

University of Pardubice
Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

The Struggle for Racial Equality in *Detroit*

Lucie Kozáková

Bachelor Thesis

2023

Univerzita Pardubice
Fakulta filozofická
Akademický rok: 2020/2021

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(projektu, uměleckého díla, uměleckého výkonu)

Jméno a příjmení: **Lucie Kozáková**
Osobní číslo: **H19110**
Studijní program: **B0231A090018 Anglický jazyk**
Specializace: **Anglický jazyk pro vzdělávání**
Téma práce: **Problematika rasové nerovnosti ve snímku "Černobílá spravedlnost"**
Téma práce anglicky: **The Struggle for Racial Equality in "Detroit"**
Zadávající katedra: **Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky**

Zásady pro vypracování

Teoretická část bakalářské práce bude zkoumat historický vývoj rasové problematiky v Detroitu v kontextu první poloviny 20. století. Praktická část se zaměří na zobrazení boje za lidská a občanská práva ve filmu "Detroit" (Kathryn Bigelow, 2017). Cílem bude i na základě kritických ohlasů prozkoumat, jak se tvůrci filmu postavili k vyobrazení rasismu a jednání Afroameričanů v kontextu reálných událostí, které film adaptoval. Teoretická část se také zaměří na přínos filmu pro diváky.

Rozsah pracovní zprávy:
Rozsah grafických prací:
Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**
Jazyk zpracování: **Angličtina**

Seznam doporučené literatury:

- Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press, 2010.
- Darden, Joe T., and Richard W. Thomas. *Detroit: Race Riots, Racial Conflicts, and Efforts to Bridge the Racial Divide*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013.
- Hersey, John, and Danielle L McGuire. *The Algiers Motel Incident*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019.
- Jones, Camara Phyllis. "Levels of Racism: A Theoretic Framework and a Gardener's Tale." *American Journal of Public Health* 90, no. 8 (August 2000): 1212–1215. <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/practice/resources/equitylibrary/docs/jones-allegories.pdf>.
- Maloney, T., & Whatley, W. (1995). Making the Effort: The Contours of Racial Discrimination in Detroit's Labor Markets, 1920-1940. *The Journal of Economic History*, 55(3), 465-493. Retrieved March 16, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2123659>
- Nimtz, August H. "Violence and/or Nonviolence in the Success of the Civil Rights Movement: The Malcolm X–Martin Luther King, Jr. Nexus." *New Political Science* 38, no. 1 (2016): 1–22. <http://gsjhr.ms.ds.iscte.pt/2017-18/violence%20Civil%20Rights.pdf>.
- Rephun, M. 2017. "Katheryn Bigelow's Detroit: A Case Study in Evil". *Film Criticism* 41 (3). <https://doi.org/10.3998/fc.13761232.0041.323>.
- Sitkoff, Harvard. *Toward Freedom Land: The Long Struggle for Racial Equality in America*. Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2010.
- Sugrue Thomas J. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014.
- Widick, B. J. *Detroit: City of Race and Class Violence*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Michal Kleprlík, Ph.D.**
Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Datum zadání bakalářské práce: **2. dubna 2021**
Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: **30. března 2022**

doc. Mgr. Jiří Kubeš, Ph.D. v.r.
děkan

Mgr. Olga Roebuck, Ph.D. v.r.
vedoucí katedry

V Pardubicích dne 30. listopadu 2021

Prohlašuji:

Práci s názvem *Problematika rasové nerovnosti ve snímku Černobílá Spravedlnost* jsem vypracoval samostatně. Veškeré literární prameny a informace, které jsem v práci využil, jsou uvedeny v seznamu použité literatury.

Byl jsem seznámen s tím, že se na moji práci vztahují práva a povinnosti vyplývající ze zákona č. 121/2000 Sb., o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon), ve znění pozdějších předpisů, zejména se skutečností, že Univerzita Pardubice má právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití této práce jako školního díla podle § 60 odst. 1 autorského zákona, a s tím, že pokud dojde k užití této práce mnou nebo bude poskytnuta licence o užití jinému subjektu, je Univerzita Pardubice oprávněna ode mne požadovat přiměřený příspěvek na úhradu nákladů, které na vytvoření díla vynaložila, a to podle okolností až do jejich skutečné výše.

