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The Black Press and the Shaping of Protest in African American Literature, 1840-1935

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THE BLACK PRESS AND THE SHAPING OF PROTEST
IN AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE,
1840-1935

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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August 2009

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1840-1935

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My dissertation argues that the black press of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries set the stage for a flourishing black protest tradition in black literature in three ways: suggesting what should be protested; creating figuratively and literally the space for literary protest; and acting as a training ground in the school of protest for black writers who moved back and forth between both worlds, journalism and literature.

In arguing the black press' role in shaping a black protest tradition in African American literature, my dissertation restricts itself to the 1840s through the 1930s. I chose this time period for this dissertation because these are crucial years of the growth of both the black press and black literature. Furthermore, during these years four African American writers emerged: Frederick Douglass, Pauline E. Hopkins, James Weldon Johnson, and W.E.B. Du Bois. I use these authors because of their extensive work in both genres and because they are representative of the role print protest journalism played in molding black literary protest. Chapter one argues that Douglass used his newspaper to create the heroic man persona that surfaces in his literary works. Chapter two argues that Hopkins's work as a magazine editor helped her to construct a new social reality prevalent in her journalism and literature work. Chapter three demonstrates Johnson's use of journalism techniques in his literature to attack lynching. Chapter four argues that Du Bois's major journalism themes to

include but not limited to Pan-Africanism and capitalism often made their way into his literary works in an effort to protest racial and economic oppression.

By telling and using the stories of these four authors/journalists, I hope to have demonstrated in this dissertation the significance of the black press in providing a venue directly and indirectly for protest literature to thrive in African American literature.

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INTRODUCTION

"I believe I am right when I say that the Negro press has a peculiar as well as a general relationship to its clientele; that the Negro editor has a relatively deeper responsibility to his public than the white editor has to his; that the service possible for the Negro press to render to Negro America is more vital than what the white press has to give to white America. I believe that Negro Americans will understand and accept this statement without discussion" James Weldon Johnson 1934 (Johnson, "Negro Americans" 149).

When I use the terms black press or African American press, these terms are interchangeable and exclusive to African American print publications--newspapers and magazines. I define the black press as an African American institution that creates, owns, and regularly publishes information pertinent to the African American community. Moreover, I see the historical function of the African American press as two-fold: to protest against oppression and to uplift the African American community by highlighting achievement. For me, the African American press holds a particularly dear spot in my heart as it was through the black press that I started my career in journalism in 1991 after being hired at the *New Pittsburgh Courier* straight out of college.

From the *Courier*, I would go on to work for several different newspapers in an eleven-year career as a full-time reporter, eventually leaving the field (somewhat) to teach journalism on the college level. Nonetheless, it was at the *Courier* where I first saw the influence (even in the late twentieth century) that the black press had on the community. On issues such as housing discrimination, police brutality, fair employment, education, gang violence, and narcotics, the African American newspaper that I worked for was in the forefront reporting these issues and demanding responsibility and accountability. As a reporter, I had a firsthand view of the power of the press and the power of black protest. I watched as a white politician who said he didn't need the black vote to be elected had his

political aspirations severely sidetracked after the black press reported his comments. Years later, this same politician still was trying to curry favor from the black community. At the height of gang activity in Pittsburgh during the early 1990s, I witnessed the black media address the issue of violence through stories and events that rallied the community to action. Just as significant, I also saw how the black press highlighted the issue of police brutality and, along with the NAACP and other like-minded social organizations, protested loudly enough that federally mandated reforms occurred in the Pittsburgh police department. Examining how the written word, via the press, was used to protest led me to think about my other passion: African American literature. I began to wonder about the relationship between the black press and black literature and the role the black press played in establishing a black literary protest tradition. This dissertation begins the exploration of the relationship between the black press and black literature, forged through the years, specifically from 1840 to 1935.

What we know today as the "black press" came into existence on March 16, 1827, with Samuel E. Cornish's and John B. Russwurm's *Freedom's Journal*. Cornish and Russwurm saw the creation of this first African American newspaper as an opportunity to voice protest against injustices, discrimination, and mischaracterization made about African American people. As Jacqueline Bacon writes in "The History of Freedom's Journal: A Study in Empowerment," "*Freedom's Journal* arose in a context in which African Americans dealt with both explicit and more subtle racist attacks. Its editors believed that it was important that they—and not just white reformers or ostensible supporters—voice their concerns" (3). This was the first attempt through journalism that African Americans used the written word to protest unfair social conditions and to advocate for themselves, without a white benefactor, which was critical in terms of progress and self-determination.

Although *Freedom's Journal* had a brief run (1827-1829), the paper provided a model to other African American activists for how to address slavery. Other African American abolitionist newspapers soon sprang up, including the *North Star* (1847), *Mirror of the Times* (1855), and the *Anglo-African* (1859). This nineteenth century media produced several African American journalists of note, including staunch abolitionist Frederick Douglass, anti-lynching crusader Ida B. Wells-Barnett, editor and novelist Martin R. Delany, and militant editor T. Thomas Fortune. From the beginning, these black journalists and newspapers were committed to protest. Charlotte G. O'Kelly argues, "The black papers began in the context of the abolitionist movement and their continuance has been dependent on their presentation of the situation of black people and advocacy of changes in the oppressive aspects of that situation" (1). In *The Black Press 1827-1890*, Martin E. Dann explains that the black press emerged as "a response to white racism and an assertion of self-determination" (12). The black press was searching for ways to redefine and provide a truer picture of African Americans that expressed their hopes, fears, and contributions to society. More importantly, many in the black press carried the mantra that true freedom would come only by them speaking out for themselves against injustices. We see an example of this thinking in the *Anglo-African's* statement July 23, 1859: "We need a Press--a press of our own. We need to know something else of ourselves through the press than the every-day statements made up to suit the feelings of the base or the interests of our opponents. . . . Our *cause* (for in this country we have a cause) demands our own advocacy" (qtd. in Dann 55; emphasis in original). Through merely publishing, black newspapers were protesting not only against white discrimination but also against stereotypes and limitations placed on them by a Western culture.

The protest took on many faces through the years as these writers dealt with their specific oppression in their particular era. In early to mid nineteenth century, African American newspapers existed mostly to attack slavery. The editors of these papers attacked slavery by first asserting who they were as black people-- thinkers, humans--able to speak for themselves. These papers also attacked slavery from the moral high ground, using Christianity and America's democracy, to show the hypocrisy of this institution. After the Civil War and post-Reconstruction, many of the black newspapers shifted their focus toward eliminating the Black Codes in the South. The black press just as bold as when attacking slavery called the Black Codes America's "caste system." Many of these papers ridiculed the use and justification of imposing Black Codes. By the twentieth century, the black press squared off against Jim Crow segregation and discrimination. These papers called for affordable housing, voting rights, employment, and integration of the schools, work, and professional sports. Also in the beginning of the twentieth century, black journalists used newspapers to protest racial violence, i.e., lynchings and to present a more balanced analysis of the race riots that reached their height in the Red Summer of 1919. As a result of African American press' positions, these newspapers grew in stature, influence, and circulation. By the twentieth century, major African American newspapers such as the *Pittsburgh Courier* and the *Chicago Defender* had circulations of 250,000 to 400,000. Lee Finkle writes, "By World War II the black press was one of the leading black industries and had a following perhaps second only to the black church. In 1940 an average of 1,276,000 were purchased each week. By 1943, the number rose to 1,643,311, and in 1945 it reached 1,809,060" (693-94). What we see is that these papers not only had a mission but they had an audience eager to hear and eager to participate in this protest. The protest, in effect, becomes a communal

experience.

As these African American newspapers became a voice of protest, they also served as a model for the emerging African American literary establishment and became a place where black literature could flourish. As these protest messages took hold in the community, African American literary artists also took up pen to protest. The black press' strategies of protesting including subject matter, such as slavery, Jim Crow, etc., debunking racial stereotypes and acting as America's moral conscience-- was assimilated by a nascent black literary movement. But the black press of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries also set the stage for a thriving black protest tradition in black literature in three other ways: suggesting what should be protested; creating figuratively and literally the space for literary protest; and acting as a training ground in the school of protest for black writers who moved back and forth between both worlds, journalism and literature. For example, Thomas Detter, author of *Nellie Brown; or, The Jealous Wife* (1871), Pauline Hopkins, author of "Talma Gordon" (1900), and William Wells Brown, author of *Clotel* (1853), were among the early African American fiction writers who engaged in both journalism and literature throughout their careers (Andrews, Foster and Harris 411).

African American expression, both in the press and literature, increased sharply by the end of the Civil War and leading into the next century. Carter R. Bryan explains that prior to emancipation, there were forty or more African American newspapers in the country (1). And just before the turn of the century, the country supported 150 African American newspapers and magazines (Gates and McKay 352). Simultaneously occurring was an explosion of African American literature with Bryan saying, "Doubtless there were other instances of Negro expression published before 1800, but the real dawn of Negro literary

production occurred after 1800 with an outpouring of autobiographical narratives of escaped slaves. These works . . . were influential in creating and arousing antislavery sentiment" (5). Bryan contends that the slave narratives set the stage for African American newspapers, but I disagree. I believe that the newspapers set the stage for black literature to grow. Starting with *Freedom's Journal*, African American newspapers (and abolition newspapers in general) made the call early and often for the end of slavery and set the stage for slave narratives to be widely accepted. Moreover, what we have at this time is the start of a long and fruitful relationship between the black press and African American literature. In the *Oxford Companion to African American Literature*, William L. Andrews, Frances Smith Foster and Trudier Harris contend that the black press provided a space/platform to ensure black literature would continue to be published, particularly post slavery. They write, "the abolition of slavery created some difficulty in accessing the publishing market. The antislavery society no longer functioned in such a supporting role. It was now left to the black press to assist in the publication of literary material, a task they were quite willing to do . . ." (411). The black press' mantra of protesting for itself moved forward with the notion of publishing for itself. Where white publishing houses receded in their interest in promoting stories by African American writers, the black press stepped in to fill that void and to support African American writers. This relationship between the black press and black literature benefited both as they acted as a support system for one another. Black creative writers provided the paint and the black press provided the canvass:

By the end of the nineteenth century, the relationship between journalism and literature had become more entrenched. Through newspapers, periodicals, journals, and literary magazines (the divisions were not distinct), writers had a

voice outside of their poetry, fiction, and drama. When they did produce creative manuscripts, placing them in journalistic forums provided a captive readership. Some magazines were created precisely to provide additional publishing opportunities for authors. (Andrews, Foster, and Harris 412)

The press allowed these African American authors some autonomy to print and protest as they saw fit. Furthermore, these writers, through the black press, operated with an established audience. Having an established audience, these writers flourished in the twentieth century, particularly during the 1920s. For example, Harlem Renaissance writers such as Langston Hughes, George S. Schuyler, Georgia Douglas Johnson, Gwendolyn Bennett, Alice Moore Dunbar-Nelson, and Countee Cullen often crossed back and forth between the journalism and literature worlds (Andrews, Foster and Harris 412). Richard Digby-Junger, pointing to the *Messenger*, provides an example of the relationship between the black press and black literature, stating, "Literature, poetry, and drama were staples in the *Messenger*, even in the earliest and most radical issues. Poets such as Claude McKay and James Weldon Johnson were featured in its pages, along with works by or about black historians, philosophers, artists, and musicians" (270). Genre blurring during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was typical in newspapers, and the inclusion of literature in these African American newspapers and magazines was not considered odd.

Taking its cue from the African American press, from the beginning, the black literary establishment focused on protest in its creative work, starting with slave narratives described by Amiri Baraka as "fierce indictments of U.S. slave society" ("Afro-American Literature" 5). In addition to the slave narratives, African American writers in the last half of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth century used novels and plays to

protest inequality. According to Joyce Nower in "The Traditions of Negro Literature in the United States," after the release of Brown's *Clotel* (1853), the anti-slavery story and first novel published by an African American, two hundred full-length African American novels were produced between 1854 and 1967. We see other novels such as Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig* (1859); Frances Harper's *Iola Leroy: On Shadows Uplifted* (1892); and James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912) as examples of African American novels protesting institutionalized slavery, racism and discrimination. In the beginning of the twentieth century, anti-lynching plays such as Angelina's Grimke's *Rachel: A Play in Three Acts* (1920) and Georgia Douglas Johnson's *A Sunday Morning in the South* (1925) also emerged. Both of these plays protested violence aimed toward African American men in the 1920s, which was at an all-time high in America. Even though protest writing dominates much of African American literature from its inception, it is not until Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1940) that a name is given this tradition, "Negro protest writing." Robert Washington in his book, *The Ideologies of African American Literature: From the Harlem Renaissance to the Black Nationalist Revolt*, explains how Wright's *Native Son* ushered in this formal term and school-- Negro protest literature, which included a hint of Marxism:

In this new atmosphere of crisis and desperation, a number of leading black writers gravitated to the white American Marxist movement, marking the formation and ascent of the naturalistic protest school. With the appearance of this literary school, the dominant ideological tendency in black American literature for the first time embraced a radical political ideology. Spearheaded by Richard Wright's *Native Son* (Wright 1940), this new ideology launched a

fierce assault on the American racial caste system, signaling a new era in the cultural dynamics of American race relations. (119-120)

Washington said African American writers such as Chester Himes, Frank Yerby, and Ann Petry were among this new school of Negro protest literature authors. In fact, Petry's *The Street*, published in 1946, is seen as the sister book to Wright's *Native Son*. This Negro protest literature took a realistic raw look at the brutal effects of racism and discrimination on African American citizens and ties capitalism into that equation. However, prior to Wright's *Native Son* and et al., journalist/academic/novelist, W.E.B. Du Bois often made the connection of capitalism, racism, and oppression in the pages of the *Crisis* magazine.

To understand the historical significance of the protest tradition in African American literature one must first understand the tradition of protest in the African American press. My dissertation attempts to make that link between the African American press and African American literature with an examination of the period between 1840 and 1935. This time frame is a crucial period because of the explosive growth of both the black press and black literature in America at that time. Furthermore, it is during these years that four African American writers emerged: Frederick Douglass, Pauline E. Hopkins, James Weldon Johnson, and W.E.B. Du Bois. These authors worked extensively in both genres, and they are representative of the role that journalism played in molding black literary protest.

Starting with Douglass, we see that his reputation was forged during the height of slavery, and he spent most of his life exposing the harsh realities of this institution. American slavery began in 1619 with the arrival of twenty Africans to the Jamestown colony. By the time of the American Revolutionary War in 1775, slavery had become an established, lawful practice within the colonies. Laws were put in place to benefit slave owners and expand their

assets such as any child born of an enslaved black woman became the owner's property. Slavery built America's strong economy, enabling industries such as cotton, rice, and sugar that relied on physical labor to prosper. According to Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Nellie McKay, prior to the slave trade ending in the nineteenth century, ten million or more Africans had been stolen and brought to both North and South America (154). James and Lois Horton in *Slavery and the Making of America* write that at the beginning of the Civil War approximately four million African Americans were enslaved (7). Douglass's greatest writing productivity occurred in the period prior to the War Between the States. When Douglass emerged on the journalism scene in 1847 with the creation of the *North Star*, he arrived at the peak of the anti-slavery movement. In the time I examine, 1847-1863, he was editor of the *North Star*, and abolitionists such as Douglass were making a strong case for ending slavery. Douglass stood among the period's most notable abolitionist journalists such as William Lloyd Garrison, editor of the *Liberator*; James G. Birney, the *Philanthropist*; and Elijah Lovejoy, of the *St. Louis Observer*. Michael Emery, Edwin Emery, and Nancy L. Roberts contend that abolition journalists played a significant role in creating the conditions that led to the Civil War and that would eventually lead to slavery's demise: "It took some time to sweep the masses into the movement, but eventually the people of the North made slavery a fighting issue, and the press was effective in helping to bring this about" (122). Douglass's protest journalism was indicative of journalism of the period: he protested in first-person and addressed opponents directly with no pretense of objectivity and with the force of his argument largely located in persona journalism. Also, another technique used in his journalism was the use of epistolary writing common in the nineteenth century press. Douglass, like other abolitionist journalists, wrote seemingly personal letters to friends and

foes that were published in their papers. Also, many of these nineteenth century journalists/editors, as seen by Douglass and Garrison, were the news, projected themselves in the news, and were so identified by their journalistic personas.

The complete opposite could be said about Pauline E. Hopkins, who at times hid behind pseudonyms as an emerging writer at the dawn of the twentieth century. She was editor of the *Colored American Magazine* from 1900 to 1904. As one of a small number of women editors at the advent of the twentieth century, Hopkins could not be as brash as Douglass and found it necessary to protect her identity periodically. Women still were being discriminated in the areas of property ownership, voting, employment, and education. America was very much a patriarchal society, and many restrictions, spoken and unspoken, were placed on them. It was those restrictions that most likely led to Hopkins at times to use the pseudonyms Sarah A. Allen and J. Shirley Shadrach in her journalism and literary works. Hanna Wallinger in *Pauline E. Hopkins: A Literary Biography* writes that the pseudonyms "allowed her to disguise her identity, publish more frequently, and avoid public criticism directed at herself" (62). As a woman in a powerful position during this time, Hopkins would have been subjected to harsher critiques than her male counterparts. Even in her newsroom and among her colleagues, Hopkins would likely have felt the brunt of being an opinionated/intelligent woman. In fact, Jill Bergman, author of "'Everything We Hoped She'd Be': Contending Forces in Hopkins Scholarship," pointed to hostility among male colleagues of Hopkins and contends that Hopkins most likely was removed from her position at the *Colored American Magazine* because of her gender politics. Scholars have disputed the reason for her departure from the magazine--health was the stated official reason for Hopkins leaving in 1904, but some contend her radical racial politics led to her dismissal. Often cited is

that the magazine's new management was much more aligned with the conciliatory politics of Booker T. Washington than her position, which called for equal rights.¹ Bergman, however, writes, "I suggest that perhaps . . . her gender politics rather than her race politics - that alienated her from the Washington management at *The Colored American*" (191). Much of Hopkins's work at the *Colored American Magazine* promoted African American women. She wrote articles and made editorial decisions that addressed a female audience. For example, Hopkins was instrumental in creating the "Famous Women of the Negro Race" series. Bergman believes some of these editorial decisions might have put her at odds with the male management. In keeping with the patriarchal norms, Hopkins's name never appeared in the masthead as editor, but many scholars believe she played a significant role in the magazine. The oversight then and the confusion today of how significant a part Hopkins played in the magazine are indicators of how women were treated and perceived during that period.

Nonetheless, Hopkins's most productive work as a journalist/fiction writer occurred between 1900-1904 at the magazine; moreover, the turn-of-the-century also served as a momentous time for women in general. The women's movement was afoot. Women were demanding their rights, particularly the right to vote. Gates and McKay explain that "the period between 1890 and 1910, a time known to many as 'the women's era.' . . . In fiction, in essays, in autobiographies and in investigative reporting, African American women were voicing their perspectives and recording their activities" (553). During this period, women were joining forces with one another professionally and personally and more than 3000 women's organizations were formed (Emery, Emery, and Roberts 212). Hopkins also was a member of the black women's era that Hanna Wallinger places from 1880 to 1920.

¹ In "Away from Accommodation: Radical Editors and Protest Journalism, 1900-1910" Arthur and Ronald

Wallerstein writes that "hundreds of African American women were eager to uplift the race through motivations to self-help and race pride" (97). A product of her time, Hopkins's journalism and literature writings went to uplifting women, particularly African American women. In addition to being an ardent fighter for women's equality, Hopkins also fought as hard for racial equality.

As an admirer of Douglass, Hopkins often invoked the memory of the long fight against slavery as she addressed the challenges African Americans faced in this new century. Hopkins, born in 1859 in Maine, was a product of a post-Reconstruction America. In this America, gains made after the Civil War were eroded and were replaced with Black Codes which restricted movement of African Americans in the South, and would transform later into Jim Crow legislation, which severely and cruelly curtailed African Americans constitutional freedoms. Yet, this environment also gave rise to the twentieth century black press and its editors who were committed to fighting against the new chains being placed on African Americans. Hopkins, in her role as editor/journalist, spoke out against Southern racism as well as Northern bigotry. She was representative of the African American press of that period:

The black press, in its various forms, was a vibrant outlet for intellectuals like Hopkins to speak out against the deterioration of black rights in the post-Reconstruction era. This period, which historian Rayford Logan famously termed the "nadir," was characterized by the rise of lynching, mass disfranchisement, legislation that restored power to the former Confederacy, and court decisions that sanctioned segregation. Yet even when white

Johnson make the case that Pauline Hopkins's non-conciliatory race politics led to her dismal (328).

supremacist violence targeted black newspaper editors, the press remained a stalwart outlet for voices of opposition. (Dworkin xx)

Hopkins, and editors and intellectuals like her, represented the “New Negro” movement during the first part of the twentieth century. They were brazen. These New Negroes called for America to live up to its promise. Members of the African American press especially symbolized that new spirit of independence and were determined to fight for the rights of African American citizens. Alain Locke in his anthology *The New Negro* (1925) described this twentieth century African American as one who has "slipped from under the tyranny of social intimidation and to be shaking off the psychology of imitation and implied inferiority. By shedding the old chrysalis of the Negro problem we are achieving something like a spiritual emancipation" (qtd. in Gates and McKay 985). Hopkins, symbolic of the New Negro--middle class, educated, and politically savvy-- wrote to provide this new face of African Americans and combat old stereotypes that surfaced after Reconstruction and still had a stronghold on America's consciousness.

Like Hopkins, James Weldon Johnson also was very much the face of the New Negro, and this New Negro was a threat to be dealt with violently. Middle class, college educated, and independent, Johnson and other like-minded African Americans during this period, represented a danger to white America. Blacks such as Johnson were seen as upsetting the racial balance of America, where African Americans were "inferior" and whites were "superior" in all things. In the first part of the twentieth century with African Americans making gains, a movement of violence to put them into their place gained momentum throughout the country. Increased lynchings against African Americans punctuated the first three decades of the twentieth century. Between 1912 and 1935, much of Johnson's work

concentrated on reducing the frequency of lynchings and race riots that were prevalent at the time. Much of the violence directed toward African Americans started at the end of the nineteenth century, carrying into the twentieth century. Violence was the South's response to emancipation, particularly after Reconstruction and the removal of federal troops that protected African Americans in the states of the former Confederacy. In fact, the wholesale lynching of African Americans, especially men and boys, played a huge part in the great migration of blacks to the North. Just as during slavery, African Americans in the post-Reconstruction period sought freedom by heading North, and sometimes West: "An early exodus from the South occurred between 1879 and 1881, when about 60,000 African-Americans moved into Kansas and others settled in the Oklahoma Indian Territories in search of social and economic freedom" (Library of Congress). While slaves fled the South to escape slavery, post-Reconstruction African Americans fled to escape Jim Crow and death. For African American boys growing up in the South, death by a lynch mob was a constant threat and reality for many.

Scholars contend that lynchings had become so common and acceptable by the twentieth century that they were viewed by many whites as public spectacles much like parades. Furthermore, the means of killing humans had become so creative that the shock value was lost on many of the participants:

When one recalls that lynchings often entailed not just death by hanging but also torture and burning alive and that such horrible events were sometimes advertised in advance and attracted large crowds of white men, women, and children, the pre World War I years almost make the antebellum South seem a dress rehearsal. (Gates and McKay 547)

Dress rehearsal or not, what is clear is that during the beginning of the twentieth century African American men were endangered species. African Americans men were being killed because they were particularly viewed as a danger to white women. During this period, again, the violence against blacks, particularly men, became more intense and occurred more often: "In the very first year of the new century more than 100 Negroes were lynched, and before the outbreak of Word War I the number for the century had soared to more than 1,100" (Andrews, Foster, and Harris 465). Even more shameful was after World War I violence against African Americans was ratcheted up again to put black folks in their place. Whites were concerned that the liberties African American soldiers enjoyed in Europe might make them more liberal in all things back home. A reign of terror was used to eliminate such temptations. Andrews, Foster and Harris write that

after the war more than a few returning black soldiers were lynched, some in their uniforms. The "Red scare" of 1919 was eclipsed by the racial violence and lynching fever of what James Weldon Johnson termed "the Red Summer." Riots and killings, some of them lynchings, occurred in Chicago, Texas, Washington, DC. and with particular brutality that October in Arkansas. (465)

The black press viewed lynching as a legitimate news story and one that needed to be covered to the fullest extent. In fact, African American journalists wanted to expose this barbarous practice to sympathetic whites who might be unfamiliar with the ritualistic killings and the frequency in which these lynchings occurred. Moreover, the African American press' ultimate goal was to call for legislation that would end lynching. Johnson, a twentieth century journalist steeped in the principles of objectivity, fairness, and thorough reporting, used modern conventional journalistic techniques to protest lynching. He used stats, data, and

firsthand reporting to go after lynching. He also used investigative reporting tools representative of the era of muckraking journalism.

W.E.B. Du Bois's work at the *Crisis* from 1910 to 1934 also placed him in this period of great violence directed toward African Americans. However, Du Bois took a broader approach to the violence problem. The reason African Americans could so easily be tortured, maimed, and killed by a white society was because the country was still functioning under an early nineteenth century mentality that attached stereotypical characteristics to African Americans. In fact, these images of the coon and mammy were used in much greater fervor than before the Civil War. Black life was a second-class life, a notion that dominated through much of the first half of the twentieth century. This was a period in which “white supremacy attained its fullest ideological and institutional development in the southern United States” (Frederickson 99). The scientific community again was looked upon to justify legal racism and discrimination. Even if African Americans were being accepted as part of the human family, their humanity was one situated at the bottom of the evolutionary ladder. W.E.B. Du Bois in his work at the *Crisis*, much like Frederick Douglass, used journalism to proclaim African American's humanity and rights as citizens. Du Bois was much more militant in his approach, and he relied heavily on the use of editorial writings to attack the opposition. Du Bois was not afraid to look at different types of solutions, unconventional at the time, to deal with the issue of inequality in American life. He adopted Marxism and Pan-Africanism ideologies although they were not mainstream in the African American community.

Douglass, Hopkins, Johnson, and Du Bois are symbolic representations of the black press' influence on black literature and the protest movements of their times. These four used their work as journalists as the catalyst to call attention to unfair conditions. Their

publications provided a venue directly and indirectly for dissent to thrive in African American literature. The campaigns by these journalists/literary writers, and like-minded others, were successful in moving the public opinion of the majority to recognize the rights of the minority.

Scholarship

Scholarship concerning the formation and contribution of both the black press and black literature in American society is numerous and extensive, as well as scholarship on the protest tradition. For example, journalism scholars such as Bryan, O'Kelly, Arthur Johnson, Ronald Johnson, and Frankie P. Hutton have done a nice job explaining the history, the policies, and the black press' role as a voice for the oppressed. Most of the scholars in their research of the African American press have focused on two areas: first, the black press as agitators for freedom from oppression and second, as agents to fight against stereotypes. Another line of research now being considered, and led by Hutton, is the black press as educator. The black press was used to teach its African American readers how to be good Americans. Hutton writes,

It is clear then, from the messages of antebellum black newspapers, that these publications served a sort of socialization function—to help with the Americanization of blacks. Essentially, all blacks, the free elite along with those in slavery, were outsiders in America and had been reminded repeatedly that they were inferior and not worthy of a change in that status. (8-9)

Even in the twentieth century, black editors thought that African Americans, not far removed from slavery, needed instructions on how to be proper Americans. African American newspapers and magazines had to teach African Americans how to act in an effort to

eliminate the destructive stereotypes, which many believed led to African Americans being treated as second-class citizens. Educating the masses was particularly true in the journalism of Hopkins, who spoke directly to African American women giving them instructions on how ladies behaved, and Du Bois, who also was image conscious, reminding those how educated, respectful gentlemen should behave and be treated. Scholars of the black press have mainly focused on the black newspapers' functionality in terms of again educating the people, debunking stereotypes, or protesting injustices.

Just as the functionality of the African American press has been discussed and debated by scholars, so has the functionality of African American literature. Many of these scholars would agree that black literature is rooted in protest against historical oppression. Lois Tyson writes that themes such as the Middle Passage, slavery, Reconstruction, and economic inequality have loomed largely in African American literature as well as the theme of "surviving the combined oppression of racism, classism, and sexism . . ." (389). However, through the years, the mammoth debate among African American literature scholars and writers such as Du Bois, Hughes, Petry, Gates, Jr., hooks, James Baldwin, Houston Baker Jr., Baraka, Larry Neal, Wright, Barbara Smith, Barbara Christian and many others has been the question of using creative work to protest or not to protest against oppression. This debate really took flight just before and during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, a time of great literary production for African American writers. And even today, African American literary scholars argue whether African American writers have a responsibility to protest in their writings (keeping with the black press tradition) or to write toward a universal truth with little regard to a political agenda. Historically much of the literature has pointed toward protest; however, as African Americans have made gains

politically, socially, and economically, a shift probably starting in the mid-1970s has been seen with the literature being less polemic in nature and more aesthetically focused. Even so, current conditions show that protest literature still has a place in both African American literature and the black press.

Protest literature scholars such as Zoe Trodd, John Stauffer, and Howard Zinn would most likely agree on that point. Stauffer contends that protest literature has the ability to change people and communities and that literature should not be confused with protest literature. He writes, "The difference between literature and protest literature is that while the former empowers and transforms individuals, the latter strives to give voice to a collective consciousness, uniting isolated or inchoate discontent. Protest literature taps into an ideological vein of dissent and announces to people that they are not alone" (xii). What Stauffer is articulating is creating community and expressing communal experiences through protest. The black press, and black literature following suit, provided a communal voice for African Americans to protest their conditions. Stauffer in his statement speaks to that collective dissent.

While scholars have researched the black press, black literature, and protest literature independently, they have not, as a rule, combined all three groups for examination. With the exception of some entries in the *Oxford Companion* reference guide, information and research are minimal in the examination of the historical relationship among the black press, black literature, and protest literature. My dissertation complements the disparate work and begins the discussion on the combined impact and their relationship to black progress.

This look at the black press, black literature and protest is situated within the critical race theory framework, which focuses on the effects of institutionalized racism and

discrimination of African Americans at the hands of white America. The functionality of critical race theory is one in which, "critics analyzed the ways in which literary texts undermine or reinforce the racist ideologies that have kept black Americans politically oppressed and economically disadvantaged" (Tyson 386). Because critical race theory examines oppression via writing/literature, this theory threads throughout each chapter of the dissertation with the examination of slavery, Black Codes, lynching, and Jim Crow and how addressing these issues, these particular authors undermined racist ideologies through the use of their journalism and literature. In the dissertation, one key term in critical race theory that is addressed is double consciousness. In Du Bois's use of double consciousness in his seminal *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), he discusses the internal conflict of being both Negro and American. All four of these authors confront this double consciousness. They wrestle with the natural conflict of being proud of their American status and being oppressed by America because they were African Americans. These authors found this conflict to manifest itself when attempting to address audiences. The interplay between how the authors see themselves and their multiple audiences is important in the understanding of all the chapters. In the James Weldon Johnson chapter, Johnson specifically discusses the dual audience in his essay "Double Audience Makes Road Hard for Negro Authors." He explains the challenges African American authors have in addressing both black and white audiences.

Another thread throughout the dissertation is the issue of black humanity tied to literacy. Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s essay, "Writing, 'Race,' and the Difference It Makes" in *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars* shows the significance of the emergence of both the black press and black literature movement in the nineteenth century as African Americans were trying to claim their rightful humanity through the written word. My work

will specifically address this issue in chapter one, where Douglass connects writing, reading, and publishing to proving black humanity. This discussion resurfaces in the last chapter with Du Bois who in the twentieth century still felt the need to make the claim for black humanity and to promote that humanity through print.

Playing a cursory role in the dissertation is black feminist theory, specifically in the Hopkins chapter, that looks at the dual challenges of African American women oppressed through gender and race. Black feminism comes into play through the use of Hazel Carby's "Of What Use Is Fiction," in *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Novelist*. Carby explains white male dominance over the black woman's body, and part of the chapter discusses how black women reclaim their bodies and their image. Hopkins, as editor, attempts to reclaim that body in her work. She had substantial control of the images of black women presented in her publication, and often, she combated the negative stereotypes of black women by well-considered editorial choices such as stories used, photos chosen, and page layout and designs created. Black feminist Patricia Hill Collins's work on black female stereotypes is also well situated in this chapter, particularly when she argues that these stereotypes have led to abuse against African American women (58).

The last theoretical approach informing my understanding of the connection of the black press, black literature, and protest comes by way of journalism's agenda-setting first mentioned in Donald Shaw and Maxwell McCombs's groundbreaking article, "Agenda-Setting Function of the Mass Media," published in *The Public Opinion Quarterly* in 1972. In this essay, Shaw and McCombs contend that media through reporting and editorializing determine to their readers what subject is important—what is news—particularly in the political

realm: "In choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position" (176). Shaw and McCombs discovered that the media's news priorities were mirrored by the people in terms of what they saw as important issues.

Agenda-setting is at work and evident with black newspapers that made publicizing and focusing on racial oppression as their priorities. The black press through reporting made these issues not only important in the African American community but in the general community as well. Furthermore, these items moved from the pages of the black press, to the pages of black literature, and to the conscience of a people. In addition, the black press came in existence as a response to the white journalism that often portrayed African Americans in a stereotypical manner. The black press, in effect, was used as a way to challenge the images of black America perpetuated often (even in late twentieth century) by the white press. Black newspapers and magazines also gave voice to stories overlooked by the white media. The black press played a colossal part in making sure oppressive acts and conditions were discussed, debated, and changed. We see examples of the press working in such a manner with the four case studies—Douglass, Hopkins, Johnson, and Du Bois. Each chapter highlights how each writer effectively protested conditions through the convergence of journalism and literature.

In chapter one with slavery protest as my theme, the majority of my primary material comes from Douglass's work at the *North Star* between 1847 and 1863, relying much on Philip S. Foner's edited version of *Frederick Douglass: Selected Speeches and Writings*. My look at Douglass's literary writing, with the exception of his first book, also includes that

time frame, concentrating my research on his autobiographies *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845) and *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), and his novella, “The Heroic Slave,” published in the *North Star* in 1853.

In chapter one, “Manhood, Humanity, and the Heroic,” I argue that although Douglass emphasized the humanity, nobility, and heroics of the slave in *Narrative*, it was his journalism protest work that created, sustained and solidified those ideas, particularly slave as man, for the masses of white and black readers. Douglass’s journalism efforts, even prior to his creation of the *North Star* and in such places as the *Liberator*, highlighted the humanity of the slave while creating a noble heroic slave persona. Because of his consistent protest journalism work that hammered on themes of manhood, humanity and nobility, Douglass gained a credibility that enabled his literary efforts to combat the negative images that he writes to protest.

My next author, Pauline E. Hopkins, moves the discussion of the black press into the early twentieth century. I confine my research of the author to the period between 1900 and 1904, when Hopkins co-edited the *Colored American Magazine*. Primary sources for this chapter include the *Colored American Magazine* and *Daughter of the Revolution: The Major Nonfiction Works of Pauline E. Hopkins* edited by Ira Dworkin. My research on her literary work focuses on her three novels published in the *Colored American Magazine*: *Hagar’s Daughter. A Story of Southern Caste Prejudice* (1901-1902); *Winona. A Tale of Negro Life in the South and Southwest* (1902); and *Of One Blood. Or, the Hidden Self* (1902-1903). My literary research on Hopkins also includes her short story “Talma Gordon” (1900), published in the *Colored American Magazine*.

In this chapter, I argue that Hopkins as an editor at the *Colored American Magazine*

used the magazine to protest racial injustices by subversively creating a social reality of African American life through her journalism and fiction that ran counter to prevailing views of blacks during the turn-of-the-century. I demonstrate how Hopkins used the magazine to create an African American domesticity, a family life, universal to American domesticity; I show how she created a social reality of black life by constructing an African American past through both her biographical journalism and in her fiction; and lastly, I show how Hopkins used the issue of miscegenation in her journalism and fiction as a destabilizing factor in a segregated society.

With my next author, James Weldon Johnson, I examine his journalism and literary output between 1912 and 1935. My concentration in Johnson's journalism and literary writings will be on his anti-lynching efforts. Using Sondra Kathryn Wilson's *The Selected Writings of James Weldon Johnson Volume II: Social, Political and Literary Essays*, I review the journalism work of Johnson who wrote for the *Crisis*, *New York World*, *Current History*, *New York Herald Tribune Magazine*, and *Harper's Magazine*. In these publications, he addresses much of the critical social issues confronting African Americans, particularly the issue of lynching. My literary focus of Johnson includes his fictional work *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912 and 1927) and his autobiography *Along This Way* (1933).

In chapter three, "Attacking the Strange Fruit," I argue that Johnson's anti-lynching literature relied heavily on journalism techniques that included observation, firsthand reporting, and detailed description. I compare Johnson's literature to some of his anti-lynching journalism pieces such as "The Lynching at Memphis" in the *Crisis* in 1917 and "Lynching—America's National Disgrace" in *Current History* in 1924 that appear somewhat

detached in a journalism fashion. In these pieces, like in any good journalism writing, Johnson is using facts, numbers, statistics, and historical information to condemn lynching.

This chapter also examines how lynching journalism, in general, influenced literature of the early twentieth century by reviewing Jean Marie Lutes's "Lynching Coverage and the American Reporter-Novelist." This chapter will also include Robert L. Zangrando's *The NAACP Crusade Against Lynching, 1909-1950*, which provides historical information on the lynching problem of America in the first half of the twentieth century. My look at lynching addresses how the white press and the black press viewed lynching in terms of news worthiness.

