and Variations* edited by Andre Gaudreault. (Ed.). Rutgers University Press.

Nadella, James. 1995. "*Boyz N the Hood: A Colonial Analysis*," *Journal of Black Studies,* 25: 447-461

Ongiri, Amy Abugo. 2010. "You Better Watch This Good Shit!": BLACK SPECTATORSHIP, BLACK MASCULINITY, AND BLAXPLOITATION FILM." In *Spectacular Blackness: The Cultural Politics of the Black Power Movement and the Search for a Black Aesthetic*, Charlottesville; London: University of Virginia Press: 159-186

Payne, Michael. 1997. *A dictionary of cultural and critical theory.* Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Reid, Mark. 1995. *"The Black Gangster Films." Film Genre Reader II.* University of Texas Press: 457-470

Richardson, Riche. 2007. *Black Masculinity and the U.S South: From Uncle Tom to Gangsta. Athens*, GA: University of Georgia Press.

Rhines, Jesse. 1995. "The Political Economy of Black Film*." Cinéaste, 21*(3): 38-39.

Sheridan, Earl. 2006. "Conservative Implications of the Irrelevance of Racism in Contemporary African American Cinema." *Journal of Black Studies,* 37(2): 177-192.

Small, Deborah. 2001. "The War on Drugs Is a War on Racial Justice." *Social Research, 68*(3): 896-903.

Smith, Jessie C. 1988. *Images of Blacks in American Culture: Reference Guide to Information* Sources. New York: Gleenwood Press

Styron, William. 1967. *The Confessions of Nat Turner.* New York: Random House.

Welch, Kelly, 2007. Black Criminals Stereotypes and Racial Profiling. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 23(3);276-288.

Wilson, Charles. 2006. *Jim Crow. The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture: Myth, Manners, and Memory*. University of North Carolina Press. 4: 237-239

Woods, Naurice F. 2013. *African American pioneers in art, film and music*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing Company

Zhang, Yan & Wildemuth, Barbara M. 2005. *Qualitative Analysis of Content* by Analysis 1 (2):1-12.

APPENDIX A

CODE SHEET

Black Masculinity in Cinema Indicators (1-6)

1) Archetypal Tom

2) Revolutionary Liberator

3) Archetypal Buck

4) Urban Youth/Gangster

5) Decent male

6) Modern day Sambo

APPENDIX B

CULTURAL INDICATORS CODED TABLES

The Birth of a Nation by Nate Parker

Archetypal Tom = 6

Revolutionary Liberator = 13

Archetypal Buck = 0

Delinquent Youth/Gangster = 0

Decent male = 3

Modern day Sambo = 0

Table 9

The Birth of a Nation Coded Table

Nat Turner	Nodes
Nat tribal ritual/rites of passage. Prophecy as a born leader. (Code 1, N1)	Code 1
"I got caught stealin food, I killed a slave catcher. You a child of God. You got purpose, it's in ya. The Lord put it in in der and nobody can take it away, ya hear" ---Nat last encounter with his father. ---- (Code 4, N4 N1)	Code 2, Code 1
Nate persuades his master to buy Cherie for a wedding gift	Code 5, Code 1
"Nate calls a young slave to call him by his first name instead of "Turner's nigger."	Code 2
Nate teaches Cherie how to read	Code 5
"You tell me who did this to ya, cause imam take care of it. On my soul." Code 2, Code 4	Code 2,
Brothers and Sisters I lead you to Peter 2:16…slaves submit yourself to your master with all respect. Not only those who are good and considerate but also to those who are harsh	Code 1
Let the high plains of God be in the mouths of the saints and a two edge sword in their hands to execute vengeance on the demonic nations and punishment on those people who bond their nobles with chains.	Code 2