Beru na vědomí, že v souladu s § 47b zákona č. 111/1998 Sb., o vysokých školách a o změně a doplnění dalších zákonů (zákon o vysokých školách), ve znění pozdějších předpisů, a směrnici Univerzity Pardubice č. 7/2019 Pravidla pro odevzdávání, zveřejňování a formální úpravu závěrečných prací, ve znění pozdějších dodatků, bude práce zveřejněna prostřednictvím Digitální knihovny Univerzity Pardubice.

V Pardubicích dne 28. 3. 2023

Lucie Kozáková v. r.

TITLE

The Struggle for Racial Equality in *Detroit*

ANNOTATION

The bachelor thesis deals with racial issues in the USA. The theoretical part aims to capture how racial disparity influenced the lives of African Americans, specifically in Detroit, Michigan, between the Great Migration and the 1967 race uprising. The paper further compares ideologies of racial liberation held by some of the most prominent figures in African American history. The analytical part of the thesis examines *Detroit*, a 2017 drama based on a true story, in terms of its portrayal of racism, its standpoint toward Black agency, and the film's impact on the viewer. As a whole, the analytical part observes whether the director achieved her goal of highlighting the ongoing problem of racial inequality and respectfully commemorating the incident's victims.

KEYWORDS

Detroit, Kathryn Bigelow, Algiers Motel, racial inequality, racial liberation, race relations

NÁZEV PRÁCE

Problematika rasové nerovnosti ve snímku *Černobilá Spravedlnost*

ANOTACE

Bakalářská práce se věnuje rasové intoleranci v USA. Cílem teoretické části práce je popsat vliv rasové nerovnosti na život Afroameričanů se zaměřením na michiganský Detroit v období mezi Velkou migrací Afroameričanů a rasovými nepokoji roku 1967. Práce dále srovnává ideologie rasové integrace spojované s několika z nejvýraznějších osobností Afroamerické historie. Praktická část práce se zabývá analýzou filmového dramatu z roku 2017 *Černobilá Spravedlnost* natočeného podle skutečné události. V praktické části se zkoumá, jak se tvůrci filmu postavili k vyobrazení rasismu a „Black agency“, a jaký může mít film přínos pro diváky. Hlavním úkolem praktické části je zjistit, zda režisérka dosáhla svého cíle poukázat na stále probíhající problémy rasové nerovnosti a projevit respekt obětem incidentu.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Detroit, Kathryn Bigelow, Motel Algiers, rasová nerovnost, rasové osvobození, mezirasové vztahy

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	7
1. Historical Context.....	9
1.1. Issues of African Americans in the 20 th Century Detroit.....	9
1.2. The Long, Hot Summer of 1967	13
2. Racial Integration.....	15
2.1. Clashing Ideologies of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois	15
2.2. The Pursuit of Civil Rights in the Eyes of M. L. King Jr. and Malcolm X	17
3. Historical Film	20
3.1. General Characteristics of Kathryn Bigelow’s Work	22
4. The Depiction of Racial Issues in Kathryn Bigelow’s <i>Detroit</i>	24
4.1. Standpoint towards Racism.....	25
4.2. Portrayal of Black Agency	29
4.3. Impact on the Viewer	35
Conclusion	38
Resumé.....	41
Bibliography	44

Introduction

This bachelor thesis deals with racial injustice in the USA and namely in the context of African Americans in Detroit, Michigan. Racial inequality in the USA has been present for more than 300 years and is still widely discussed. In the last years, there have been numerous protests and rebellions across the USA in reaction to police killings of African Americans, among the most recognisable being the killing of George Floyd, which has been a final drop due to which the cup of dissatisfaction with the unjust system overflowed. Similar reactions were sparked 55 years ago when the combination of socioeconomic factors, discrimination, and police violence pressured African Americans to rise up and fight for justice. Among the major cities in which the rebellions took place was Detroit, which Widick likens to a pressure cooker.¹

Kathryn Bigelow uses the 1967 rebellion as a backdrop for her historical drama *Detroit* (2017), the film subject of analysis in this thesis. Picturing a real instance of a police killing amidst the rebellion, Bigelow's film aims for it to speak about current issues related to racial inequality and police violence. The main goal of the thesis is to analyse how Bigelow's *Detroit* works with the topic of racial injustice and whether it achieves an "eye-opening" effect while still being respectful towards Black people and their communities, as the director wishes.²

The introductory chapter serves to provide a historical context to the film. The reader can learn about the problems Black Detroiters had to deal with as their population in the city numbered due to the Great Migration and about the uprisings which the issues catalysed.