My last chapter focuses on W.E.B. Du Bois's work to fight Jim Crow between 1910 and 1934, when he was editor of the NAACP's *Crisis* magazine. My examination of Du Bois's journalism work comes from primary sources collected in Henry Lee Moon's edited book *The Emerging Thought of W.E.B. Du Bois*, which includes reprinted essays and editorials from the *Crisis*. On the literary end, I focus on two of Du Bois's novels: *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* (1911) and *Dark Princess* (1928). I also include Du Bois's historical essay "Criteria of Negro Art" (1926), in which he succinctly defines his theory of African American creative output. In chapter four, "The Great Propagandist," I argue that Du Bois's extensive journalism work guided the protest themes that would appear in his literature. Du Bois's major themes of capitalism/socialism; Pan-Africanism/nationalism; and racism/discrimination were discussed first, often, and continuously in his journalism, while eventually making their way into his literature. When Du Bois addresses these same protest themes in his literature, they are just merely an extension of the work he was doing in the newsroom. To support this thesis, this chapter will first establish Du Bois as a journalist,

second show how Du Bois incorporated the second level of agenda-setting in his journalism and art for protest, and third compare the protest work Du Bois did as a journalist at the *Crisis* with his first two novels.

The agenda-setting aspect of this chapter will come by way of Salma Ghanem's essay "Filling in the Tapestry: The Second Level of Agenda Setting," which looks at this theory twenty-five years later after the groundbreaking article "Agenda-Setting Function of the Mass Media." Ghanem's piece centers around the notion of the next level of agenda-setting in the media. Ghanem argues that while the first level of agenda-setting concentrates on the media's coverage of a subject and the correlation of the perception of that subject based on coverage, the second level of agenda setting goes beyond the media's mere coverage of a subject to looking at how it is covered and ultimately the impact that reporting has on the reader. Du Bois's use of art as propaganda was most likely led by his journalism of propaganda. How he wrote--what he chose to focus on or not in both his journalism and literature--was used to influence opinions of his reading public.

Finally, by using Du Bois, Douglass, Hopkins, and Johnson, I hope to demonstrate how the African American press undoubtedly influenced the protest tradition in African American literature. African American writers, as the four examined, spent their careers crossing back and forth in both genres as they wrote to the masses. These writers are symbolic of the resistance made by the black press through the years. What we see through these writers is how protest in the pages of the black newspapers and magazines emerged in the literature. Also, the black press served as a platform, a place for black creativity to flourish. The black press nurtured, supported, and promoted black literary expression, providing an outlet for publication during periods when white literary houses weren't as

supportive. What we see in this examination is how closely connected the black press and black literature establishments have been through the years. They share a common past and a common mission to use the printed word to improve the lives of their readers. Through Douglass, Hopkins, Johnson, and Du Bois, we witness this intimate relationship between literature and journalism used to uplift an oppressed people.

CHAPTER ONE - FREDERICK DOUGLASS: MANHOOD, HUMANITY AND THE HEROIC

Nine years ago, as most of our readers are aware, we were held as a slave, shrouded in the midnight ignorance of that infernal system—sunken in the depths of senility and degradation—registered with four footed beasts and creeping things— regarded as property—compelled to toil without wages—with a heart swollen with bitter anguish—and a spirit crushed and broken. . . . During our stay in that country, kind friends, anxious for our safety, ransomed us from slavery, by the payment of a large sum. The same friends, as unexpectedly as generously, placed in our hands the necessary means of purchasing a printing press and printing materials. Finding ourself now in a favorable position for aiming an important blow at slavery and prejudice, we feel urged on in our enterprise by a sense of duty to God and man, firmly believing that our effort will be crowned with entire success. *North Star*, 3 December 1847 (*Writings* 280)

If I have at any time said or written that which is worth remembering, I must have said such things between 1848 and 1860, and my paper was the chronicle of most of what I said during that time--Frederick Douglass (qtd. in Loggins 50).

Frederick Douglass, one of America's great men, in one term would be a difficult task to define. Douglass was a slave, fugitive, orator, abolitionist, statesman, autobiographer, editor and publisher. Through will and determination, Douglass pulled himself out of slavery and ignorance and transformed into one of the most respected and influential Americans in the nineteenth century. With the publication of *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845), Douglass's fame surged. With the subsequent trip to England in his attempt to put some distance between himself and his master, he garnered international fame. Upon his return from England, Douglass embarked on his next grand achievement, the creation of the *North Star*. As a newspaper man, Douglass moved among the ranks of the great editors of his time, wielding influence socially and politically through mass publication.

Because of the success of his writings and speeches and his historical significance to

the abolitionist movement, Douglass's role as a journalist is often overlooked. As a result, the role his journalism plays on his literary writing is also overlooked. In this chapter, I will argue that Douglass, one of the leading nineteenth-century journalists, was critical in shaping his other identity as a literary writer. I will show that through journalism and the use of agenda-setting Douglass *first* created the heroic slave image that is noted often in critical studies of the *Narrative*. I will show that through journalism Douglass transformed the heroic slave image into the heroic man image prominent in his second book *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855) and the novella "The Heroic Slave" (1853). Lastly, I will show how Douglass's journalism and literature complemented one another in his protest writing.

Before moving forward, I will first situate Douglass's writing in the history of slavery in the United States. During Douglass's greatest writing productivity, America was consumed by slavery. The very question of where African Americans were positioned in the chain of evolution had been the debate since 1619 with the arrival of the first slaves. Slaves were deemed no more than chattel to be used, worked and sold for their white master's convenience. According to James O. Horton and Lois E. Horton, "Patrons looked the slaves over closely, examining their teeth, their tongues, and their hands and checking their bodies for telltale scars of the lash, scars that might indicate a rebellious nature in need of violent restraint" (105). Slavery, as Douglass pointed out often, was a way to remove the African from humanity. The slave, in a sense, had to ignore his own humanity in a slave system. Gates and McKay argue, "The intention of slavery was to create in the slave a sense of complete alienation from all human ties except those that bound him or her in absolute dependence to the master's will" (155). Douglass, like all slaves, could not deny his humanity. His burning desire was to assert himself through his writing as human, as man, as

hero.

When literary and critical scholars examine Douglass's writings, they often turn to the *Narrative*. Douglass establishes himself nationally and internationally in 1845 with the publication of the *Narrative*, which describes his life and the hardships of being a slave in Maryland. The book recounts Douglass learning how to read, his growing understanding of the contradictory nature of slavery, his yearning for liberty, and eventually his escape north to freedom. Scholars such as Robert Stepto, William Andrews, Albert Stone, Deborah McDowell, Houston Baker, Jr., and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., among others, have acknowledged the book as the quintessential slave narrative. Gates and McKay write that the *Narrative* "was unquestionably the epitome of the antebellum fugitive slave narrative," pointing out that the book "sold more than thirty thousand copies" in its first five years (386). McDowell writes that out of the six thousand slave narratives written, Douglass's *Narrative* is looked upon as the first, and contends, "It is regarded as the prototypical, premier example of the form. It is also viewed as the text that 'authorized' most subsequent slave narratives" (37). The scholars' praise of the *Narrative* is mainly on the strength of its author, who was able to tell his *own* story *written by himself* and to do so in an eloquent and engaging manner. Most scholars agree that what sets this story apart from other slave narratives is Douglass's distinctive voice and writing style. Vernon Loggins explains that although the *Narrative* served as protest against slavery like other slave narratives, the protest does not mar the writing, and he argues, "His sole purpose in writing his autobiography was to produce antislavery propaganda. Unlike the great majority of abolition writers, however, he possessed the ability to bring out his sermon without destroying his story" (45). I would agree with Loggins and other scholars as to the literary strengths of the *Narrative* and for some of the

reasons cited by the scholars, like the book's brevity and crisp writing. However, what these literary scholars miss in their praise of the *Narrative* is that the book stands as an example of good journalistic writing that Douglass learned well as a columnist for several publications. The 128-page book (Signet's 1997 publication) relies on simple sentences, short paragraphs, and concise wording much like a strong news story. The *Narrative* invites a person to read because of its brevity. Douglass also manages to pack the book with many details and facts to prove the truth of his account in much the same way a journalism story functions.

Also, what literary and critical scholars have often focused on with regard to the *Narrative* is Douglass's "heroic slave." Douglass created the heroic slave to counter the cowardly images and stereotypes of slaves and those of African descent. His decision to read, although unlawful, his attempts at escape, unsuccessful and successful, and his willingness to fight rather than be beaten include all examples of Douglass's heroic slave image. An often-cited defining moment in Douglass's heroic slave image is his altercation with slave-breaker Edward Covey. What we see in this passage in his first book is a repositioning of Douglass from mere slave to the heroic slave that has been documented often.

Another critical moment in the *Narrative* that scholars point to is positioned outside of the text and on the cover--Douglass's bold decision to include "written by himself" in the title. In African American publications of that time, particularly slave narratives, white men provided the authentication of a piece of writing--often through some sort of introduction. When Douglass proclaimed, however, "written by himself," he had taken control and had acted boldly in his life as documented in his early journalism work. Stepto in his "Narration, Authentication, and Authorial Control in Frederick Douglass' *Narrative* of 1845" contends Douglass takes the authority from his white benefactor, William Lloyd Garrison, saying,

“The final effect is that Douglass reinforces his posture as an articulate hero while supplanting Garrison as the definitive historian of his past” (35). Douglass announces with the “written by himself” that he is no ordinary slave. He tells the world that he is unlike any slave who has come before him.

We see Douglass defining himself; however, that image defining is something he starts years before the *Narrative*. James Olney called Douglass’s decision to assert himself on the cover as an act of boldness, writing, “It is explicitly an act of assertion and aggression against the slaveholders who tried to prevent the slave’s ever learning to read and write” (5). When you align Olney’s comments with Douglass’s attempts toward literacy in the *Narrative*, we see the beginning of his transformation from mere slave to heroic slave. Yes, Douglass does include an introduction from Garrison, his abolitionist friend and mentor. But Douglass clearly informs the readers that this is his story. What we see is Douglass asserting a heroic slave image right there on the cover. Douglass, a slave, has broken the law by becoming literate. And not only has Douglass, this fugitive slave, broken the law by being both a fugitive and literate, he is bold enough to admit it to the world. He is a heroic slave.

Moreover, not only is Douglass a heroic slave, but he is a knowledgeable slave. He has understanding, which gives him the tools with which to fight. Understanding the enemy’s tactics, Douglass could engage him in battle. He understands that words are powerful. He understands the power of literacy. As the heroic slave, Douglass ignores the edict of his master and seeks out little white boys from the street who would trade knowledge for food (*Narrative* 52). In addition, Douglass would sneak and read, as well as sneak and write in the blank spaces of his Master Thomas’s copy-book (*Narrative* 57). He did so, even as a young boy, at great risk to himself. Douglass is planting the seeds for the heroic slave, about whom

he would write in later years as Gates and McKay explain, “Refusing to accept Hugh Auld’s dictates, Frederick took his first covertly rebellious steps by teaching himself to read and write” (385). In other places in the *Narrative*, we see examples of Douglass, the slave, acting heroically. For example, his decision not to work and turn over wages to Master Hugh was another act of slave rebellion (Douglass, *Narrative* 110). Furthermore, Douglass’s attempts to run away, successfully and unsuccessfully, also serve as examples of his willingness to resist slavery. In his one failed attempt to escape, as ringleader, Douglass prepared his fellow slaves for the task ahead in yet another show of the heroic slave. He writes, “It was truly a matter of life and death with us. . . . At this time, I was very active in explaining every difficulty, removing every doubt, dispelling every fear, and inspiring all with the firmness indispensable to success in our undertaking” (*Narrative* 94).

Douglass’s definitive moment in protest and resistance literature occurs when he stands up against the notorious slave breaker Mr. Covey, first written in the *Narrative*. Gates and McKay call the scene “the heroic turning point” and “one of the most celebrated scenes in all of antebellum African American literature” (385). At that moment, Douglass rose above his status as a slave—he became a man willing to resist and face death. He became a heroic slave. Douglass explains this moment by stating, “He asked me if I meant to persist in my resistance. I told him I did, come what might; that he had used me like a brute for six months, and that I was determined to be used so no longer” (*Narrative* 81). His stand against Covey with his declaration of manhood is the key moment scholars point to when discussing the abolitionist’s use of the heroic slave image. Here is where many believe Douglass gives birth to the heroic slave.

However, while literary and critical scholars have often linked Douglass’s heroic

slave to the *Narrative* and that particularly scene, I would argue they repeatedly neglect the role journalism played in creating this heroic slave image. Ironically, however, it is not just literary scholars who fail to connect the heroic slave to journalism, but also journalism scholars such as Robert Fanuzzi, Shelley Fisher Fishkin, and Carla L. Peterson, who miss the connection; journalism scholars have focused more on Douglass's use of journalism writing in terms of political and social empowerment for disenfranchised African Americans. For example, in "Frederick Douglass's 'Colored Newspaper': Identity Politics in Black and White," Fanuzzi explains how Douglass saw the black press as both a measure and symbol for progress in the fight to abolish slavery and writes, "For Douglass, however, the progress of history toward emancipation would be measured materially, in the black race, and even more critically, in the colored newspapers, which shared all its attributes" (Fanuzzi 62). Journalism scholars such as Fanuzzi and literary scholars have ultimately failed in the study of Douglass's writing by not examining how his journalism and the literary have informed on one another. Douglass through the use of the media--his and others--creates the heralded heroic slave image much earlier than the publication of the *Narrative*.

To understand how Douglass created his heroic slave image through journalism, we must first discuss agenda-setting theory. Agenda-setting theory, which comes by way of the journalism field and was first mentioned in Donald Shaw and Maxwell McCombs's groundbreaking 1972 article, "Agenda-Setting Function of the Mass Media," contends that the media, through their reporting and editorializing, inadvertently determine for their readers what subject is important--what is news--particularly in the political realm. Readers learn and understand the importance of news by the positioning of stories, the amount of information and space allotted to a story, and the frequency of a particular story. In the second level of

agenda-setting, the media move beyond just directing readers to what stories are important. Pu-tsung King's essay "The Press, Candidate Images, and Voter Perceptions" explains that the second level of agenda setting begins the process of determining what specifics or attributes of a story or an issue are important. King argues, "As certain perspectives and frames are employed in news coverage, they can draw public attention to certain attributes and away from others" (29). Using politicians during an election as the model, King explains that in image setting, the media affect how the candidates are perceived by the public, arguing, "In fact, previous studies have, either directly or indirectly, showed that media help set the agenda of attributes that define the pictures of candidates in voters' minds" (30). The media's focus on certain attributes help to shape public opinion on candidates. Douglass understood this particular power of the press.

Douglass's positioning himself as the heroic slave provides a clear example of image making in the media, the second step in the agenda-setting theory. Although Douglass was not running for a political office, his work was political. He was a candidate waging a campaign against slavery, and he exemplified through his image setting the fallacy of that particular institution and the fallacy of the characteristics tagged to those oppressed by this institution. Douglass in the nineteenth century understood the power of image and the power the media had in creating that image; even prior to owning his own newspaper and the publication of the *Narrative*, he began creating this heroic slave persona. In 1841 as an orator for the abolitionist movement with the help of the media that covered his speeches, Douglass was a participant in the media agenda-setting process. Douglass, as orator, exemplified the heroic slave through appearance, standing more than six feet in height and handsome, and, more importantly, through speech. Although Douglass was a physical specimen to be

admired, his heroic presence came through in his speech, which was clear, articulate and strong. He commanded a room early in his abolition career and reporters took notice and in the second-level of agenda setting mode emphasized characteristics of Douglass that painted him as heroic. For example, the editor from the *Hingham Patriot* likened Douglass to Spartacus, the Gladiator, after hearing him speak at the Plymouth Society convention in November 1841: “‘He is very fluent in the use of language,’ he wrote, ‘choice and appropriate language, too; and talks as well, for all we could see, as men who have spent all their lives over books. He is forcible, keen and very sarcastic’” (qtd. in Foner 47). Douglass plays on that heroic image and attributes such as strength and power are emphasized by first, the fugitive slave who presents himself as an unafraid, unapologetic fighter of slavery and next, by the press which focuses on that image. In another example, a month after the first editor’s comments, another editor, N.P. Rogers of the *Herald of Freedom*, after hearing Douglass speak, actually referred to him as “hero”: “The fugitive Douglass was up when we entered. This is an extraordinary man. He was cut out for a hero. In the rising for Liberty, he would have been a Toussaint or a Hamilton. . . . Let the South congratulate herself that he is a fugitive. It would not have been safe for her if he had remained about the plantation . . .” (qtd. in Foner 47-48).

Douglass created a fearless image through his speeches. Just speaking out so publicly as a fugitive slave was a daring act in of itself, and he understood the ramifications of doing so; however, Douglass saw it as his duty to shed light on this institution even while putting himself at risk. He says as much in his speech "My Slave Experience in Maryland" delivered before the American Anti-Slavery Society on May 6, 1845:

I have the gratification to know that if I fall by the utterance of truth in this

matter, that if I shall be hurled back into bondage to gratify the slaveholder--to be killed by inches--that every drop of blood which I shall shed, every groan which I shall utter, every pain which shall rack my frame, every sob in which I shall indulge, shall be the instrument, under God, of tearing down the bloody pillar of Slavery, and of hastening the day of deliverance for three millions of my brethren in bondage.

(Douglass, *Speeches* 12)

Douglass almost seems to take on a Christ-like figure, willing to sacrifice himself for his fellow slaves. He is unafraid to lay down his life for the cause and for others. In a Christian-centered/focused nation, Douglass's image as a heroic messiah is easy to relate to and understand. What we see in Douglass's early speaking career, he begins the creation of that heroic image for his audience, which often included the members of the press. Douglass's physical stature projected power without him uttering a word, and his sharp intellect, strong grasp of language, and moral authority are attributes that the media gravitated to and reported, thus engaging in image-making agenda-setting.

However, Douglass the journalist/writer also is engaged in image-making through his own writing. In his journalism, we see Douglass creating and nurturing his heroic slave image as early as 1841—four years before the publication of the *Narrative*. Douglass's protest journalism work was being published in abolition periodicals such as the *Liberty Bell*, the *Liberator*, *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, and the *Ram's Horn* prior to his starting the *North Star*. Patsy Brewington Perry explains, "It was during this period that he had an opportunity to test his ideas in print, to experience and review the various forms of racial prejudice which he would attack, to examine the power of the press in general, and to explore

the prospects for a newspaper such as the one he envisioned” (107). His protest journalism set the foundation for his protest literature, enabling Douglass to create the persona of the heroic slave. Douglass in his journalism work embodied the heroic slave who underwent the transformation from beast to cultured, from unlearned to refined, and finally from heroic slave to heroic man.

Douglass’s journalism career starts inconspicuously through the use of reprints of speeches and letters he writes to abolitionist friends, like Garrison, the owner of the *Liberator*. However, in these pieces, we see the rhetoric of protest that underscores this slave as heroic such as in the speech "The Church and Prejudice" Douglass delivered to the Plymouth Church Anti-Slavery Society in December of 1841 and later printed in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* on December 23, 1841. In the speech, Douglass boldly takes on false Christianity and racial discrimination: "Thus you see, my hearers, this prejudice goes even into the church of God. And there are those who carry it so far that it is disagreeable to them even to think of going to heaven, if colored people are going there too. And whence comes it? The grand cause is slavery . . ." (*Writings* 104). Again, in a later passage, Douglass attacks the institutionalized racism of the church: "The slave-holding ministers preach up the divine right of the slaveholders to property in their fellow-men" (*Writings* 104). Douglass took on this bastion of American society, criticizing religion and attacking religious practitioners who use religion to justify slavery. In taking on America’s religion, Douglass addressed a sensitive topic which some, even today, would be reluctant to do in such a public and forceful manner. Douglass, by speaking (and publishing) so critically, risked life and freedom. Yet through his words, he projects himself as fearless and uncompromising. His courage casts him as heroic.

We see again Douglass's fearlessness in his letter to Garrison, which appeared in the *Liberator* on Nov. 18, 1842. In the letter, he laments the recapturing of slave George Latimer in Boston, and hints that an armed struggle may be needed to fight those who would steal human beings. In the letter, "To William Lloyd Garrison," Douglass rings the alarm and dares others to follow by writing, "It is a struggle of life and death with us just now. No sword that can be used, be it never so rusty, should lay idle in its scabbard. Slavery, our enemy, has landed in our very midst, and commenced its bloody work" (*Writings* 107). Douglass again is playing the heroic slave who is willing to stand to correct a moral wrong. And Douglass leaves no question of his willingness to use force. The images that he creates with words like the sword and the eagerness to pick it up, no matter what condition, speaks to who he is. "Even as a slave, you're not powerless—look at me" seems to be the rallying cry from Douglass. Douglass's readiness to use force for justice speaks to Western tradition of the heroics.

In the article "The Folly of Our Opponents," which appeared in the *Liberty Bell* in 1845, Douglass boldly goes after those who would use spurious arguments to advance the cause of slavery. In an often-used technique he will execute in his own paper, Douglass speaks directly to the person, usually a white man, who makes pro-slavery arguments in public. Douglass, still the slave himself, uses biting sarcasm. Douglass's language makes it appear he does not know his place in relation to white people, an omission that would subject any African American, free or enslaved, to physical harm and possibly death. For example, even in the title of this piece, "The Folly of Our Opponents," Douglass dares to call white men foolish. He also refers to these white men who perpetuate lies to perpetuate slavery as "mean and wicked" people. Furthermore, Douglass, the slave, dares to say that God is on his

side—is on the side of the slaves with this statement, “Our cause is onward; the efforts of our enemies, not less than the efforts of our friends, are contributing to increase the strength of the sentiment at home, as well as abroad, which is very soon to dash down the bloody altar of Slavery, and ‘proclaim liberty through all the land, unto all the inhabitants’” (*Writings* 115). What is significant about these words are their sense of urgency, power, and boldness as he calls for the end of this American institution. Douglass’s words are not those of a cowardly, fearful slave. Douglass uses words like “dash down” and “bloody altar.” He understands the images that words can create. He also understands audience. Douglass primarily had a dual audience. He wrote to those, particularly white people, who had the power to help end slavery. Douglass also wrote to African Americans, particularly those enslaved and illiterate who had papers read to them, that they were worthy of freedom. He was a symbol of hope for them. Douglass understood the importance of projecting a heroic image to the masses suffering under the weight of slavery. Furthermore, Douglass in his journalism, which is seen later in his literary works, lets his people know that he will fight for them. He is their hero.

Douglass created such a compelling heroic slave image in his speeches and through his journalism that the idea that he was or had ever been a slave was questioned. Slaves did not speak, write, or think in the manner Douglass did. Slaves did not possess the bold spirit Douglass possessed. Douglass, who appeared superhuman, was something other than a slave. A reporter expressed that sentiment:

“Many persons in the audience,” wrote a Philadelphia correspondent in the *Liberator* of August 30, 1844, “seemed unable to credit the statements which he gave of himself, and could not believe that he was actually a slave. How a man, only six years out of bondage, and who had never gone to school a day

in his life, could speak with such eloquence--with such precision of language and power of thought--they were utterly at a loss to devise." (*Speeches* 11)

This disbelief that Douglass was ever a slave was the impetus for him to write the *Narrative*. Being an articulate and heroic slave appeared to be too much the oxymoron for many to digest, so unable to deny the heroic in Douglass, they chose to deny that he had ever been a slave. The skepticism was just a byproduct of the time and the racial prejudice rooted in America. Douglass's *Narrative* provides detailed facts that would indicate that he was indeed a slave and a heroic one at that. And even though the *Narrative* provided validity for Douglass's story, his image setting in journalism created this heroic slave story prior to the May 1845 publication.

Douglass's decision to start his own newspaper two years after the publication of the *Narrative* allowed him to not only continue to cultivate the heroic slave image but to change the heroic slave to heroic man an image that holds sway in his second book, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), and his novella "The Heroic Slave" (1853). But before delving into Douglass's transformation in literature from the heroic slave to the heroic man image, again some background information is in order, this time looking at the start of his newspaper and his long career in journalism. Having this information will provide understanding on how Douglass moves from heroic slave to heroic man—again, first through journalism and then in the literature.

In 1847, Douglass made good on his promise to create, supervise, and run a successfully-owned African American newspaper. The *North Star*, which became *Frederick Douglass's Paper*, stayed in print from 1847 to 1863 (Andrews, Foster, and Harris 226). The paper's goal was to eradicate slavery in a land that boasted a love of liberty and freedom.

Douglass and his papers were agitators for freedom, and his years as editor were fruitful. His journalism work built on his goal to show the slave as human, as heroic, and as man.

Douglass's ability to hammer on these themes day in and day out in his journalism provided the ease and the credibility to address these issues in his literature also.

Douglass's move to occupy that editor's chair was not an easy step. Although supported by his abolitionist friends in England to start a newspaper, Douglass met with great resistance from his American abolitionist supporters. His detractors argued it would be unwise to start an African American newspaper because they did not see a need for it. He was needed as a speaker, and it would take too much of his time. Most importantly, they argued, a paper by a black editor would ultimately fail. Douglass was mindful that he was mounting a challenge that had in the past defeated African American men and editors more educated than he. Philip S. Foner in the biography, *Frederick Douglass*, contends that before the founding of the *North Star*, African American newspapers struggled because of little financial support. Many of these journals had small subscriptions and went out of existence after a short time such as *Freedom's Journal*, the first African American newspaper started in 1827. Reminded that he was only nine years removed from slavery, Douglass at one point abandoned his idea to create this newspaper (Douglass, *Bondage* 393). However, he saw his cause as a righteous cause—a divine cause, writing,

My American friends looked at me with astonishment! 'A wood-sawyer' offering himself to the public as an editor! A slave, brought up in the very depths of ignorance, assuming to instruct the highly civilized people of the north in the principles of liberty, justice, and humanity! The thing looked absurd. Nevertheless, I persevered. (Douglass, *Bondage* 394)

It is good that Douglass persevered because his journalism work allowed him to grow as a literary writer. His decision to start a newspaper was instrumental in his development as a writer, thinker, and leader. Foner contends that Douglass, who had no formal training, developed on the job, arguing, “His editorial experiences contributed immeasurably to his own development and ‘intellectual expansion.’ The very necessity to speak out week after week on every important issue of the day compelled him to analyze events carefully and to reach conclusions based upon his own thinking” (93-94). Moreover, Douglass’s decision to create a newspaper really moved him among the ranks of public opinion makers in the country during the nineteenth century. As an editor, Douglass wielded tremendous power. Dr. James M’Cune Smith, an African American friend who wrote the introduction to *My Bondage*, said the former slave pulled himself up on his own to a position of great prestige: “As a successful editor, in our land, he occupies this position. Our editors rule the land, and he is one of them” (xxv). By the Civil War, about forty African American newspapers had been started. Robert Fay argues that Douglass’s publication was probably by far the best and most popular (46).

When he became owner and editor, Douglass no longer wore the shackles of slavery. His chains had been removed with the help of his British friends, who purchased his freedom in 1846 at a price of \$710.96 (Foner 72). Although no longer a slave, Douglass was still heroic, and he wanted the world to know. Douglass also wanted to inform the world that he was a man. As it was Douglass the journalist who created the heroic slave image prominent in the *Narrative*, it was Douglass the editor who created the heroic man image found in his second narrative, *My Bondage*, as well as in the novella “The Heroic Slave.” What we see in Douglass’s writings, most prominent in his journalism, is with the chains removed, Douglass

is no longer fettered to slavery, and he is no longer limited to the heroic slave. What Douglass begins to do first is assert his own humanity and manhood, which he does loudly, boldly and often in the pages of the *North Star*. A freed Douglass, a man of position and power as editor, will no longer be defined in terms that make him less than a man—even if the term would include heroic in front of it. Following the lead in his journalism writing and persona, Douglass's literary writings, particularly in his second narrative and in his novella, place less emphasis on his enslavement and more emphasis on this new heroic man. Heroic slave is no longer apt in describing this man.

When Douglass wrote *My Bondage* in 1855, he had been freed for more than fifteen years, and the narrative provided him an opportunity to discuss not only slavery but also racism, prejudice and a caste system in the North as well as the South (Gates and McKay 386). The book again recounts his life as a slave and eventual escape; however, much of this narrative provides information on his work as an abolitionist. Furthermore, *My Bondage* delves deeper into Douglass's time as an abolitionist under the tutelage of Garrison and his eventual break. By the time his second book came to print, Douglass had made his famous split from Garrison and had become his own MAN.

While scholars have discussed at length the *Narrative*, *My Bondage* is just beginning to grow in esteem and popularity, with critics such as William L. Andrews, Deborah McDowell, Eric J. Sundquist, and Jeannine Marie DeLombard examining Douglass's second autobiography. Some scholars have even suggested that the writing in *My Bondage* is stronger than in the *Narrative*. Critics, such as Peter Dorsey, also have stated that *My Bondage* represents a maturing of Douglass: "In the ten years between the two books, Douglass dramatically enhanced his literary skills through his development as a writer, editor

and orator and honed a 'protomodernist' style that shares much with the styles of other canonical writers of the American Renaissance" (435). Many critics agree that *My Bondage* represents growth--growth in the writing, growth in the man, and growth in the message. For example, Andrews indicates in his essay "*My Bondage and My Freedom* and the American Literary Renaissance of the 1850s" that Douglass no longer tells a tale of a slave, but a tale of a man. He writes, "*My Bondage and My Freedom* thus became the first Afro-American autobiography designed to argue that a black man's life story had a wider significance than was usually accorded to the narratives of former slaves" (134). I would add that Douglass's nearly decade-long work as a journalist/editor provides the fertile training ground for his writing to grow. He becomes a better writer because he becomes a better thinker as result of working day in and day out as an editor. His focus in terms of protest becomes sharper as a result of his journalism work. As Douglass grows in stature with his position as editor, he no longer sees himself as a slave but as a man.

Douglass expanding and developing as a writer is also seen in the novella "The Heroic Slave," as evident in his mere attempt to publish fiction. Although Douglass's novella is called "The Heroic Slave," what the abolitionist again presents is slave turned heroic man in this story. The novella, based on a real life slave uprising in 1841, presents this celebrated new manhood through the character of Madison Washington, which some scholars² believe is a fictionalized Douglass. This story, published in 1853 in the *North Star*, tells of Washington's escape North and his decision to return to the South to free his wife. In his attempt to rescue his wife, Washington is captured and re-enslaved. He eventually becomes the daring, brave leader of a slave revolt aboard a ship, bringing freedom to himself and

² Robert B. Stepto in "Storytelling in Early Afro-American Fiction: Frederick Douglass's "The Heroic Slave"

others.

“The Heroic Slave” does not garner nearly the attention the *Narrative* or *My Bondage* enjoys. The scholars who have addressed this novella often have linked the heroic fictional character Madison Washington to Frederick Douglass, as does Robert B. Stepto who writes, “Moreover, Douglass might very possibly have been attracted to Washington’s story because it in some measure revises his own” (111). Shelley Fisher Fishkin and Carla L. Peterson add that Madison Washington is a “fictional projection of himself in many ways”(83). These scholars are on the mark in connecting Washington and Douglass together. What I would add is that Washington is a manifestation of Douglass’s heroic man image--the heroic slave turned heroic man.

The fictionalized Madison Washington is the product of Douglass’s journalism. First, Madison Washington comes alive as a character in this novella that appeared in the pages of the *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, formerly the *North Star*. Douglass fictionalizes the true-to-life mutiny on the *Creole* in 1841 led by Madison Washington, who escaped from Virginia to Canada. Washington was recaptured after trying to rescue his wife. After he was put aboard the *Creole* bound for New Orleans, Washington staged the successful insurrection in the Bahamas. He led the *Creole* to the British port of Nassau in which the British government chose to free the captives. Second, as would any good journalist, Douglass researched, investigated, and reported on a true incident before writing the piece. In the real uprising, just one person, the slave owner, was killed, according to Helen Lock (65). Douglass stays extremely close to the facts of the incident with a few exceptions with the number of deaths being one of them. Whereas, in the true account, John Hewell, owner of the thirty-nine slaves

and Shelley Fisher Fishkin and Carla L. Peterson in “We Hold These Truths to Be Self-Evident” are some of the

aboard, was the only white man to die, in Douglass's short story, two white men are killed. Also, in the true account of the incident, black islanders surrounded the *Creole*, which led to the British authorities to release them, fearing bloodshed. In the novella, the fugitives walked off the ship after black soldiers from the island refused to stop them. Because of Douglass staying fairly near to the facts of the 1841 mutiny, it would indicate that he did his research prior to writing his fictionalized account. Third, in journalistic fashion, Douglass took an old story and updated it for readers. Often in journalism, writers will revisit an old story for several reasons--an anniversary, updated information, a new twist, etc., and write about the past incident, and by doing so, the reporter is able to do two things: first, provide new information for readers familiar with the story, and second, introduce this subject to readers unfamiliar with the subject. These are all tried and true techniques used in journalism as a way to inform the public.

Nonetheless, what's important about "The Heroic Slave" and Douglass's other literary works is how he incorporates agenda-setting in the writing. Scholars often have missed the agenda-setting image link in his journalism and literary works. Douglass used agenda-setting image making to create the heroic man. However, before Douglass could make the leap in his writing from the heroic slave to heroic man, he had to overcome the gargantuan argument in nineteenth century America that said he was no man at all—heroic or otherwise. Douglass had to first establish black people's humanity before he could give life and credibility to the heroic man. In fact, Douglass proving the slave was heroic was probably less problematic than proving the slave was human. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there had been accounts of heroic acts by slaves who had risked their lives in the defense of their masters'.

scholars who link the fictionalized character Madison Washington to Frederick Douglass.

However, being loyal and heroic in the service of one's master did not constitute humanity. Animals were loyal. Douglass's challenge was to show the slave as a thinking, feeling, and reasoning being—to show the slave as human--and he went about that challenge first through his journalism.

Understanding the power of the press and its ability to create sustaining images, Douglass made a conscious decision to prove his humanity and thus to prove the humanity of other African Americans with the creation of the *North Star*. What makes this noteworthy is the belief at the time that humanity was tied to literacy and the ability to reason, as Henry Louis Gates, Jr., explains, “Human beings wrote books. Beautiful books were reflections of sublime genius. Sublime genius was the province of the European. Blacks, and other people of color, could not ‘write’” (56). Douglass understood the power of the written language and the credibility that African Americans gained by being able to read and to write. Douglass learned this valuable lesson earlier in his life as a slave in the often-told story of his mistress's abortive attempt to teach him to read. Douglass used the written word to attain freedom and to claim the humanity of those who looked like him. Understanding the power of the written word and what it said about the humanity of the African made Douglass all that more determined to succeed as an editor of an African American newspaper. The *North Star* shone because Douglass attempted to make a statement with every edition. Douglass raised the bar for himself and his paper in his efforts to make the paper an example of what African Americans could do once unfettered. Foner explains how Douglass's stellar work as an editor was lauded by his fellow journalists: “He was determined to prove that a paper edited by a former slave compared favorably with the best-edited weeklies of the period; and he succeeded so admirably that Negroes felt a sense of pride in the paper. White reformers

pointed to it constantly as a perfect refutation of the charge of inferiority of the Negro people . . .” (93). Douglass’s success as a writer and editor allowed him to proclaim loudly and boldly the humanity of African American with every edition of his paper.

When Douglass lent his voice to the abolition movement, and later with the creation of his newspaper, he had to speak with a loud, clear, and unequivocal voice—one that exemplified intelligence, reflection, and humanity, to counter the image of slave as mere beast. According to Gates and McKay, Douglass wrote to affirm the humanity and heroic spirit of the slave through the use of himself:

As the most highly regarded African American man of letters in the nineteenth century, Douglass devoted his literary efforts primarily to the creation of a heroic image of himself that would inspire in blacks the belief that color need not be a permanent bar to their achievement of the American Dream, while reminding whites of their obligation as Americans to support free and equal access to that dream for Americans of all races. (385)

Again, Douglass is using image-setting to create a humanity-based image of himself, which he hopes can be conferred to other African Americans. He attempts to recast how blacks were viewed. African Americans during the nineteenth century were seen as outside of the human race—an “other” to be despised. African Americans, with the help of the white media, were portrayed as cowardly, shiftless, cunning, docile, immoral, hyper-sexual, childlike, unthinking, and inhuman. Also, artistic images of African Americans often were exaggerated to make them appear as unattractive and ape-like as possible. These were the images that Douglass and other African American editors battled against in their newspapers. Douglass attempted to undermine these negative images by laying the groundwork for the creation of

his heroic man shortly after his first book. However, as Douglass attempts to refocus the negative images of African Americans, he finds himself under attack.

He often was targeted by Southern and pro-slavery media from the North. He also was hurt by media image-setting by these media who placed emphasis on undesirable traits. For example, in the Southern and pro-slavery media, during his historic trip to England, Douglass was described as a rogue, considered dangerous, unpatriotic, and untrustworthy. The pro-slavery media wrote he was a madman ranting on foreign soil about a benign institution. It wasn't just the Southern media that painted a picture, through reporting, of Douglass as wily, uncontrollable, and un-American. Some Northern papers as well emphasized characteristics of Douglass that weren't favorable through reporting and publishing letters to the editor. For example, one letter from members of a temperance organization strongly expressed dismay with Douglass's speech during the World Temperance Convention in London in the summer of 1846: "Reverend Samuel Hanson Cox of Brooklyn, New York delivered a broadside against Douglass in a long angry letter to the *New York Evangelist*. He branded him as a 'colored Abolition agitator, and ultraist,' charging him with 'ruining almost everything [at the convention] that preceded him'" (Foner 68).