Table 9

The Birth of a Nation Coded Table continued

Nat Turner	Nodes
We pray for and thank you for your protection and your promise. That in our obedience, you will be an enemy to our enemies. That you will oppress those who oppress us."	Code 2
But no one is without sin Ms. Elizabeth. This man wants to repent and be delivered. This a shepherd of the lord, It's my duty to serve. I like to baptized him (a White preacher).	Code 1
"Stand between a man and the Lord is a dangerous place to be" Code 2. Code	Code 2
Nate Stand to his feet after being flogged brutally by a slave catcher. Code 2	Code 2
God has spoken to me. Vision of what's to come. A rise between Good against. The first shall be last. And the last shall be first.	Code 2
Nate watches helplessly as a slave gets his teeth out Code 1	Code 1
What I want is for the oppressed people of God.	Code 2,
The Lord calling me. To stand and fight.	Code 2
Take hath therefore unto yourselves, and to all that flock in which the holy ghost made you overseers, to feed the church of God in which has purchase with his own blood….You were brought with a price, do not become slaves of man..	Code 2
"I don't have much….mamma…nannie. But I sho like fo you to be my wife. I take good care of ya. Protect ya."	Code 5
The Lord will give us a sign. Until then we remind steadfast. Ready to strike at any moment of the Lord call. With the strength of our father, we'll cut the head of the serpent. We'll destroy all.	Code 2

Table 9

The Birth of a Nation Coded Table continued

"You are now free men and women, servants of the lord, the sword of the lord has dawn on our enemies, our ancestors and unborn rejoice."	Code 2

Malcolm X by Spike Lee

Archetypal Tom = 1

Revolutionary Liberator =14

Archetypal Buck = 3

Urban Youth/Gangster = 5

Decent male = 8

Modern day Sambo = 1

Table 10

Malcolm X **Coded Table**

Malcolm "Detroit Red" Little	Malcolm X "El Hajj Malik El-Shabazz
Malcolm lies to Laura about his interest in Sophia; Malcolm tell Sophia that He had [sex] plenty of White women. "I don't like women who talk too much" (Code 3)	I don't do that [cocaine] anymore. I've been clean for eight years. (Code 5)
"Laura, Save it for Mr. Right. Your grandmother is smarter than you think." (Code 5)	Had it not been for the honorable Elijah Muhammad, I would be an in insane asylum, or dead. Maybe the murderer of one of you." (Code 2, Code 4)
"What's your story. You one of those White girls who can't get enough colored stud. Kiss my foot. Go ahead, kiss it. Now Feed Me" (Code 3, Code 6)	"Tell the honorable Elijah Muhammad that I have decided my life to tell the White devil the truth to his face." (Code 2)
"We were parceled out, all of us. I truly believe that if ever a state agency destroyed families, it destroyed ours." (Code 2)	I want to peace. I want me and you to be still. I just want peace in my house. Have we ever had an argument?" (Code 5)
Malcolm slams a liquor bottle on the side of a gangster head for disrespecting his mother. This act initiates him into West Indian Archie gang. They run numbers (gambling) for Harlem Black underground economy. (Code 4)	He (White authorities) should admit his crime but he doesn't. No! He scorns you! He split your head upon when that night stick. He bust you in the head with that bully club and call you a nigger." (Code 2)