The second chapter compares the ideologies of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois, and representatives of a later generation of activists, Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. This comparison helps to understand that there can be a number of different ideologies, none of them a bad one, all aiming to achieve the same thing—racial equality.

The last chapter of the theoretical part focuses on the formal characteristics of *Detroit*. The reader can learn what it requires for a work to be considered historical and find out what makes Kathryn Bigelow a unique filmmaker with a distinct style.

¹ B. J. Widick, *Detroit: City of Race and Class Violence* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), XVII.

² Julie Hinds, "Can 'Detroit,' the Movie about the 1967 Algiers Motel Killings, Start a National Dialogue?" (Detroit Free Press, accessed March 11, 2023).

The fourth chapter encompasses the analytical part. This part is built on observation of selected phenomena in Kathryn Bigelow's *Detroit*, and assessing how they influence the film in relation to the director's aim. Apart from presenting a personal viewpoint from the perspective of a white person who does not live in the USA, I consult with comments by Black critics and native Detroiters, whom, as people whose history is presented in the film, I consider authorities when discussing their portrayal.

Within the analytical part there are three questions, firstly asking whether the film portrays racism as a personally mediated or systemic issue. This chapter looks at the behaviour of the white authorities and the way they misuse their power against African American characters.

The second part of the analytical part deals with Black agency as a tool for standing up for oneself and one's race. By dissecting their actions, the goal is to capture how some of the Afroamerican characters assert Black agency. Apart from that, this chapter also pinpoints the manifestations of Black agency which the filmmakers did not get right when compared to the real story, and analyses the significance of their accurate portrayal.

As a person who likes to broaden their knowledge about social issues, I found analysing a film about racial injustice intriguing. *Detroit* came to me as a potential object of analysis for my thesis because of its depiction of violence. Watching it felt uncomfortable to me. I remembered watching a different film with the same intensity of violence executed on a character in whom I could see myself and started thinking about how Black people could feel when watching *Detroit*. Therefore, the last part of the thesis analyses what the film offers to viewers of different demographic groups and whether it aligns with what the director had in mind when creating the film.

1. Historical Context

Detroit stages one of Detroit's most turbulent moments, the 12th Street Rebellion, which emerged within the period of the civil rights movement. This section of the thesis contextualises the rebellion as a reaction to the continuous mistreatment of African Americans. Despite the issues of Black women in this period being as pressing as those of Black men, the chapter focuses on Black men only, as there is barely any representation of Black women in the film.

1.1. Issues of African Americans in the 20th Century Detroit

The city of Detroit, Michigan, experienced significant social and economic changes from the early 1920s through the late 1960s. During this period, Detroit's large and vibrant Black community faced several challenges and opportunities. Anti-Black housing policies, racial segregation, redlining, and preferential hiring for white workers were standard tactics of economic and social oppression.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Detroit was experiencing a period of rapid growth and industrialization. That attracted many African Americans from the rural south to the city with the vision of starting a new life.

One of the primary industries in Detroit was the automobile industry, which created many job opportunities. However, African Americans were often excluded from these jobs due to racial discrimination, both in hiring and in the promotion process. Labour unions, which were created to protect workers' rights and improve working conditions, often excluded African Americans from membership or relegated them to low-paying jobs.

Before wartime, it was mainly Ford's plants in River Rouge that had an African American employee base. Maloney and Whatley claim that the concentration of African Americans at Ford was due to Ford being the only employer providing relatively high wages who would not turn Black Detroiters down. For married African Americans, Ford was the only opportunity to earn enough to support a family, which made them loyal and hardworking employees.³ By 1943, earlier hesitant companies became open towards having African American workers in the workplace. It was partly due to the work of the local labour union organisations and civil

³ Thomas N. Maloney and Warren Whatley, "Making the Effort: The Contours of Racial Discrimination in Detroit's Labor Markets, 1920–1940," *The Journal of Economic History* 55, no. 3 (September 1995): 469.

rights organisations, which persuaded the public via their campaigns that hiring African American workers was a question of patriotism because, without them, the companies would not be able to supply for the wartime needs and pressured employers to do so.⁴ After the war, many Black veterans returned to Detroit, hoping to take advantage of the city's economic growth. However, African Americans were still limited to low-paying jobs in the service sector or manufacturing jobs with little opportunity for advancement.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the civil rights movement brought increased attention to the issue of employment discrimination. African American activists and organizations began to pressure companies and the government to end discriminatory hiring practices. In response, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The law created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to investigate claims of discrimination and enforce the law.