By contrast, Douglass took advantage of the media image-setting as he became the spokesman of the abolitionist and European press; the images and characteristics of Douglass reported in the British, European, and abolitionist newspapers spoke of his being earnest, reflective, measured, and eloquent. A reporter from the Durham County *Herald* was especially generous in his praise of Douglass: "We have rarely listened to an orator so gifted by nature," he wrote, "and never to a man who more thoroughly threw his whole heart into the work in which he is engaged" (qtd. in Foner 71). Upon his return to America, Douglass

had created a public persona through his many speeches and the press publicity from the British and European media of the articulate brave former slave turned into man. Douglass would capitalize and promote and solidify that image through his own image setting in the *North Star*. Always mindful and protective of his public persona, in the pages of his newspaper, Douglass created the image of someone who was bold, assertive, articulate, unafraid, unapologetic, and manly. He was quick to respond through the media to those who would misrepresent or challenge his persona—his image.

Douglass promotes, through his publication, the image of a holy fighter—a deliberate image-setting function enabled by owning and editing his own paper. In his newspaper, he reports on attributions that play up this image of him as noble warrior and rejects characterizations to the contrary. Douglass's reporting, editorializing, and writing, in the *North Star* helped create a picture of himself that would resonate with readers much as current media do for current national political candidates. King contends that the drawback with image-setting is that the press focuses on images instead of issues that the candidates are addressing. When that occurs, King contends that the media neglect their job of informing the public. However, one could not make the charge against Douglass. For Douglass, the issue was the abolition of slavery. He wrote clearly covering every side of the issue, much like a reporter would do, so his readers understood the impact of slavery on the country and citizens—enslaved and free. Douglass's emphasis on his heroic noble image is used in tandem with reporting the horrors of slavery as a means of eradicating this institution. Douglass focused on both image and issues, which sometimes became intertwined as some scholars contend is the case in image setting (King 30).

Douglass wanted to show through his newspaper that African Americans were indeed

human--that they could write beautiful prose, they could reason. His newspaper and his work as an editor were reflections of that humanity. Unlike with books, Douglass could make the claim of black humanity more loudly and more often through his abolition papers. He did not have to wait every ten years or more to argue his humanity through a literary piece when he had a regular newspaper. Every edition of the *North Star* argued his black humanity, thus the humanity of his enslaved brothers. One reason why slavery persisted for so long was the myth perpetuated by slave owners and some of those in the science community that African Americans were outside of the human race or some inferior byproduct of the human race. Douglass often in his journalism rebutted these notions with wit, sarcasm and logic. For example, in the article, "The Claims of the Negro Ethnologically Considered," published in the *Frederick Douglass' Paper* on January 12, 1855, stands as one of his strongest condemnations and rebukes to those who would persist with the fallacy of black inferiority. Douglass, always the teacher, begins his argument by explaining the types of scholars who conduct this type of research. He explains that some of these scholars, who claim to objectively study the African American, do so with a bias and cunning. In this particular editorial, Douglass takes on a respected journal from Richmond, which ultimately determined that the slave was not a man; hence, slavery was not a crime against his humanity. An incredulous Douglass offers evidence to the contrary. In the news article, Douglass explains that to consider the question of whether an African American is a man, a person must first consider what makes a man a man. Douglass begins with the obvious--comparing physical qualities of men and beasts. He also discusses the emotional qualities of man--the ability to laugh and weep, to have hopes, and fears: "Tried by all the usual, and all the *unusual* tests, whether mental, moral, physical, or psychological, the Negro is a MAN--

considering him as possessing knowledge, or needing knowledge, his elevation or his degradation, his virtues or his vices--whichever road you take, you reach the same conclusion, the Negro is a MAN" (Douglass, *Speeches* 284; his emphasis). As a good journalist, and particularly as a strong editorial writer, Douglass backs his assertions with facts, evidence, and logic. Douglass's response in print in a newspaper is protest in and of itself against the lies that those of African descent don't belong to the human family. The way Douglass constructs his journalism protest is impressive because he uses the master's tool to dismantle the master's house of lies. There are many examples of Douglass using clear reason and thought to insist on the humanity of African Americans.

Douglass also makes the argument of African Americans' humanity in his literature. While Douglass's journalism work uses a heavy dose of reasoning to make his arguments, often in his literary work, particularly in *My Bondage* and "The Heroic Slave," the abolitionist relies heavily on pathos--the passionate appeal--as he makes his claim of African humanity. Literature, particularly fiction, allows Douglass to move from the confines of journalism. What most likely makes literature attractive to Douglass is that he creates characters, real or imagined, and imbues them with feelings and emotions that are hard to convey in journalistic writing. In his literature, Douglass allows his readers to feel slavery as only a slave feels it, and by doing so, he attests to African Americans' humanity without having to argue it as he does in his journalism editorials. Probably some of the most powerful testimonies of the slave's humanity in Douglass's literature are when he writes of his own intimate desires to be free of slavery--even welcoming death to that end: "Whilst in the painful state of mind described in the foregoing chapter, almost regretting my very existence, because doomed to a life of bondage, so goaded and wretched, at times, that I was

even tempted to destroy my own life . . .” (Douglass, *Bondage* 163). Death, as opposed to a life in bondage, is much more tolerable for Douglass. He longs for freedom. We see this longing again in Douglass as he discusses watching ships pass on Chesapeake Bay and his feelings of destitution. Those vessels represented freedom to him—a freedom he could not have: “I have often, in the deep stillness of a summer’s Sabbath, stood all alone upon the lofty banks of that noble bay, and traced, with saddened heart and tearful eye, the countless number of sails moving off to the mighty ocean. The sight of these always affected me powerfully” (Douglass, *Bondage* 220). Here again, Douglass makes a strong case for his humanity through the use of emotions. Douglass uses symbolism such as the ocean representing freedom. His emotions are on full display, and they tell readers that slaves do feel, do think, do hurt, and do have hopes for their lives. His ability to use the language of pathos is something he cannot do in his journalism.

As a journalist, Douglass has to be logical, fair, and reasoned, even in an editorial piece. Also as a journalist, Douglass, like most reporters, is most effective when he is working in the third person, which allows him to act as an outside observer and to bring in other views and perspectives that strengthen his arguments. Douglass adopts different strategies in his first-person narratives. Here, Douglass is the lone source. However, in his one true fictional piece “The Heroic Slave,” Douglass chooses to write in the third-person journalistic objective news story manner, which Fishkin and Peterson point to in their essay, “Just as his third-person omniscient narrator in the story moves back and forth from one point of view to another, Douglass the journalist would soon allow his own work to move back and forth between several points of view . . .” (84). In addition to being able to move back and forth using the third person, Douglass can advocate for revolution without calling

for it directly. And although Douglass uses the third person to bring in other voices as would a journalist, he, however, does not have to adhere to journalistic rules. He is still writing a work of fiction, and he can dramatize the work as he sees fit.

Douglass's use of the emotional, passionate appeal in his literature is even more powerful when he cries out for justice with the use of his lone authoritative voice that is seen in his newspaper writing. The monologues in his literature function in much the same way as his editorials in his journalism by providing a powerful authoritative voice of protest. Douglass uses this lone voice in "The Heroic Slave" with the main character, Madison Washington, first seen lamenting his condition, thus reinforcing his humanity. Using Madison, Douglass enables the reader to understand how slavery tortures the slave's very humanity. Just as Douglass in his narratives is anguished as he watches the ships pass, Madison also is anguished as he looks at the freedom enjoyed by animals: "*They live free, though they may die slaves. They fly where they list by day, and retire in freedom at night. But what is freedom to me, or I to it? I am a slave,—born a slave, an abject slave,—even before I made part of this breathing world, the scourge was plaited for my back; the fetters were forged for my limbs*" (221; his emphasis). Madison, like Douglass, is born into slavery with the prospect of lifelong chains forever confining him.

Furthermore, what Douglass also does masterfully in this book and particularly in this section is to allow Mr. Listwell, a white Northerner, to listen in secret as Madison speaks. Mr. Listwell represents Douglass's white audience and the hopes Douglass has for that audience. Because the use of the soliloquy here functions much like the journalism editorial, allowing the speaker unfettered speech, Mr. Listwell listens without interruption. Readers and listeners of editorials may respond, but they cannot interrupt the editorial. They have to

hear the argument out before countering or supporting that argument. Madison, who believes he is alone, speaks without interruption. Madison is free to speak his mind, and Mr. Listwell hears and sees the soul of the African. He sees the humanity of the African. Douglass wants his white audience to listen, understand and feel as Mr. Listwell does. In his journalism, Douglass is not guaranteed a white audience, particularly one that will listen and be open to change. Through his literature, unlike the journalism, Douglass can create a receptive white audience. And if his white audience hears like Mr. Listwell, they too, will recognize the humanity of all Africans: “The speech of Madison rung through the chambers of his soul, and vibrated through his entire frame. ‘Here is indeed a man,’ thought he” (223). Here we have Mr. Listwell affirming Madison’s humanity, thus affirming Douglass’s humanity, and thus affirming the humanity of all enslaved people.

Douglass in his protest literature continues to promote the idea that if white people just listen, they will hear, they will know that people of African descent are their brothers and sisters and that these people possess all of the highest (and lowest) qualities of humanity. Again, speaking directly to a white audience harkens to his journalistic writing wherein he frequently addressed a white community as well as an African American one. In the novella, Douglass uses the first mate Tom Grant’s discussion with Jack Williams, a white man disgusted with the outcome of the slave uprising on the *Creole*, as another way to address a white audience. Grant represents the possibility of white Americans changing their outlook of African Americans once they see their true character. Grant has an opportunity to witness nobility and courage in the African American Madison, and he comes away with a very different perspective. Grant in some ways represents hope.

The dejected Grant recounts the capture of the slave ship by Madison and the

eighteen other slaves. However, the first mate's description of what occurred after the ship was docked in Nassau, where they had hoped the consul would help in retaking the slaves, harkens to Douglass's use of reason, humor, and irony in his editorial writings to argue for African humanity:

What he did, or whether he did anything, I don't know; but, by order of the authorities, a company of *black* soldiers came on board, for the purpose, as they said, of protecting the property. These impudent rascals, when I called on them to assist me in keeping the slaves on board, sheltered themselves adroitly under the instructions only to protect property,—and said they did not recognize persons as *property*. I told them that by the law of Virginia and the laws of the United State, the slaves on board were as much property as the barrels of flour in the hold. At this the stupid blockheads showed their *ivory*, rolled up their white eyes in horror, as if the idea of putting men on footing with merchandise was revolting to their humanity. (246-47; his emphasis)

Again, what makes this section of the first mate's story important and skillful is that Douglass, although still using pathos, drives home the point of black humanity through the use of logic and irony often utilized in his journalism editorials. The white first mate looks to *black soldiers* from a *black community* to reclaim *black slaves*. The last line, however, is the most telling when the first mate is willing, without knowing, to recognize Nassau *black soldiers'* humanity--“of putting men on footing with merchandise was revolting to *their humanity*”—but still not ready to recognize the slaves' humanity. Just as in his journalism work, Douglass in his literature writings speaks volumes to the absurdity and contradictory nature of the slave system as a whole and specifically to the notion slaves are not human.

Douglass, showing the slave as human in both his journalism and literary writing, prepares the reader to finally see his heroic slave as heroic man.

By constantly making the case for African humanity through his journalism and literature, Douglass set the basis to make the case that the heroic slave is really the heroic man, which we see in his newspaper writing and later in his literary works. In a letter printed in the *Liberator*, September 22, 1848, addressed to his former owner Thomas Auld, Douglass, the journalist, provides us an indication of where his writing is heading with the last sentence to Auld: “I am your fellow man, but not your slave” (Douglass, *Speeches* 117). I would argue that Douglass’s journalism is the driving force in creating and maintaining the new image—the heroic man image, presented in his second book and novella. To understand the shift from heroic slave to heroic man, you must first understand how Douglass defined manhood. I believe that Douglass defines manhood as one who uses or is willing to use deadly force to resist oppression. What we see in his later journalism and literature writings is Douglass connecting heroic manhood often with physical resistance, and in doing so, he participates in the historical masculinity tradition in African American writing. We see that theme of physical resistance as early as 1830 with *David Walker’s Appeal* in which David Walker argues about matching force with force:

Now, I ask you, had you not rather be killed than to be a slave to a tyrant, who takes the life of your mother, wife, and dear little children? Look upon your mother, wife and children, and answer God Almighty! and believe this, that it is no more harm for you to kill a man, who is trying to kill you, than it is for you to take a drink of water when thirsty. (46)

We see that theme of physical resistance played out in early twentieth century African

American protest literature, for example in Richard Wright's *Native Son*. Also, much of the literature coming out of the 1960s Black Arts Movement was masculine in tone and often married physical resistance to manhood, as in Amiri Baraka's call for "Poems that kill. Assassin poems, Poems that shoot guns. Poems that wrestle cops into alleys and take their weapons leaving them dead" (1943).

In the 1850s, Douglass assumed a militant tone in his journalism, which was then emulated in his literature that his work foreshadows the black power movement and rhetoric of leaders such as Malcolm X. The older and independent Douglass was adamant in his assertion that the African slave had a right and responsibility to resist his captivity even if that meant death for him or his oppressor. But as militant as Douglass became, he was not an anomaly in this regard in mid-nineteenth century. Sarah N. Roth argues slave narratives took a more militant turn in the 1850s with the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law. She explains that the early slave narratives presented slaves as victims and were popular and pushed often by white abolitionists because victimized African Americans were more appealing to a white readership than stories of black avengers. However, black authors impatient for change decide to become more aggressive in tone and stories: "Radicalised [sic] by the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850 and the lack of progress toward emancipation, black authors began to reject the unspoken compromise of the 1840s and produce narratives that celebrated the fearless rebel" (267-68). Freed from his early abolition commitments and frustrated by pro-slavery measures, Douglass also is more radical in his later writings and is able to revise his heroic character--himself.

Douglass's politics and political associations also seem to warrant a change in his philosophy with regard to physical force and the extent of that force. For example, one of

Douglass's dear friends is none other than John Brown, the staunch white abolitionist known for his failed raid on Harpers Ferry. According to Foner, Douglass and Brown had been friends nearly a decade before the ill-fated raid in 1859 (174). Brown had been an ardent abolitionist, which had put him in contact with Douglass. The two men became close friends with Brown visiting Douglass's home. Foner writes that Douglass knew well in advance Brown's plans for a bloody revolt against the South in a blow to slavery (174). Foner contends that in August 1859, Brown gave Douglass a full account of the proposed raid as he attempted to enlist the former slave (177). Douglass refused, seeing it as doomed. That was the last meeting between Douglass and Brown, who marched on Harpers Ferry October 16 with his group of twenty-one men. After being beaten by Colonel Robert E. Lee, Brown was later hanged on December 2, 1859 (Foner 178). When Brown was caught, Douglass was implicated in the plot because of letters found on Brown; Douglass had to flee temporarily to Canada for a time. After the raid, Douglass would write an editorial about Brown that spoke to his new thinking: "He has attacked slavery with weapons precisely adapted to bring it to the death. Moral considerations have long since been exhausted upon slaveholders. It is in vain to reason with them. . . Slavery is a system of brute force. It shields itself behind might, rather than right. It must be met with its own weapon" (qtd. in Foner 181). You can see Douglass's writing changed in word choice and tone. Douglass begins to reason that violence is just against an unjust opponent and institution. Later, Douglass would appeal to President Lincoln to allow African Americans to join in the fight for their own freedom during the Civil War.

With this new way of thinking, Douglass's heroic slave of 1845 is much different from his heroic man of 1855. I would argue that Douglass's heroic man was much more

aggressive, more likely to fight, and more likely to kill, emphasized in his second book. Douglass's new character becomes heroic and a man because he is willing to face death, and more important, willing to cause someone else's death rather than be oppressed. As with the heroic slave, Douglass first creates the heroic man in his journalism, and he sustains him mostly there. However, because of the journalism, Douglass is able to move the heroic man from his newspaper into his literature in pieces like *My Bondage* and "The Heroic Slave." To show the evolution from heroic slave to heroic man, we must first look to his journalism.

In his speech "The Fugitive Slave Law," published in *Frederick Douglass' Paper* on August 11, 1852, Douglass assails the law that made it a crime to harbor a runaway slave, and we see the beginning of his advocating violence as a tool against oppression. In this newspaper piece, Douglass makes it clear that those who would attempt to enslave a person have no right to life: "No where has God ordained that this beautiful land shall be cursed with bondage by enslaving men. Slavery has no rightful existence anywhere. The slaveholders not only forfeit their right to liberty, but to life itself" (Douglass, *Speeches* 207). Moreover, Douglass called on citizens to take the law into their own hands to protest this unjust law: "The only way to make the Fugitive Slave Law a dead letter is to make half a dozen or more dead kidnappers. A half dozen more dead kidnappers carried down South would cool the ardor of Southern gentlemen, and keep their rapacity in check. That is perfectly right as long as the colored man has no protection" (Douglass, *Speeches* 207-08). Again, Douglass in his journalism writing asserts that African descendants are men and women, and as such, they should resist and protect themselves. Douglass is uncompromising in this position, much to the dismay of his more peace-loving white abolitionist brothers and sisters. Douglas celebrates force in the pages of his newspaper. He said that in the past slaves

had often been captured without much of a fight, thus, encouraging slave hunters to continue to hunt them down. The slave that offers little or no resistance does not endear himself to his owner, according to Douglass. The lack of resistance was part of the reason the slave was thought of as cowardly and unfit for freedom: “This reproach must be wiped out, and nothing short of resistance on the part of colored men, can wipe it out. Every slave-hunter who meets a bloody death in his infernal business, is an argument in favor of the manhood of our race. Resistance is, therefore, wise as well as just” (Douglass, *Speeches* 279). Douglass does not mince words as he calls for “bloody” confrontations.

As editor, Douglass also reported when slaves and former slaves used deadly force to break the chains of slavery. In fact, it would be easy to say that when physical resistance occurs, Douglass celebrates that resistance in his newspapers. One such example is Douglass’s article “Freedom’s Battle at Christiana,” published in *Frederick Douglass’ Paper* on May 30, 1850, where he recounts the story of slave-catchers’ attempts to return to bondage several fugitives. Douglass declares up front in the article that a man stealer, after being met with force, was killed. Moreover, Douglass muses why anyone would be surprised that black men would fight and kill for their liberty by writing, “Everybody seems astonished . . . there should be found men so firmly attached to liberty and so bitterly averse to slavery, as to be willing to peril even life itself to gain the one and to avoid the other” (*Speeches* 179). According to Douglass, even more astounded by the acts of these African American men, freeman William Parker and the five fugitives he harbored, are the pro-slavery proponents, who perpetuated the belief of the supposed cowardly nature of the African. Douglass warns of the folly of this belief, insisting that many men would fight rather than exist as slaves: “There is in that translation a lesson which the most obtuse may understand, namely, that all

Negroes are not such fools and dastards as to cling to *life* when it is coupled with chains and slavery” (*Speeches* 180; his emphasis).

In Douglass’s reporting of the tale, the African Americans possess characteristics of high-minded, noble men, such as heroism and bravery, while the slave-catchers are painted as recreants and immoral beasts. Douglass uses this device in both his journalism and literature, where his rhetoric turns upside down the prevailing belief of white as hero and black as coward. Here we see Douglass engaged in image setting. In this newspaper report, Douglass writes that upon entering the home of Parker, “The kidnappers undertook to force their way upstairs, but were met, and compelled to retreat” (*Speeches* 181). Douglass paints these men as nothing more than criminals, willing to break into someone’s home; however, they could not prevail against more noble men. When the owner of the home, Parker, described by Douglass as “a sober, well-behaved, and religious man of color” was confronted by the slave-catchers, he remained calm. When the slave-catchers demanded their property back, Parker told them that they owned nothing in his house, and “Parker repeatedly advised the slave-catchers to go away, stating that he did not wish to hurt them, although they had fired into his house fifteen times . . .” (Douglass, *Speeches* 181). Douglass details how these five slaves came downstairs and faced the fifteen slave-catchers. After verbal communication between the camps, one of the slave-catchers fired and missed Parker and that began the exchange of gun fire, according to Douglass. One of the slave-catchers was killed, while two others were wounded: “Young Gorsuch then fired at Parker, but missed him, and he, Gorsuch, was instantly shot down.—There was now general shooting, and striking with clubs, during which the elder Gorsuch was killed, his son shot through the lungs, and his nephew dangerously wounded” (Douglass, *Speeches* 181). Douglass also

points out that one of the slave-catchers decided to retreat rather than fight: “We must not omit to state that the first man to take the advice of the colored preacher, (as Parker is called,) was the Marshal from Philadelphia. *He topped his boom* before the heat of the battle came on, undoubtedly feeling that he had barked up the wrong tree, and that it was best for him to make tracks!” (Douglass, *Speeches* 181; his emphasis). In every instance of Douglass's reporting this story, his African American characters act swiftly, act bravely, act efficiently, and act moderately as opposed to the white men who appear impetuous, without honor, without skill, and without bravery. Douglass, using image-setting, highlights certain attributes for each group of men.

Douglass was at his best in his writing, when he performed image-setting using himself. He often took up the heroic mantle himself as example of the bold African American man willing to fight against injustice. For example, in his editorial “At Home Again,” Douglass retells an attack he received at the hands of a gang of white men, who saw him walking with two white women. Douglass, in an attempt to set the record straight from what he calls erroneous reporting of the incident, explains that his only crime was being a man. Douglass's decision to point out his manhood is his *modus operandi* in his journalism work. Douglass, no longer a slave, sheds the slave to give life to the man: “My crime is, that I have assumed to be a man, entitled to all the rights, privileges and dignity, which belong to human nature—that color is no crime, and that all men are brothers. I have acted on this presumption” (Douglass, *Speeches* 157). Furthermore, when Douglass explains that the reporting that he walked down the street arm and arm with two white woman as untrue, he still declares that as an American man, “I *insist* upon the right to do so” (*Speeches* 157; his emphasis). Again, here we see a bold and unapologetic Douglass who dares to make a highly controversial

statement in print that could have had him killed even in a sympathetic North at that time. But Douglass does not care because he is a warrior willing to go to battle. As always painting his attackers as cowardly, Douglass writes how these men surprisingly attacked the women and him. Douglass is careful to show that the attack on them does not go unanswered: “When about to leave for the Steamer, five or six men surrounded us, assailing us with all sorts of coarse and filthy language, and two of them finally struck the ladies on the head, while another attacked me. I warded off the blows with my umbrella, and the cowardly creatures left without doing any personal harm” (*Speeches* 157). The men attacked Douglass’s group again unexpectedly, assaulting him before he had a chance to get his defenses up. Douglass, nonetheless, writes of himself as a man who remained in control—brave under fire: “I never was more calm or self-possessed than when under his beastly assault” (*Speeches* 157). He is a heroic man.

Because of Douglass’s journalism personification of the heroic man, we see this heroic man shift in his literature as well which connects morally conscientious violence to establishing one’s manhood. Eric J. Sundquist argues that Douglass’s newspaper persona allows him the opportunity to “edit” his identity in his second autobiography much like newspaper publisher Benjamin Franklin did in his book: “It leads directly into *My Bondage and My Freedom*, defining the public self as a newly revised and more vitally marketed ‘thing’—a man with property in himself” (123). As Sundquist points to Douglass securing ownership of not only his body but also his image and public persona, I would add to Sundquist’s argument that Douglass’s edited new identity no longer recognizes the slave in him, which manifests in *My Bondage*. Jeannine Marie DeLombard also argues that Douglass used his second narrative to move further away from his former slave status and to connect

himself to the universal American man. Douglass owns himself; he is his own property, and as such, he is willing to protect that property to protect himself. Douglass is invested in that protection, even to the point of violence, and that is evident not only in his journalism but in his literature:

But even as, in the familiar phrasing of *My Bondage and My Freedom*, Douglass sought to frame the well-rehearsed “narrations of [his] own personal experience as a slave” with more philosophical denunciations of “slave-holding villainy”—and thereby to exchange his public identity as the representative “American Slave” for that of “Representative American man.”
(104)

DeLombard’s discussion of Douglass’s American man and Sundquist’s reference to Benjamin Franklin make for an interesting discussion about Douglass’s link to the Founding Fathers and their ideas of freedom, ultimately linked to violence and armed struggle. To become Americans and rid themselves of British tyranny, the Founding Fathers sanctioned the killing of other men. Douglass takes a page from the Founding Fathers. The only way he can become an American man, a heroic man, is to be willing to take a life in defense of his freedom.

In his later works, we see this shift in his literary writing from a victimized heroic slave to the heroic man avenger prompted by his more aggressive approach in journalism. By contrasting his first two books, *Narrative* and *My Bondage*, we can see the shift in philosophies. Looking at these two books provides adequate evidence to suggest that Douglass’s heroic man embraces a more violent approach to ending slavery than Douglass’s heroic slave. Starting with the definitive heroic scene of his confrontation with Covey,

Douglass in *My Bondage* argues at length the necessity to match violence with violence—something he does not do in the *Narrative*. We do not see Douglass making such declarations in the *Narrative*. He simply recounts objectively the facts of the incident. In *My Bondage*, Douglass believes there are lessons that need to be learned about manhood and heroism and the mere retelling of the fight scene would be inadequate. In his second book, Douglass explains why physical resistance is more desirable than passive acceptance by saying, “A man, without force, is without the essential dignity of humanity. Human nature is so constituted, that it cannot *honor* a helpless man, although it can *pity* him; and even this cannot do long, if the signs of power do not arise” (*Bondage* 246-47; his emphasis). Douglass's statement here from his second novel signals a shift, at least publicly, in his thinking. Douglass contends that the white man only understands and respects force and African Americans should look to force as a way to earn their freedom. Earlier in his career, Douglass, still under the guidance of white abolitionists, could not speak as candidly because many of his fellow abolitionists did not and would not support slave uprisings.

Even in Douglass's description of the fight scene in both books, there are noticeable indicators of Douglass's shift. For example, in the *Narrative*, Douglass spends about two pages on the Covey incident, whereas in *My Bondage*, he spends nearly six pages. Also in his second book, the fight scene is more animated and detailed. For instance, in the *Narrative*, when Covey calls for help from his cousin Hughes, Douglass briefly mentions giving the young man “a heavy kick close under the rib” (*Narrative* 81). However, in *My Bondage*, Douglass elaborates much more, explaining how he took the offensive after being outnumbered with the arrival of Hughes:

I was compelled to give blows, as well as to parry them; and, since I was, in

any case, to suffer for resistance, I felt (as the musty proverb goes) that “I might as well be hanged for an old sheep as a lamb.” I was still *defensive* toward Covey, but *aggressive* toward Hughes; and, at the first approach of the latter, I dealt a blow, in my desperation, which fairly sickened my youthful assailant. He went off; bending over with pain, and manifesting no disposition to come within my reach again. (*Bondage* 243; his emphasis)

What we see in Douglass's description is a more graphic account of his fight. Here we see Douglass on the attack—and an attack that's celebrated. Another difference is at the conclusion of the Covey incident in *My Bondage* as opposed to the *Narrative* Douglass declares his manhood. Yes, Douglass does utter his famous words on “how a slave was made a man” in the *Narrative* (76), but in *My Bondage*, he connects his manhood to the fight with Covey unlike he does in the first book. He is now heroic; he is now a man because he resisted. Douglass lets the reader know in *My Bondage* that he is forever changed because of this battle: “I was a changed being after that fight. I was *nothing* before; I was A MAN NOW” (*Bondage* 246; his emphasis). As a man, Douglass vows to match aggression with aggression, and he vows to seek freedom even if death comes.

Borrowing from journalism, Douglass also reports the heroic actions of others in his literature. His focus on the heroic man is also evident in his description of Henry Harris's brave refusal to be tied after the group's failed escape. Again, we see a difference in the retelling of this incident in the *Narrative* and *My Bondage*. But before we examine the difference, let us look at what is the same. In both books, the passage of Harris's defiance is almost identical: “‘*Shoot! shoot me!*’ said Henry; ‘*you can't kill me but once*. Shoot, shoot, – and be damned! *I won't be tied!*’ This he said in a tone of loud defiance; and at the same

time, with a motion as quick as lightning, he with one single stroke dashed the pistols from the hand of each constable” (Douglass, *Narrative* 96-97; his emphasis). In *My Bondage*, the shift to place emphasis on the heroic man is evident. Douglass adds the following to this scene: “This, the *brave* fellow said in a voice as defiant and *heroic* in its tone, as was the language itself; and, at the moment of saying this, with the pistols at his very breast, he quickly raised his arms and dashed them from the puny hands of his assassins, the weapons flying in opposite directions. Now came the struggle” (Douglass, *Bondage* 293; emphasis added). In the *Narrative*, Douglass does not embellish his reportorial account of Henry. In the second book, Douglass defines actions that he deems as heroic. These are actions that include one’s willingness to meet force with force. In addition to calling Henry “heroic” in the second book, Douglass also calls him “brave fellow.”

Here is an example of Douglass's new view of the heroic man being applied to other slaves who become men by their willingness to fight for their freedom. Reviewing this scene also begs for us to return to the Founding Fathers and the obvious connections, with the least being the namesake Henry—Patrick Henry and Henry Harris. In both the *Narrative* and in *My Bondage*, Douglass makes that connection by binding the Founding Fathers’ quest for independence to his slave brothers’ quest for freedom. Henry’s statement, “you can’t kill me but once,” sounds familiar to Patrick Henry’s, “Give me liberty or give me death.” Henry Harris and Patrick Henry were both prepared for death in the name of freedom. And, just as the colonists were willing to die for their freedom, so were these men in Douglass's group. Douglass points out that for them, the utterance of freedom or death was not an empty slogan but a grim reality if they were captured: “With us it was a *doubtful* liberty, at best, that we sought; and a certain, lingering death in the rice swamps and sugar fields, if we failed”

(*Bondage* 284). Again, tying the cause of the slaves to the cause of the Founding Fathers also allows Douglass to make the claim that righteous violence in the name of freedom is not only morally right, but is heroic and American.

In between his two narratives, we see another example of Douglass being drawn to Founding Fathers symbolism as he makes his case for the heroic man in his only work of fiction. "The Heroic Slave" published in 1853 in the *North Star*, probably near the height of Douglass's career as a newspaper editor, was nothing more than a declaration that the heroic slave was now the heroic man ushered in by his journalism. As Douglass grew more militant in his journalism, we see that militancy also emerge in his literature. While in his narratives Douglass only talks about revolt, he constructs and romanticizes a mutiny with the story of Madison Washington. More important, Douglass's literature, his fiction in this case, allows him to create not only a revolution, but also a successful revolution upon the *Creole*. In "The Heroic Slave," Douglass goes beyond the confines of his journalism. Even as militant as Douglass had become, he understood the limitations (outnumbered and out armed) African Americans had in terms of an uprising really being successful. In addition, in his fiction, Douglass can draw attention to a character with the name Madison Washington, who because of his name, a combination of two Founding Fathers, provides the sort of a spiritual blessing to engage in armed struggle against oppressors as he writes, "The leader of the mutiny in question was just as shrewd a fellow as ever I met in my life, and was as well fitted to lead in a dangerous enterprise as any one white man in ten thousand. The name of this man, strange to say, (ominous of greatness,) was MADISON WASHINGTON" ("Heroic" 244). Madison Washington combines the names of James Madison, known as the father of the U.S. Constitution, and George Washington, general of the colonial Army and the first president,

and Douglass makes the connection, arguing, “We have struck for our freedom, and if a true man’s heart be in you, you will honor us for the deed. We have done that which you applaud your fathers for doing, and if we are murderers, so were they” (“Heroic” 245). Here again, Douglass is making the case for the heroic slave turned heroic man. In the novella, Madison uses reason to explain to Tom Grant why their acts should not be viewed as murder.

Douglass, using Madison, tells a white reading public that slaves who fight for their freedom are doing so in the same spirit as the Founding Fathers, and that these slaves have every right to use physical force to meet their objectives, and furthermore, they should be viewed as heroic men just like the country’s Founding Fathers.

In literature, particularly in fiction, Douglass, in a bit of image-making agenda-setting, can create the perfect hero in appearance and speech. In fact, even if Washington is a fictionalized Douglass, he is a more heroic one by the abolitionist’s standards. Madison Washington looks every part of the heroic man. Everything about Madison Washington says bravery, leader, and hero. In appearance, “Madison was of manly form. Tall, symmetrical, round, and strong. In his movements, he seemed to combine, with the strength of the lion, a lion’s elasticity. His torn sleeves disclosed arms like polished iron. His face was ‘black, but comely.’ . . . His whole appearance betokened Herculean strength” (Douglass, “Heroic” 222). Roth argues that black authors like Douglass during the 1850s describe African American protagonists in a way to inspire both admiration and fear in white audiences. Roth said these characters were often dark, immensely intelligent, strong, and lethal, much like Douglass’s Madison: “The authors of these texts encouraged their white readers to admire their masculine black heroes, but at the same time to fear the harm these slaves were able and willing to inflict on anyone in their way” (268). These African American writers, just like in

agenda-setting form, placed emphasis on certain characteristics that they had hoped readers would notice.

Madison's actions are heroic. For example, after safely securing his freedom, Madison returns to the South in a failed attempt to rescue his wife, who is killed; he eventually is recaptured and placed on the *Creole* where he is to be sold. What made Madison strong and heroic was his willingness to engage in armed struggle to secure his freedom. In the most daring act of heroism, Madison Washington orchestrates and leads the capture of the slave ship, *Creole*: "The nineteen Negroes were all on deck, with their broken fetters in their hands, rushing in all directions. I put my hand quickly in my pocket to draw out my jack-knife, but before I could draw it, I was knocked senseless to the deck" (345). Douglass does not provide the gruesome details, but by the narrator's account, the entire event is a bloody affair.

Because Douglass's new heroic man is willing to wreck havoc and cause blood to flow in the name of freedom, he is even respected by his enemy—a representative of white America. We see this with the first mate, who begrudgingly acknowledges Madison Washington often as heroic and often as a man, even when all of Grant's beliefs about African Americans would say otherwise. On several occasions, Grant uses the term "man" to describe Madison: "I confess, gentlemen, I felt myself in the presence of a superior man; one who, had he been a white man, I would have followed willingly and gladly in any honorable enterprise. Our difference of color was the only ground for difference of action" (246). Douglass uses Madison as his alter ego. Douglass using agenda-setting in his fiction projects an image of black heroism unlike ever before. He can push these heroic attributes because his journalism makes it possible. His work at the *North Star* from 1847 on allows Douglass to

speak to these issues in his literature. Douglass's ability to reiterate themes like hero, manhood, resistance by force, in his newspaper bring poignancy and credibility to these issues in his literature work. And, in fact, journalism provides the forum for Douglass to push these themes in his literature with the publication of the "The Heroic Slave" in his newspaper. His journalism that harps on some of these themes allows for "The Heroic Slave" to be received by his reading public.

Like Madison, Douglass might not be white, but he is heroic. He is a man. He is a heroic man. Through the use of image-setting in the media, Douglass is able to create both the heroic slave and the heroic man, and he is able to sustain both in the pages of his newspapers. He tests these images, nurtures these images, and defines these images in his journalism work. These images gain credibility in his journalism work and become prominent in his literature.

As Douglass before her, Pauline E. Hopkins used journalism to create new images of African Americans, which also made their way into her literature. While Hopkins, editor of the *Colored American Magazine*, did not have to fight slavery as her predecessor did, she, nonetheless, would carry the argument for African American humanity into the twentieth century. Hopkins, like Douglass, used her journalism to set the stage for her literature as well as provide an outlet to publish hers and others creative works.

CHAPTER TWO - PAULINE E. HOPKINS: PROTESTING

IN LITERARY FASHION

The recent attacks made by many prominent persons upon our race, and the efforts which have been made in some states in the South to deprive our people, by legislation, of the political and other rights guaranteed us by the Constitution, make it imperative for us everywhere to appeal to the conscience and heart of the American people.

This can only be accomplished by making our white brothers and sisters realize the work we are doing, and that, in a single generation after the abolition of slavery, we have produced not only farmers and mechanics, but singers, artists, writers, poets, lawyers, doctors, successful business men, and even some statesmen.

This is the work in which THE COLORED AMERICAN MAGAZINE will lead. It will be the means by which we shall make known not only our aspirations but our accomplishments, as well as the efforts we are ourselves making to uplift our race—*Colored American Magazine* March 1904 (Hopkins, *Daughter* xxvii).

At the turn-of-the century, Pauline E. Hopkins as editor of a major literary magazine found herself in a position of power few women, African American or white, could imagine. As an African American woman, Hopkins wielded a great amount of influence not only to use her journalism to fight racism and discrimination, but also to create a space for literature to act as an agent of protest. Also as a woman of color, Hopkins saw it as her goal to fight against racial stereotypes of African Americans, particularly of African American women, who suffered from the black mammy and mulatto seductress images. Hopkins's decision-making as editor of the *Colored American Magazine* promoted images in the magazine that ran counter to the negative stereotypes of African Americans. She chose stories and subjects to write about that spoke to black history, humanity, and success. She celebrated black culture, and she painted a picture of black life through words and pictures that aligned black values to American values, ultimately demonstrating that African Americans were worthy of all the rights of U.S. citizenship.

In this chapter, I will argue that Hopkins as an editor at the *Colored American Magazine* used the magazine to protest racial injustices by creating a counter image of African American life through her journalism and fiction.

I will demonstrate how Hopkins used photographs, journalism, and fiction to create an image of African American domesticity and family life that paralleled American domesticity. Further, I will show how she created a social reality of black life by constructing an African American past through both her biographical journalism and in her fiction. Lastly, I will show how Hopkins used the issue of miscegenation in her journalism and fiction as a destabilizing factor in a segregated society, intentionally blurring the line between white and black life in a further attempt to construct a black reality congruent with the myth of white America.