Table 10

Malcolm X **Table Analysis Continued….**

Malcolm "Detroit Red" Little	Malcolm X "El Hajj Malik El-Shabazz"
"Like every hustler, I was trapped, Cats that hung together to find security, to find an answer, found nothing. We were all victims to the American social order." (Code 4, code 2)	Malcolm takes the Fruit of Islam (army of men who represent the Nation of Islam) to the police station and demand the release of a brother bangs, who was brutalized and arrested by NYPD. (Code 2)
"Rudy, don't you every cross someone who ain't afraid to die." (Code 4) Malcolm persuade Shorty, Ruby, Sophia, and Sophia sister to get a robbing wealthy people in order to make quick money. Malcolm cares less about the consequences of the robberies and is willing to get other regardless of the high risks. (Code 2, Code 4)	Elijah Muhammad teaches you and I that just as the White men and any other man on this earth has the Good-given right, natural right, human right, civil right, and any other right, to protect himself, we have that same right. This is only natural." (Code 2)
"The average first offender gets a maximum sentence of 2 years for burglary, that what the women got. But our crime wasn't burglary. It was sleeping with White women. (Code 3, Code 4)	"When the Negro listen and accept the teachings of Elijah Muhammad, He'll want to get on God side. He'll want to get off drugs and get away from a life of crime. He'll want to get away from committing adultery, fornication, and welfare. He'll want to get a job, take care of his family and his family would respect him." (Code 5)
"I will not touch the White men's liquor, his swine, his women. I will not commit fornication, I will not lie, cheat, or steal"/ Malcolm prays for the first time in his life after reading the letter from Elijah Muhammad. (Code 2, Code 5)	If the so-called American Negro was an American citizen, we wouldn't have a race problem. If the Emancipation Proclamation was authentic, we wouldn't have a race problem. If the Supreme Court decision was authentic, we wouldn't have a race problem." (Code 2)
"I was special, the only colored kid in the class. I become sort of a mascot, like a pink poodle. I got called a nigger so much I thought it was my name." (Code 1)	The Chickens have come home to Roost." Malcolm makes an intense statement about John F. Kennedy assassination, stating that the violence act was a result of the hatred and violence seeded by White America. (Code 2)

Table 10

Malcolm X **Coded Table Continued….**

Malcolm "Detroit Red" Little	Malcolm X "El Hajj Malik El-Shabazz
Character description ends	"The American Negro should not be blamed for his racial animosities. He's only reacting to 400 years of oppression/discrimination. As racism leads Americans up to a suicidal path, I believe the younger generation will see the writing on the wall and many will want to turn to the spiritual path of truth… the only way left to ward off the disaster that racism must surely lead too. In prison, the truth come and blinded me. It has happen again" (Code 2, Code 5)
Character description ends	"…..pilgrimage in Mecca, the brotherhood that existed there among all people, all races, all levels of people who accepted the religion of Islam. It has, despite people differences, help people to practice and study, and to see everyone as part of the same human family." (Code 5)
Character description ends	"Now that I have independence of action, I intend to take more of a flexible approach toward working with others to solve our problems. I've forgotten the bad things other leaders sad about me and I pray they'll forget the bad things I've said about them. We must work together and find a common solution to our common problem." (Code 5)
Character description ends	Malcolm peaks through the windows of his house with a gun by his side. He is looking out for NOI hitmen. (Code 2)
Character description ends	Those Nations, African, Latino, Asian, are hypocritical when they stand up in the UN and denounce the racism practiced in South Africa but say absolutely nothing about the racism in American society. I would not be a man if I didn't speak up. (Code 2).

Boyz N the Hood by John Singleton

Archetypal Tom = 0

Revolutionary Liberator = 7

Archetypal Buck = 9

Urban Youth/Gangster = 10

Decent male = 15

Modern day Sambo = 5

Table 11

***Boyz N the Hood* Coded Table**

Furious	Tre	Dough Boy	Ricky
"I don't have to do nothin' around here except pay the bills, put food on the table, and clothes on your back, ya understand" (Code 5)	*"That's right, that's Africa. But did you know that's where the body of the first man was found? My daddy said that's the place where all people originated from. That means everybody really from Africa. Everybody"* (Code 2)	*"She may be yours but I stuck my ding a dang in her every night so that means she's mine"* (Code 3)	Rick get into a small disagreement with his baby mama and makes a sexual exchange with her. *Rick's mother said that's the reason why they have a baby.* (Code 3)