Despite the passage of the Civil Rights Act, many companies and employers found ways to evade the law or simply ignored it. In the decades that followed, civil rights organizations continued to fight for equal opportunity in the workplace, pushing for stronger enforcement of anti-discrimination laws and advocating for affirmative action policies.

Another issue which spanned several decades was the problem of discrimination in the housing sector, which made it difficult for African Americans to access safe and affordable housing.

While new migrants came to the city with a vision of homeownership, in reality, they were crammed in segregated areas in rental, sharing the space with one or two other families to save money. Because African Americans mainly worked low-wage jobs, they could hardly save up enough to afford independent living. On top of that, landlords exploited the massive demand from African Americans for apartments, which meant that the housing was, in many cases, not only substandard but also overpriced.⁵ African Americans living in neighbourhoods with apartments needing maintenance further fuelled the ideas of white citizens about them posing a threat to the value of white neighbourhoods if let in. Moreover, it gave bankers and private real estate agencies a reason to think that African Americans were not favourable clients to invest in, which resulted in excluding them from the private estate market.

⁴ Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 93.

⁵ Sugrue, *The Origins*, 33–34.

Three quarters of African American Detroiters was confined within the Black Bottom, the poorest area in Detroit. In its most deteriorated part, ironically named after the migrants' dreams of a better future not come true, Paradise Valley, over two thirds of dwellings were officially classified as substandard, "a category that included dwelling units without a toilet or bath, running water, heating, and lighting; buildings that needed major repairs; and low-rent apartments that were overcrowded."⁶ This area also registered the most frequent residential fires fed by the combination of outdated electrical systems and wooden construction of the buildings, and pest infestations caused by piles of garbage in the streets waiting for the weekly pick-up. The second most occupied area by African Americans was the West Side.

The rest of African American citizens lived in segregated neighbourhoods located further from the city's centre. The Eight Mile–Wyoming area became populated with the hope of migrants building their houses. However, a lack of resources allowed them only to construct makeshift houses, two-thirds of which were considered in substandard condition. But despite their initial expectations differing from the actual housing conditions, the inhabitants took pride in their independence.⁷

In the 1930s and 1940s, the federal government created the Federal Housing Administration, a program which aimed to provide affordable housing to American families. However, the FHA perpetuated redlining, a practice named after neighbourhoods marked with red lines on maps by lending institutions to indicate that they were high-risk areas. African Americans were denied access to loans, insurance, mortgages, or other financial services, preventing them from purchasing homes and accumulating wealth. In addition, they were often forced to rent substandard housing in overcrowded and economically depressed areas. That perpetuated the cycle of poverty and inequality that many African Americans in Detroit faced, including poor living conditions and a lack of resources, such as quality schools and healthcare facilities.

Furthermore, even when African Americans could purchase homes, they often faced discriminatory practices. Blockbusting involved real estate agents encouraging white homeowners to sell their homes by using scare tactics about the supposed threat of African American neighbours moving in, which created a wave of white flight and further segregation.⁸ Steering involved real estate agents directing African American homebuyers to

⁶ Sugrue, *The Origins*, 37.

⁷ Sugrue, *The Origins*, 39.

⁸ Sugrue, *The Origins*, 195–197.

Black neighbourhoods and avoiding others, which perpetuated segregation by race. The practices of redlining continued until the Civil Rights Act of 1968 prohibited it.