In Chapter 2, my consideration of Hopkins moves this discussion of the synergism between the black press and black literary production into the early twentieth century and the handling of post-Reconstruction issues such as miscegenation. I have confined my examination to the period between 1900 and 1904, when Hopkins co-edited the *Colored American Magazine*. My research on her literary work focuses on her three novels-- *Hagar's Daughter. A Story of Southern Caste Prejudice* (1901-1902); *Winona. A Tale of Negro Life in the South and Southwest* (1902); and *Of One Blood. Or, the Hidden Self* (1902-1903); and her short story "Talma Gordon" (1900) all published in the *Colored American Magazine* during this period.

However, before getting into the discussion of her work, I believe it is worthwhile to provide a historical perspective when Hopkins emerged as a leading editor and writer. Hopkins came into her womanhood in the late nineteenth century America functioning under

Black Codes and Jim Crow. What occurred at this time was the ushering in of a new era of institutionalized racism and sanctioned discrimination. The black press, coming into its own, called on America to live up to its promise of democracy. Hopkins, as representative of the “New Negro” spirit, used her writings to speak out against the injustices and to combat the stereotypes.

At the end of the nineteenth century, we saw the beginning of the great migration of African Americans from the South to the North. While slaves fled the South to escape slavery, post-Reconstruction African Americans fled to escape Jim Crow. However, twentieth century African Americans trying to escape the South did not receive the welcome in the North that fugitive slaves received in the nineteenth century. The North was intolerant of African Americans during this time. Hopkins in her writings tried to remind the North, specifically Boston, of its heroic past, and its stand with those who fought against slavery. She called for the North to recommit to ideas of equality and freedom for all. Arthur and Ronald Johnson in their essay “Away from Accommodation: Radical Editors and Protest Journalism, 1900-1910” contend that Hopkins use the Boston-based magazine as a vehicle to merge protest journalism and literature while drawing on that community's rich history of abolition work (Johnson and Johnson 325-26). Hopkins had an audience that was receptive to her writings. The Boston’s black population increased significantly between 1800 and 1900 and that the population was a literate population. According to Carole Autori, Boston’s 12,000 African American population had nearly a 90 percent literacy rate” (4).

Hopkins, a product of that Boston school system, at the age of fifteen won a writing contest sponsored by the former slave-turned-author, William Wells Brown. The essay was the “The Evils of Intemperance and Their Remedy,” and a few years later, she wrote a

musical drama “Slaves’ Escape: or, the Underground Railroad” (Gates and McKay 650). In Hopkins’s formative years, in addition to engaging herself in musicals, acting, and writing, she also began training as a stenographer, a career which supported her most of her life, but she was never far removed from writing. The Colored Co-operative Publishing Company, created by four African American men, hired Hopkins in 1900 to write for their periodical, the *Colored American Magazine*. Hopkins was able to use her literary skills, particularly her fiction writing skills, for social action. Hopkins served as the editor of the *Colored American Magazine*, but also “purchased shares in the company, served on the board of directors, and became a prolific contributing writer” (Gates and McKay 650). Nellie McKay says Hopkins’s goal as an editor and as a journalist for the *Colored American Magazine* was to use the fiction, hers and others, to inspire change. She wanted to highlight the true nature and talents of African Americans:

One of her primary goals for *CAM* was that it should inspire the creation of an African American art and literature that would demonstrate the talents and skills of the group and prove to the rest of the world that black people, only recently released from slavery, were already as culturally advanced as other groups. (McKay 5)

By the summer of 1900, she was named editor of the Women’s Department and by 1903, she had earned the title of magazine’s literary editor. As a leader at the magazine, she set the tone for the magazine and ensured stories were being published that would uplift African Americans. The stories did not have to be hers, and the stories did not have to be nonfiction. According to Johnson and Johnson, Hopkins “printed contributions which were distinctly in the protest tradition and which paralleled the outspoken statements given elsewhere in the

journal” (327). Hopkins, however, was at her best when she used her own nonfiction and fiction to herald the cause of equality. In addition to the innumerable journalism stories and editorials she wrote, Hopkins penned ten short stories and three serial novels published in the magazine (Johnson and Johnson 327). Her fictional work “was a unique fusion of political, historical, and sentimental themes, shared the political commitments of her nonfiction” (Dworkin xxi).

Although her contribution to the magazine, to black literature and to black struggle was great, Hopkins languished in obscurity for many years after her tenure with the *Colored American Magazine* ended in 1904. Her writings were more or less forgotten during the Harlem Renaissance and Blacks Arts Movement. She was rediscovered after a biographical article by Ann Allen Shockley in 1972 was published. In 1988, her novels were republished by the Schomburg Library of Nineteenth–Century Black Women Writers series. Since then, scholars such as Hazel Carby, John Cullen Gruesser, Nellie McKay, Kate McCullough, Lois Lamphere Brown, C.K. Doreski, Kristina Brooks, Jennie A. Kassanoff, Cynthia Schrager, and Elizabeth Ammons have researched Hopkins and her literary contributions. Most of these scholars agree that she is a talent who has been under-appreciated, under-valued and misunderstood. Hopkins has largely been dismissed because her stories follow the conventional dime-store sentimental romance novels of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She also has been particularly maligned by scholars for her use of mixed-race characters and the playing with racial stereotypes that equated beauty and virtue with near white appearance. However, many scholars, such as Kristina Books, are starting to reevaluate Hopkins’s rhetorical use of mulatto characters. In “Mammies, Bucks, and Wenches: Minstrelsy, Racial Pornography, and Racial Politics in Pauline Hopkins’s *Hagar’s*

Daughter,” Brooks argues that Hopkins used these caricatures to include the tragic mulatto to fight racism by “confronting turn-of-the-century racism with visible proof that racial barriers were indeed artificially constructed and imposed, using a strategy that nearly one hundred years later, ironically leaves her open to charges of elitism and accommodationism” (124-25). However, even in Brooks’s defense of the writer, she also argues that Hopkins sent mixed messages, which undermined her protest. But if Hopkins’s literature is viewed in the context of her work as a journalist and editor at the *Colored American Magazine*, there is no ambiguity, there are no mixed signals of her intentions. Once one understands how her creative production was informed by her journalism, Hopkins can be appreciated for the protest writer that she was.

Other scholars have examined her work through the feminist/historical lens. For example, Hazel Carby’s “Of What Use Is Fiction,” argues that Hopkins’s fiction represents black women’s bodies being colonized by white men and that she uses historical fiction that squarely addresses slavery to tackle the contemporary issue of the raping of African American women by white men. While I agree with Carby’s basic reading, I believe a clearer and more complete picture of Hopkins’s work is possible when one considers her journalism. Hopkins uses her fiction and nonfiction to reclaim black women’s bodies and identities as something to be revered and protected. In fact, in her stewardship of the *Colored American Magazine*, she stresses black womanhood as a great virtue to be admired and contends that “maligned and misunderstood, the Afro-American woman is falsely judged by other races. Nowhere on God’s green earth are there nobler women, more self-sacrificing tender mothers, more gifted women in their chosen fields of work than among the millions of Negroes in the United States” (Hopkins, *Daughter* 115). It should come as no surprise that Hopkins’s

editorial decisions are dedicated to the rebuilding of the image of the African American woman. Black feminist Patricia Hill Collins's work on black female stereotypes is important in understanding how critical Hopkins's work was and still is today. For example, Collins explains how the "sexual stereotypes of women of African descent as jezebels not only justified rape, medical experimentation, and unwanted childbearing inflicted upon Black women but it covered up Black women's protests as well" (58-59). Hopkins, again, attempted to reclaim the bodies of African American women by destroying the white-male manufactured stereotypes in her protest writing.

Hopkins's task in normalizing the African American and the African American family had to come through the African American woman, the vessel of life. After all, it was through the bodies of black women that the slave industry was promulgated, nurtured, and sustained. Hopkins sees freedom coming through the bodies of African American women as mother, as wife, as pillars of society. Her emphasis on women, particularly the black woman, puts her in company with other African American writers of the period such as Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Anna Julia Cooper, Gertrude Mossell, Fannie Barrier Williams, Victoria Earle Matthews, and Mary Church Terrell. According to Wallinger,

In all these writers there is decidedly feminist tone, a firm conviction that the African American woman has a role to occupy in the fight against oppression and discrimination, that she has more than sufficient material to write about, and that, above all, over the course of history, she has commanded respect and admiration. (138)

Like these women before her, Hopkins did not and would not abdicate her role to men to speak out against injustices, particularly injustices felt often by African American women.

She was a woman's voice in a sea of men's voices.

Hopkins's images, editorials, news stories, and fiction were used to create images of African American domesticity that subverted stereotypical representations of black family life. Hopkins's use of these devices taps into an agenda-setting function described by Toshio Takeshita in the essay "Exploring the Media's Roles in Defining Reality: From Issue-Agenda Setting to Attribute-Agenda Setting." Takeshita explains how the media, through images, create or attempt to create a social reality. Takeshita's pulls from Walt Lippmann's work, saying "it is one of the principal functions of the media to mediate between 'the world outside' and 'the pictures in our heads.'" The media provide information that is a major component of our 'pictures' . . ." (qtd. in Takeshita 15). Takeshita explains how the study of the media's influence on creating a social reality has been a major research component for mass communication (15), saying, "the cultivation analysis advanced by Gerbner and his associates has investigated how and to what degree TV portrayal of reality (mostly in fictional content such as dramas and movies) influences and homogenizes the viewers' conceptions of social reality" (15-16).

In the early twentieth century, Hopkins was trying to create pictures in the heads of her readers. In fact, not only was she trying to create a social reality of black life for whites to consume which might then change their views of African Americans, but she also created these images for African Americans to inspire their growth. Through her work at the *Colored American Magazine*, Hopkins featured African Americans who were as cultured as the most cultured white citizen. Images of African Americans pictured in the pages were those people of distinguished character, great beauty, extraordinary achievement, and who were ultimately and undeniably American.

One picture that stands out is the “The Young Colored American,” which ran September 1900. The photo is of an African American baby boy sitting on top of the American flag with his index finger pointing to the sky and with a smile on his face—indicating he is the face of America. According to Tanya Clark, the magazine editors were going for pure imagery, saying, “the stars and stripes stand out clearly, and a corner of the flag, covers his lower body. The baby picture used the African American family’s hottest commodity—its youth—and linked it directly to the future to America” (88). Most noteworthy, however, is a detail not mentioned by Clark, that the boy is dark-skinned—no racial ambiguity here. In Hopkins’s promotion of blackness as beautiful, intelligent, and American, the African Americans pictured in the *Colored American Magazine* run the spectrum of color from the almost white to caramel colored to the darkest of skin tones. The images that she uses in the magazine are African Americans, no gray area, and they are beautiful and intelligent-looking, debunking the racial stereotypes of the time. In her journalism decisions, one can ascertain the full breadth of Hopkins’s appreciation for her people, which may not be as evident in her literature. She saw achievement and beauty in all shades, and these images and stories were proudly displayed in her magazine. In fact, I would argue that Hopkins was extremely conscientious in her inclusion of the array of African Americans in the magazine. In her journalism, she redefined beauty subversively with her inclusion and promotion of African Americans who were not always mulattos, nor tragic.

Again for Hopkins, through pictures and words in her journalism and in the pages of her magazine, images of black life emerge that are very similar to white life. These people, America’s darker brothers and sisters, have the same hopes and dreams and desires for their lives. They conduct business in the same manner, live their lives in the same manner, and

rear their children in the same manner. They achieve, they fail, but they are Americans. They are beautiful and demure like Mrs. Marshall Walter Taylor pictured on the September 1902 cover of the *Colored American Magazine*. They are stately and dignified like the magazine's owners, Walter W. Wallace, Jesse W. Watkins, Harper S. Fortune, and Walter Johnson, pictured on the May 1901 cover. They are homemakers, teachers, pastors, poets, factory workers, soldiers, mothers and fathers. There probably was no greater place that Hopkins brought home this point of a universal black domesticity black family life than in her series of biographies of everyday African Americans that ran in the magazine. In her piece "Elijah William Smith: A Colored Poet of Early Days," Hopkins paints a picture of a domicile that is comparable to white affluent homes during the late nineteenth century. In Hopkins's depiction of Smith's home, we see an African American entertain friends and neighbors in his home just like any white family:

For many years he lived at the corner of Smith court and Phillips street in intimate association with the dearly loved, tried and true leading men of his race, and its white friends, Garrison, Phillips, Sumner, Wilson, Francis Jackson, Gov. Andrew, and all the rest of those stars of the first magnitude, loved Elijah Smith and visited him, finding in his brilliant intellect fit meat for thoughtful minds. Mrs. Smith library contained the leading writers and most of the books written by colored men. The walls of his house were covered by the pictures of the leading spirits in American history, and one could not but feel the air of culture and refinement pervading his home. (Hopkins, *Daughter* 278)

Hopkins, in her quest to provide a snapshot of black life, packs a great deal in these three

sentences. Not only do we get a sense of an African American living in a beautiful home with his wife, but also we see a man who is called upon by other men of esteem, white and black. We see a home that is graceful, dignified, and intellectually stimulating because of the African American inhabitants. In her bid to show that African Americans live normal/American lives, she conspicuously points out that the books on Smith's shelf are written by African Americans. Hopkins draws a connection between African Americans and American histories by informing the reader of the historical portraits on the wall. Hopkins creates an image of African American home that is as American and tied to America's past and history as any white person's home. Often in her fictional work, she sought to show that African Americans were not some exotic "other," but lived like white Americans.

Hopkins places special emphasis on family. For example, she writes in detail of the makeup of the family: "Mr. Smith's immediate family included his wife, two daughters—Mrs. Annie Paul Sims and Miss Hattie Smith—since married to John M. Burrell, Esq., a promising young lawyer of Boston—Mrs. Susan Paul Vashon, his sister, well and favorably known in the southwest as public school teacher" (Hopkins, *Daughter* 278). Through her writing of these people and the identification of these folks as lawyers and teachers, Hopkins is creating what I will call the Bill Cosby³ effect, which creates/highlights a new image/reality of African American life that is convincing to readers, both black and white. For Hopkins who grew up in a household of some influence, these were not empty pictures. These were her realities, and she wanted to recreate those realities. Again, I'll leave you with her picture of Smith, who is deceased by the time of her writing:

He was the life and soul of the domestic circle, and in the society of his

³ Comedian Bill Cosby's television show *The Cosby Show*, which ran from 1984 to 1992, featured an African

dear ones at home he passed his happiest hours. No husband and father was ever more truly mourned than Elijah W. Smith. By his daily life he sought to inculcate a comprehensive Christianity. His religious enthusiasm and love for his church, his upright character, and patience during a long illness, all present an example rare and beautiful. (Hopkins, *Daughter* 283)

Here is what a dignified African American man looked like and how he lived, according to Hopkins, and by creating biographies such as this, she tears down old stereotypical images and builds up new reality-based ones, showing that African American life is multifaceted.

In another example of creating a picture of black life through biographies is Hopkins's "Charles Winter Wood; or From Bootblack to Professor." In this article, she describes this young African American's man's journey from poverty to a position of influence. His story is as American as any white man's success story. In this article, Hopkins describes how Wood was born in Nashville in 1871 and after living there for nine years, he moves to Chicago, where he works as a bootblack and a newsboy. The story discusses how he, through his intellect, attracted the attention of a Justice Jarvis Blume, who brings him in contact with a Professor Walter C. Lyman. Wood ends up working for Lyman, who also trains him in the ways of the theater. Later, Wood is accepted into Beloit College; he later moves on to Chicago Theological Seminary, graduates, and becomes a pastor, and at the time of the news article, he was continuing his education, pursuing a doctorate. In stories such as these, Hopkins recast the American Dream that is now being pursued by African Americans. Like other African Americans, Wood is not the exception, he is the rule in this pursuit of

American upper middle-class family where the father was a doctor and the mother was a lawyer. This comedy

American life.

The same could be said about the Rev. John Henry Dorsey, who is highlighted in the pages of the magazine in October 1902. Dorsey, the second African American to be ordained to the Roman Catholic ministry, is celebrated by Hopkins for his rise to this great distinction in public life. Hopkins writes about Dorsey, who is unlike the depiction of African American men at that time, to counter the image of black men as dangerous: “His countenance is most benignant, his manners suggestive of poise, reserved strength, social tact and great delicacy of feeling. To the discharge of his sacred duties he brings a mind thoroughly consecrated in the fullest sense to his priestly calling” (Hopkins, *Daughter* 264). In this description, she combats the stereotype of African American male as beast. Here is a man who is poised, thoughtful, and rational. Hopkins says he has a “reserved strength.” She purposefully omits descriptions of his physical stature because if she focuses on his physical strengths, it will play to the stereotypical brute image. Dorsey is a man with “reserved” strength, which is quiet, understated and controlled. Lastly, in this quote, she describes his mind as “thoroughly consecrated.” She shows that he is a spiritual being dedicated to Christianity in contrast to being some heathen “other.”

Hopkins was mindful to include women in her several biographies. In “Mrs. Jane E. Sharp’s School for African Girls” published March 1904, Hopkins discusses the work that Mrs. Sharp was doing in Africa with the goal to raise money to go to constructing a school for girls in West Africa. In Hopkins’s description and characterization of Mrs. Sharpe, this African American woman is seen as refined womanhood. By discussing Mrs. Sharp’s work in Africa, Hopkins shows Sharp as a well-traveled/worldly woman. Also by discussing

broke new ground as one of the first shows to portray African Americans as middle class and professional.

Sharp's charitable work, Hopkins shows that the woman acts and lives with a higher social purpose than most people. Money also seems to connote refinement, and Hopkins is sure to mention that Mrs. Sharp married into money through her union with "Mr. Jesse Sharp, a wealthy coffee planter . . ." (Hopkins, *Daughter* 301). Mrs. Sharp, a product of Boston Girls High School, is a pillar of the community: "Mrs. Sharp is brilliant in conversation and well-versed in the literature of all nations. Ideality in her is well developed, and adds a touch of romance to a personality at once queenly, yet touched with deep humility" (Hopkins, *Daughter* 301). Again, Hopkins does not hold up Mrs. Sharp as the exception; she is just one of many fine African American women seen often in the magazine. These are just some of the examples of Hopkins use of her journalism to present African Americans in all walks of life doing all sorts of feats that racist ideology would argue impossible for these people to do. Hopkins, through her biographies, paints a picture of an oppressed people, less than forty years removed from the Civil War, who have been able to climb society's ladder in a short time, even in the face of constant discrimination. In all of her choices she creates images of African Americans who live like their refined white counterparts. They are American as any American except their skin is darker, which she tells readers through words and shows through pictures in the magazine.

As Takeshita discusses, through the images Hopkins uses in the magazine and the stories and editorials she writes, she creates a new social reality not just for white readers, but African American readers as well. Her journalism continues to show that African Americans do live and behave in a respectable manner, contrary to the negative stereotypes. For her African American readers, Hopkins provides them with a barrage of African American achievement to show them that this can be their reality—they also can achieve, should expect

to achieve, and they should strive to achieve. Hopkins does what Takeshita explains that the media do in reporting, creating a new reality, so to speak, “a pseudo-environment provided by the media is assumed to serve as a ‘common world’—socially recognized area of subjects” (18). Hopkins created a social reality through her journalism that she hoped her black and white readers could share and experience.

Moreover, Hopkins’s journalism sets the stage for her fiction and allows her fiction to continue in the agenda-setting function of creating pictures in the heads of her readers. When Hopkins included her fiction in the pages of the *Colored American Magazine*, she incorporated pieces that emphasized the same themes as her journalistic non-fiction. Hopkins provides readers with African American characters who are achievers, who are noble, who are refined, dignified. Her African American characters are brave, intelligent, much like the people-- famous and not-so- famous--Hopkins writes about in the pages of her magazine. Hopkins’s creative mind is a byproduct of her journalistic mind. Thus, much of her creative work features African American families who experience domesticity akin to white America. Often in her fiction, she places much emphasis on the mother and child relationship. In Hopkins’s fictional writing, families are where children are nurtured and loved and taken care of by parents in what looks to be traditional American homes. Hopkins creates these stories and images by design to combat stereotypical ideas held over from slavery. Proponents of slavery often viewed their slaves as being detached from human feelings and familial bonds. That thinking by slave owners made it easy to separate mothers from children and wives from husbands. In promoting her message of black family life in her fiction, Hopkins’s literary device often was one of subversion. In her fiction, Hopkins can redefine and recreate black family as she sees fits.

One way Hopkins protested racism and discrimination was through what I call the use of “blackening,” a play on the old notion that one drop of black blood makes an individual black. In Hopkins's fiction, one black member in a white fictional family “blackens” that family. For example, a strain of black blood somewhere in the family’s past turns a white fictionalized family black. When writers in the African American literature tradition have played with the notions of passing and tragic mulatto, here is where the idea of blackening gains currency. Just as in passing narratives, these characters function as white people, and this allows the author to subtly and subversively demonstrate how black families function in a manner that is not much different than white families, especially when given the same opportunities to improve themselves.

In her efforts to create pictures for protest, Hopkins “blackens” several of her fictional families by creating a strain of black blood somewhere in the family’s past. For example, in the short story “Talma Gordon,” the family appears white, but is “blackened” generations earlier on the mother’s side of the family. “Talma Gordon” spins a tale of a prominent “white family” of means in which the father, mother, and brother are murdered and suspicion falls on the two sisters—Jeannette and Talma Gordon with Talma ultimately being tried and exonerated in her family’s murder. After Talma is cleared of the murder, the revelation of Talma's and Jeanette's black heritage through their mother is discovered. Jeannette, who is dead at this time, leaves a letter behind to Talma that reveals the secret. What we learn is that Talma’s and Jeannette’s mother, Miss Isabel Franklin of Boston, was adopted by the wealthy Franklins. Isabel’s mother had been “octoroon girl who had been abandoned by her white lover” (Hopkins, “Talma” 660). Because the baby looked white and because of the Franklin’s Northern upbringing, they had no problem raising Isabel as their own. Isabel was

lavished, loved, and was given a large inheritance, but by the legal and social mores of the community, she was an African American woman. Thus, in adopting Isabel as their own, the Franklins are “blackened.” Yet, nothing about the Franklins changes outwardly. Taking in a black child knowingly, the Franklins “stain” themselves—they become Negroid and assume all the risk that goes with this decision. They care for their child, thus, creating a black family dynamics for unsuspecting readers. They have become a black family and what Hopkins wants us to believe is this is a typical black family—eventually marrying Isabel off to Captain Jonathan Gordon. Isabel and Captain Jonathan, who become parents to Talma and Jeannette, are a black family— albeit, unknowingly. Their daughters are raised in the family's tradition of wealth (which is, ironically, wealth gained through their black mother) and are afforded opportunities that come with that wealth. Although black by social constructions of race, they live a “white” existence. But this family is a typical American family, as Hopkins would have us to believe: “Jeannette was tall, dark, and stern like her father; Talma was like her dead mother, and possessed of great talent, so great that her father sent her to the American Academy at Rome, to develop the gift” (“Talma” 653). What else makes these black young ladies, Talma and Jeannette, as American as any white American is being descendents of early colonists. Their family, through the father, has been in America since the beginning: “The Gordons were old New England Puritans who had come over in the ‘Mayflower’; they had owned Gordon Hall for more than a hundred years” (Hopkins, “Talma” 653). We see the cycle of blackening of families recur at the end with the mingling of Talma’s African American blood with white Dr. William Thornton’s through matrimony. Hopkins creates subversion with a “black family” that appears to be white.

In Hopkins’s novel, *Hagar*, white characters and white families also are blackened.

Hagar reads like two stories, which eventually merge at the end. The first half of the story the reader meets Hagar and Ellis Enson both from white southern aristocratic families. They fall in love, marry, and have a daughter together. They are enjoying life as slave owners of a large plantation when their marital bliss is interrupted by the entrance of Ellis's brother, St. Clair, and slave trader, Mr. Walker. Mr. Walker claims and proves that Hagar was born a slave, and she was taken away from him by the Sargeants, Hagar's adopted parents. After the revelation, Ellis first rejects Hagar because of her "black blood," but he eventually decides he will take her abroad with the child. Before that happens, St. Clair and Mr. Walker attempt to murder Ellis, but unbeknownst to them, they fail. Ellis returns in the second half of the novel as a new person. Meanwhile, Mr. Walker takes control of Hagar and her baby with the intention of selling them. After being sold, Hagar jumps off a bridge with her baby, and the two are presumed to be dead.

In the second half of the story, Hopkins fast forwards twenty years later and many of the old characters reappear with new identities as they have tried to escape their pasts. Hagar is now Estelle Bowen; St. Clair is now General Benson; Mr. Walker is now Major Madison; and Ellis is now Chief Henson. Their identities are discovered at the end with the conclusion of a dramatic court scene. The plot revolves around Cuthbert Sumner, who is betrothed to wealthy socialite Jewell Bowen. Cuthbert is set up by General Benson (St. Clair) and Major Madison (Mr. Walker) in the death of the office secretary Elise Bradford, who works for General Benson. General Benson (St. Clair) and Major Madison (Mr. Walker) want the secretary out of the way, so she does not expose or disrupt the men's intentions of stopping the marriage of Cuthbert and Jewell Bowen. General Benson and Major Madison, along with Major Madison's daughter, Aurelia, come up with this scheme to go after the Bowen fortune.

Aurelia will marry Cuthbert and General Benson will marry Jewell Bowen to gain access to her fortune. After Cuthbert is framed and jailed in the murder of the secretary, Jewell Bowen hires Chief Henson (Ellis), a detective to help clear her fiancé's name. The truth comes to light with the final courtroom scene where the trio are revealed (identities as well as nefarious intentions), and General Benson and Major Madison are implicated not only in the death of the secretary, but also in the attempted murder of Ellis years earlier. Estelle Bowen (Hagar), the widow of the late millionaire Sen. Zenas Bowen, recognizes Chief Henson as her beloved Ellis. Once the plot and characters are revealed, Ellis (Chief Henson) reclaims Hagar (Estelle Bowen), widowed prior to the trial. Ellis and Hagar also reclaim their daughter Jewell, who Hagar thought she lost after her leap into the river. Sen. Zenas Bowen saved Jewell from drowning when she was a baby, and he and his first wife adopted the child as their own. After the death of his first wife, Bowen meets and marries Estelle (Hagar) who becomes Jewell's stepmother, not knowing in reality that she was rearing her own child. Zenas kept items found on Jewell during the time of her rescue that would prove that Jewell was the baby that Hagar sacrificed twenty years earlier.

Starting with Hagar's parents, the Sargeants, again we see Hopkins creating an artificially constructed black family that becomes "blackened" with the addition of Hagar, a child of African American descent. Later we see the Bowens, Estelle and Zenas, raising their black daughter Jewell. Hopkins is allowing us to witness a black household, black domesticity. Although these characters function as white characters, the reader discovers that these characters are not white and that the mother and daughter are African Americans through lineage. Jewell is raised in privilege, with culture and with doting and loving parents. Although Hagar and Jewell appear white, they are black because of their black blood and as a

result of his marriage and fatherhood, Zenas, who is white, becomes blackened. African Americans are loving and have loving families. It may appear that Hopkins undercuts her arguments because the characters live a white existence, but I would argue that only strengthens her case—these people are American regardless of skin color or racial constructs. Upon revelation of their African American heritage, these characters, although conscious of their lowered status in a racist country, there is no major shift in their behaviors or personalities.

Hopkins again creates Black domesticity in an unlikely environment in story of *Winona*. In this novel, again we have a white father, but one who lives as a Native American. I would argue again that the white father, White Eagle, lives a black existence because he marries a fugitive mulatto slave, and with her fathers his mixed-race daughter, Winona. White Eagle adopts Judah, the son of another fugitive slave who died trying to escape. In societal terms, White Eagle is no longer white because he has infused African American blood into his family, thus, "blackening" himself. This family, in their multiraciality, is the American family that is only disrupted when slavery becomes part of the mix. White Eagle teaches Judah his ways, preparing him for manhood. White Eagle's lessons stay with Judah even when father is gone and Judah is enslaved. Hopkins writes, "Warren thought him a superb man, and watched him, fascinated by his voice, his language, and his expressive gestures. Slavery had not contaminated him. His life with White Eagle had planted refinement inbred" (*Winona* 335). White Eagle also imparted lasting values and love to Winona. He showed this black girl that she should be honored and revered. White Eagle, the doting father, pampered Winona as seen in this passage, "Winona was queen of the little island, and her faithful subjects were her father, Judah and old Nokomis" (*Winona* 290).

White Eagle dotes on his dark daughter. And she, like Daddy's little girl, loved her father dearly. What we get is Hopkins creation of a black family that is American in tradition. However, with the entry of slavery, the family is destroyed, in keeping with the historical disruptive effects of this institution. Slavery murders White Eagle and sentences his children to a life of servitude. Because White Eagle has blackened himself through his family relationship, he can be killed with impunity. And again slavery is the destabilizing factor in the relationship among black families. In fact, slavery challenges the notion of family as a whole.

There is no greater place where we see this destabilization of slavery on a black family than in Hopkins's book *Of One Blood* (1902-1903). What makes this story even more telling is that nearly forty years has passed since slavery. When two brothers unwittingly marry their sister, this situation harkens to slavery's past, where family members might have been forced to have intercourse as a way to procreate for the purpose of profits. *Of One Blood* in its intricate plot, is the story of medical student Reuel Briggs, who is passing; Aubrey Livingston, a "white" friend who finds out about Reuel's identity; and Dianthe Lusk, a fair-skinned African American gospel singer who they both fall in love with and marry. Shortly after meeting Dianthe, Reuel saves her life and cares for this woman who has lost her memory. Reuel does not reveal to Dianthe their racial identities, and he marries her. Aubrey, who appears to be a friend, but is really an enemy, uses his knowledge of Reuel's identity to steal the man's wife away from him. Aubrey reveals Reuel's secret, which keeps him from finding a medical position in the United States. Through Aubrey's advice, Reuel applies for and earns a medical job that takes him to Africa, where he is part of a crew searching to uncover treasure in Ethiopia. After Aubrey tells Dianthe the truth of her racial identity, he

has her believe that Reuel is dead. Aubrey marries her and takes her to his home in the South. As these events unfold, Aubrey kills his fiancée, so he can be with Dianthe and Reuel learns he is the royal descendant to the Ethiopian throne. Also what is revealed is that all three of them have the same parents—white father and African American mother. Ultimately, Aubrey kills Dianthe, then must kill himself, and Reuel returns to Africa to marry his Ethiopian queen and govern.

Moving beyond the unwieldy plot, what we see with the two main African American characters is a traditional domesticity that one would find in a typical white household. We see an African American man capable of providing a home and great love to his wife; in fact, he so wants to please her and keep her in a lifestyle fitting of her (African American queen), he sacrifices by leaving the country to find work prior to consummating the marriage:

Her husband drew the fair head to his bosom, pressing back the thick locks with a lingering lover's touch. "I wish to God I could take you with me," he said tenderly after a silence. "Dear girl, you know this grief of yours would break my heart, only that it shows how well you love me. I am proud of every tear." She looked at him with an expression he could not read; it was full of unutterable emotion—love, anguish, compassion. (*Of One Blood* 499)

Even Aubrey in his diabolic way is searching for secure domestic life as well, and he, too, tries to provide it for Dianthe. Aubrey values family and domestic living and Hopkins shows that this is innate in all people not just white people. Aubrey with his money creates a home most would be proud of, but he does it without love and under false pretense—a recipe for failure in marriage/family, white or black. Hopkins's use of Aubrey, Reuel, and Dianthe, as with her journalistic biographical sketches, is used to break down stereotypes and paint

whole pictures of African Americans and African American life.

In all of these examples, Hopkins uses color subversively as she promotes black family domesticity. She does this in two ways—she provides a picture of a seemingly white family whose members are actually African American, and she moves to blacken white families that go knowingly or unknowingly into familial relationships with members who have African American blood. Hopkins's sleight of hand techniques allow people to read these characters as they appear without passing racial judgment. Again, Hopkins blackening her characters harkens to the passing narrative in the African American literature tradition. Just as the characters in the passing narrative tradition are not what or who they appear to be, Hopkins's characters and families are also not who they are believed to be. Phillip Brian Harper, quoting Amy Robinson, author of "Forms of Appearance of Value: Homer Plessy and the Politics of Privacy," contends racial identity classification is a capricious construct, allowing for passing because "appearance is assumed to bear a mimetic relation to identity, but in fact does not and can not" (qtd. in Harper 382). Using Robinson again, Harper contends it is because appearance signs can be inconclusive that passing "jeopardizes the very notion of race as a biological essence, foregrounding the social contexts of vision by calling into question the 'truth' of the object in question . . ." (qtd. in Harper 382). As Hopkins dismantles stereotypes, she turns the notion of race upside down with her use of blackening in conjunction with the already slippery slope of passing. In all of these fictional instances, we are witnessing loving and nurturing black families who produce children who grow up to be respectable adults. Hopkins's black household is no different from a white household except for the threat of slavery. Hopkins plays bait and switch with the character's color to gain a wider audience and acceptance of her fiction. But because of this literary

device, Hopkins's works have been misunderstood and criticized. However, juxtaposing her fiction to her journalism work, Hopkins is crystal clear on her position about what black families look and act like and that these strong families are tied to the success of not just the black community, but American society. She creates an African American domesticity universal to American domesticity in both her journalism and fiction.

What Hopkins also does when she creates the image of an African American family life in both her journalism and in literature is provide a clear link to an African American past. Hopkins, particularly in her journalism work, wanted to create and highlight a past of achievement and substance for African Americans. Through a past history, African Americans could start the process of human validation-- something that Hopkins saw sorely missing as she writes, "The Negro's right to be classed as a man among men, has been openly doubted, nor do we find this doubt removed in the dawn of the Twentieth Century . . ." (Hopkins, *Daughter* 114). One of the major criticisms of African Americans and a justification to discriminate during the first part of the century was the argument that they had no place in history and had made no real contributions to society. As far as many white Americans were concerned, Blacks were a product of a white America who brought them here, named them, gave them Christianity, and cared for them. The belief was that African American life and their history started in America. Using journalism and fiction in the pages of the magazine, Hopkins linked African Americans to the race's heroes of the past through biographical sketches of historical figures. Hazel Carby explains, "The network of these relations between *Of One Blood* and other, nonfictional articles in the *Colored American Magazine* indicated the extent of an intertextual coherence, achieved under Hopkins's literary editorship, which aimed at the reconstruction of a sense of pride in an African heritage" (159-

60). As Carby points to, Hopkins's goal through journalism and fiction was to create a true picture of African Americans contribution to mankind.

Again, Hopkins's journalism led the charge in protesting stereotypes and creating a past for African Americans. In her efforts to restore a past, Hopkins ran two series in the *Colored American Magazine*: "Famous Men of the Negro Race" and "Famous Women of the Negro Race." In these series, she highlighted such African American luminaries as Toussaint L'Ouverture, Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, Sergeant William H. Carney, Sojourner Truth, and Harriet Tubman. In her article "Toussaint L' Ouverture" published in November 1900, Hopkins provides a detailed history of Toussaint and his bravery and leadership in liberating the enslaved people in Haiti. Hopkins describes Toussaint in terms like valiant, intelligent, brave, leader, tactical, moral, loyal and just. She made a point to write he was a "Negro of unmixed blood" and Senegal African (Hopkins, *Daughter* 14). His admirable characteristics were not tied into the blood line of whites. His character traits were wholly his own and wholly African. And not only was Toussaint a brave African soldier, but his men were as well with their proud African blood and natural courage, "But think of the rise of the Haytian slaves under a slave! Armed with nothing but their implements of toil and their own brave hearts . . ." (Hopkins, *Daughter* 21). She contends men like Toussaint should be used when judging and understanding those of African heritage. In her historical recreations, she saw her task to equate individual greatness to the body of the African American community. She wanted to demonstrate that greatness was not an aberration, but was in the bloodline of African Americans of the day:

Races should be judged by the great men they produce, and by the average value of the masses. Races are tested by their courage, by the justice which

underlies all their purposes, by their power and endurance—the determination to die for the right, if need be. If the Negro race were judged by the achievements and courage in war of this one man, by his purity of purpose and justice in times of peace, we should be entitled to as high a place in the world's relation of facts respecting races, as any other blood in the annals of history. (Hopkins, *Daughter* 12)

Hopkins, by remembering the past history and dispelling the notion of Anglo-Saxon superiority and African inferiority, is using subversion to create a new social reality. The reality, as Hopkins saw it, included a history as long as the human race and as fruitful. Her social reality gave African Americans a past that stretch beyond slavery. Furthermore, Hopkins saw telling this history of African Americans a divine mandate. She believed that for African Americans to move from the bottom of the human ladder that knowledge of their historical past and people must be told as mandated by God. In her “Toussaint L’ Ouverture” article she says, “History has recorded these deeds, and they shall be known; God intends it so! . . . there raised our bethel consecrated by the life-blood of the brave black man. History has recorded that, also, and it shall be known; God intends it so!” (*Daughter* 21-22). Not only does Hopkins recreate a heroic and noble history of African Americans, but also she is bold enough to say that God has mandated this history to be known. Hopkins reiteration of a divine mandate plays to a society steeped in Christian beliefs.

Hopkins was at her best in journalism or fiction when she connected African Americans to Africa. The stereotypes of Africa prevailed and ruled heavily throughout the twentieth century; Africa, viewed through Western racial lens, was seen as dark, as heathen, and as primitive by white Americans and often a badge of shame by African Americans.