Table 11

Table 11

***Boyz N the Hood* Coded Table Continued**

Furious	Tre	Doughboy	Ricky
Yo Tre, you may think I'm being hard on you right now but I'm not. I'm teaching you how to be responsible." (Code 5)	*Punk I'll kick ya ass. Got ya punk as brother, bitch, I'll get my daddy, least I got one mothafucker.* (Code 4)	Young Dough Boy fight gang member in order to get his brother ball back… *"Man, he don't won't want ya ball, His daddy gave him that ball. Man I wish I could kill that mothafucker"* (Code 4)	Ricky laughs at Tre for being a virgin (Code 3)
Somebody must have been praying for that fool 'cause I was aiming right for his head. (Code 2)	*"Always look a person in the eye, that way they respect you better. Never be afraid to ask for anything, stealing isn't necessary. Never respect anyone who doesn't respect you back"* (Code 5)	*"Fool you don't go to college to be talkin to no bitches. Ya Blackass 'pose to learn something. You can't learn shit talking to no stupid as bitches."* (Code 3)	*"I heard that before. Actually, I thought about majoring in business. I have this friend Tre, whose talking about going into business and all. Plus I like computers."* (Code 5)
"My friend Marcus, he was into robbing people. Wanted me to come with him but I was like "Nah man. I'm about to have a son." (Code 5)	*"I took a girl, stuck my thing in her, 9 months later a baby comes out"* (Code 3, Code 6)	Doughboy get sent to juvenile detention for robbery a local grocery store (Code 4)	Ricky wants to join the Army after looking a commercial at home (Code 5)

Table 11

***Boyz N the Hood* Coded Table Continued**

Furious	Tre	Doughboy	Ricky
"Remember this, any fool with a dick can make a baby, but it takes a man to raise a child" *(*Code 5)	*"As soon as I get inside BOOM we got at it. None stop kissing, huggin, I picked her up, take her upstairs. 20 minutes in, her grandmother comes back home"* (Code 3)	*Sun, Moon, Stars. There ain't no God. Okay If there was a God, why he be letting mothafuckers set smoke every night? Babies? little kids?* (Code 4)	*"I don't know about all this Furious, walking around mothafuckin Compton"* (Code 4, Code 5)
"Never go to the army Tre. A Black man has no place in the army" (Code 2)	*You say you want to wait until you get married right? And I say I'm going to be the one who marries you. So it doesn't matter if we do it (have sex) now or later, we'll still going to get married right?* (Code 3, Code 6)	*Hey baby, let me knock the stuffin from that egg muffin. Got a number?* (Code 3)	*I have a son to look after, I don't want to be like my brother and shit. Hanging out and not doing shit. Being in the can just like him* (Code 5)
Furious starts to wonder about Tre when they talk about grandchildren. Furious ask Tre has he been having sex (Code 3)	*What they don't tell you is that you don't belong to you anymore. You belong to them! The government! Like a slave or something.* (Code 2)	Doughboy flashes his gun to a Blood set to defend his brother. *"That why fools get shoot all the time, trying show how hard they is"* (Code 4)	Rick ask question about Furious Business. He wants to learn more about his career. (Code 5)

Table 11

***Boyz N the Hood* Coded Table Continued**

Furious	Tre	Doughboy	Ricky
"That's exactly what they want you to do. You have to think young brother, about ya future" (Code 2, Code 5)	*Tre wants to get revenge for Rick's death and instructs Doughboy to "meet him at his spot in 5 minutes"* (Code 4)	*Don't be like this nigga, this nigga got babies, in house pussy. If I were to do some shit like that, mom be like "I aint havin it"* (Code 6)	*If I won the lottery, I don't have to worry about nothing...no colleges, no 700 on a SAT, nothing* (Code 6)
It's called gentrification. It's what happen when the property value in a certain area is brought down...they buy all at a lower price, move the people out and raise the property value, sell it for a profit. What we need to do is keep everything in our neighborhood black. Black owned with Black money. (Code 2)	*Tre tells Doughboy to drop him off while searching for Rick murderers.* (Code 5)	*"Hey cuz. I know why you got out the car. Shouldn't have been there in the first place. You don't what that shit to come back and haunt you"* (Code 5)	*Ricky fights Doughboy over being the mother's favor* (Code 4, Code 6)

Table 11

***Boyz N the Hood* Coded Table Continued**

Furious	Tre	Doughboy	Ricky
Oh you bad huh. You bad, you need to shoot someone. Here I am. C'mon shoot me. I'm sorry about your friend. My heart goes to his family and mother but that's their problem. You my son. You my problem (Code 5)	*Dough, you still got one brother left* (Code 5)	*Either they don't know, don't show, or don't care about what's going on in the hood… I don't even know how to feel about it. Shit goes on and on, Shit one day someone gon smoke me. Don't matter through. We all gotta go some time* (Code 4, Code 2)	*Ricky tell Tre that they should split up to avoid Blood gang. Rick thinks it's a good idea because he believe they are just "showing off"* *Rick get shot.* (Code 4)