Since the Great Migration, the "white scare," a phenomenon of fear and panic felt by white residents in response to the increasing presence of African Americans in the city, spread over Detroit. The white scare reflected, for example, in restrictive covenants, which were private agreements among property owners to prevent African Americans from buying or renting property in white neighbourhoods. The presence of African Americans in formerly all-white neighbourhoods was perceived as a threat to the social order and the perceived purity of the white race. Restrictive covenants were not legally enforceable, but they were still widely used in Detroit and other cities. White residents also used intimidation tactics to keep African Americans out of their neighbourhoods. They organized vigilante groups to patrol the streets and intimidate African Americans who dared to venture into white areas. They also used violence to keep African Americans out, including lynchings, beatings, and arson.⁹ The exclusion of African Americans from white neighbourhoods limited their opportunities for upward mobility and contributed to the concentration of poverty in certain areas. As a result, Detroit became one of the most segregated cities in the country, with white residents living in the more affluent suburbs and African Americans living in the inner city. In 1948, the Supreme Court the enforcement of restrictive covenants unconstitutional. However, the discriminatory effects of these covenants can still be seen today, as Detroit remains one of the most segregated cities in the country.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the city of Detroit began a process of urban renewal, a policy which aimed to revitalize and modernize blighted urban areas with new housing and transportation infrastructure. However, this process often resulted in the displacement of African Americans from their homes and neighbourhoods. One of the most significant urban renewal projects in Detroit was the construction of the Chrysler Freeway, which involved the demolition of thousands of homes and businesses in the predominantly African American neighbourhoods of Paradise Valley and Black Bottom. While the freeway was intended to improve transportation in the city, it had a devastating impact on these communities, which were already struggling with poverty, unemployment, and segregation.

In addition, police misconduct has been a persistent problem in Detroit for decades. The Detroit Police Department faced a range of issues, from corruption and brutality to racial bias

⁹ Sugrue, *The Origins*, 24.

and discrimination. African Americans were often targeted by police, who used excessive force and violence against them. Many African Americans believed that the overwhelmingly white and male police force was biased against them and did not provide equal protection under the law.

This racial bias was evident in the 1943 race riots. In some instances, police officers were reported to have sided with white mobs and arrested African Americans who were defending themselves.¹⁰ This led to accusations of police brutality and further inflamed tensions between the African American community and law enforcement. The 1960s saw a significant increase in civil rights activism, which brought increased attention to police misconduct in Detroit. The DPD's use of force during the civil rights protests was heavily criticized, with officers using tear gas, batons, and other violent tactics against peaceful demonstrators.

The history of African Americans in Detroit is a complex and multi-faceted story, marked by both struggle and achievement. The frustration with inequality boiled over in the summer of 1967, when a rebellion broke out in Detroit.

1.2. The Long, Hot Summer of 1967

The summer of 1967 was a time of great social and political upheaval in the United States. The period from May to September was marked by a series of uprisings and protests in major cities across the country.

The unrest was fueled by systemic injustice which included a range of factors.¹¹ One of the key drivers of the unrest was racial tension. Many cities in the United States had large African American populations that faced discrimination and economic inequality, with few opportunities for advancement. The civil rights movement of the 1960s had made some progress in addressing these issues, but many African Americans still faced significant barriers to equality.

In addition, many urban areas were experiencing significant social and economic decline, with high levels of crime, poverty, and unemployment. As a result, many young people felt that they had little hope for the future and were frustrated with the slow pace of social and economic change.

¹⁰ Sugrue, *The Origins*, 29.

¹¹ Jelani Cobb, "The Reasons for the 1967 Riots are Still Relevant Today," (The New Yorker, published July 28, 2017).

Many of the rebellions that occurred during the summer of 1967 were sparked by incidents of police brutality. African Americans, in particular, were often the targets of police violence, and many felt that the police were not being held accountable for their actions.

The combination of these factors created a volatile atmosphere that led to the uprisings and protests, starting in Newark, New Jersey. On July 12, a traffic stop led to the arrest of a Black cab driver, sparking outrage in the city's predominantly Black community. Over the next several days, rebellions broke out, with protestors clashing with police, leaving 26 people dead and hundreds more injured.¹²

A few days later, similar unrest broke out in Detroit. The rebellion was sparked by a police raid on an unlicensed after-hours bar, which was a common gathering place for African Americans in the city. The raid and subsequent arrest of bar patrons were seen as an example of police harassment and brutality, which had been a longstanding issue in Detroit's African American communities.¹³ Over the five days of the rebellion, rioters clashed with police, set fire to buildings, and looted stores, but the majority of arrests were for curfew violations.¹⁴ The response of law enforcement and the National Guard was heavy-handed and often indiscriminate, leading to further violence and destruction in the city, leaving 43 people dead.