However, Hopkins's reporting showed that Africa was not a dark continent, but a mature civilization enlightened in literature and art. Often in her reporting, she carefully explained how Africa was the cradle of civilization and that Europe and America owed Africa a great debt. Her writing on Africa enabled her to create a touchable past for the African American whose reality had cast him as a construct of the white man. Hopkins creates a new narrative to be read, owned and shared. African Americans do have a glorious past. After resigning from the *Colored American Magazine* in 1904 and later writing for the *Voice of the Negro*, Hopkins published a five-part series “The Dark Races of the Twentieth Century” in 1905 (Hopkins, *Daughter* 305). However, prior to that, anytime Hopkins had a chance to highlight Africa and Africans in the *Colored American Magazine*, as in her “Famous Women of the Negro Race VII: Educators” published June 1902, she always did. She writes,

Rome got her civilization from Greece; Greece borrowed hers from Egypt, thence she derived her science and beautiful mythology. Civilization descended the Nile and spread over the delta, as it came down from Thebes. Thebes was built and settled by the Ethiopians. As we ascent the Nile we come to Meroe the queen city of Ethiopia and the cradle of learning into which all Africa poured its caravans. So we trace the light of civilization from Ethiopia to Egypt, to Greece, to Rome, and thence diffusing its radiance over the entire world. (Hopkins, *Daughter* 169)

Through tedious research and copious reporting, Hopkins, in the tradition of W.E.B. Du Bois, used her journalism to set the record straight about Africa, its people, and its origins. Also like Du Bois, she took a Pan-African view as she thought of protest for African Americans in a broader sense. She created a picture of an African past and heritage to protest

against misrepresentations and inaccuracies about African Americans and their historical worth to civilization. Hopkins uses the tenets of journalism-- accurate, detailed, and thorough reporting-- to advance this historical understanding of African American life. Her thorough reporting on the origins of man lends credibility to her writing when she takes on these subject matters in her literature. The literature is a nice counter balance for those who might not be receptive to a history lesson in the newspaper, but more acquiescing of a history lesson tucked within the confines of a fictional narrative: "The *Colored American Magazine's* desire to use her fiction to get through to 'those who never read history or biography' implies a preference for using narrative rather than conventional historical apparatus (such as citation) to communicate effectively with its readers" (Dworkin xxxviii).

Although her fiction and journalism both are designed to protest, they attract different audiences. Hopkins writes about Africa in her fiction for both African Americans and whites; Africa is a mystical place, but not one to be fearful or ashamed. In *Of One Blood*, Professor Stone discusses with Reuel how Africa has been misrepresented by revealing truths about that continent that people are unaware: "You and I, Briggs, know that the theories of prejudice are swept away by the great tide of facts. It is a *fact* that Egypt drew from Ethiopia all the arts, sciences and knowledge of which she was mistress" (Hopkins, *Of One Blood* 520-21; her emphasis). Hopkins uses fiction as a way to correct ignorance and serious misrepresentations. Here in her telling of the story Hopkins is acting in the capacity of a reporter—she is providing vital information to her readers. We see another example of this in her writing of Africa in *Of One Blood*, when Professor Stone explains to his fellow travelers the history and the importance of Africa and particularly Ethiopia:

For three thousand years the world has been mainly indebted for its

advancement to the Romans, Greeks, Hebrews, Germans and Anglo-Saxons; but it was otherwise in the first years. Babylon and Egypt—Nimrod and Mizraim—both descendants of Ham—led the way, and acted as the pioneers of mankind in the untrodden fields of knowledge. The Ethiopians, therefore, manifested great superiority over all the nations among whom they dwelt, and their name became illustrious throughout Europe, Asia and Africa. (*Of One Blood* 531)

In *Of One Blood*, Hopkins skillfully defines America's association with Africa, playing on both the perceptions and misrepresentations of this continent. In several incidents, we see incredulous reactions from both African Americans and white listeners of Professor Stone's revelations. Hopkins understands in her protest of racial stereotypes and prejudices against Africa, she has to destabilize long-held beliefs to influence how Americans think about Africa, hence, how they think of African Americans. She has to do it for the characters in the book as well as the readers of her book. But this is no easy task as evidenced by the white character Charlie Vance, who can hardly believe Professor Stone's explanation how Africans created civilization: "Great Scott!" cried Charlie, 'you don't mean to tell me that all this was done by *niggers*?'" Even Reuel, who is half being sarcastic and half being incredulous, questions Professor Stone's findings about African civilization and its relationship to the western world: "Your theories may be true, Professor, but if so, your discoveries will establish the primal existence of the Negro as the most ancient source of all that you value in modern life, even antedating Egypt. How can the Anglo-Saxon world bear the establishment of such a theory?" (*Of One Blood* 520). The question that Reuel might have very well asked was how would he bear such a theory? In fact, how would African American

readers bear such a theory? Thus Reuel, who expresses shame about hiding his heritage, becomes a metaphorical agent for discovering Africa. As he comes to learn and gain pride in his African blood, the reader, particularly the African American, learns and gains pride in Africa. The reader discovers as Reuel discovers his African heritage. There is a level of revelation that Hopkins wants not just for Reuel to experience but for her African American and white readers to understand as well of Africa's, hence, the African American's past. This is demonstrated when spiritual leader Ai quizzes Reuel about his attempt to flee from his African heritage saying, "And yet, from Ethiopia came all the arts and cunning inventions that make your modern glory. At our feet the mightiest nations have worshipped, paying homage to our kings, and all nations have sought the honor of alliances with our royal families because of our strength, grandeur, riches and wisdom" (*Of One Blood* 560). Ai wants Reuel to remember and Hopkins wants society to remember the contribution of the African. Again, Hopkins's series "Famous Men of the Negro Race," which she started in 1900 speaks directly to her hopes of cultivating racial pride in African American history. Her decision to lead the series off with Toussaint L'Ouverture gives us an indication of the importance she placed on Pan-Africanism, in general, and in Africa, specifically. To talk about Ouverture, who Hopkins informs us was "of the Senegal African race," she can talk about Africa and its people. Later in 1901, when Hopkins writes her biographical sketch of Sergeant Carney, she says he "is an African of, I should think, full blood . . ." (*Daughter* 75). Here again, she does not hesitate to connect this African American to Africa. In her piece, "Phenomenal Vocalists," written in 1901 as part of the "'Famous Women of the Negro Race," Hopkins provides a history lesson about Egypt and its connection to African Americans. Nearly two years prior to the publication *Of One Blood*, Hopkins, in her

journalism, is trying to resurrect Africa's and African American's image through pieces she writes. She constructs a history in both her journalism and fiction that enables those of African descent to move with pride, and she does it in such a manner, like a good reporter, using details and evidence to back up her claims. She creates a new historical reality of the African and his origins through her journalism and fiction in the *Colored American Magazine* and by doing so, an agenda-setting function is occurring, allowing Hopkins to change the pictures in her readers' heads.

Lastly, in Hopkins's attempt to create a social reality of African American life through her magazine, she uses the issue of miscegenation in her journalism and fiction as a destabilizing factor in a segregated society, intentionally blurring the line between white and black life in a further attempt to construct a black reality congruent to white America. Again, the issue of miscegenation is where Hopkins's reputation and intentions have seriously been called into question. Because of the creation of these near-white characters and interracial relationships in her fiction, Hopkins has been maligned by scholars, who again see her perpetuating stereotypes that African Americans are only legitimized through white blood. Sigrid Anderson Cordell says,

Hopkins's ideology appears inconsistent, or at least problematic, because of her concomitant valorization of light-skinned European ideals of beauty and her advocacy of amalgamation. Some critics have questioned why almost all of her fiction features blonde-haired, blue-eyed mulatto protagonists, and, further, why, as Vashti Lewis points out, there is no "dark-skinned African-American major female character [s]" in Hopkins's four novels. Scholars have long criticized Hopkins's novels for, as Julie Neraud puts it, "implicitly arguing

an assimilationist politics because her Black characters—many of whom are ‘mulatto’—are too physically and socially ‘white.’” (60)

Unlike those scholars, McKay contends that Hopkins work was militant-nationalistic in its presentation, and Hopkins published like minded fiction—fiction that spoke of oppression saying, “She called for black protest literature, unconciliatory to all forms of white oppression, and opposed other kinds of literature that did not denounce all oppression of blacks” (McKay 5). As McKay contends, Hopkins work did not sell out. Hopkins's decisions in her fiction all had the same aim even if it appears as if she is partial to white Western thought. And again, if her journalism is juxtaposed to her literature work, we can get a true understanding of where she stands in terms of interracial relationships. In Hopkins’s addressing of interracial relationships in her journalism, she does not speak softly. In fact, some of her positions are similar to Ida B. Wells-Barnett, the great nineteenth century anti-lynching crusader who attacked the claim that anti-miscegenation laws were developed to protect white women from black men. Like Wells-Barnett, Hopkins contends that white women have freely associated with black men, and when they, on occasion, cried rape, it did not necessarily mean they had been raped. Hopkins in the article “Rev. John Henry Dorsey” published in 1902 in the *Colored American Magazine* stated,

The Southern white woman poses in the eyes of the world as the most virtuous of women. We sincerely hope she is. But human nature is the same the world over, and we mark the fact that handsome Negroes cut a wide swath in some communities. And the sin brings its punishment in lynchings and burnings and the torments of the accursed—to the Negro. No guilty woman hesitates one instant to sacrifice her dusky lover to save her reputation. (*Daughter* 266)

Hopkins also explained often in her journalism that just as the white woman victim/ black male perpetrator is a falsehood, so is the idea that the white man is a proponent of keeping the races pure. Questioning the use of legislation to bar interracial unions, Hopkins points out the hypocrisy of white Southerners in one column article published in 1903, “The Anglo-Saxon argues that no fouler blight can fall upon his race than the curse of intermarriage with former slaves, forgetting that the ‘shaded Afghan’ which represents the present conglomeration, once pure African, was contributed by the blood of the Southern whites” (*Daughter* 208). She often pointed to the hypocrisy of the white man who for years lusted, raped, and cavorted with black women. In slavery and in the early part of twentieth century, she argued, white men were the greatest contributors to creating mixed-race children while condemning the practice. Again, Hopkins argues in her journalism that one cannot police interracial desire. It is not realistic. The picture she paints, the social reality she tries to create, is to show that it is natural for blacks and whites to be attracted to one another and to form relationships.

Due to amalgamation, many of Hopkins’s fictional characters are near white and are able to pass in their race-conscious environment. Those who would argue that Hopkins’s protest literature is weakened by her “promotion” of interracial relationships only need to look at her journalism to get a true account of her position on miscegenation. In her article “Black or White—Which Should Be the Young Afro-American’s Choice in Marriage” published March 1903, while Hopkins argues that people should be allowed to marry outside of their race, she is not, contrary to belief, a supporter of interracial relationships, stating, “To the young Afro-American who hesitates between black or white in his choice of a life partner, I say ‘Don’t!’ This time for amalgamation is not yet. In the company of the beautiful,

virtuous and intellectual of your own race, lie health, happiness and prosperity” (*Daughter* 214). Although it appears that Hopkins contradicts herself, she does not. Her position has always been for the right of interracial relationships not the promotion.

Furthermore, Hopkins contends that when African Americans have joined in matrimony with white people, often they married "down." According to Hopkins, it was the African American stock that was “polluted,” so to speak, in this exchange, not whiteness. She said in the North, where the practice was more accepted, African American men married white women who were far from refined and virtuous. She viewed these unions with regret:

We find no fault in this if the Negro unites himself to one who is in all things his equal—morally and intellectually. But we are sorry to say, the reverse often happens, and no men entail upon themselves and their children the deadly association of a nature vile, miasmatic and filthy, dealing the death to all hope of moral cleanliness. (Hopkins, *Daughter* 209).

In her attempt to protest stereotypes, here again we see Hopkins creating a new social reality that debunks the virtuous white woman myth and the black male rapist. She seeks to cultivate a critical mindset that questions whether that African Americans are the ones who risk pollution when they engage in interracial relationships. She turns upside down the idea that white womanhood is a virtue to be sought; rather, a black man who binds himself with a white woman often does so with little return on his investment. But even, in her fiction, she rarely (if at all) introduces relationships between African American men and white women. Scholars who believe she promotes interracial relationships simply overlook this obvious point. I believe her sole purpose of writing about white men and African American women is an act of irony and subversion, nothing more.

Her journalism seems to be a contradiction to the lives shared by her characters in her fiction, many of whom are products of interracial relations and who also engage in interracial marriages/relationships. Again, I would say, even though it appears a contradiction, Hopkins's fiction supports her position in her journalism with regard to amalgamation and miscegenation. What we see in her journalism is that Hopkins believes in and fights for is equality and the right for those to choose their own life partners. She sees no room for discrimination in matters of the heart, thus, she does not support legislation that would prevent people from marrying outside of their race. On the other hand, although Hopkins believes in the right for people to marry outside of their race, she really is not a promoter of interracial relations. Hopkins, though, is a realist. She writes in both her journalism and fiction that the mixing of the races is not new and in fact, white males are the main culprit, "Anglo-Saxon blood is already hopelessly perverted with that of other races, and in most cases to its great gain. Well, if it is so, what of it? The world moves on; old ideas and silly prejudices disappear in a fog of ridicule" (Hopkins, *Daughter* 262). Here is the reason that we see these interracial couples and products of interracial relations in her fiction. Again in the three novels and the short story we examine, the main characters are biracial or mixed-race and all are involved in or products of interracial relations. In fact, these relations appear normal, common, nothing out of the ordinary. Brooks argues that Hopkins uses miscegenation to subversively attack racial discrimination, but contends it is "problematic" because it appears to push the idea of "lightening up":

By countering legal, social, and literary prohibitions against relations or marriage between individuals identified as racially different, Hopkins can be viewed as a protest writer. However, because she uses the literary stereotypes

of the tragic mulatto Although her strategy is to destabilize racial difference through representations of mulatto characters and interracial unions, Hopkins's objectification of racial difference in several caricatures results in a mixed message about the value of African American identity.

(121)

Scholars contend that she uses these interracial relations and mulatto characters to show how capricious race and discriminatory laws based on skin color actually are. In her fiction, her interracial characters make that point by moving within a "white world" easily. Where the contradiction appears is when Hopkins uses the tools of the enemy to help undermine the enemy.

Hopkins message is especially not mixed when you connect her journalism writings, particularly those addressing interracial marriage, with the characters in her books. Her journalism position is not different from the position she takes in her fiction. However in her fiction, she must be more subversive. Her goal, although appearing so, is not to promote interracial relations; her goals are to subversively create a social reality that shows miscegenation is natural, has occurred for many years, and is not a detriment to white America. In fact, in both her journalism and literature, her job is to show that miscegenation is a reality of black life--that it is a reality in American life—and that African Americans and whites share the same blood:

Throughout her fiction, she examined topics widely considered taboo and usually excluded from conciliatory journals. She assailed conventional theories of race, declaring that the boundary separating black and white was fictive. *Wiona*, for instance, begins in a 'mixed community of Anglo-Saxons,

Indians and Negroes . . . (Johnson and Johnson 327)

So while in her journalism work she protests loudly against the boundaries separating black and whites, her fiction dealing with these issues is much more subtle and subversive. In her fiction, the social reality she creates is one that shows these particular relationships as longstanding and normal, especially in the South. She demonstrates how the social order has not been destroyed by the mixing of the races. I argue that her greatest reason for creating mixed race characters, which are “*really*” black because of the prevailing one drop of black blood rule, is to show these African Americans as they really are as people rather than as the stereotypical caricatures, created by racist ideology. These characters are used to debunk racial stereotypes. These characters are used to give black men and women a footing in American society as Wallinger succinctly argues, “Her fiction set out to persuade the skeptical white reader that colored characters could possess impeccable manners and morals, social refinement, and sophisticated political thought” (144).

Hopkins has to make them light, half white, appearing to be white, to attract an open-minded white readership. She wants these white readers to see these black characters as beautiful, intelligent, moral, religious, and Americans, thus building the psychological apparatus that would enable them to extend those thoughts to real African American men and women. She subversively makes the argument that black blood does not demean ,but helps creates something better---it enhances. She also wants to ensure that white people keep an open mind about her stories by creating characters that look like them.

When she does create interracial relationships in her fiction, she most often uses white men and black women as the model in an effort not to offend. Hopkins understands for her protest to have some traction in her fiction, she can only present interracial relationships

that will not offend white sensibilities. She is not trying to be an accommodation; however, she is labeled as one, much like her contemporary African American writer Charles Chesnutt as Cynthia A Callahan explains,

Over the course of his career, and of the century, critics have accused Chesnutt of, at best, ambivalence toward the act of passing and, at worst, of being an ‘accommodationist.’ While there may be legitimate evidence to support these perspectives, part of the ambivalence attributed to Chesnutt can be accounted for by an evolving critical attitude toward passing novels.

(Callahan 317)

With that changing wind on passing narratives, Hopkins literary reputation suffers in much the same way as Chesnutt's. For her protest to work, she needs white folks also to read her stories and not be turned off from the story on the onset. She can only make her case if people are reading. She can only change minds if people are reading. Nonetheless, Hopkins still encountered objections to using white men and black women as subjects of her interracial love stories. For example, white reader Cornelia A. Conduct was particularly incensed by Hopkins interracial love affairs, dropping her subscription, and writing that “The stories of these tragic mixed lovers will not commend themselves to your white readers and will not elevate the colored readers” (qtd. in Johnson and Johnson 327). Hopkins was undaunted by Conduct's admonition, writing, “I am glad to receive this criticism for it shows more clearly than ever that white people don't understand *what pleases Negroes*” (qtd. in Johnson and Johnson 327). Hopkins's response to Cornelia Conduct provides excellent insight into why she used mixed-race characters and interracial relationships to protest conditions of African Americans at this time. Hopkins believes that showing these characters,

who can pass, who look white, will more often than not elicit some empathy from white readers who could identify with these characters because of appearance. These mixed-race characters, many of whom believe they are white and live a “white existence,” provide a compelling story of African American life for white America. To her white readers, Hopkins could very well be asking, “What would you do if all of a sudden you realized you were African American as Hagar, Jewell, Talma and Jeanette discovered?” “How would your life change?” and “Could you bear the new position in this caste system?” Hopkins, using these near-white characters to provide insights to an unsuspecting white reading public, shows what it means in America to be African American. By the time these white readers realize these characters are of mixed race, they have already understood them as people, have learned their characters, and have seen their virtues. Hopkins seems to be saying here are the stories of these people, here are their real characters—take heed. Without understanding the role of her journalism, many scholars will miss the role of her fiction in terms of protesting America's racist social order.

CHAPTER THREE - JAMES WELDON JOHNSON:

ATTACKING THE STRANGE FRUIT

When the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill was being pushed, the Negro newspapers were a great factor in keeping the whole race stirred up and determined on the issue; and copies that reached the desks of congressmen and senators gave those representatives of the people a new light on their fellow Negro Americans. This was a clear instance of the power possible for them to wield”—James Weldon Johnson 1934 (Johnson, “Negro Americans” 149-50).

When James Weldon Johnson was named Field Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1916, he mused that his life’s work, an eclectic assortment of careers that included school principal, lawyer, song writer, foreign diplomat, and poet, prepared him for this new challenge. However, as varied as his careers were, Johnson’s life growing up and attending school in the South probably prepared him for his greatest job as a leader in the anti-lynching movement of the early twentieth century. A true Renaissance man, Johnson also worked as a novelist and journalist, and he used both forms of writing, literature and journalism, to confront lynching. In this chapter, I will argue that Johnson’s literary efforts that protested lynching relied heavily on journalistic techniques that included observation, firsthand reporting, and detailed description. My shift from simply examining the connections between the literature and journalism as seen in the Douglass and Hopkins chapters to a literary analysis of Johnson’s work in this chapter is done because Johnson’s journalism was so intrinsic to his literature. Unlike Douglass’s and Hopkins’s work, Johnson’s literature relied heavily on the journalism techniques that he learned in his many years as a reporter/editor.

Johnson’s anti-lynching crusade started during the height of mob murders in the United States. At the advent of the twentieth century, white men lynched African Americans for all types of offenses. However, threatening a white woman’s purity was the main reason

given for lynching black men. Statistics from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People show that "between 1889 and 1918, 3,224 individuals were lynched, of whom 2,522 or 78 % were Black" (qtd. in Perloff 315). America's history with lynching goes back as far as the Revolutionary period. However, Americans' idea of lynching stems from the development of this practice in the late nineteenth century. Robert Zangrando defines lynching this way:

Lynching is a vicious practice in which members of a mob take the law into their own hands. On the pretext of seeking retribution for some wrongdoing, they injure or execute a victim in summary fashion, at times with great fanfare and public acclaim. Presumptions of innocence and proof of guilt are treated as afterthoughts, if at all. The accused may have broken a law, violated a local custom, or merely offended prevailing sensibilities. Outnumbered and overwhelmed, the victim has no means of redress, since the mob functions as self-appointed prosecutor, jury, judge, and executioner. (3)

According to Phyllis Klotman, the term lynch-law is attributed to Fitzstephen Lynch, mayor and warden of Galway, Ireland, who allegedly condemned and executed his own son in 1493. Klotman explains, however, that Americans most often associate lynching with Colonel Charles Lynch, who provided justice during the War of Independence, doing so in a fair and honorable manner (56). Lynching took on a whole different face with the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the South during Reconstruction. Lynching was a political tool used to disenfranchise African Americans and roll back gains made after the Civil War:

Primarily, however, lynching was a means to intimidate, degrade, and control

black people throughout the southern and border states, from Reconstruction to the mid-twentieth century. The mob proved a ready instrument for enforcing racism, that disposition to proclaim all blacks inferior on grounds no more substantial than their physical characteristics. (Zangrando 3)

As lynching escalated in the country, nineteenth century writers such as Frederick Douglass and Ida B. Wells-Barnett protested loudly against the practice. Douglass, known as a staunch abolitionist, later in his life turned to addressing the horrors of lynching. Douglass railed against lynching in speeches such as "Southern Barbarism" delivered in Washington, D.C., on April 16, 1886, and the "Address to the People of the United States" delivered on September 25, 1883, in Louisville, Kentucky. Douglass also addressed lynching in his writings with such pieces as "Why Is the Negro Lynched?" published in *The Lesson of the Hour* in 1894 and "Lynch Law in the South," published in *The North American Review* in July 1892. In his journalistic writings on lynching, Douglass lambasted the institution as seen in "Lynch Law in the South," where he writes,

Certain it is that in no tolerable condition of society can lynch law be excused or defended. Its presence is either an evidence of governmental depravity, or of a demoralized state of society. It is generally in the hands of the worst class of men in the community, and is enacted under the most degrading and blind influences. To break down the doors of jails, wrench off the iron bars of the cells, and in the dark hours of midnight drag out alleged criminals, and to shoot, hang, or burn them to death, requires preparation (Douglass 747)

Douglass's journalism, a product of nineteenth century subjectivity reporting, was used as a

sharp sword to cut down opponents. When Douglass went after lynching, he used strong words that were meant to indict not only the mob but the supporters of the mob. Ida B. Wells-Barnett's attacks on lynching were as biting.

As strong of a voice Douglass was in all things, no one had a stronger anti-lynching voice in the nineteenth century than Wells-Barnett. Rodger Streitmatter in *Voices of Revolution*, pointing to Wells-Barnett, said, the "first full-scale crusade against lynching came in the form of a social movement launched by a fiercely militant African American woman journalist" (81). She advocated that blacks leave the South, particularly her home of Memphis, if the government would not do anything to protect them against lynching. Essays such as David M. Tucker's "Miss Ida B. Wells and Memphis" underscore Wells-Barnett's importance to the anti-lynching genre: "For the long struggle against lynching in the South, Miss Wells deserves more credit than any other individual, having brought this practice before the eyes of the world, and in so doing, having accelerated the establishment of law and decency in the American South" (112). Wells-Barnett served as a role model in her anti-lynching journalism. She became editor of the *Evening Star* in 1886, she joined the Memphis *Free Speech and Headlight* newspaper in 1889, she began work in 1892 with the *New York Age*, and she co-owned with her husband the Chicago *Conservator* in 1895. Between 1892 and 1900, Wells-Barnett wrote three anti-lynching pamphlets: *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases* (1892); *A Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynchings in the United States, 1892-1893-1894* (1895); and *Mob Rule in New Orleans: Robert Charles and His Fight to the Death* (1900); all three would fall under the category of investigative journalism today. Through her research, Wells-Barnett provided a detailed examination of lynching, by exposing the alleged causes and debunking the rationales

offered for lynching. In *Southern Horrors*, Wells-Barnett dared to question the purity of white women by writing,

Hundreds of such cases might be cited, but enough have been given to prove the assertion that there are white women in the South who love the Afro-American's company even as there are white men notorious for their preference for Afro-American women.

There is hardly a town in the South that has not an instance of the kind which is well-known, and hence the assertion is reiterated that "nobody in the South believes the old thread bare lie that negro men rape white women." (11)

As the above quote shows, Wells-Barnett and Douglass did not mince words or use objectivity when they protested lynching in their journalism. Both were trained in nineteenth century journalism where objectivity was not the standard. On the other hand, Johnson's journalism had a twentieth century sensibility forged in the principles of objectivity, balanced reporting, and fairness. As Douglass's and Wells-Barnett's voices faded, it would be safe to say that they passed the anti-lynching movement torch to Johnson who carried it through in the first half of the twentieth century.

The African American press that Johnson, Douglass, and Wells-Barnett belonged to, shaped, defined, and thoroughly reported this national shame of lynching. The African American press went after lynching—speaking truth to power, uncovering fallacy, and bringing attention to wrongs. In fact, during this time what we see is the growth of a mature African American press with protest as its mission, particular in terms of violence against its members:

At the same time more African Americans boldly protested; black newspapers flourished as never before. At the end of the nineteenth century powerful media giants marshaled their forces. The number of periodicals with a circulation of one hundred thousand quadrupled between 1885 and 1900. In the first years of the twentieth century magazines began to achieve circulations of one million and more. In this era African American found they could effectively denounce whites' racial violence because cheap newspaper technology and a subsidized postal service gave them the means to do so. (Waldrep xviii)

African American newspapers such as the *Pittsburgh Courier* and the *Chicago Defender* orchestrated campaigns against lynching. For example, headlines from the *Chicago Defender* are representative of the spirit among the black press in the first part of the twentieth century: "Lynching Must be Stopped by Shotgun," "When the Mob Comes and You Must Die, Take at Least One with You," and "Call the White Fiends to the Door and Shoot them Down" (Streitmatter 146).

By contrast, often when many white newspapers reported a lynching in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was done for two reasons: to sell papers and to perpetuate the black rapist/white woman victim/ white male hero narrative. During the late nineteenth century with the increase of lynchings, this was a period that newspapers also engaged in sensational/yellow journalism. Newspaper owners around the country such as journalism titans William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer saw profits grow and circulation increase with tantalizing news stories. Lynching details often provided for sensationalized news. When the white press did report on lynching, the details were graphic

to sell newspapers. The other reason that the white press wrote about lynching was to promote and to be a co-conspirator in the black/white inferior/superior social order.

Normally, the white press would put forth a narrative of a white victim, usually a white woman, and the black criminal, usually a black man. The black man became newsworthy because his story was tied to a white victim. The black man is accused of raping a white woman, hence, attacking white society, and he needs to be punished. White papers often condemned the black man prior to due process. He was described in terms that made him guilty such as scoundrel, rapist, and brute, while on the other hand, the white press made heroes of the lynch mob. The white press made those who were involved in lynching to be upstanding citizens who were merely meting out justice:

Tolnay and Beck, in one of the few social scientific investigations of lynching, noted that Southern editors often used sympathetic language in describing lynch mobs while reserving callous damnation for lynch victims. The southern press was extremely creative when it came to providing moral, if not legal, justification for the action of lynch mobs. (Perloff 320)

The white lynch mobs were seen as righteous avengers. They were protectors of the white race, particularly the virtue of white women. They acted as agents for white society. These white newspapers even advertised when a lynching would occur as it was an event to be publicly witnessed, again in the context that justice was occurring. However, as calls were made to make lynching illegal through federal legislation, there was a change from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century on how these incidents were reported by the white press, particularly the white press in the South. In fact, you started to see an omission in the

white press to discuss these items: “Worried that outside pressure might produce a federal antilynching law, some southern whites found it wise to suppress the news of mob violence” (Zangrando 4).

Unlike the white press, the African American press saw lynching as a cause to rally around and fight. The African American press made lynching an important issue for the African American community. With the black press out front, you see the beginning of a fury of activity from organizations, such as the NAACP, which pushed for federal legislation to criminalize lynching. In fact, after years of the African American press reporting the brutality of these death mobs and lobbying by social organizations, lynching by the middle of the twentieth century was no longer viewed as an acceptable practice by a civilized society. Because of the reporting of mob violence, lynching became part of the American consciousness/psyche and gradually was represented in the literature, specifically African American literature.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, African American anti-lynching literature flourished with works such as Paul Lawrence Dunbar's short story “The Lynching of Jube Benson” (1904); James Weldon Johnson's poem "Brothers" (1916)⁴; Angelina Grimke's *Rachel: A Play in Three Acts* (1920); and Georgia Douglass Johnson's plays such as *A Sunday Morning in the South* (1925) and *Blue-Eyed Black Boy* (1930). However, African American writers were not the only scribes that addressed the topic of lynching in their works. Jean Marie Lutes's “Lynching Coverage and the American Reporter-Novelist” explains how white writers “from Mark Twain to Ernest Hemingway” (456) explored lynching in their writings.

⁴ Published in 1916, Johnson's anti-lynching poem "Brothers" is an anti- lynching story narrated by a white

With the emergence of anti-lynching literature, we also saw an emergence of critical work on lynching and white violence with several themes explored such as lynching as American; slavery and lynching; lynching and white power; lynching and sexuality; lynching rituals; and lynching and emasculation. Trudier Harris's seminal book on lynching *Exorcising Blackness* (1984) examines lynching rituals and emasculation. Harris also draws a distinct line from slavery to lynching and explores how African American writers have addressed both in their works. She argues, "Violence against black Americans is one recurring historical phenomenon to which every generation of black writers in this country has been drawn in its attempt to depict the shaping of black lives" (ix). Writers often write what they know and for African Americans historically violence at the hands of whites has been what they have known. Some have said Johnson's own encounter with a lynch mob led to his writings and active stance against the practice. Other lynching scholars such as W. Fitzhugh Brundage have explored lynching's identity to America's. Brundage examines this issue in *Under Sentence of Death: Lynching in the South* (1997). Most civilized nations were not lynching, especially in the twentieth century. Brundage argues, "Indeed, so pronounced was the penchant for lynching in the United States that early observers considered it a measure of American distinctiveness. To explain the prevalence of mob violence was to explain much about American attitudes about social order, justice, and race" (2). Other writers have also tied lynching to Americanism. Some such as Cynthia Skove Nevels in *Lynching to Belong* (2007) have argued, for example, that immigrants became Americanized through participating in lynchings. As Nevels explains, "foreign-born immigrants began claiming whiteness with a vengeance. They did so by taking advantage of, or even

mob participant.

participating in, the South's most brutal form of racial domination: the lynching of black men" (7). In Johnson's own works, one fiction and the other non-fiction, the writer shows the connection of mob violence to American identity by retelling an encounter he had with a young man from Paris. After discovering that Johnson was American, the young man wanted to know everything about the United States. He eventually asked Johnson if it were true that they burned people alive in America. Johnson's use of this story speaks to Brundage's and Nevels's notion that lynching is a truly American institution.

Scholars such as Herbert Shapiro and A.J. Williams-Myers's have explored, given, and discredited reasons for white violence toward African Americans. For example, Shapiro in *White Violence and Black Response* (1988) argues that protecting the white power structure is one of the main reasons for lynching. Shapiro writes, "White supremacy has been maintained by propaganda, political manipulation, and economic pressure but also by the ultimate weapon of violence" (xii). Williams-Myers in *Destructive Impulses: An Examination of an American Secret in Race Relations: White Violence* (1995) argues lynching was used as a tool by white men to maintain or gain sexual power. Williams-Myers, borrowing from Robert L. Zangrando's *The NAACP Crusade Against Lynching 1909-1950* (1980), writes,

The myth would be the rallying cry, and throughout slavery and into the twentieth century (on the pretext of 'protecting' white women), it "symbolized the prerogatives to interracial sex that white males meant to enjoy. That left black women open to sexual attack, deprived white women of any options or voice in the matter, and made all black males stock targets for retribution." (qtd. in 31)

Johnson, who explored the social implication of violence, also connects lynching to sexuality. He contends that sexual fears and concerns were the overriding reasons for the rise in lynching. Johnson through both his fictional and autobiographical works draws the parallels between lynching and the American sexualized line. His work confirms that the sexualized line has been the impetus for lynching.

Johnson is among the few African American writers to protest lynching as both a journalist and literary writer.⁵ His lifelong journalism work had a direct influence on the writing process used in his literature. He started in journalism as a youth. One of his first jobs was delivering *The Times-Union*, the local morning newspaper, where he made "\$2.50 a week" (Johnson, *Along This Way* 55). He worked for the paper until he left for college. Johnson, who held several positions at the paper, said, "the world of the newspaper fascinated me, and I formed a new ambition" (*Along This Way* 56). Later in college, he worked in the University printing office through graduation (*Along This Way* 101). After graduating from Atlanta University and a year after his appointment as principal of Stanton School, Johnson started in 1895 the *Daily American*, a newspaper in Jacksonville. Later, in 1914, he became a contributing editor of the *New York Age*. In 1916, Johnson began work for the NAACP and wrote for the organization's magazine, the *Crisis*. Also through his adult life, he constantly published in periodicals black and white to include the *Nation*, *Century*, *Harper's*, *Mercury*, the *New York Times*, the *Herald Tribune*, the *New York Amsterdam News*, and *Opportunity* (Wilson 4).

Johnson's journalism was designed to be hard hitting, analytical, and educational as he reached for a broad audience of white and African American people as well as policy

⁵ Black writers such as Charles W. Chesnutt, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Claude McKay, Langston Hughes,

makers who could provide legal remedies. Undoubtedly lynching played prominently in his journalism work as editor of the *Daily American*, created to tackle oppression in the African American community. Johnson was dedicated to speaking out against the violence perpetrated against African Americans: "First time Johnson assumed the role of spokesman for his people" (Adelman 131). Johnson's anti-lynching work rushed into high gear after he became field secretary of the NAACP, which waged a national campaign against lynching, pushing for federal legislation to combat mob violence.

Johnson's most prolific journalism work occurred between 1916 and 1938 when he wrote several anti-lynching articles for the *Crisis* and other publications and called for federal legislation such as the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill.⁶ Johnson used the journalistic techniques of observation, firsthand reporting, and detailed description to call attention to lynching. He also ascribed to the notion of objectivity and fairness in his journalism reporting. We see these techniques on display in three examples of his journalistic work: "Lynching--America's National Disgrace" (1924 *Current History*); "Three Achievements and Their Significance" (1927 *Crisis*); and "The Lynching at Memphis" (1917 *Crisis*).

"Three Achievements" provides a strong example of how Johnson used straight objective journalism reporting to provide readers with news. He gives detailed factual information of a lynching in Aiken, South Carolina. Johnson tells the story of three African Americans accused and tried for murder, and he reports that the three had appeared to be headed toward an acquittal after an appeal:

These three Negroes, two of them men and one a woman, were being re-

Angelina Grimke, and Georgia Douglass Johnson treated lynching in just their creative works.

⁶ Congressman L.C. Dyer introduced in 1921 H.R. 13, an anti-lynching bill. Johnson and the NAACP spent two years fighting for its passage. Opponents of the bill objected that federal law would supersede state jurisdiction. The Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill died in the Senate through a filibuster.

tried in the courts of South Carolina and in the course of the trial, upon motion of Mr. Frederick, the Judge directed a verdict of not guilty for one of the defendants and it is most probable that the other two would have been acquitted. . . . On that night a mob gathered and entered the jail through the connivance of the officers of the law and those two men and that woman were taken out and shot to death. (Johnson, "Three Achievements" 90)

Here we see Johnson just reporting the facts of what occurred—emotionally detached and somewhat a matter of fact in his writing. Johnson provides readers with four of the five Ws and H used in journalism- the who--two men and a woman, what--shot, where--jail, and how--by a mob. Johnson is only missing the "why," but the why would seem to be unnecessary given the frequency of lynchings in the South.

In "Lynching—America's," Johnson's use of objective reporting is again prevalent. Johnson, moreover, uses his reporting to educate his readers by providing them with information they need to make informed decisions. Johnson's attempt to educate his readers is grounded in the press' role in teaching its audience. In this piece, Johnson through objective reporting refutes the conventional wisdom (at least in the South) that African Americans are lynched mainly because of sex crimes. He uses statistical information to rebut the myth and report facts. Johnson points to the NAACP's "Thirty Years of Lynching," a study based on reporting by *The Chicago Tribune* showing that between 1889-1918, fewer than one-fifth of African Americans were lynched for raping white women. He writes, "So much, then, for the lie that the negro is by nature a rapist, or that he is more disposed to commit this crime than any other race, and that lynching is punishment for that crime. Fifteen

years of investigation . . . have done much to clear away this myth” (Johnson, “Lynching-America’s” 74).

Again, using numbers, statistics, and objective reporting, Johnson methodically exposes the myth of lynching, while he educates readers. For example, he said out of the more than 4,000 lynchings in more than three decades, only fifty were convicted of any crime, and out of that less than twenty-five were convicted of murder (Johnson, “Lynching-America’s” 76). He also writes that out of the nearly sixty to hundred lynchings a year for thirty years, that all of them went unpunished. Johnson is just giving facts gained from thorough reporting.