Fruitvale Station by Ryan Coolger

Archetypal Tom = 0

Revolutionary Liberator = 0

Archetypal Buck = 2

Urban Youth/Gangster = 8

Decent male = 11

Modern day Sambo = 2

Table 12

Fruitvale Station **Coded Table**

Oscar Grant	Nodes
Oscar Grant argues with his alleged girlfriend, Sophina, mother of his daughter, about infidelity and cheating. He is accused of cheating due to a history of cheating on Sophina.	Code 3
Oscar allow his daughter to come sleep with him and Sophina (because she couldn't sleep	Code 5
Oscar slap Sophina on the butt while she is preparing their daughter's lunchbox.	Code 3
Oscar helps his daughter get ready for school and gives her the fruit snacks Sophina denies her at home.	Code 5
Oscar offer to get the seafood for his mother's party tonight. She offer to pay him back (due to his financial situation) but he humbly denies, stating, "it your birthday, you don't have to pay me back"	Code 5

Table 12

Fruitvale Station **Coded Table Continued**

Oscar Grant	Nodes
Oscar call his grandmother Bonnie and ask her to instruct Katie on how to fried seafood for New year celebration	Code 5
Oscar get aggressive with his former manager Emi…"I need this fucking job bruh. You want me sellin dope, bruh? You need me outside waiting for you to get done, bruh?"	Code 4
Oscar Sister Chantey calls asking for help with the rent. Oscar starts making calls to sell drugs.	Code 4, Code 5
Oscar yells at a driver who commits a hit and run toward a stray dog. "Aye Slow down, Slow down, you bitch motherfucker"	Code 4
Oscar nurtures a wounded strayed dog after a fatal hit and run but unfortunately couldn't save it's life	Code 5
Oscar mother visit him at the San Quentin Federal Penitentiary. He's been in several fights. She asks about his wellbeing (bruises on face) but he ignores the question and talk about Sophina and Tatiana.	Code 4
Oscar gets into a verbal confliction with a San Quentin prisoner. "What you say about my mom. Yeah, you talking real tough with these here guards. Imma gonna see your bitch ass on the outside, bruh"	Code 4
So you gonna leave me in here? You gonna leave me again? What kind of mom is you? You gonna fuck around and leave me in here? You never had my fucking back anyway. I'm here by myself	Code 4, Code 6

Table 12

Fruitvale Station **Coded Table Continued**

Oscar Grant	Nodes
Oscar is fighting the prisoner guards after getting into a huge argument with his mother about being in prison.	Code 4, Code 6
Oscar dumps on the marijuana his has in the ocean after having a flashback on being in San Quentin. He makes a decision to never do illegal activities that will potentially get him incarcerated again.	Code 5
Oscar races with his daughter when he picks her up from school	Code 5
Oscar is having a real life discussion with uncles and elder male relatives about life and successful Black sponsors in the community	Code 5
Oscar helps a pregnant woman get into a local bathroom after the store building was closed. The husband talks to Oscar about marriage and ends up offering Oscar a job opportunity	Code 5
Oscar get into a Gang fight on the Subway and arrest by Oakland police for the incident	Code 4

APPENDIX C

RESULTS TABLE

Table 13

Sum of Cultural Indictors/Labels for each Film and Time Frame

Movie	Era/ Genre	Archetypical Tom	Revolutionary Liberator	Buck	Urban Youth/ Gangster	Decent Male	Sambo	Total
Birth of a Nation	Slavery	6	13	0	0	3	0	22
Malcolm X	Civil Rights	1	14	3	5	8	1	32
Boy N the Hood	Ghetto-centric	0	7	9	10	14	6	46
Fruitvale station	Alleged Post Racial Society	0	0	2	8	11	2	23
Totals		7	34	14	23	36	9	123