The insurgency in Newark and Detroit were just the beginning. Throughout the summer, similar protests and rebellions broke out in other major cities, including Milwaukee, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Tampa.

The long hot summer of 1967 was a time of great turmoil and change in the United States. The riots and protests that swept the country were a reflection of the deep social and political divisions that had long existed in American society. Detroit and other cities faced significant challenges in rebuilding and healing in the following years. The economic and social costs of the uprising were enormous, and the city's reputation was tarnished by the violence and destruction. While the violence of the summer was certainly tragic, it also served as a wake-up call for many people across the USA, inspiring a new wave of activism and social change, with organizations and leaders working to create a more just and equitable society.

¹² Farrel Evans, "The 1967 Riots: When Outrage Over Racial Injustice Boiled Over" (History, updated June 21, 2021).

¹³ B. J. Widick, *Detroit: City of Race and Class Violence* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 168.

¹⁴ Widick, *Detroit: City of Race*, 167, 171.

2. Racial Integration

This chapter focuses on four prominent figures related to the fight for racial justice—Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King Jr. The chapter helps better understand that there are different ways through which Black people can manifest resistance, which goes hand in hand with the section of analytical part dedicated to Black agency.

2.1. Clashing Ideologies of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois

Booker T. Washington (1856–1915) and W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963) belong among some of the most recognised African American activists. In spite of them being active in the same era, their ideologies differed in degree of intransigency, which also reflected in the way society perceived and supported their ideologies.

In *The Souls of Black Folks*, Du Bois wrote:

The Preacher is the most unique personality developed by the Negro on American soil. A leader, a politician, an orator, a "boss," an intriguer, an idealist,—all these he is, and ever, too, the centre of a group of men, now twenty, now a thousand in number.¹⁵

According to Young, the Preacher's most influential power is in their possession of "Black charisma". If handled well, Black charisma would inspire African Americans to challenge the system of racial oppression and direct white listeners towards reflecting on how they feed the system.¹⁶ Booker T. Washington, during his Atlanta Compromise speech, the first speech given by an African American to a racially-mixed audience in the South, gained overwhelming appeal to the white segregationist audience. What, however, made them admire Washington was his hesitant standpoint towards the fight for civil rights rather than what Young defines as Black charisma.¹⁷ Washington failed in the position of the Preacher because his ideas were not revolutionary enough.

Washington suggested that African Americans would become equal by working with dignity and getting trained in skilled labour to participate in the economic growth of the South instead of aiming for better treatment in the political and social sphere. He believed that focusing on mastering demanded skills would make African Americans valued workers. By showing

¹⁵ "Of the Faith of the Fathers," *American Studies @ The University of Virginia*, accessed October 29, 2022, <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper/DUBOIS/ch10.html>.

¹⁶ Jeremy C. Young, "Booker T. Washington and the White Fear of Black Charisma," (*African American Intellectual History Society*, accessed October 29, 2022).

¹⁷ Young, "Booker T. Washington."

white people that they are crucial for the functioning of society, segregation and discrimination would, according to Washington, naturally fade away.

Du Bois, in contrast, believed that African Americans should not stop pursuing civil rights and higher education as that would only reinforce their treatment as second-class citizens. He wanted to focus on the higher education of a tenth of African Americans to train the best thinkers of the race. The Talented Tenth would become an example for the majority and help civilise them. Du Bois pointed out the necessity of complex training of people, not only as skilled workers but also to develop their knowledge of the world, character and purpose.¹⁸ To make a change, he asserted, the most educated ones should become the teachers of teachers, who would hand on the knowledge and culture to others, just like the clergy or parents hand on their wisdom to their children.

Du Bois dedicated "Of Mr Booker T. Washington and Others," an essay published in his collection *The Souls of Black Folks*, to commenting on Washington's conflict-evasive tactics. Du Bois perceived Washington's attitude as old-fashioned, submissive, lacking self-respect, and accepting of the notion of racial inferiority. In the past, the same popular attitude which left the fight for political power, civil rights and higher education for later, and focused on feeding the economy had, as Du Bois stated, resulted in "the steady withdrawal of aid from institutions for the higher training of, and the legal creation of a distinct status of civil inferiority" for African Americans.¹⁹ Despite it not being all because of Washington's ideas, their spreading was what Du Bois considered to be giving a helping hand to speeding up the process. Du Bois was also persuaded that the notion held by many white people that African Americans are fully responsible for building their futures would be further reinforced by following Washington's teachings.²⁰ In short, Du Bois interpreted Washington's ideas as too humiliating and leading nowhere.