In "The Lynching," in addition to objectivity, Johnson incorporates all three of these journalistic techniques of firsthand reporting, observation, and detailed description. As a good journalist, Johnson spent his time out in the field to investigate and write stories that would be full and accurate. He did firsthand reporting for “The Lynching” piece. Johnson spent ten days in Memphis investigating the lynching of Ell Person. Person had been accused, judged, and executed by a mob in the ax-murder death of a 16-year-old white girl. Johnson combed through newspaper stories of the girl’s death, reports from the sheriff’s and detective’s offices, and conducted interviews of local citizens. He observed this local community and its people. Objectivity is present in this piece as Johnson provides the details of the case in a matter of fact manner in his opening of his article:

On Monday, April 30, near six o'clock, Antoinette Rappal, sixteen years old, got on her bicycle to go to school. She never returned.

On Wednesday, May 2, the "Memphis Press" (sic) printed a story of the missing girl under the headline, "War Lures Girl of 15 to Leave," and

containing an account of Antoinette's often expressed desire to join the Red Cross. The girl's mother was reported as believing that her daughter had left home for that purpose.

The Memphis papers of Thursday, May 3, published accounts of the finding of Antoinette in the Wolf River bottoms. The girl's head had been severed from the body with an ax. ("The Lynching" 23)

Johnson's news story is devoid of emotions. Johnson reports the facts as he gathered them. Girl went missing, mother believes girl might have joined the Red Cross, and in the last paragraph, the girl is found dead. Even the mention of the "girl's head severed" just seems like one more piece in this collection of facts. In this section, Johnson uses short paragraphs and short declarative sentences often found in journalism. The writing is crisp and brief.

Johnson also methodically demonstrates through the use of hard facts how African Americans--even in the face of contradictory evidence--would be targeted, blamed, and killed, like in this instance with the young white girl's murder. Johnson reports that although the sheriff's office was quick to parade out black suspects, specifically local woodchoppers, in the slaying of the girl, evidence and conclusions made by the city detectives indicated that the murder was most likely committed by a white person. The piece also methodically shows how black suspects were arrested and bogus confessions were extrapolated. For example, Johnson writes, "On Thursday night, Sheriff Tate arrested a deaf and dumb Negro named Dewitt Ford who claimed to have witnessed the tragedy" ("The Lynching" 24). Johnson reports how the police eventually arrested Ell Person, who lived nearby the scene of the murder, and who "allegedly" confessed to the slaying (25). In this, Johnson shows how the

confession is tainted by morally corrupt techniques to include beatings. Johnson also pointed to inconsistencies in the police story and drew attention to the fact that although Person had been indicted on murder, he had not been indicted for assault: "He was reported to have confessed to murder, and he was indicted for murder alone. Who, then, committed the assault, or, according to the theory of the detectives, the double assault upon the Rappal girl?" ("The Lynching" 29). Just like with this statement, throughout the piece, Johnson through detailed reporting and writing shows inconsistencies, provides refutes, and highlights questionable behavior by law enforcement. Johnson in his reporting and writing provides evidence that show reasonable doubt of Person's guilt: "Again, none of the tangible clues, the handkerchief, the white vest, the fresh automobile tracks found in the desolate spot were followed up ("The Lynching" 29). Again devoid of any emotions, Johnson states the facts clearly and asked you as a reader to make a reasonable judgment. His matter of fact style adds power to his writing and makes his protest of lynching all the more effective.

Nonetheless, the way Johnson ends this piece by providing detailed information and description allows him to paint a picture for his readers of the location Person was lynched and remain objective:

Out on the Macon Road is the spot where Ell Person was burned. It is in the bottom lands of the Wolfe River, about fifteen miles from the heart of Memphis. A long wooden bridge with iron railings stretches across the stream and the lowlands. The spot is down in a hollow twenty feet, perhaps, below the level of the road, and on the left side and at the near end of the bridge as approached from the city. For a wide space around, the trees had been felled to give the view to a larger crowd. . . . At the

base of this iron rail to which Ell Person had been chained the earth was still black and charred; at its top, placed there to mark the spot, there floated an American flag. ("The Lynching" 29)

Johnson's writing is an example of great use of details and specifics. He gives the reader the where: Macon Road, the who: Ell Person; the what: burned. Johnson gives the reader detailed location of where the lynching occurred "bottom lands of Wolfe River, about fifteen miles from the heart of Memphis." He describes the location, leaving the two strongest details at the end: "earth was still black and charred" and at the spot of the lynching "floated an American flag." Johnson reports what he sees, allowing the reader to come to his or her own conclusions.

Johnson's literary works, borrowing from journalistic techniques of observation, firsthand reporting, and detailed description, functioned much like his journalism. We see this evident in Johnson's *Along This Way* (1933) and *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912, 1927). In *Along This Way*, Johnson provides detailed information about his parents and family. We see his childhood in Florida, his move to Atlanta University, his first job as a principal in Jacksonville, and his founding of the *Daily American* newspaper. The author also writes about his musical career, his successful attempt at passing the bar, his Bohemian lifestyle with his brother Rosamond and Bob Cole in New York, and his decision to leave the trio and become a foreign diplomat. On the personal side, we get an in-depth look at his family and his relationship with his family, and we see his courting and marriage to Grace Nail. Next, we see him writing his first book, his move into the NAACP leadership, and his fight against lynching. In addition to his fight against lynching, we are given details of his harrowing experience with a lynch mob.

In the *Ex-Colored Man*, this fictional story is of a young man who navigates through a racial morass. Up until the age of nine, he believes that he is white. He discovers in school he is not white after his teacher calls for all of the white children to stand, and he is told to remain seated. He later asks his mother, if he is a “nigger,” and she tells him that he is not and that he comes from good Southern blood and family. The protagonist does meet his white father, who subsequently abandons him and his black mother, to marry a suitable white woman. The protagonist, who is not named, spends his time searching for a racial identity. He makes a sojourn through the South, meeting with African Americans; however, on his discovery of black music and his blackness, he comes in contact with the ugly and pitiful reality of black life—the lynching of a black man at the hands of a white mob.

Most of the scholarship of Johnson's literature have been focused on the *Ex-Colored Man*. Scholars such as Eugenia Collier, Kathleen Pfeiffer, and Donald Goellnicht in their research of the *Ex-Colored Man* have discussed themes from the book such as passing, autobiography/slave narrative genre, miscegenation, racial discovery, violence and journey. Also many of these scholars give the book high praise, such as Collier who called the novel, “The brilliant product of a brilliant mind, this novel has long been recognized as a precursor of the Harlem Renaissance and thus an ancestor of current black literature” (365). Scholarship of *Along This Way* is scarce. Jennifer L. Schulz, one of the few scholars to tackle *Along This Way*, examines the issue of American social contracts and race relations. What has been missing in the examination of *Along This Way* and *Ex-Colored Man* is the role journalism played in both books. Starting with *Along This Way*, I'll show how Johnson used basic journalism techniques to tell his story.

With *Along This Way* being autobiographical, it allows Johnson to write in the first

person. Normally journalists write in the third person, but a first-person account is acceptable when the piece is compelling. Johnson's brush with a lynching mob is a compelling story. Johnson reports the facts as he sees them. Just like a reporter, he is on the scene. Being able to report the facts firsthand of a lynching, moreover when the writer is the object of that lynching, is remarkable journalism. Johnson's reporting of the would-be lynch mob is an intriguing story, which covers five pages of his book. Unlike most African American men in a similar position, Johnson was in the hands of a lynch mob and lived to write about it. In addition to observation, firsthand reporting, and detailed description, Johnson also uses the journalism technique of quoting. Johnson begins the section by setting up the reader with detailed information about the near lynching. In the beginning of this section, Johnson uses a teaser technique found in journalism. He provides the reader with characteristics of a journalism delayed lead, which sets the reader up with the surprise ending or "kicker" as it is called in newspaper writing.

In the beginning of his story, Johnson provides the reader some information about this woman he is to meet. We learn that she is from New York and that she is a writer. We also learn she wants Johnson to read over an article she wrote about a fire and its impact on local African Americans. Johnson describes the woman "with eyes and hair so dark that they blanched the whiteness of her face" (Johnson, *Along This Way* 165). As a good story teller, Johnson gives us only the details we need to understand what is to come later. For example, he gives the exact times and places: "At four o'clock I washed up and boarded a car. I had not yet been to this new Riverside Park" (Johnson, *Along This Way* 165). Although the exact time and place might seem minute details, however, as a working journalist, minute details are important when dealing with the issue of credibility and accuracy in a story. Johnson

provides more specific details almost in chronological order about the encounter:

As I settled in my seat and glanced out of the window I saw a woman approaching across a little rustic bridge a hundred or so feet away whom I at once recognized by her dress and the black and white parasol she carried to be the lady I was to meet. I jumped off the car and walked over to join her.

(Johnson, *Along This Way* 165)

Johnson tells the reader how far away the woman is from him, he describes the bridge, and he tells us about the parasol's color. These are small details, but by including them, Johnson uses observational skills he developed as a reporter. The reader understands why the story, as it moves into the climax, must be told in the first person. The tale is a gripping one and Johnson does a good job as his reporting provides detailed description that keeps the reader staying with him through the account:

I became aware of noises, of growing, alarming noises; of men hallowing back and forth, and of dogs responding with the bay of bloodhounds. One thought, that they might be hunters, flashed through my mind; but even so, there was danger of a stray shot. And yet, what men would hunt with such noises, unless they were beating the bush to trap a wild, ferocious beast? I rose to go, and my companion followed. (Johnson, *Along This Way* 166)

Johnson continues to use the senses to describe the scene to bring the reader with him. Johnson moves from the sense of hearing to sight, but the danger is still the same: "Suddenly we reached the barbed wire fence. There we stopped. On the other side of the fence death was standing. Death turned and looked at me and I looked at death. In the instant I knew that the lowering of an eyelash meant the end" (Johnson, *Along This Way* 167). Next, Johnson

provides more detailed information to show the reader what he was up against as he stood there with the woman: He gives us the number of individuals, and we are told what they are wearing and what they were doing: “Just across the fence in the little clearing were eight or ten militiamen in Khaki with rifles and bayonets. The abrupt appearance of me and my companion seemed to have transfixed them. They stood as under a spell” (Johnson, *Along This Way* 167). Again, the more details given, the more accurate his account appears and the more credible Johnson is as a reporter or teller of this incident. Next, Johnson again dealing in senses with his description not only allows the reader to see the action, but also the reader has an opportunity to hear these people. He quotes the mob participants directly adding to the drama of the situation:

The spell is instantly broken. They surge around me. They seize me. They tear my clothes and bruise my body; all the while calling to their comrades, “Come on, we’ve got ‘im! Come on, we’ve got ‘im!” And from all directions these comrades rush, shouting, “Kill the damned nigger! Kill the black son of a bitch!” (Johnson, *Along This Way* 167)

By quoting directly, Johnson allows the reader to hear from the participants—adding color as well as credibility to his account. Here, Johnson reports to the readers, giving them a bird’s eye view of what a lynch mob looks like and sounds like when it has the alleged criminal in custody. Johnson’s description of the scene speaks not only to his scenario but to what other African Americans in the hands of white men go through in similar circumstances. Johnson speaks to the heart of vigilante justice. The mob normally takes on a life of its own with a disregard for justice:

I catch a glimpse of my companion; it seems that the blood, the life is gone

out of her. There is the truth; but there is no chance to state it; nor would it be believed. As the rushing crowd comes yelling and cursing, I feel that death is bearing in upon me. Not death of the empty sockets, but death with the blazing eyes of a frenzied brute. (Johnson, *Along This Way* 167)

Johnson provides a firsthand account what it is like to be doomed at the hands of a lynch mob. He just reports the details that demonstrate the futility of his situation and worst of all, he, like many others before and after him, is a man clearly innocent of any wrongdoings. Johnson speaks for the critics of lynching, and more importantly, he speaks for the victims of lynching whose voices have been silenced.

What saves Johnson from the dreadful fate that other African Americans have suffered while in the clutches of a lynch mob is a voice of reason among the group. Even better is this voice of reason is recognized as a leader among the mob. Instead of vigilante justice, the leader opts for real judicial justice. Again, Johnson uses the journalism technique of quoting wisely to flesh out this scene and the drama surrounding it:

“You are my prisoner.” I ask him, “What is the charge?” He answers, “Being out here with a white woman.” I question once more, “Before whom do I answer this charge?” “Before Major B--, the provost marshal,” he replies. At that, I answer nothing beyond ‘I am your prisoner.’ . . . As soon as the lieutenant put his hand on me and declared me his prisoner, the howling mob of men became soldiers under discipline. (Johnson, *Along This Way* 167-68)

Johnson wisely reports how a mob becomes disciplined soldiers. His reporting provides a contrast to the stereotypical undisciplined mob, led by undisciplined leaders. Johnson is wise

to include this bit of information about the mob because his writing comes off objective. His reporting shows a balance and fairness, staples of good journalism, in his description of the events and the players. Nonetheless, even while in the custody of the lieutenant danger is still lurking, and Johnson skillfully shows the reader this in this passage: “On the way in, the car stopped at the electric power house. It was met by a crowd of conductors, motormen, and other employees, who hailed our car with cries of, ‘Have you got ’em?’ ‘Yes, we’ve got ’em,’ the soldiers cried back” (168). Those conductors, motormen and other employees who make up a new potential mob are only kept at bay because of the lieutenant’s leadership. It would not have taken much for the scene to become deadly, which Johnson shows in an understated manner. Here again, Johnson shows that danger by detailed description, but also with the use of quotes—“Have you got ’em.”

Johnson provides the reader with the journalism technique of a kicker or surprise ending to this scenario. It is not until after nearly four pages into the potential lynch mob scene, Johnson reveals to the lieutenant and thus the reader that his companion, although white looking, is not white at all. She is by all standards and definitions at that time an African American woman: “However, I did say to him, ‘The lady with me is white, but not legally so’” (Johnson, *Along This Way* 169). Later when Johnson is in the presence of Major B, he again confirms that his companion is other than white. However, what is more important than revealing to Major B that the woman is not white is Johnson adeptly arguing against lynching by making it personal. Johnson, again, gives voice to lynching victims. The provost marshal is an acquaintance of Johnson and is apologetic and embarrassed by Johnson’s near demise. Because of their relationship, Johnson, as reporter, can show the insane nature of lynching, and by doing so, Johnson speaks for the African American men

who can not speak-- who are not alive to tell their stories. Johnson shows how easily an African American life, even one of his stature, can be blotted out by an angry white mob even before guilt or innocence is established: "I told him that I appreciated how he felt about it personally but that that (sic) did not balance the jeopardy in which my life had been put. I added, 'You know as well as I do, if I had turned my back once on that crowd or taken a single step in retreat, I'd now be a dead man'" (Johnson, *Along This Way* 169). Johnson is not some nameless, faceless, African American man. Major B knows him and the act of violence against Johnson has been personalized. Here again, although he is quoting himself, his selection of quotes nonetheless help to tell the story and capture the drama of the event as reporters do. Yes, other autobiographies have used quotes and dialogue and were written by people without a journalism background, but because Johnson does have that background it is safe to say that he draws on that training. He probably, more than others, knows when to quote, where to quote, and what quote will be most effective in story telling as evident in the examples provided.

Johnson through this first- person account personalizes the story for his readers. When he does reveal to Major B the woman's true racial identity, Johnson carries his anti-lynching argument a bit further not necessarily for Major B, but for his readers by asking a simple question, "Suppose the lady is white?" I believe Johnson is asking what does white really mean, especially if one can not tell who is white by skin color? I also believe that Johnson is asking if white female skin color can justify killing a man? Again, I argue Johnson's reason for bringing up the question is to show the lunacy of lynching:

He repeated the charge the lieutenant had made. "Major," I went on, "I know there is no use in discussing law or my rights on any such basis as, 'Suppose

the lady *is* white?’ so I tell you at once that according to the customs and, possibly, the laws of Florida, she *is not* white.’ In spite of appearances, he, of course, knew that I spoke the truth. (Johnson, *Along This Way* 169; his emphasis)

Suppose the lady is white is the question. In America, why would an African American man be subjected to lynching by being in the presence of a white woman? When his companion begins to speak, the hypocrisy of this skin color question comes to full light. Although Johnson does not quote her directly, he does let us know that she places the blame on how she looks, her fair skin, on Major B and all the other white men who came before him. She explains her skin color is caused by years of amalgamation led by hypocritical white men. Johnson, in his quest for detailed reporting, does well by reporting this by writing, “At this point my companion began to speak. She spoke slowly and deliberately at first; then the words came in torrents. She laid on the Major’s head the sins of his fathers and his fathers’ fathers. She charged him that they were the ones responsible for what had happened” (Johnson, *Along This Way* 169). The woman tells Major B and white America that she, like so many others like her, is not white. She also wants white America to know that she is not pure black/African. She is a mix of races because of generations of white-men led race mixing--often forced upon African American women. Because of generations of white men, this African American woman looks more white than black. Johnson’s firsthand reporting with his brush with a lynch mob is invaluable.

Johnson’s use of journalism techniques in his creative pieces makes for a more poignant story. In *Ex-Colored Man*, Johnson again writes from the first-person advantage point in his reporting of the lynching scene, the pivotal moment in the book. For the

protagonist who has floated between a white and African American existence, it is not until he witnesses a lynching that he makes the permanent move to life as a white man--forever being the ex-colored man. As with *Along This Way*, Johnson provides readers insight into lynching through firsthand reporting. Although he is not the one being lynched or in imminent danger of being lynched, the African American narrator is a participant by his mere presence at the scene. His white skin allows him to witness the lynching in relative safety and report it firsthand. The protagonist is able, so to speak, to wear a mask more opaque than Paul Lawrence Dunbar explains in his 1895 poem "We Wear the Mask." His ability to wear a racial mask undetected, allows the narrator to work as an undercover investigative journalist to observe and report firsthand the story of the lynching of a black man at the hands of a white mob:

Suddenly I became conscious of that sense of alarm which is always aroused by the sound of hurrying footsteps on the silence of the night. I stopped work and looked at my watch. It was after eleven. I listened, straining every nerve to hear above the tumult of my quickening pulse. I caught the murmur of voices, then the gallop of a horse, then of another and another. Now thoroughly alarmed, I woke my companion, and together we both listen. After a moment he put out the light and softly opened the window-blind, and we cautiously peeped out. We saw men moving in one direction, and from the mutterings we vaguely caught the rumor that some terrible crime had been committed. (Johnson, *Ex-Colored Man* 872)

Johnson through the protagonists not only reports what he hears, like the sound of hurrying

footsteps and galloping horses, but the whispers of the offense, which the reader hears as “some terrible crime.” Johnson through the protagonist is using his sources on hand to tell the reader what all the ruckus is about. He has confirmed with sources. Once on the scene, the protagonist provides detailed description of what he sees as he reaches the railroad station:

There was gathered there a crowd of men, all white, around others were steadily arriving I watched these men moving under the yellow glare of the kerosene lamps about the station, stern, comparatively silent, all of them armed, some of them in boots and spurs; fierce, determined men. I had come to know the type well, blond, tall, and lean, with ragged mustache and beard, and glittering gray eyes. (Johnson, *Ex-Colored Man* 873)

The protagonist is careful in his detail—not only does he go beyond a generic white man description of these men, but we see them through his reporting—blond, tall, lean. These men are stern and fierce looking, and they mean business. As a good reporter does, the description of the men provides a better understanding of who they are and a better understanding of the event. The significance of the event or understanding of the event becomes clearer, when the protagonist describes how the victim enters into the town: “Before noon they brought him in. Two horsemen rode abreast: between them, half dragged, the poor wretch made his way through the dust. His hands were tied behind him, and ropes around his body were fastened to the saddle horns of his double guard” (Johnson, *Ex-Colored Man* 873). The description of the victim being hauled into town provides for a nice contrast. The reporter gives us a picture of the hunter and the hunted. Through the reporting, we see how African Americans in the twentieth century are still treated no better than beasts. Later, the protagonist describes how the lynching process indeed turns this man into a beast:

There he stood, a man only in form and stature, every sign of degeneracy stamped upon his countenance. His eyes were dull and vacant, indicating not a single ray of thought. Evidently the realization of his fearful fate had robbed him of whatever reasoning power he had ever possessed. He was too stunned and stupefied even to tremble. (Johnson, *Ex-Colored Man* 873)

As an eye witness to the event, the protagonist can report on what he hears. He is providing the reader with direct quotes from the scene: “The men who at midnight had been stern and silent were now emitting that terror-instilling sound known as the ‘rebel yell.’ A space was quickly cleared in the crowd, and a rope placed about his neck, when from somewhere came the suggestion ‘Burn him!’ It ran like an electric current” (Johnson, *Ex-Colored Man* 873). In addition, Johnson through the protagonist captures the scene of the horrifying lynching. As an objective reporter, Johnson does not have to say the scene is despicable, he just provides the details that speak to this point. Also for Johnson, it allows him to protest lynching through the words of his protagonist. For Americans who have never seen a lynching, for white Americans indifferent, Johnson, through his narrator/reporter on scene, graphically tells them what happens:

Fuel was brought from everywhere, oil, the torch; the flames crouched for an instant as though to gather strength, then leaped up as high as their victim’s head. He squirmed, he writhed, strained at his chains, then gave out cries and groans as that I shall always hear. The cries and groans were choked off by the fire and smoke; but his eyes, bulging from their sockets, rolled from side to side, appealing in vain for help. Some of the crowd

yelled and cheered, others seemed appalled at what they had done, and there were those who turned away sickened at the sight. I was fixed to the spot where I stood, powerless to take my eyes from what I did not want to see.

It was over before I realized that time had elapsed. Before I could make myself believe that what I saw was really happening, I was looking at a scorched post, a smoldering fire, blackened bones, charred fragments sifting down through coils of chain; and the smell of burnt flesh—human flesh—was in my nostrils. (Johnson, *Ex-Colored Man* 873)

I quote here at length because the description of the lynching is so vivid, so thorough, in terms of reporting. Again the in-depth details provide the reporter a level of credibility in his work. The protagonist through undercover investigative reporting has uncovered the truth of the lynching ritual.

As much as Johnson relies on journalistic techniques in his literature, he is not bound to the rigors of journalism in his literary writings. Not being held to journalistic standards in his creative writing is helpful to Johnson in addressing lynching, particularly when he tries to make sense of his own encounter. Johnson took years to stop reliving his own close call with a lynch mob. He writes, “It was not until twenty years after, through work I was then engaged in, that I was able to liberate myself completely from this horror complex” (Johnson, *Along This Way* 170). By living through this near-lynching, Johnson also is able to reflect on it in his writing; he also is able to reflect on the lynching because unlike the rudiments of journalism, literature allows Johnson to ponder. Through reflection, Johnson can speak to what he believes is the heart of lynching, and here is the reason he believes white men lynch

black men:

Through it all I discerned one clear and certain truth: in the core of the heart of the American race problem the sex factor is rooted It may be innate; I do not know. But I do know that it is strong and bitter; and that its strength and bitterness are magnified and intensified by the white man's perception, more or less, of the Negro complex of sexual superiority. (Johnson, *Along This Way* 170)

This is James Baldwin-type analysis that Johnson is putting forth in the 1930s. He is a man way ahead of his time. Other writers such as Harris and Sandra Gunning have since linked the lynching phenomenon to criminalization of the sexualized black male body. To criminalize and sexualize and ultimately destroy the black body is to ensure white power and dominance. Scholars have discussed how white men historically have been fearful of black potency, particularly where white women were concerned, making the black rapist/white victim plausible to white America. Harris explains that "to the white male psyche, rape defines any intimate or assumed intimate alliance between black man and white woman, whether voluntary or not. Naturally the white woman was 'forced'" (15). The black male body is made illegal by the association with a white female body. Harris explains how the white power structure, white men, used lynching to emasculate black men--literally and psychologically. She writes that "white American males castrated black men presumably in an effort to eliminate the threat of black sexuality to white women, and . . . perhaps in an effort to transfer some of that sexuality to themselves" (15). What is interesting here is that not only does the white man want to kill the black body, but he also wants to harness its perceived sexual prowess.

Gunning argues that the black rapist/ white woman victim in the lynching scenario allows for whites to rally in their attempt to maintain the existent power structure: “For many white supremacists, the stereotype of black male as sexual beast functioned as an externalized symbol of social chaos against which all whites regardless of class, could begin to unite for the purpose of national renewal” (Gunning 6). Gunning's argument is true, particularly in the South, where historically poor whites worked in conjunction with better off whites to enforce a system that oppressed them as well. They believed that keeping the African American man in his place through lynching preserved white supremacy, thus, preserving societal order. Johnson's literature on lynching affirms these ideas.

Again, literature provided Johnson the freedom he did not have in structured-based journalism to offer social critiques of lynching, like the one Gunning argues here. For example, in *Along This Way*, Johnson can provide a history lesson to Major B about the wrongs of the white man and his sexual tendencies. Johnson can write how miscegenation in America is a fact and has occurred for a long time. He can provide this same history lesson in the *Ex-Colored Man*, and he does. In this particular work of fiction, the protagonist is a product of that miscegenation, having a white father from the South and an African American mother, and he explains, “She spoke to me quite frankly about herself, my father, and myself: she, the sewing girl of my father’s mother; he, an impetuous young man home from college; I, the child of this unsanctioned love” (Johnson, *Ex-Colored Man* 818). His father marries a white woman and sends his paramour and love child up North. What amazes the protagonist is that his mother never says a disagreeable thing about the arrangement. She loves his father: “In none of her talks did she ever utter one word of complaint against my father. She always impresses upon me how good he had been and still was, and that he was

all to us that custom and the law would allow” (Johnson, *Ex-Colored Man* 818). By including this passage, I believe Johnson provides historical insight of the relationship between white men and black women—black women were the playground for white men. In contrast, white men fiercely guarded the virtue of their own women with the threat and execution of black men. This idea is played out in the *Ex-Colored Man*, ironically by the ex-colored man.

In *Ex-Colored Man*, the protagonist's reaction to the sexual taboos being broken by African American men and white women in New York and the story of the "widow" are relevant. The protagonist tells the story of the white “widow” and her kept African American male companion: “One of these in particular attracted by attention; she was an exceedingly beautiful woman of perhaps thirty-five; she had glistening copper-hair, very white skin, and eyes very much like Du Maurier’s conception of Trilby’s ‘twin gray stars’” (Johnson, *Ex-Colored Man* 843). Johnson’s protagonist explains how this woman paid for the clothes and diamonds of her young African American companion, who she would meet at “The Club.” The protagonist’s reaction to seeing these two together is telling: “I shall never forget how hard it was for me to get over my feelings of surprise, perhaps more than surprise, at seeing her with her black companion; somehow I never exactly enjoyed the sight” (Johnson, *Ex-Colored Man* 843). Although the protagonist understands, knows he is of both races, he identifies more with being white, and he reacts like a white man when he sees the widow with her companion. His reaction is one of uneasiness; however, being in such a racial quagmire and uncertainty, he cannot punish or lynch this African American male. He can only watch in horror. Because of his racial conundrum, the narrator is ironically emasculated as a pseudo white man. As a pseudo white man with no power, the narrator can not condemn

the black man for his breach of this social contract that Schulz discusses in "Restaging the Racial Contract." The narrator's uneasiness with the situation may be in his knowledge that someone will have to die because of this breach. Someone will have to be lynched. Ironically, a white woman is lynched by a black man for sitting and talking to a "white man." She is lynched in the sense that she is presumed guilty and executed without a trial, and she is never given the chance to speak on her behalf. This scenario plays out in the narrator's story of his encounter with the "widow." The protagonist tells how the "widow," like others begin to admire him for his talents on the piano. One night she calls him to sit with her and some of her friends, and he does so thinking that he "was committing worse than folly" (Johnson, *Ex-Colored Man* 848). Johnson, though, sets up this statement by allowing the reader to know prior that the "widow's" longtime black companion is a "bad man." Johnson, in a sense, wants the reader to believe that the protagonist's uneasiness is because of the white woman's African American companion, which on the surface is true. However, the real source of the protagonist's uneasiness is that the "widow" is a white woman, and he is still an African American man, even if he appears white. Johnson will demonstrate this uneasiness later in the book when the protagonist decides to pass and falls in love with a white woman. Nonetheless, the protagonist decides to share company with the "widow." While he is sitting with her, the black companion enters the establishment, and that's when the protagonist witnessed the lynching of this white woman:

Just as I partly turned in my chair, I saw the black fellow approaching; he walked directly to our table and leaned over. The "widow" evidently feared he was going to strike here, and she threw back her head. Instead of striking her he whipped out a revolver and fired; the first shot went straight into her throat.

There were other shots fired, but how many I do not know; for the first knowledge I had of my surroundings and actions was that I was rushing through the chop-suey restaurant into the street. (Johnson, *Ex-Colored Man* 849)

The widow must die because she put herself in the company of African American men, regardless if some of those men, like the narrator, appear white. In his protest of lynching, Johnson is playing with irony on so many levels with this scene. In fact, the lynching scenario seems to be flipped on its head. A white woman is lynched by a black man for sitting with a black man, who appears to be white. The scenario is absurd. I believe that Johnson with this play on color, sex, and lynching shows how absurd the rationale for lynching is as demonstrated by this upside down lynching scenario.

After the widow's murder, events revert back to form. We see the "black" protagonist, fearful of the lynch mob, fleeing the club, rushing through a chop-suey restaurant and down the street. He runs into his white millionaire friend and tells what has just occurred. This friend gives him advice that so many other African American males from the South were most likely given in their innocence of some alleged crime:

For answer I got into the cab and related to him all that had happened. He reassured me by saying that no charge of any kind could be brought against me, then added: "But of course you don't want to be mixed up in such an affair." He directed the driver to turn around and go into the park, and then went on to say: "I decided last night that I'd go to Europe tomorrow. I think I'll take you along instead of Walter." (Johnson, *Ex-Colored Man* 849)

Just like so many African American males from the South who ran North to stay ahead of the

pending lynch mob, we see the protagonist fleeing to Europe with his white millionaire friend. The protagonist is fleeing the lynch mob that undoubtedly will come for him because of the murder of the white woman, but more importantly, for putting the white woman in a compromising position—her white pureness has been compromised: “The cool air somewhat calmed my nerves and I lay back and closed my eyes but still I could see that beautiful white throat with the ugly wound. The jet of blood pulsing from it had placed an indelible red stain on my memory” (Johnson, *Ex-Colored Man* 849). Johnson shows how the narrator views that the white woman’s purity has been invaded by his emphasis on the words “beautiful white throat.” Also, from the details, “the ugly wound” indicates some type of penetration at the hands of a black man by way of a bullet. This white woman’s beauty and pureness have been tainted by an African American man in the narrator’s eyes. By Johnson using this passage with an African American protagonist who looks and identifies himself with whiteness (and white privilege) through most of the novel, the author demonstrates how strongly white America views the sexual taboo of black man with white woman. What Johnson alludes to here is the root of all the racial problems—here is the root of the violence and here is the root of the lynching of African Americans. His decision to lynch the white woman who has obviously crossed this imaginary sexual racial line is a more powerful image/argument than if he had said sexual advances on a white woman was the cause of the black man’s lynching he witnesses near the end of the book. A sexual advance on a white woman was the standard reason for killing a black man. There is little shock value.

Not long after the protagonist’s arrival in Europe, again Johnson highlights the dangers for an African American man to be near a white woman. He demonstrates there is tension, there is danger—even when the meeting is by chance and is innocent. When the

protagonist is at the opera in Paris, he sees a young white girl that he can hardly keep his eyes off—even at great social risks:

At the end of the act I noticed that my neighbor on the left was a young girl. I cannot describe her either as to feature, or color of her hair, or her eyes; she was so young, so fair, so ethereal, that I felt to stare at her would be a violation; yet I was distinctly conscious of her beauty.... I occasionally stole a glance at her, and each time I did so my heart leaped into my throat. (Johnson, *Ex-Colored Man* 852-53)

What draws the protagonist to this girl and what he soon realizes is that she is his sister, and she is with their father. His instant love for his sister he compares to the love he has for his mother. He aches because social constructs prevent him from acknowledging his sister. His actions could be misconstrued even by his white father. He is a black man, she is a white girl, and his intentions must be nefarious. He is guilty. Interestingly, the protagonist says he is willing to compromise his life for a moment with his sister, which is a telling choice of words: “I knew that I could not speak, but I would have given a part of my life to touch her hand with mine and call her ‘sister’” (Johnson, *Ex-Colored Man* 853). In America, and particularly in the South, by approaching her, he might as well have given up his life at the hands of a lynch mob, which would not have stopped to fully interpret his actions. By approaching her even in Paris, he might have put himself in danger at the hands of his southern white father.

Johnson plays on the possibility of African American men and white women intimacy that lead to these irrational killings. Later, Johnson shows this tension explicitly in the scene where the protagonist is returning to America and a racist Texan and others are having a

debate about African Americans' value as well as their rights as human beings. The Texan's argument, based solely on race prejudice, is weak. However, he pulls out the trump card for justification for racial segregation, Jim Crow, discrimination, and violence toward African Americans:

The Texan was somewhat disconcerted, for the argument had passed a little beyond his limits, but he swung it back to where he was sure of his ground by saying: “‘Do you want to see ‘em sitting around in our parlors? Do you want to see a mulatto South? To bring it right home to you, would you let your daughter marry a nigger?’” (Johnson, *Ex-Colored Man* 864).

To that question, even the most ardent defender of African Americans' rights in that scene has to say, "no," unequivocally. Johnson's anti-lynching literature, like Lutes suggests, allows him to explore the sexual issue of lynching in a fuller manner than the mere reporting of facts. In literature, motives can be explored by the author, where as traditional journalism focuses on the specifics. In journalism, again, Johnson has to focus on the five Ws and H--the who, what, why, where, when, and how. With journalism, he has to provide the facts and provide them quickly. Johnson does not have the time or luxury that literature provides to delve deeply into the sexual conflicts present in lynchings. Johnson is able to show in literature, as in this particular scene, the social mores of the South at work, which in reality represent the mores of the United States. Johnson shows in the scene with the Texan, and particularly the response of the Northern man, how universal the irrational fear of black male sexuality is, which allows for the perpetuation of lynching even among whites who abhor the practice and are sympathetic to African American equality. Literature allows Johnson to explore this fear.

Since Johnson is using literature as his forum to protest lynching, he can do something with the protagonist that he can not do in normal news reporting. He can insert his feelings. He can personalize it beyond just reporting it firsthand. Returning to the lynching scene, we see Johnson doing this as the protagonist reflects on what has just happened:

I walked a short distance away and sat down in order to clear my dazed mind. A great wave of humiliation and shame swept over me. Shame that I belonged to a race that could be so dealt with; and shame for my country, that it, the great example of democracy to the world, should be the only civilized, if not the only state on earth, where a human being would be burned alive. (Johnson, *Ex-Colored Man* 873-74)

Johnson through the protagonist takes to task white people, African Americans, and the country for the inglorious practice of lynching. For African Americans, he seems to be asking, why stand for this? Johnson really is striking a militant posture. For whites, he condemns their race for carrying on this practice of lynching. And for his country which boasts of freedom, Johnson wants to know why these atrocities are sanctioned on her soil. Moreover, Johnson through the protagonist provides a parting salvo to those who would argue state's rights when dealing with lynching. In fact, this statement would be pertinent seven years later when though his work with the NAACP, he pushed for federal anti-lynching legislation to only be thwarted by Southern politicians:

Whenever I hear protests from the South that it should be left alone to deal with the Negro question, my thoughts go back to that scene of brutality and savagery. I do not see how people that can find in its conscience any excuse whatever for slowly burning to death a human being, or for tolerating such an

act, can be entrusted with the salvation of a race. (Johnson, *Ex-Colored Man* 874).

Here again, Johnson the literary writer can do what Johnson the journalist can not do. He can personalize the event, he can provide his feelings on the subject, and he can reflect on lynchings' destructive impact on society.

Although lynching was a racial problem, Johnson sought to rise above race when speaking on the subject of mob violence. He thought that literature in its purest form could transcend race, making this argument in his “Double Audience Makes Road Hard for Negro Authors” piece:

The equipped Negro author working at his best in his best known material can achieve this end; but, standing on his racial foundation, he must fashion something that rises above race, and reaches out to the universal in truth and beauty. And so, when a Negro author does write so as to fuse—which white and black America into one interested and approving audience he has performed no slight feat, and has most likely done a sound piece of literary work. (Johnson, “Double Audience” 412)

I would argue that Johnson did reach a truth in his literature work, which transcended race. I believe all the ambiguities in *Ex-Colored Man* such as the color of the narrator, the truth of the narration, and the uncertainty of racial allegiance, all were used to tell a story that dares its readers to focus on the universal story of a man trying to find his way in society. Johnson, though, understood that while trying to transcend race in literary writing, the African American writer did so while being mindful of the racialized audience--one black and the other white and both having competing agendas:

It is more than a double audience it is a divided audience, an audience made up of two elements with differing and often opposite and antagonistic points of view. His audience is always both white America and black America. The moment a Negro writer takes up his pen or sits down to his typewriter he is immediately called upon to solve, consciously or unconsciously, this problem of the double audience. To whom shall he address himself, to his own black group or to white America? Many a Negro writer has fallen down, as it were, between these two stools. (Johnson, "Double Audience" 409)

Addressing different audiences is the main reason Johnson bounced between journalism protest and literary protest. When Johnson wrote pieces for African American news publications, he mostly was talking to an African American audience. He spoke to their needs, wants and desires. Johnson, though, understood that the African American press was not just viewed by African Americans—that the views of the paper would be read by the general population--white readers. His journalism spoke to a white readership that was most likely unaware or in denial to the extent of the problem of lynching in America. To gain credibility for him and his cause, Johnson's journalism had to be ethos and logos driven, unlike with his literature. As a journalist, he could show how problematic lynching was with facts that would be accepted, if not agreed upon, by both white and black audiences. Johnson, adhering to journalism guidelines, printed the truth and provided the cold hard numbers and let his readers sort them out to make judgment on them. Also, Johnson, and other members of the black press, had to speak out against lynching because the white press either ignored the problem or often reported in a bias manner the lynching. The white press perpetuated the lie of Negro rapist avenged by heroic white mob.

Johnson also knew, like other writers in the journalism and literary fields, that journalism because of its constraints could only go but so far in allowing readers to understand the depths of something as horrific as lynching. As an example of that limitation, Lutes explains how lynching accounts first reported in newspapers often made their way into literature writings such as with Theodore Dreiser's short story "Nigger Jeff," published in 1901 and loosely based off a lynching story he wrote as a young journalist for the *Republic* in 1894 (469). Because of the constraints of journalism, particularly with the new professional standards of "objectivity"⁷ in the twentieth century, literature, particularly in lynching stories, allowed for the subjective human emotional side to be explored unlike journalism work:

If lynching was one of those experiences reporters were not allowed to represent fully, naturally it fell to writers of fiction, not journalists, to do it justice, and it is certainly true that most daily newspapers and prominent magazines failed to give lynching sustained coverage, particularly during the years of the worst violence, such as 1892, where there were twice as many lynchings of African Americans in the US as there were legal executions. In this sense, lynching can be understood as one of the pressing topics that literature took up when journalism fell short.

(Lutes 457)

Again when Lutes argues that most newspapers didn't give lynching sustained coverage, the author is focusing on the white press. The African American press and writers such as Johnson saw protesting the lynch mob as a calling. Johnson, nonetheless, saw that the

⁷ The nineteenth century American press moved from subjective reporting to one that promoted objectivity

cause against lynching was so great that he employed every tool he had at hand to protest this false vigilante justice. I believe Johnson understood the limits of both journalism and literature as he skillfully went back and forth in his anti-lynching writings. Yet and still, journalism provided Johnson the fundamentals in reporting and writing, to include observation, firsthand reporting, and detailed description, that informed his anti-lynching literature.

and fairness and would become the standard in twentieth century journalism and currently.

CHAPTER FOUR - W.E.B. DU BOIS: THE GREAT PROPAGANDIST

Fourth, only the publication of the truth repeatedly and incisively and uncompromisingly can secure that change in public opinion which will correct these awful lies. *The Crisis*, our record of the darker races, must have a circulation not of 35,000, chiefly among colored folk, but at least 250,000 among all men who believe in men. It must not be a namby-pamby box of salve, but a voice that thunders fact and is more anxious to be true than pleasing. There should be a campaign of tract distribution—short well-written facts and arguments—rained over this land by millions of copies, particularly in the South, where the white people know less about the Negro than in any other part of the civilized world. The press should be utilized—the four hundred Negro weeklies, the great dailies and eventually the magazines, when we get magazine editors who will lead public opinion instead of following afar with resonant brays. Lectures, lantern slides and moving pictures, cooperating with a bureau of information and eventually becoming a Negro encyclopedia—all these are efforts along the line of making human beings realize that Negroes are human.---W.E.B. Du Bois April 1915 *Crisis* (*Emerging* 77).

W.E.B. Du Bois's words seem to bring us full circle, harkening to Frederick Douglass's charge of attesting the humanity of African Americans through print, and particularly the press. Like Douglass's role in the nineteenth century, Du Bois saw his role in the early twentieth century of continuing to affirm black humanity and all the rights and freedoms associated with that humanity. While Douglass used the written word to fight slavery, Du Bois swung the written word with a vengeance to chop Jim Crow off at the knees. Elliot Rudwick contends that Du Bois, much in the same vein as Douglass, thought "that Negroes should protest against their second-class status, and at that time he maintained that direct social action was the only method which would bring freedom to his people" (4). For Du Bois, direct social action meant protesting in a public forum--through the press.

Born in 1868, just three years after the end of the Civil War, Du Bois came into his own as an intellectual in the midst of the Reconstruction backlash. Louis Harlan in the

preface to *W.E.B. Du Bois: Propagandist of the Negro Protest* explains Du Bois "wandered up every conceivable avenue of assault on the absurdities that race and racial attitudes have created in twentieth-century America" (7). As an undergraduate student at Fisk University, Du Bois first encountered Southern democracy (or lack of). He also encountered the plight of poor African Americans, who toiled the land as virtual indentured servants or de facto slaves in a sharecropping system. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Nellie McKay contend that "in 1885, the 'quite thoroughly New England' youth went to Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, his first foray into the South and southern racism and, more important, his first deep immersion in the lives of African Americans" (687).

It was probably during this time that Du Bois began to see the race problem tied to economics and that connection and those themes played out in both his journalism work and his literature. In fact, in Du Bois's seminal work, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), in the section "Of the Meaning of Progress," he details his summer working in a Tennessee community as a teacher in a "Negro" school. During this time he became intimate with several of the black families he stayed with, and watched how they toiled the land year after year to still be in arrears, much like the Burke family mentioned in that chapter. Du Bois writes, "The Burkes held a hundred acres, but they were still in debt. Indeed, the gaunt father who toiled night and day would scarcely be happy out of debt, being so use to it" (*Souls* 56). Here in the dusty hills of Tennessee, Du Bois saw firsthand how descendants of slaves were still bound to Southern soil because of the sharecropping system. Du Bois realized that slavery had not been removed, it was just called by another name. Ten years later, he returned and talked to Uncle Bird, the owner of one of the homes Du Bois stayed in while teaching, about the plight of those African American families he met during that summer a

decade ago. Du Bois pondered the ills many of those families suffered at the hands of a segregated racist society as he “rode to Nashville in the Jim Crow car” (*Souls* 57).

Riding that railroad car to Nashville while immersed in thought was probably one of the few times Du Bois remained silent in the face of Jim Crow. He was an ardent fighter against racism and discrimination. This chapter will focus on Du Bois’s fight against Jim Crow when he was editor of the NAACP’s *Crisis* magazine between 1910 and 1934. This chapter will also examine how Du Bois used his journalism to set the stage for his protest literature. Following his journalism example, Du Bois saw art as propaganda to uplift the race, and he understood that African Americans, perceived as inferior, would only move forward when images of competent, educated, and moral African Americans proliferated in literary works. He also believed that all forms of literacy at his disposal had to be used to engage in effective protest of America's racist social order.

This chapter argues that Du Bois's extensive journalism work guided the protest themes that would appear in his literature. Du Bois’s major themes of capitalism/socialism, Pan-Africanism/nationalism, and racism/discrimination were discussed first and often, and continuously in his journalism, eventually making their way into his literature. When Du Bois addresses these same protest themes in his literature, they are merely an extension of the work he was doing in the newsroom. To support this thesis, this chapter will first establish Du Bois as a journalist; second, show how Du Bois incorporated the second level of agenda-setting in his journalism and protest art; and third, compare the protest work Du Bois did as a journalist at the *Crisis* between 1910-1934 with his first two novels, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* (1911) and *Dark Princess* (1928).

Although Du Bois, a prolific scholar himself, is one of the most researched men of

letters of all times, it is worth providing a quick summary of his life. Abandoned by his father, he was raised in a sheltered existence in Great Barrington, Massachusetts with his mother—an existence mostly free of outright racism and discrimination. I believe this environment allowed him to develop his skills and talents free from a racial inferiority complex. In this setting, Du Bois often bested his white school mates in education and athletics, and it allowed him to develop the socio-political outlook that African Americans were equal to whites and deserving of the same rights. An honored student in high school, he later went to Fisk University graduating in three years with a bachelor's in 1888. Du Bois then went to Harvard graduating with another bachelor's degree in 1890 and a master's degree a year later. He studied abroad in Germany at the University of Berlin from 1892 to 1894, and later he returned to Harvard where he received his doctorate in 1895. He took several professional jobs teaching economics, sociology, and history. As a professor, particularly during his time at Atlanta University, Du Bois wrote and published constantly. During his time at Atlanta University, he became more politically active as an early member of the Niagara Movement in 1905, which would morph into the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which he helped found later in 1909. Gates and McKay explain that because of Du Bois's "extensive publications in the sociology and history of African Americans and in tribute to his pioneering editing of numerous journals of opinion devoted to racial issues, Du Bois has been called, with justification, the founder of black studies in American academic life" (686). And it would be difficult to argue with Gates and McKay on this matter. Du Bois's work as a scholar and activist is how and where he established his reputation.

In 1910, Du Bois started the *Crisis*, and maintained control of the publication until he

left the NAACP leadership in 1934. In the following years, his politics became more radical as he moved toward Marxism and black militancy, leading to his departure from his NAACP leadership position. By the 1950s and 1960s, because of his radical leftist positions, such as a growing affinity for the Soviet Union, Du Bois had become marginalized. He would later renounce his American citizenship and become a citizen of Ghana, dying there in 1963 (Gates and McKay 686-89).

While Du Bois has been known for many achievements as a political activist, a scholar, a renowned sociologist, and a writer, he is rarely viewed as a journalist, which is curious, to say the least. Here is where I see my work situated, to not only present Du Bois as the newsman that he was, but also to show how his journalism set the tone for his literature. The irony of him being unheralded in journalism is that Du Bois was a journalist to his core, starting in high school when he first began to publish. As John Gabriel Hunt explains in the introduction in *Souls* that “between 1833 and 1885 he was the western Massachusetts correspondent for a black weekly newspaper, the New York *Globe* (called the *Freeman* by 1884). At Fisk University, he served as editor-in-chief of the *Fisk Herald*” (viii). Not only did Du Bois work as a newsman, but he also embodied his role as a journalist according to V. P. Franklin in his article “Review: W.E.B. Du Bois as Journalist.” As Franklin and Hunt demonstrate, Du Bois had a great and early interest in journalism, and one could argue that the newsroom acted as a training ground in developing him as a writer and thinker. Later, while serving as faculty at Atlanta University from 1898 to 1910, Du Bois continued to ply his journalism craft, writing for such magazines as the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *Dial*, and the *World’s Work* (Hunt viii). It was also during his time at Atlanta University that Du Bois ventured out and started two magazines of his own, *The Moon Illustrated Weekly* (1905-

1906) and *The Horizon: A Journal of the Color Line* (1907-1910):

Soon disillusioned with social science but determined to strike a blow against the "white backlash" of his day, Du Bois the man of learning became increasingly a publicist and propagandist. Breaking openly with the bland accommodationist Booker T. Washington, Du Bois started two ill-starred Negro magazines and flailed out at racial restrictions with essays, speeches, and poetry. (Harlan 8)

Du Bois's determination to work as a journalist is evident in these years of hard work, starting in 1901. He attempted to find funding and sponsors for his magazine endeavors, according to Paul Partington in the article "The *Moon Illustrated Weekly*: The Precursor of the *Crisis*." He worked furiously to establish a magazine, meeting with white northerners and editors he knew for support (Partington 206) and eventually partnered with Edward Simon and Harry Pace, and in December 1905 in Memphis, Tennessee, *Moon* was created (Johnson and Johnson 333). Partington contends Du Bois viewed the establishment of *Moon* as a major achievement in his young journalistic career and possibly setting the stage for work later on the national stage, saying,

For him the *Moon* fulfilled a boyhood dream and climaxed an effort of several years to launch a national magazine. Financed with his savings of \$1,200, the *Moon* represented his first venture as the editor of a national journal. Through its pages he proposed to interpret "a new race consciousness to the world and [to reveal] the inner meaning of the modern world to the merging races." (qtd. in 206)

Quoting Du Bois from the pages of *Moon*, Partington offers insight into how the scholar

viewed the press and how he could use the press to advance an agenda. At an early age, he understood the power of the press and its ability to provide messages for the masses. His launching of *Moon* was not from some vain pursuit. He saw it as a vehicle to shape public opinion, particularly on the issues of race and discrimination. Doing most, if not all, of the writing for the magazine, Du Bois struck an uncompromising tone in his publication for example, the paper "charged Booker T. Washington with making friends of the Southern white man" (Partington 214). Moreover, the magazine set the tone for his career as "a militant journalist." Partington says, "from the pages of the *Moon* he commented on the issues of the day. These included greater equality and freedom for the Negro, the platform of the Niagara movement, etc. His subjects varied from racial problems in Africa to disfranchisement of the Negro in the United States" (214). Du Bois was setting the agenda of the issues he would address later not only in other journalism outlets but in his literature.

With *Moon*'s controversial stance, according to Arthur and Ronald Johnson, the magazine "attracted only a limited audience—approximately 250 to 500 subscribers—and it lasted for just a short time—until the summer of 1906" (333). However, Du Bois was not daunted by the failure of *Moon*. By 1907, he had launched the *Horizon*. Johnson and Johnson contend that Du Bois took lessons from his venture with *Moon* and put together a stronger publication with *Horizon*, published in Washington, D.C., from January 1907 to May 1910: "First of all, it featured more memorable prose. . . . He indicated, as well, an understanding of the politics of literature, an awareness he had not exhibited in *Moon*" (333-34). As with *Moon*, Du Bois saw *Horizon* as a tool to address political issues, specifically those that impacted the lives of African Americans. Susanna Ashton explains that while *Horizon* was marketed to middle-class African Americans, the magazine had the "potential to break down

the divisions between the urban elite and the rural poor in the African American community” (20). Du Bois addressed economic issues in the pages of the magazine that appealed to both rural and urban populations. In his early writings as a journalist, themes of socialism can be seen emerging in the *Horizon*, which would eventually materialize later in his literature. Du Bois writes, “‘I am a Socialist-of-the-Path. I do not believe in the complete socialization of the means of production . . . but the Path of Progress and common sense certainly leads to a far greater ownership of the public wealth for the public good than is now the case . . .’” (qtd. in Johnson and Johnson 334).

Horizon, fared much better than *Moon*, laying the groundwork for Du Bois’s next and probably greatest conquest in journalism—the running of the *Crisis*. In fact, some scholars have argued that *Moon* was really just a trial run for Du Bois’s major push into journalism with the *Crisis*.⁸ I would include the *Horizon* as well. He brought all of his past experiences to bear to the editorship of this NAACP publication. Partington said that “the *Moon* was a dream, a dream which was not to be realized until 1918 when the circulation of the *Crisis* reached 100,000” (216). The *Crisis* was Du Bois’s baby. He saw his work at the magazine as the best place to lead the NAACP in tackling racial problems:

The editor believed he could make his contribution to cause of Negro rights by publishing this journal and had no inclination to take an aggressive role in promulgating policies at sessions of the N.A.A.C.P. board directors. He preferred to make this influence felt on the pages of the magazine and freely admitted the *Crisis* was "the only work" in the Association "which attracts me." (qtd. in Rudwick 151)

⁸ Scholars such as Paul G. Partington, call the *Moon* “the precursor of the *Crisis*” (213).

Du Bois saying that "the only work" that attracted him in the NAACP is the magazine provides some insight into the value he placed on journalism. He took firm control of the magazine and with complete editorial reign, he gave the NAACP a voice to match its actions in the struggle for human rights. The voice, though, was all Du Bois's. As Henry Lee Moon explains,

Du Bois wisely refused an executive position in the new organization, while eagerly embracing the opportunity to establish and edit the Association's organ, *The Crisis*. . . . He made of the new periodical much more than a house organ. Under his editorship *The Crisis* became an important journal of opinion, including the opinions of a notable group of contributors, black and white, American and foreign. Its literary standards rivaled the best of its American contemporaries. It became the most influential magazine ever published and edited by Negro Americans. (21)

Again, Moon really speaks to Du Bois's commitment to journalism and how he viewed journalism in the terms of its effectiveness to be used as a protest tool for African Americans. What is also interesting about Moon's quote is that Du Bois, who passed up an executive position, most likely could have had any role in the organization, and he decided to concentrate his time in the public information sphere as a newsman. And not only did he spend his time as an editor, but again, like Douglass, he went about making the periodical a strong voice that in of itself would be used to not only to speak to the achievements of African Americans but the possibilities for them if given a chance. Du Bois saw the role of being a spokesman for his people through the written word such a critical position that he dare not leave the editorship to anyone else. Moon explains that Du Bois through this

magazine played his largest role in the struggle for humanity, claiming, “of the many Du Bois roles—most of them important enough for any single career—that of the leader and theoretician of the Negro protest movement is historically the most significant” (15). What might be even more significant about Du Bois’s protest leadership is that he climbed to the top through writing, unlike any other leader had done before or many after him. Gates explains,

Du Bois, clearly, saw himself as a man of action, but a man of action who luxuriated within a verdant and fecund tropical rainforest of words. It is not Du Bois’s intoxication with words that marks his place in the history of great black public intellectuals—persons of letters for whom words are a vehicle for political action and their own participation in political movements ... no, the novelty of Du Bois’s place in the black tradition is that he wrote himself to a power, rather than spoke himself to power. (“Black Letters” xii)

To note what is symbolic about Du Bois writing himself into power, we have to return to Gates again, who has argued that African Americans have not necessarily written themselves into power, but they have written (or attempted to write) themselves into existence. The written word in the African American literary genre has time after time been used to substantiate African Americans as rational, thinking beings as Gates explains in *Loose Cannons* (57). Frederick Douglass, before Du Bois, attempted to write himself as well as his fellow African Americans into existence through his slave narratives and his publication of the *North Star*. Douglass also saw African American publications as key to promoting the humanity of African Americans, the primary reason he pushed for the creation of a black-owned, black-published newspaper in the face of doubts. Du Bois, just as

Douglass, would not be deterred. Rudwick writes, "He did not relinquish his desire to edit a magazine of propaganda and news, and against the well-meaning advice of some board members he started the publication of the *Crisis*, the Association's monthly" (151). Du Bois maintained complete autonomy of the magazine, ensuring his voice would be the dominant voice of protest in the *Crisis* "to be recognized as "Du Bois' Domain" (qtd. in Rudwick 151). It's important to draw the connections between Du Bois and Douglass because these men were fighting the same fight just called by different names--slavery and Jim Crow, and they fought using the same weapons--the written word and the press. These men from different generations actually come to the same conclusions about the significance of the written word and the press for effective protest.

Du Bois was at the helm of the *Crisis* during heady times for African Americans. Jim Crow was becoming firmly entrenched, the Ku Klux Klan was on the march again, and violence against African Americans was on the rise. Miscegenation and segregation codes were put in place to ensure the separation of African Americans and whites. America was at war, and African Americans enlisted with the hope of realizing social gains for their service. Du Bois was a proponent of African Americans serving in the military in the country's World War I campaign to make the world safe for democracy. He wrote several articles in the *Crisis* explaining how fighting in the war abroad would help African Americans in their fight at home for equality. But the hope of equality African Americans soldiers thought their service would ensure was dashed once they returned home. Instead, during the 1920s, African Americans suffered from an increase in lynchings and race riots throughout the country. This was the period that Du Bois wrote for the *Crisis*. This is the period he exerted leadership and this is a period of his most prolific contribution to journalism:

The *Crisis* editor strove mightily and persistently to lighten this burden. He employed his powerful pen to pry loose the externally imposed handicaps and to strengthen the inner core of the race to enable it to stand up straight and thrust off the burden. He exposed the lies about the Negro. He assailed the injustices which held the race down. He pleaded for intensified organized effort to combat Jim Crow. He called for establishment of black consumer cooperatives and urged support of Negro business and other means of self help. (Moon 35)

Du Bois's time at the magazine also intersects with the country entering the Great Depression, so not only do racial issues concern Du Bois, but also economic issues. In fact, Du Bois early on made the connection between the grief suffered by African Americans and a capitalist system that had surely failed them as well as many poor white people. His writings determined that the struggle for human rights reforms had to also include economic reforms. As Moon points out, as Du Bois grew, his journalism writing grew and changed through the years as he “placed more emphasis on economic and political issues and on international affairs, particularly Pan-Africanism. . . . He warned against efforts to duplicate within black America the class structure and economic ideology of white America. He scorned the idea of black capitalism as a viable solution to the race problem” (24). Du Bois saw more and more African Americans equating equality to economics gained through capitalism. He viewed faith in capitalism as false hope.

Du Bois's journalism work at the *Crisis* rose to the level that Douglass would have been proud. Circulation of the magazine went from 1,000 in 1910 to 30,000 by 1913, according to Rudwick (151). Franklin contends that Du Bois's work at the magazine was

unparalleled, saying, “during the years of Du Bois’s editorship (1910-1934), *The Crisis* was undeniably the most influential magazine in the Afro-American community” (241). Franklin, among the few scholars, who notes Du Bois as a force in journalism, writes he was "one of the country’s leading journalists and intellectuals" and "a major contributor to the development of black journalism in the United States" (240). With the exceptions of Franklin and Rudwick, Du Bois rarely is given the credit due to him as a journalist. His work as a journalist is so interweaved with his activism that Du Bois the newsman is often lost. But Du Bois's base for activism was the press, and his work set the example for others in the newsroom to emulate.

Du Bois understood the potential of the press, particularly in the hands of capable African American editors. Franklin quotes Du Bois at length, using the scholar to explain the significance of the black press in terms of protest and in terms of achievement for the African American community. Du Bois writes, "The present Negro press, especially as represented by the weekly newspaper, is one of the extraordinary accomplishments of the Negro in America. From small beginnings hardly worth notice they have grown to a circulation to be counted in the millions" (qtd. in Franklin 243). Furthermore, according to Franklin, Du Bois saw the importance of the continued development and the growth of the black press because of the dire need to counter the white press that had, at best, ignored and, at worst, unjustly criticized African Americans:

Very little of what Negroes wanted to know about themselves, their group action and the relation of public occurrences to their interests were treated by the press. Then came the time when the American press so far as the Negro was concerned was interested in the Negro as a minstrel, a joke, a

subject of caricature. He became in time an awful example of democracy gone wrong, of crime and various monstrous acts. (qtd. in Franklin 240)

According to Rudwick, Du Bois's magazine gained an affluent African American readership, and he produced series dedicated to that demographic. Some of the articles published that first year included "Colored High Schools," "Women's Clubs," "The Colored College Athlete," and "Harriet Beecher Stowe's Personal Knowledge of the Negro Character." In addition, the magazine featured a section called "'Along the Color Line' which, like a small town newspaper, contained news items about a large number of Negroes" (152-53). Rudwick explains that Du Bois used the *Crisis* to attack segregation, particularly in the education system, and to shatter the notion that African American children could not achieve. For example, in the article "College Education," published in the *Crisis* July 1914, Du Bois promotes the importance of higher education for African Americans writing, "Every artificially increased difficulty that surrounds colored children today should be additional incentive to make their education and mental development the highest possible. Only in the higher intellectual life of today can they hope to find that freedom . . ." (Du Bois, *Emerging* 122). During a time African Americans were either discouraged from attending college or encouraged to attend a trade school, Du Bois saw the importance of drawing the parallels between higher education and freedom. In journalism form, "Du Bois' editorials had clearness, sharpness, and dramatic style, the theme of protest was expressed with directness and simplicity" (Rudwick 156). We see an example of this in his article "Education," published July 1915 in the *Crisis*. Du Bois begins the piece by saying,

The quiet insidious persistent attempt to keep the mass of the Negroes in

America in just sufficient ignorance to render them incapable of realizing their power or resisting the position of inferiority into which the bulk of the nation is determined to thrust them was never stronger than today. Let us not be deceived. (Du Bois, *Emerging* 122)

With his statement of "Let us not be deceived," Du Bois shows a directness and bluntness in his editorial writing. He is not tepid in addressing wrongs.

Du Bois was a serious journalist, beginning with his days as a freelance writer, the creation of two magazines, and his editorship of the *Crisis*, and he used the news to protest. Through the press, Du Bois spoke for the millions of other oppressed African Americans who did not have a voice. African Americans had no voice with the American press, the white press. The American press was not concerned about African American issues, which is why the black press protested conditions loudly and boldly and often to an angry audience. The black press led the way and African Americans of the early twentieth century were glad to follow, and the white press, hence, white America, sat up and took notice. Du Bois says as much in his essay "The American Negro Press," explaining, "what white commentators think they have discovered is that the Negro press is exciting the masses of Negroes to discontent and even to violence. As a matter of fact what they are really seeing is the intensity of feeling and resentment which is sweeping over the Negro people" (qtd. in Franklin 242-43). Du Bois indicates that African Americans had a place, through the black press, to read, to address, and to air grievances. The African American press cared about what concerned black people, unlike the mainstream white press of that period.

Although not using the specific terminology, Du Bois is nonetheless discussing the second level of agenda setting theory as explained by Salma Ghanem in "Filling in the

Tapestry: The Second Level of Agenda Setting." Again, the agenda-setting theory first mentioned in Donald Shaw and Maxwell McCombs's 1972 article "Agenda-Setting Function of the Mass Media" contends that the media through their reporting and editorializing inadvertently determine for their reader what subject is important—what is news—particularly in the political realm. Scholars such as Ghanem assert that the second level of agenda setting goes beyond the media just providing images to the public to emphasizing certain characteristics of an issue or person. He writes, "Agenda setting is now detailing a second level of effects that examines how media coverage affects both what the public thinks about and how the public thinks about it. This second level of agenda setting deals with the specific attributes of a topic and how this agenda of attributes also influences public opinion" (qtd. in Ghanem 3). The black press, in general, and Du Bois, specifically, engaged in the second-level of agenda setting through a conscious effort of trying to influence public opinion about African Americans. Du Bois, like other African American writers, tried to give African Americans a makeover. His goal was to show to a doubting American public that African Americans were worthy of human rights and American citizenship, writing, "The *Crisis*, our record of the darker races, must have a circulation not of 35,000, chiefly among colored folk, but at least 250,000 among all men who believe in men" (*Emerging* 77). Although the *Crisis* had an African American audience, he often aimed his pieces to a larger white audience. He did so with an eye toward influencing change using journalism.

Just as Du Bois scoffed at art for art's sake, he did not see journalism just for journalism's sake. He was trying to change minds and true to the second level of agenda setting, he focuses on emphasizing attributes among the African American population that showed them in the best light. For example, just as Pauline E. Hopkins did in her magazine,

Du Bois also included African American achievements in his publication and countered false stereotypes. In addition, Du Bois was deliberate in what he wrote and how he wrote in terms of protest. Again, he was trying to change minds. As Ghanem explains, "This transference of the salience of attributes is the core of the second level of agenda setting" (7). Ghanem is speaking to the media's ability to influence readers through the constant emphasis of certain traits in reporting. Images of African Americans, even in the beginning of the twentieth century, did not move them much beyond the realm of animals. Du Bois's goal was to not allow those images to stand, new images had to be created through journalism and literature. He writes, "Suppose the only Negro who survived some centuries hence was the Negro painted by white Americans in novels and essays they have written. What would people in a hundred years say of black Americans? Now turn it around. Suppose you were to write a story and put in it the kind of people you know and like and imagine" ("Criteria" 781-82). That was his challenge to African American writers, but it was his challenge to himself. Du Bois lived up to that challenge. He wrote with a purpose.

His sense of purpose moved beyond his journalism into his literature. As African American writers gained stature during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, Du Bois in "Criteria of Negro Art" (1926) asked this simple rhetorical question about art's purpose for the African American, writing, "After all, what have we who are slaves and blacks to do with art?" ("Criteria" 777). And if Du Bois was not clear here on his position of art and how it should be used, no one can mistake one of his most famous declarations:

Thus all Art is propaganda and ever must be, despite the wailing of the purists. I stand in utter shamelessness and say that whatever art I have for writing has been used always for propaganda for gaining the right of black

folk to love and enjoy. I do not care a damn for any art that is not used for propaganda. ("Criteria" 782-83)

Du Bois, a learned man with an appreciation of art, understood art in all of its beauty and mystery. But he also understood the key of universal, lasting, and important art had to deal in the realm of truth. He saw the potential for art, and specifically literature, to be used as a blunt instrument for truth and protest. Du Bois explains,

I am one who tells the truth and exposes evil and seeks with Beauty and for Beauty to set the world right. That somehow, somewhere eternal and perfect Beauty sits above Truth and Right I can conceive, but here and now and in the world in which I work they are for me unseparated and inseparable. ("Criteria" 779)

For Du Bois, the highest order of art is its use to meaningfully change lives, to protest wrongs, and to be a beacon of hope. Du Bois strived to be a workman with his words, with his art. He understood as his job and the job of other African American writers to use their talent to change and create a new reality for African Americans. Du Bois argues,

Thus it is the bounded duty of black America to begin this great work of the creation of Beauty, of the preservation of Beauty, of the realization of Beauty, and we must use in this work all the methods that men have used before. And what have been the tools of the artists in times gone by?

First of all, he has used the Truth--not for the sake of truth, not as a scientist seeking truth, but as one upon whom Truth eternally thrusts itself as the highest handmaid of imagination, as the one great vehicle of universal understanding. ("Criteria" 782)

Du Bois's understanding of art here speaks to the standards inherent in and inherited from journalism-- to seek truth in an attempt to provide understanding and valuable information to readers. Journalism's goal is to create awareness, to shed light, and to improve the lives of readers as evident in the code of ethics established in 1923 by the American Society of Newspaper Editors (Emery, Emery, and Roberts 515). It is interesting that Du Bois ties journalism principles to literature and art. Du Bois used this understanding of journalism as he explored his more creative side with literature and fiction. However, the truth and the searching of truth started with his journalism, eventually shaping the literature that he wrote during this period. Du Bois's first two novels, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* (1911) and *Dark Princess* (1928), illustrate his belief in the relevancy of art to social protest and how his journalism themes influence his art. These pieces address many of the issues that Du Bois covered in his journalistic writing during this period. *Quest* looks at the Southern cotton industry and examines the issues of economic oppression, serfdom, and Southern racism and hostility. Du Bois's next novel, the *Dark Princess*, tells the story of a young African American man whose plans to become a doctor are destroyed because of racism. After being blocked from a medical program, the protagonist, Matthew, leaves America for Europe where he meets a beautiful Indian princess who believes in superiority of the darker races. The book touches on themes such as Pan-Africanism, nationalism, and revolutionary protest. By juxtaposing the themes in these two novels to Du Bois's journalistic work in the *Crisis*, occurring at the same time, one is able to get a clearer picture of how his journalism influenced and guided his literature.

During his lifetime, Du Bois moved among the writing genres of journalism, academic research and literature. He specifically turned to literature to try to tap into a softer,

more creative side of protest that he was unable to express in either his journalism or his academic writing, according to Gates and McKay, stating, "He repeatedly turned to traditional literary forms, such as poetry, fiction, and introspective, impressionistic prose when impelled by the need to express his most deeply felt emotions" (686). When Du Bois did turn to letters, he did so with mixed results. As Arnold Rampersad claimed, "Du Bois's reputation as a man of literature is surely the 'awkward' side of such fame as he possesses . . ." (50). Rampersad points out that many of the artists during the Harlem Renaissance, particularly those who had been assailed by Du Bois for creating non-protest art, did not find much to applaud in the scholar's literature. Claude McKay wrote of Du Bois's work that "nowhere in your writings do you reveal any comprehension of aesthetics" and Arna Bontemps thought Du Bois's work "unimaginative" (qtd. in Rampersad 51). Du Bois's literature reflects the workman attitude that he took toward his creative writing. Du Bois wrote for effect and not for beauty, and this was clearly evident in his literary works.

Even with the criticism, Du Bois was not dissuaded from writing literature. He wrote five novels in total to include the *Black Flame* trilogy: *The Ordeal of Mansart* (1957), *Mansart Builds a School* (1959), and *Worlds of Color* (1961) all written toward the end of his life. Because Du Bois was a marginalized figure by time the *Black Flame* trilogy of novels were published, they "went into the critical and cultural abyss" ("Black Letters" xxiii). More attention has been given to both *Quest* and the *Dark Princess*. The most attention of his published works, if you will, has been paid to *Souls*, which is structured as a collection of literary essays rather than a novel. *Souls* played a large part in Du Bois gaining his reputation as a premier writer, thinker, and leader of his generation; scholars have examined the book thoroughly, particularly Du Bois's discussion of the color line, and more importantly, his

much lauded notion of "double consciousness."

Again, many of the themes that Du Bois wrote about as a freelance journalist appeared in *Souls*. However, we see the pattern even more pronounced in Du Bois's true works of fiction. Du Bois's first two novels *Quest* and *Dark Princess* give us the ability to examine the effects of his journalism on these novels because the time they were written falls in the middle of his most productive journalism work--his time at the *Crisis*. However, before jumping into this analysis, it would be worthwhile at this point to provide a fuller summary of each book and to discuss what scholars have said about each novel.

In *Quest*, the story takes an in-depth look into the Southern cotton industry and how that industry creates a framework where discrimination and racism flourish. Du Bois follows the lives of African American students Zora and Bles, who meet in an Alabama swamp, grow up together, and fall in love. Zora and Bles, the typical Southern characters Du Bois wrote about, struggle against, racism and economic hardships. Gates writes,

Du Bois's subject was, in no small part, the largely unarticulated beliefs and practices of American Negroes, who were impatient to burst out of the cotton fields and take their rightful place as Americans. As he saw it, African American culture in 1903 was at once vibrant and disjointed, rooted in an almost medieval agrarian past and yet fiercely restive" (Gates, "Black Letters" xiii).

Although Zora and Bles attend a (segregated) school for African Americans, cotton plays a large part in their existence and the existence of other families in their community. Most of the African Americans who live on the land are sharecroppers who work for or rent land owned by the Cresswells. The Cresswells are longtime white Southern aristocrats, who

exploit and oppress and their tenants and employees, functioning as de facto slave owners. When Zora and Bles become adults, they leave Alabama with Zora becoming a personal assistant for a wealthy white woman, and Bles moving to Washington, D.C. where he becomes involved in politics. Eventually, both return to their native home, and try to break the hold that the Cresswells and cotton have on the African American community by creating their own industry and school. Zora and Bles confront decades-long racism, discrimination, and class oppression as they attempt to reform and restructure their Alabama home.

In their examination of *Quest*, scholars have concentrated on Du Bois connecting racial issues to economics as well as Du Bois's exploration of feminist issues through the interesting and complex character of Zora. Although not as widely known or appreciated as *Souls*, *Quest* both has garnered thematic respect. Gates and McKay contend that the book, "partly an expose of the southern cotton industry, partly a romantic love story, and partly a brief for socialism, did not receive much notice, but its unhackneyed depiction of black women and its barely disguised political radicalism were remarkable in African American fiction" (688). William Andrews in the introduction of *Quest* said Du Bois should be applauded for his efforts and the "novel should be appreciated as the most ambitious African American contribution to the pursuit of the Great American Novel—in effect, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* is the most noteworthy Great African American novel of its time" (xxv). Furthermore, Andrews explains that the themes that Du Bois touches on in this novel, although radical at the time, have proven to be enduring, another reason to sing the praises of the novel and its author:

Almost a century after the appearance of *The Quest of the Silver Fleece*, we celebrate its political boldness about sexual, gender, and economic

institutions, as well as its determined attempt to portray the "race problem" as a national issue demanding a national fictional canvas on which to portray it and a reorientation of national consciousness and priorities in order to resolve it. (xxvii.)

This is high praise from both Gates and Andrews and well deserved. Again the root of Gates's and Andrews's praises comes from Du Bois tackling of economics as well as feminism. Most of the scholarship on *Quest* contend the work is much an indictment on capitalism as it is of racism. Andrews does a nice job of explaining how Du Bois not only tied racism to capitalism, but also how the writer shows that regions in the North and South worked together to exploit not only African American workers but also poor white workers as well. Andrews said, "Du Bois was prepared to enlarge the focus of his novel beyond the South—though *Quest* is indeed set primarily in the Black Belt—in order to chart the complicity of Wall Street (U.S. capitalism) and Washington, D.C. (the national government), in the continuing domination of white over black in the South" (xxvi). Furthermore, Andrews argues that Du Bois demonstrates how cotton and the Southern industry are tied to the North, as well as cotton's far-reaching world implication with the demand for the crop globally. Andrews explains, for Du Bois, economics and discrimination were seen as one. Mark Wienen and Julie Kraft going farther than Andrews contend that *Quest* is an indictment of capitalism as well as a promotion of socialism:

Though one might imagine fictional art to be merely a provisional trying out of alternative realities, *Quest of the Silver Fleece* constitutes a definite, socialist remedy for socioeconomic ills, coming from the pen of a writer

whose fiction like the rest of his writing was meant to be politically purposive. (69)

Wienen and Kraft also explain that by staging this socialist model, Du Bois begins to show what problems can be caused by capitalism--with the very least being a division among the poor--black and white. They explain, "White capitalists are presented in *Quest* as deliberately fomenting division and suspicion between white and black workers to keep both classes down, and racism is too fertile a soil for this plot to be readily foiled" (Wienen and Kraft 71). Scholars such as Wienen and Kraft are right on with their discussions of Du Bois connecting African Americans' racial woes to economics. In Du Bois's lifetime, he criticized capitalism and looked at other systems such as socialism, Marxism, and communism that would enable more economic equity and eliminate racial barriers. He understood that for poor African Americans to rise, the position of poor white Americans also had to rise. He understood how those two groups were related.

Equally important to scholars in examining *Quest* is Du Bois's feminism work. Several scholars have contend that Du Bois's exploration of a woman character in of itself during the time he wrote this book makes *Quest* an important novel. Gates called the novel "radical," saying, "*Quest* is a 'Southern problem' novel writ large on a national and even mythic canvas, and one that is ultimately radical in its endorsement of strong black womanhood, equality and comradeship between the sexes" ("Black Letters" xx). Thus, Du Bois flips American society on its head not only by dismantling a capitalistic model, but also by subverting the patriarchal model as well. When Bles and Zora first meet, he clearly is the leader. By the end of the novel, Zora is in charge. Bles follows her in matters both personal and public. Not only is it remarkable that Zora as a woman has a

voice, but Zora as a black woman has a voice and a leadership role in the community, which was uncommon for black women in early twentieth century America.