Washington responded, emphasising the idea that the main focus on skilled training would only be temporary and did not deny the need for highly educated African Americans in the future.²¹ Washington was aware that his tactics would take time until they would reach the

¹⁸ "The Talented Tenth ' [excerpts]," Yale University, accessed October 29, 2022, <https://glc.yale.edu/talented-tenth-excerpts>.

¹⁹ "Of Booker T. Washington and Others," Teaching American History, accessed October 29, 2022, <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/of-booker-t-washington-and-others/>.

²⁰ Teaching American History, "Of Booker T. Washington."

²¹ "Booker T. Washington 'The Case of the Negro'," Hanover College History Department, accessed October 29, 2022, <https://history.hanover.edu/courses/excerpts/111bwash.html>.

expected effect and considered Du Bois' ideas too rushed. Because the majority of African Americans depended on white people providing them with jobs and housing opportunities, he was worried that by using resistance, Southern African Americans would risk being denied these opportunities and provoking violent attacks from scared extremists.²² Washington believed that plans towards earning equal rights were too hazardous if implemented too radically, so he addressed the problem in a safer and slower way than Du Bois would.

Washington's and Du Bois' ideologies differed in time and the degree of directness required to reach the common goal—equal rights. Washington's strategy aimed to earn the respect of white citizens by becoming an irreplaceable part of the workforce, and he believed in continual strengthening of the relationship between the two races based on mutual dependency. Du Bois expressed support for the reconciliation between North and South, however, not under the conditions of sustaining the position of inferiority supported by the legal system any longer. He believed that only spreading the teachings of the most educated bunch could bring change to the racially segregated society.

2.2. The Pursuit of Civil Rights in the Eyes of M. L. King Jr. and Malcolm X

Similarly to Washington and Du Bois, in the mid-20th century, another couple of significant thinkers and activists in the field of social justice, Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–1968) and Malcolm X (1925–1965) came through. Due to different influences from religious and spiritual circles, these two men with the same aim did not agree on the means of resistance to racial oppression.

Martin Luther King Jr., inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and Christian beliefs, led nonviolent campaign against Jim Crow and other forms of racial injustice. King based his tactic on “persuading the opponent that he is mistaken,” impacting white people's morals and “winning their understanding.” King claimed that it was just as crucial to keep one's thoughts nonviolent and “love people because God loves them.” What King wanted to defeat was injustice, rather than white people who acted unjustly. He believed that God stands on the side of those who suffer under the reign of injustice and that a better future would come.²³ King believed that using nonviolence could reunite people, and violence would only generate more animosity.

²² Hannover College History Department, “Booker T. Washington 'The Case of the Negro'.”

²³ The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, “Nonviolence and Racial Justice.”

In contrast, Malcolm X promoted the ideas of Black nationalism and separatism. Under the teachings of Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Black Muslims, X believed that African Americans were “manoeuvred by the white man into a life of poverty,” which forced them into a life of crime to survive and drugs as a form of escapism. At the same time, these habits were weaponised against the Afro-American community. As claimed by Muhammad, inferior status and poverty confined Black people to substandard schooling, leading to substandard education and, therefore, unpleasant work positions.²⁴ X spoke up about how integrated housing and schooling didn’t give African Americans any better options than those in the slums, and about white people protecting their jobs from Afro-Americans at all costs. He claimed that the system of temporary solutions, tokenism and “false promises” from the government would not work. Instead, X advocated for Muhammad’s vision of an independent nation separated from white people, which African Americans would govern for themselves.²⁵ Malcolm X, under the teachings of Muhammad, saw the poor living conditions as a never-ending circle, which could only be escaped by not relying on white people.