Like in *Quest*, Du Bois again places a woman of color front and center in the unfolding drama in his second novel *Dark Princess*. These woman characters Indian Princess Kautilya as like with Zora, is desired and sought after and appreciated for her beauty and intellect. Du Bois again is making a feminist statement that also takes into account color. Where African American women and other women of color have been seen in literature as either asexual or hypersexual, in both instances, Du Bois creates women of color who are noble and contrary to the stereotypes.

Dark Princess introduces the reader to Matthew Towns, a brilliant medical student, who is denied entry into the obstetrics program at a white hospital. After this denial, Towns goes to Europe and while there, he meets the Indian Princess Kautilya. She heads an international world council of color which desires to end imperialism, colonialism, and racial discrimination at the hands of white people both in Europe and America. Towns makes the case for the American Negro's participation in this revolution, and he becomes a member of the organization. As Towns becomes more involved in the organization, his devotion and love for its leader, Kautilya, grows. During the course of the novel, several twists of plot keep Matthew and Kautilya apart. Matthew eventually marries another woman and goes into politics, but leaves both before completely selling his soul to ambition and greed. He reunites with Kautilya by the end of the novel, and they continue the work of the council.

Again, most scholars have not given the *Dark Princess* the attention that has been devoted to *Souls*. However, when scholars have considered *Dark Princess*, more often

than not, they have read the novel through a Pan-African focus. Scholars contend that Du Bois's examination of the race problem, the problem of the color line is no longer limited to black and whites in America but takes on a more global, multi-racial approach. Bill Mullen in the article "Du Bois, Dark Princess, and the Afro-Asian International" explains that Du Bois's Pan-Africanism in the *Dark Princess* was a thirty-year process in mental growth. Mullen contends that Du Bois's view of the color line went beyond the U.S. "extending into China, Japan, and India, and he considered Pan-Africanism and Pan-Asianism as mutually constituting global struggles" (218-19). Moreover, Mullen sees *Dark Princess* as a major text in defining the struggle against imperialism, racism and colonization:

Dark Princess thus stands as a central text in African American discursive engagement with the American, Asian, and international left in this century, and it constitutes a key text for understanding how resistance, particularly to Eurocentric discourses of race, led to the radical recasting of Afro-Asian relationships as central to twentieth-century world revolutionary struggle. (219)

According to Homi Bhabha in the introduction to *Dark Princess*, the genesis of Du Bois's global thinking of the struggle of the African American might have started back in 1911 with his participation in the Universal Races Congress, part of the anti-colonial and anti-racist movements of the time dedicated to the advancement of people of color. Du Bois was moved by his participation:

It was the international nature of the event as a meeting place of cosmopolitan minds, free of the prejudices of race or nation, that remained with him as a

symbol of social harmony and global justice. Indeed, nowhere among the delegates present at the Congress—Asians, Americans, Europeans, and Africans---was there even a mere shadow of the prejudicial, discriminatory color line. (Bhabha xxvi)

As Bhabha indicates, Du Bois of 1928 no longer sees the problem the way he did in 1903 when *Souls* was published. Du Bois no longer sees the world just as black and white but in a multicultural way in which the American Negro has a kinship with oppressed people of color globally. In fact, for Du Bois now, the African American should give up the fight between the warring souls and concentrate on being a global citizen of those darker people of the world who know the same type of misery.

Bhabha in his introduction to *Dark Princess* argues that the symbolism in the romance between the Princess and Matthew, effectively moves beyond Du Bois's double consciousness and redraws the "color line on a global scale and bringing together racially segregated national minorities with the subject peoples of European imperialism and diasporic and anti-colonial revolutionaries" (xxvi). Bhabha adds that "the 'twoness' of African American double consciousness is now introduced to the Third World . . . as both an emancipatory formation of political solidarity and a new-found vision of transnational justice" (xxvi). Robert Gregg and Madhavi Kale also argue that the romance in *Dark Princess* bears symbolism of where Du Bois's thinking is with regard to the race struggle. Moreover, Gregg and Kale argue that Du Bois sees the Pan African movement as so transformative that it has the power to not only transform racial issues but also transform an economic system (147).

Du Bois talked about this changing world not only in his literature but also, often, and

first in his journalism. His journalism provided the raw materials used in his protest literature. For example, Bill Mullen said Du Bois as early as 1907 in an *Horizon* column called for Pan-Africanism, citing "a militant speech at the Indian National Congress as marking Asian uprising as a model for Pan-African and other colored rebellions" (220). In another example of how Du Bois's journalism influenced his literature, Wienen and Kraft compared his novel *Quest* to the muckraking tradition of investigative reporting in the early part of the twentieth century. Muckraking was a derisive term given to investigative reporters by President Theodore Roosevelt who said they dwelled in the muck and garbage. These magazine reporters, however, wore the name with pride as they went after corruption in government and business (Emery, Emery, and Roberts 213). Wienen and Kraft said Du Bois's use of muckraking served him well as a protest writer:

Within the anticapitalist muck-raking tradition, Du Bois's *Quest* extends the range of the subgenre from the usual topics--industrial exploitation, white slavery, northern metropolitan politics--to a white-on-black and southern nexus, including such topics as the exploitation of black sharecroppers and poor whites in the South, the combination of northern finance and the southern plantocracy and the corruption of patronage politics in Washington, DC. (69)

Through the course of Du Bois's journalism career, he addressed themes such as capitalism/socialism, Pan-Africanism/nationalism, and racism/discrimination. These themes eventually played prominent in his literature. Moon's collection of Du Bois's editorials from the *Crisis* from 1910 to 1934 when compare to his two novels during this period provides a clear picture of how the subject matters in his journalism made their way into his literature.

Scholars have consider Du Bois's use of the above themes in his writings, but they have not significantly delved into how his journalism largely influenced these themes in his literature.

In *Quest*, the dominant theme present is the issue of economic empowerment. However, Du Bois addressed economic issues throughout his years writing for the *Crisis* with articles like, "Earning A Living," "Real Estate in New York," "Migration and Help," "Occupations," and "The Black Man and the Unions." Most of these articles addressed the issue of economic equality as it relates to racial policies. For example, in his piece "Earning A Living" published in 1911, Du Bois takes aim at economic issues through both racial and regional frameworks. As African Americans migrated to the North from the South in the beginning of the twentieth century, the loss of a cheap, exploited labor pool caused white Southerners to try to discourage this relocation. Often, scare tactics centering around income/economics were used to pressure African Americans to stay put. In the article, Du Bois mimics these naysayers: "How do Northern colored people earn a living? There is no economic opening in the North: they are being displaced; starvation faces them" (*Emerging* 155). From his musing, Du Bois goes about quickly setting the record straight. Not only are African Americans not starving once they head North, they are thriving. Furthermore, not only are African Americans acting as consumers, but they are also producers of goods and creators of new inventions and industry. He writes, "Scarcely a locomotive rolls in the United States but by aid of a black man's lubricating device, and only recently Edison paid a colored man \$62,000 for an improvement on the phonograph" (*Emerging* 155). Du Bois does not just debunk the falsehoods with this piece, but he also demonstrates the economic potential of African Americans in terms of the power of the purse string and the potential of their collective economic power to hurt an oppressive region (South) by taking their money North.

In his article "The Immediate Program of the American Negro" published in 1915, Du Bois examines the exploitation of the African American worker. Du Bois, connecting the economic issue to liberty, writes, "The Negro must have industrial freedom. Between the peonage of the rural South, the oppression of shrewd capitalists and the jealousy of certain trade unions, the Negro laborer is the most exploited class in the country, giving more hard toil for less money than any other American, and having less voice in . . . his labor" (*Emerging* 75). In the article "Our Program" published in 1930, Du Bois not only speaks of the exploited African American worker, but he also addresses the woes of the poor white worker and how the two are related. He writes that industrial inequality oppresses all poor people, not just African Americans:

There is the problem of economic justice in the distribution of income and in the democratization of the whole industrial process, and there is the question of caste and social class based on wealth and privilege.

There is above all the question of Peace and the cessation of imperial aggression on weaker peoples. (*Emerging* 90)

In his journalism, Du Bois advanced the idea that the economic system was the glue that tied together all of the woes suffered by a "weaker" people and that insight was reflected in his literature. He saw all being ensnared by a capitalist system that preyed on the defenseless and throughout his career as a journalist and specifically during his time at the *Crisis*, Du Bois makes a case for the distribution of wealth and power, and we see him touch on this economic area in his novel *Quest*. In the book, Du Bois places the cotton industry at the center of his polemic against capitalism. By using cotton, Du Bois provides a clear link to slavery and the need for free labor that kept the institution functioning unabated for more

than two hundred years. Cotton drove the slave industry in the South. What Du Bois brilliantly demonstrates in *Quest*, however, is that much had not changed; even after emancipation and Reconstruction, the cotton industry still ruled in the South, functioning off the backs of freed African Americans as well as poor whites, both enslaved to the industry and the land through sharecropping. Bles and Zora understand how the economic system works to keep those at the bottom at the bottom, while protecting those at the top. Zora understands this so well that she attempts to break the cycle by buying swampland and having those in the community to help clear it and eventually work it for themselves:

"Oh, my people!" she almost sobbed. "My own people, I am not asking you to help others; I am pleading with you to help yourselves. Rescue your own flesh and blood-free yourselves!" And from the swaying sobbing hundreds burst a great "Amen!" . . . Two hundred men and women rose and pledged themselves to help Zora. (*Quest* 202-03)

Du Bois who so often in his journalism challenged capitalism is providing an alternative by dangling socialism on the collective minds of his readers. When Du Bois in *Quest* shows that capitalism is not just a black problem, but also a white poor problem, he is merely writing on themes that have appeared often in his journalism. In *Quest*, Du Bois illustrates how poor white people are exploited by the southern aristocratic system, symbolized by the Cresswells as well as forces of the industrial North represented by the Taylors. Through Zora, the reader comes to understand that the system is set up to pit poor whites against poor blacks:

It was when Zora, crowding into the village courthouse to see if she could not help Aunt Rachel's accused boy, found herself beside a gaunt, overworked white woman. The woman was struggling with a crippled

child and Zora, turning, lifted him carefully for the weak mother, who thanked her half timidly. "That mill's about killed him," she said. At this juncture the manacled boy was led into court, and the woman suddenly turned again to Zora. "Durned if I don't think these white slaves and black slaves had ought ter git together," she declared. "I think so, too," Zora agreed. (*Quest* 216)

Again although the issues of economics and equality have been written about often by Du Bois in his journalism work, his literature provides the emotional lift that his journalism can not. Du Bois, like Johnson and Hopkins, is influenced by twentieth century journalism standards that focus on objectivity, fairness, and hard facts. Literature is not bound by those constraints. Nonetheless, what we see with the novel *Quest* is an expose of the cotton sharecropping industry in the journalistic realm of investigative reporting and muckraking traditions. However, as Wienen and Kraft pointed out Du Bois's use of literature removes the bluntness in the message with softer edges. Instead of reporting or arguing the need for poor exploited workers to unite as he did in the pages of the *Crisis*, this argument is dramatized through the simple exchange between Zora and the white woman, who has in tow her crippled son, as a result of corporate greed and capitalism.

Literature also allowed Du Bois to put a sentimental touch on his call for darker peoples of the world to unite--of his call for Pan-Africanism that he makes clearly in his second novel, *Dark Princess*. Pan-Africanism was extremely important to Du Bois who discussed it often in the pages of the *Crisis* through the years with articles like "Pan-Africa," "To the World," "The West Indies," "On Migrating to Africa," and "Africa: January 1, 1924," written prior to the publication of the *Dark Princess* in 1928. Du Bois's concern for people of

color around the world did not lessen over time, as he kept writing about the issue until the end of his life in pieces such as "India," "Listen, Japan and China," "Pan-Africa and New Racial Philosophy" and "Japan and Ethiopia." As early as 1915, Du Bois trumpeted Pan-Africanism with his essay "Hayti." In this particular essay, Du Bois unites the suffering of those of African descent in Haiti to those of African descent in America as he argues for action against U.S.'s imperial intentions toward the country. Du Bois writes about "the outrage of uninvited American intervention, the shooting and disarming of peaceful Haytian citizens, the seizure of public funds" and then asks, "what are we ten million Negroes going to do about it? Can you not at least do this? Write President Wilson and protest" (*Emerging* 216). Du Bois makes the argument here that the rightful place for African Americans to stand is not with their country, but with the oppressed dark other. In the essay, simply titled "Africa," Du Bois also makes a clarion call for African Americans to stymie Europe's attempts to divide Africa after World War I. He writes, "The number of souls thus under the rule of aliens is astounding, It is the question of the reapportionment of this vast number of human beings which has started the Pan-African movement" (*Emerging* 217). In his articles written about Africa, Du Bois also exposes the falsity of Europe's claim that they were only trying to "civilize the natives." Du Bois contends the issue was really the lack of respect Europe held for different cultures:

Outside of cannibalism, which can be matched in this country, at least, by lynching, there is no vice and no degradation in native African customs which can begin to touch the horrors thrust upon them by white masters. Drunkenness, terrible diseases, immorality, all these things have been the gifts of European civilization. (*Emerging* 218)

In his several columns on Africa, Du Bois tried to make clear to African Americans that their involvement in alleviating the suffering of Africa would not undermine the work that needed to be done in America. He argued, "The African movement means to us what the Zionist movement must mean to the Jews, the centralization of race effort and the recognition of a racial fount. To help bear the burden of Africa does not mean any lessening of effort in our own problem at home. Rather, it means increased interest" (*Emerging* 219). Du Bois was clearly making the statement that African Americans' fortunes were tied to the fortunes of fellow Africans.

Although not the originator, as Rudwick points out, Du Bois was nonetheless committed to the Pan-African movement, participating in and organizing global meetings. In fact, Rudwick contends that Du Bois had an interest in African affairs as early as 1890s and had "suggested the establishment of 'a great central Negro State of the world' in the Congo Free State" (208). Du Bois, who participated in three Pan-African congress meetings before 1923, at the end of World War I "decided to call a Pan-African congress so that some attention would be focused upon the problems of Negroes in Africa and elsewhere" (Rudwick 208). According to Rudwick, Du Bois's concern for all people of color was indicated as he spoke of an united freedom among the color nations to include China, India, Egypt, and Ethiopia in 1930. Du Bois called for "awaking' of the black, brown, and yellow peoples" (qtd. in Rudwick 234). Again, eleven years prior to writing the *Dark Princess*, Du Bois in 1917 "predicted a militant crusade of the blacks, aided by their 'natural' allies, the brown and yellow groups. The 'dark world (Japan, China, India, Egypt, and the Negroes of the United States, the West Indies, South and West Africa) would wage war on the 'white world'" (qtd. in Rudwick 234).

As we can see, Du Bois's view of the world through Pan-African lens and his dealing with this issue in the *Crisis* provided the source for *Dark Princess*. By the time *Dark Princess* was published, Du Bois had been enmeshed in this Pan-African work, and the themes that he addressed in the *Crisis* connecting the Pan-African movement to the Negro movement, European and white arrogance, and the globalization of dark freedom fighters were prevalent in his second book.

In the *Crisis*, Du Bois worked to convince his African American readers that the problems of the darker races of the country were also an African American problem. For example, in his article "Africa" where he explains the partitioning of the continent, Du Bois said it is no longer a matter of being involved in foreign affairs that "Colored America is indeed involved" (*Emerging* 217). In his article, "Egypt and India" again Du Bois called on African Americans saying, "The sympathy of black America must of necessity go out to colored India and colored Egypt. Their forefathers were ancient friends, cousins, blood brothers, in the hoary ages of antiquity. . . . But we are all one--we the Despised and Oppressed, the 'niggers' of England and America" (*Emerging* 219). One of the main points at the start of *Dark Princess* and Matthew's introduction to The Great Central Committee of Yellow, Brown, and Black is the role that the American Negro should play on this revolutionary world stage. Matthew argues to the international council that the American Negro is not only willing, but also able to share in the liberation of all people of color: "'And on either count,' said Matthew, 'whether we be bound by oppression or by color, surely we Negroes belong in the foremost ranks'" (*Dark Princess* 16). Through Matthew you can hear Du Bois making that clarion call for African Americans to take their rightful place as global warriors. In addition to Matthew, the Princess also speaks to the America Negro's ability to

share in the struggle for people of color:

You see, Moscow has reports--careful reports of the world's masses. And the report on the Negroes of America was astonishing. At the time, I doubted its truth: their education, their work, their property, their organizations; and the odds, the terrible, crushing odds against which, inch by inch and heartbreak by heartbreak, they have forged their unfaltering way upward. If the report is true, they are a nation today, a modern nation worthy to stand beside any nation here. (*Dark Princess* 16)

Matthew reassures the council that this is indeed true and that the American Negro is ready to take his place in the world struggle. But again this is Du Bois readying the troops (which he has also done in his journalism), telling African Americans that their talents are needed to improve the lot of oppressed darker people around the world. As he writes February 1919 in the *Crisis*, "For any ebullition of action and feeling that results in an amelioration of the lot of Africa tends to ameliorate the condition of colored peoples throughout the world. And no man liveth to himself" (*Emerging* 219).

One way Du Bois argued for Pan-African in his journalism was to negate the notion of European superiority. In the *Dark Princess*, members of The Great Central Committee of Yellow, Brown, and Black easily scoffed at white supremacy, sounding like Du Bois's dismissive stance on this subject seen in the pages of the *Crisis*. Again in "Africa," Du Bois discusses this issue, "Let the natives develop along their own lines and they will 'go back,' has been the cry. Back to what, in Heaven's name? Is a civilization naturally backward because it is different?" (*Emerging* 218). In Du Bois's fictional world not only are these people from darker nations on par with Europe, they are actually better,

"You see," said the Japanese, "Mr. Towns, we here are all agreed and not agreed. We are agreed that the present white hegemony of the world is nonsense; that the darker peoples are the best--the natural aristocracy, the makers of art, religion, philosophy, life, everything except brazen machines." "But why?" "Because of the longer rule of natural aristocracy among us. We count our millenniums of history where Europe counts her centuries." (*Dark Princess* 18)

Again, Du Bois uses this exchange to destabilize the notion of Western superiority as well as provide a bit of a history lesson, which he has done often in his writings, particularly in his journalism writings. In this exchange, Du Bois also shows how easy the discussion of superiority can be shifted, rationalized, and racialized, with the Japanese character arguing for "natural inborn superiority" (*Dark Princess* 18).

Above all else and in true Pan-African form, *Dark Princess* calls for unity among darker race people--this is where the book starts and where it ends, keeping again with Du Bois's work in the *Crisis*. As scholars have suggested, the marriage of the American Negro Matthew and the Indian Princess Kautilya really symbolizes the coming together of darker people of all nations to fight a common foe-- one who would oppress, ridicule, and subjugate them because of their skin color. The unification of people of color is a constant theme in Du Bois's journalism as expressed in his article "Pan-Africa and New Racial Philosophy" where he writes the following:

And those interests are the same matters of color caste, of discrimination, of exploitation for the sake of profit, of public insult and oppression, against which the colored peoples of Mexico, South America, the West

Indies and all Africa, and every country in Asia complain and have long been complaining. It is, therefore, simply a matter of ordinary common sense that these people should draw together in spiritual sympathy and intellectual cooperation, to see what can be done for the freedom of the human spirit which happens to be incased in dark skin. (*Emerging* 241)

At Matthew's first meeting with The Great Central Committee of Yellow, Brown, and Black, there sat ten people of various backgrounds, including Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Egyptian, and Arab. By the end of the book, a plan is in place for these nations of dark people to take action against the white oppressor. Princess Kautilya reveals the committee's plans to Matthew, who has now become an official member. She says, "Ten years of preparation are set. Ten more years of final planning, and then five years of intensive struggle. In 1952, the Dark World goes free--whether in Peace and fostering Friendship with all men, or in Blood and Storm--it is for Them--the Pale Masters of today--to say" (*Dark Princess* 213). Du Bois provides a picture of dark unity and cooperation that appears flawless and in sync. Through fiction Du Bois can create this perfect cooperation. Here is Du Bois's world. In this literature world everything can be tidy and possible-- unlike in the real world in which his journalism exists.

The final dominant theme that Du Bois explored in his journalism, and that we see play throughout *Quest* and *Dark Princess*, are issues of racial prejudice and racial discrimination. As a journalist, Du Bois made his reputation speaking out against racial injustices through his printed word. His goal was to ensure that African Americans received all the rights that they should as citizens of this country. He did not or would not placate white America, like his rival Booker T. Washington. Du Bois thought men should be treated

in relation to their talents and behavior. In the article "A Philosophy for 1913" published in 1913, Du Bois is uncompromising in his position about discrimination and racism. Du Bois does not hold back as he discusses how he would go after those who would sanction the unfair treatment of African Americans. He not only sees it as his right to attack racism, but he sees it as his duty to attack this system. Furthermore, Du Bois made it clear in the *Crisis* that he expected to be treated with all the respect due to a gentlemen, sounding a lot like Douglass in the words he wrote in the *North Star*. In the "Philosophy," Du Bois promised to fight race discrimination:

If possible, I shall fight it openly and decidedly by word and deed
Whenever I meet personal discrimination on account of my race and color
I shall protest. If the discrimination is old and deep seated, and sanctioned
by law, I shall deem it my duty to make my grievance known, to bring it
before the organs of public opinion and to the attention of men of
influence, and to urge relief in courts and legislatures. (*Emerging* 48)

Du Bois is providing readers with instructions on how to address discrimination, and according to him, discrimination needs to be protested by any means available.

In both the *Dark Princess* and *Quest*, Du Bois uses his main characters to speak out against racism and discrimination much like he does in his journalism. In *Quest*, we immediately see Matthew confronting racism and discrimination after he is blocked from registering for the obstetrics program even though he was at the top of his medical class and had been approved earlier before it was known that he was an African American. When the dean apologizes for the refusal, Matthew's response is quick and uncompromising: "Hell, I'm not asking your pity, I'm demanding--" (*Dark Princess* 3). When the dean does not yield,

Matthew in another and one last act of defiance threw "his certificates, his marks and commendations straight into the drawn white face of the Dean and stumbled out" (*Dark Princess* 4). In both examples, the way Du Bois deals with injustice is to face it swiftly and without compromise.

In *Quest*, he uses Blessed Alwyn often to confront racism and discrimination with the force Du Bois demonstrated in his journalism. In fact, from the time Bles is a boy to the time that he becomes a man, much like Du Bois, Bles does not shrink or shirk in the face of racial opposition. We see this in the several instances where Bles stands up to Harry Cresswell specifically, and the Cresswells in general, who epitomize the old South, white domination, and slavery. Bles represents the spirit of the "New Negro" of the day that Alain Locke wrote of his essay by the same name. He is educated, fearless, and driven; he no longer accepts the caste and racial system of the Old South. He does not accept racial indignities, nor is he afraid to speak out against those indignities. One such example, occurs early in the book after Bles's teacher, Miss Taylor, tells him the story of the Golden Fleece. Bles compares the protagonist Jason's commandeering of the golden fleece to the Cresswells commandeering land in their community,

[Bles] "All yon is Jason's."

[Miss Taylor] "What?" she asked, puzzled.

He pointed with one sweep of his long arm to the quivering mass of green-gold foliage that swept from swamp to horizon.

[Bles] "All yon golden fleece is Jason's now," he repeated.

[Miss Taylor] "I thought it was--Cresswell's," she said.

[Bles] "That's what I mean."

She suddenly understood that the story had sunk deeply.

[Miss Taylor] "I am glad to hear you say that," she said methodically, "for Jason was a brave adventurer--"

[Bles] "I thought he was a thief."

[Miss Taylor] "Oh, well--those were other times."

[Bles] "The Cresswells are thieves now." (*Quest* 14)

Bles understands racial oppression, and the first way to fight that oppression is to identify it. Even as a young boy, Bles knows that the Cresswells have taken from the land and the African American inhabitants of the land. The Cresswells are able to continue to discriminate and cheat African Americans because of the wealth they have accumulated from thievery. Bles begins the fight against oppression by calling out the thieves.

Later in the book, a critical and direct confrontation takes place between Harry Cresswell and Bles, and this confrontation occurs without a word even being passed between the two: "Bles, too, was thinking. He knew the well-dressed man with his milk white face and overbearing way. He would expect to be greeted with raised hat but Bles bit his lips and pulled down his cap firmly" (*Quest* 44). Bles's decision not to speak to Cresswell struck a blow for freedom. Harry Cresswell is symbolic of the racial oppression engineered for years against African Americans first through slavery and then by Jim Crow. Bles goes after the racial hierarchies still in place by not acknowledging Cresswell, who believes and still is privileged because of his white skin. Bles's actions bring the two on par at least for the moment.

As strong as Bles's actions are toward Harry Cresswell, Du Bois leaves the greatest triumph over white institutionalized racism and discrimination with his woman protagonist.

Although Bles wins a moral victory in facing down racism in the form of Harry Cresswell, Zora wins a court victory by facing down Harry's father Colonel Cresswell. Zora's victory against discrimination and racism brings with it money and power, also keeping with Du Bois's economic themes mentioned throughout the book and previously in his journalism. Zora outwits Colonel Cresswell and keeps him from continuing his pattern of oppressing and cheating African American sharecroppers, at least this time. Zora not only faces down this pillar of racial oppression and buys this prized land from Colonel Cresswell, knowing he meant to cheat her all along, but she also has the courage to take him to court after he challenges her receipt of sale. Zora, who had been studying law for more than a year, stood up to Cresswell and thus Southern white oppression, and she won a victory not just for herself, but for the African American community.

Du Bois's decision to use a woman character, and an African American woman at that, who takes the greatest risk, acts the wisest, and is the bravest, is an indication of his developing feminism perspective, which again can be witness in his journalism writing through the pages of the *Crisis*. For example, Du Bois was a supporter of woman suffrage, and he pushed for African Americans to support this effort because as he writes in the article "Votes for Women," "votes for women mean votes for black women" (*Emerging* 95). In this particular article, published September 1912 in the *Crisis*, Du Bois recognizes the advancements made by African American women. He writes,

Except in the rural South, these women have larger economic opportunity than their husbands and brothers and are rapidly becoming better educated. One has only to remember the recent biennial convention of colored women's clubs with its four hundred delegates to realize how the

women are moving quietly but forcibly toward the intellectual leadership of the race. (*Emerging* 95)

As Du Bois acknowledges the leadership qualities in his characters Zora and Princess Kautilya, he also acknowledges the leadership qualities of the three million African American women in the United States of the time his article was published. As far as Du Bois was concerned, African American women were demonstrating that they were just as capable as men in leadership positions. Journalism allows for Du Bois to highlight issues such as women equality to a large scale audience and provides a base from which to build in his creative writing.

Du Bois's treatment of issues such as feminism and Pan-Africanism in both his journalism and literature works play into Salma Ghanem's argument of the second level of agenda setting. Du Bois understanding divides--cultural, gender, racial-- wanted his readers to view these issues in a different light. For example, instead of perpetuating the myth of Africa as the dark continent without anything to give, Du Bois demonstrates in his journalism and literature the richness of the continent's history and of its people. Instead of perpetuating how African American women are only good for being someone's mammy or concubine, Du Bois through his journalism and literature writes otherwise. To show that African Americans are worthy of human rights, Du Bois provides examples of this in his journalism and literary works by focusing on qualities that show black people's humanity. As Ghanem explains, "How the media covers an issue, argue researchers, also can have a cognitive influence on how the public thinks about the issue" (7). Du Bois's goal is to get people (blacks and whites) to rethink their positions through his journalism and literature.

Ultimately, Du Bois's literature is enhanced when paired with his journalism. Du

Bois's exploration of topics in his journalism such as economics and discrimination are well developed and researched by the time he moves them to the literary realm. The understanding Du Bois gains of the issues as a journalist provides clarity in his literature, making his literary polemic more powerful. Du Bois can effectively protest in his literature because he understands the issues as seen in the *Quest* and *Dark Princess*. As readers of Du Bois's literary works, we can appreciate and understand where his characters are coming from by knowing his journalism background on these issues. Understanding his position on capitalism from his journalism work, helps us to better understand Zora's attempt to create an economic co-opt. Understanding Du Bois's position concerning discrimination from his journalism work helps the reader to better understand Matthew's reaction to not being accepted into the medical program. We are better informed readers of Du Bois's literature because of his journalism. We have a greater understanding through his journalism as to why Du Bois used art to protest social wrongs. Du Bois saw art as just another means to call attention to issues that needed public protest. Just like his spiritual godfather in Frederick Douglass, Du Bois understood that the strongest way to garner public attention was through the press. He, like Douglass before him, understood the power of the press, and he went about harnessing that power to address issues like equality that were important in the African American community. His journalism through the years provided a blueprint for his literature to follow. Du Bois's journalism protest was the catalyst for the protest writing seen and valued in his literature, making him both a strong newsman and a great propagandist.

CONCLUSION

"We wish to plead our cause. Too long have others spoken for us. Too long has the publick been deceived by misrepresentations, in things which concern us dearly, though in the estimation of some mere trifles; for though there are many in society who exercise towards us benevolent feelings; still (with sorrow we confess it) there are others who make it their business to enlarge upon the least trifle, which tends to the discredit of any person of colour; and pronounce anathemas and denounce our whole body for the misconduct of this guilty one"— *Freedom's Journal* inaugural paper.

When Samuel E. Cornish and John B. Russwurm ventured into the newspaper business in 1827 to wage their protest against misrepresentations of African Americans in the press, the founders of *Freedom's Journal* didn't just create a newspaper, but they helped to create an institution still relevant in the black community today. More importantly, Cornish's and Russwurm's introduction of the black press into American society created a framework for black protest writing to emerge and to play a dominate role in both black newspapers and black literature.

For the African American press, protest was its raison d'etre as evident by *Freedom's Journal*, the *North Star*, the *Colored American Magazine*, the *Crisis*, and scores of other black newspapers and magazines published through the years. What I have shown through this historical look of the black press has been the institution's mission to serve as a venue for protest. The African American press gave voice to the voiceless. Through the years the black press served as a conduit to speak out against discrimination and racism and the outgrowths of these two to include slavery, Black Codes, lynching, and Jim Crow. As conditions changed protest strategies in the black press changed through the years: "Historically, the black press had always been a powerful vehicle, not simply for newsgathering but also for

articulating and defining an African American agenda for literary, social, and political change" (Andrews, Foster, and Harris 413). As Andrews, Foster and Harris explain, the black press did not work in a vacuum. The black press touched all areas of the black community to include the black literary establishment, and what we saw materialized was the black press' message of protest become dominant in the black literature emerging at the same time.

In this dissertation I have attempted to demonstrate how the black press of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries set the stage for a flourishing black protest tradition in black literature: suggesting what should be protested; creating figuratively and literally the space for literary protest; and acting as a training ground in the school of protest for black writers who moved back and forth between both worlds, journalism and literature.

Using Frederick Douglass, Pauline E. Hopkins, James Weldon Johnson, and W.E.B. Du Bois, I attempted to demonstrate how these four writers symbolized the relationship between the nadir black press and African American literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Each one of these writers spent a considerable amount of time as working journalists while actively publishing in the literary world. Journalism is where they started their writing careers, and journalism is where they formulated their protest strategies that would be used in their literature.

As discussed earlier, prior to writing his first autobiography, Douglass was publishing anti-slavery articles in newspapers in the North. He eventually started his own newspaper, the *North Star*, where he practiced his craft daily. In his journalism, he attacked slavery as he created the images of the heroic slave and the heroic man both which would surface in the *Narrative, My Bondage*, and "The Heroic Slave." Douglass in his attempt to abolish slavery made it his mission through journalism and later in his literature to show the humanity of the

slave and to show the inhumanity of this uniquely American institution.

Hopkins, like Douglass as I've shown , also looked at creating new images of African Americans as she took over the reins of the *Colored American Magazine* in 1900. She emerged on the journalism scene in the shadow of post Reconstruction backlash that started the avalanche of state-sponsored terror and institutionalized discrimination. As editor of the magazine, Hopkins through her writing attacked not only discrimination, but she also went about creating new images/new pictures of African Americans and African American life. As Hopkins attempted to demonstrate through subversive methods that African Americans lived their lives similar to white Americans many of the themes present in her journalism appeared in her literature works to include *Hagar's*, *Winona*, *Of One Blood*, and "Talma Gordon," all published in the Boston-based magazine.

Johnson, like Hopkins, also manipulated the color line in his writings as he attempted to protest lynching in the beginning of the twentieth century. With the incidents of lynching reaching incredible heights in the first half of the twentieth century, Johnson took up the mantle of anti-lynching crusader by tackling this issue in the pages of the *Crisis*, *New York World*, *Current History*, *New York Herald Tribune Magazine*, and *Harper's Magazine*. As he honed his journalism craft, Johnson used the techniques learned as a reporter such as observation and detailed description to make his protest in literature even more effective in works such as *The Autobiography* and *Along This Way*.

The Du Bois's chapter seems to bring us full circle in terms of protest writing. Du Bois, probably the dean of radical writing among the four, also called for the recognition of African Americans' humanity much like Douglass did before him. Furthermore, Du Bois in his journalism called for the nation to recognize that humanity by providing African

Americans with all the rights associated with being human. Like the others, Du Bois also developed his protest themes in his journalism. I've shown in this dissertation how themes such as capitalism/socialism; Pan-Africanism/nationalism; and racism/discrimination surfaced first and often in Du Bois's journalism and made their way on the pages of his literature pieces such as *The Quest* and *Dark Princess*.

Critical race theory, which is the analysis of racist implication of texts, serves as the thread linking these writers. All of these writers through their journalistic and literature works demonstrated they understood the impact of the written word. These writers specifically, and the black press generally, used the written word to undermine racists ideas of African Americans that could be used to reinforce stereotypes and to justify oppression. Douglass, Hopkins, Johnson, and Du Bois also understood that they had a stake in using the written word to rewrite an African American narrative--one of historical significance and one of achievement. These writers are symbolic of how black journalists/literary writers protested the stereotypes by reporting and telling stories of African Americans who were brave, intelligent, industrious, patriotic, middle class, Christian, and American. These writers not only wanted whites to see Blacks differently, but they also wanted African Americans to see themselves differently.

With the African American media prominently using protest to attack societal racial ills, they historically engaged in agenda setting. Issues addressed by the black media became significant to the readers as generally is the case in agenda setting as explained by Donald Shaw and Maxwell McCombs in their groundbreaking 1972 study of this journalism theory. The African American media reporting racial oppression on the pages (often the front) of their newspapers not only started the discussion but also started the action on these issues.

William G. Jordon explains that the black media protested racism "by creating solidarity within the black community, bolstering black self-esteem, promoting militant consciousness, or advocating protest" (3). The African American media often working under the agenda-setting framework created a collective consciousness movement that called for activism to fight oppression. The issues important to the black press transferred to the community and ultimately to the literature of the time. Although the body of work on agenda-setting is exhaustive, scholars have not thoroughly examined the theory with niche journalism and compare how specific media with specific goals match up with mainstream media and agenda-setting. For sure, the impact of agenda-setting on the black media and their readers has been missing in the study of agenda setting, and I hope my work starts the discussion.

The largest omission that I hope this dissertation fills is the historical connection between African American literature and African American journalism. Although scholars have addressed each separately, little scholarship has been done on the influence each has had on the other. Outside the reference guide *African American Literature* and a quick mention in *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* not much has been written about the relationship between African American literature and the African American press. On the other hand, scholars have addressed the link between the mainstream (white) press and literature, with two examples being Lutes's examination of lynching coverage in the newspapers and in novels and Michael Robertson's book *Stephen Crane, Journalism, and the Making of Modern American Literature* (1997) that outlines the connection of Crane's journalism work to his literature. Because so little has been done with researching the relationship between the black press and black literature, I hope this dissertation begins that discussion.

The relationship between the black press and its community of readers has always been different than the mainstream media and their readership. With protest being dominant in both the black press and black literature, this makes the examination of the relationship of these two genres even all the more important. With African American media leading the protest charge and literature following, we have seen the fruits of their labor--the abolition of slavery, the reduction of lynching, the end of Black Codes, and the repeal of Jim Crow laws.

Today, however, African American newspapers are no longer the powerhouses that they once were. Part of their demise might be due to their success in protesting for a more integrated society. America has changed with integration and so has journalism. African American reporters moved to larger mainstream newspapers and African American newspapers decreased in circulation. For example, during the early twentieth century, major African American newspapers like the *Pittsburgh Courier* and the *Chicago Defender* had circulations of more than 250,000. Starting in the 1960s, we begin to see the decline in circulation with many of the country's African American newspapers today with circulations in double digits. With a diminishing circulation and availability for black writers to be published in other venues, the black press does not have the sway it once had in the publishing community. Also, coincidentally, African American writers of literature have moved away from protest:

During the late twentieth century, other media have provided the writers with additional forums, authors have more access to publishing houses, and a black literary aesthetic is no longer in its infancy. Not having to prove their humanity, the writers are freer to polish their craft. . . . Fewer creative writers are using the newspapers

and periodicals as a primary voice in ways characteristic of the Harlem Renaissance writers. (Andrews, Foster, and Harris 413)

So why should we care about the African American press and its particular relationship to black literature? Because even with all the gains African Americans have made in this country, there is still more to be protested and corrected.

With African Americans still trailing whites in terms of education and employment opportunities; while there is a wide disparity with regard to wellness and health between the white and African American communities; when African Americans are locked up in the country's prisons at a greater rate than whites; and where drugs and violence are rampant in the African American community, there is still more work to be done. The African American press uniquely understands the problems faced in the black community and continues to be a place for protest to occur. The African American press also continues to be a place where literary expression, particularly ones of protest, is still welcome. Even with declining circulations, these African American newspapers are still telling the stories that need to be told and are still fertile ground for new protest stories and new protest literary writers to emerge.

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