Concerning violence, Malcolm X did not believe that debating would win the hearts of those who would not hesitate to act brutal against African Americans. X compared it to languages—one has to speak the same language for the other person to understand. Therefore, he advocated for violence as a tool of self-defence and the defence of others in need of help against the Ku Klux Klan or other oppressors. He also wanted to use violence to signal to the government that if they were not to stop the oppressors, the oppressed would do so by any means possible.²⁶ X never advocated for mindless violence, the only violence that he approved of was for self-defence.

The civil rights movement has, according to Nimitz, been successful thanks to the combination of nonviolent and violent approaches. Not only have nonviolent protestors provoked institutionalised brutality to draw attention to the issue, according to Nimitz, but it was also the threat of potential violence in nonviolent protest that brought positive federal action.²⁷ King significantly contributed to this idea in his Letter from Birmingham Jail, where he pointed out

²⁴ “(1963) Malcolm X, 'Racial Separation',” Black Past, published January 22, 2013, <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/speeches-african-american-history/1963-malcolm-x-racial-separation/>.

²⁵ Black Past, “(1963) Malcolm X, 'Racial Separation'.”

²⁶ “The Language of Violence,” Figures of Speech, accessed October 26, 2022, <https://www.speech.almeida.co.uk/malcolm-x>.

²⁷ August H. Nimitz, “Violence and/or Nonviolence in the Success of the Civil Rights Movement: The Malcolm X–Martin Luther King, Jr. Nexus,” *New Political Science* 38, no. 1 (2016): 21.

that mass nonviolent protests were the less extreme option.²⁸ King stated that it could either be his nonviolence to gain equal rights for African Americans or a potential violent approach that could be taken by the Nation of Islam.

Malcolm X joined with similar rhetoric, stating that if African Americans could not win freedom through voting, they could end up using force to gain their rights.²⁹ Similarly, he warned that the ruling class should better listen to King because if they did not, people would use any means possible to get the government to listen.³⁰

Growing up, X lost his father at a young age due to what the family believed was an attack of the Black Legion³¹, lived in severe poverty, and had his mother put into a mental hospital. His experience in his early years might have influenced the level of militancy of his tactics, especially when compared with King, whose youth was presumably less traumatising. King, in his autobiography, stated that he grew up in a community of people with average income and within a family with healthy relationships. He ascribed the personality traits that influenced his ideology in civil rights activism to the people he had been surrounded by when growing up:

It is quite easy for me to think of the universe as basically friendly mainly because of my uplifting hereditary and environmental circumstances ... I think that my strong determination of justice comes from the very strong, dynamic personality of my father, and I would hope that the gentle aspect comes from a mother who is very gentle and sweet.³²

In spite of them disagreeing on each others philosophies and methods, Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X agreed on the strategy of generating fear of the ruling class with the statement that it was either nonviolence or violence that would win civil rights. It is possible to conclude that the contribution of King and his nonviolent approach to the development of legislation concerning targeting racial discrimination in the USA was essential. However, the ideas represented by X proved to be a necessary catalyst for events in society. Without the negative connotation of X's more radical ideology and the threat of its spreading, political leaders

²⁸ "Letter from Birmingham Jail," Bill of Rights Institute, accessed October 26, 2022, <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/primary-sources/letter-from-birmingham-jail/>.

²⁹ "The Black Revolution' Speeches (1964)," Vancouver Island University, accessed October 30, 2022, https://web.viu.ca/davies/H323Vietnam/Malcolm_X_speeches.htm/.

³⁰ Malcolm X, *February 1965: The Final Speeches* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1992), 24–25.

³¹ Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* (London: Penguin Group, 2011), 29.

³² "Chapter 1: Early Years," The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, Stanford, accessed October 26, 2022, <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/publications/autobiography-martin-luther-king-jr-contents/chapter-1-early-years/>.

would not have been pressured into changing the legislation, as King's ideas alone would not bring the required dynamics to resolve the situation.

3. Historical Film

Within a number of sources, *Detroit* gets assigned to several genres at once, including crime, thriller, drama, and historical film.³³ In this thesis, I am going to focus on the genre of historical film because, in my view, based on historical facts (for example, place, time period, characters and plot, which mostly align with reality), the film fits the genre the best. Because of the poor coverage of the topic regarding cinematography, I am going to include sources which regard to a literary parallel to historical film—historical novel. While the medium of presentation is different, historical films and novels have very similar characteristics.

Kuhn and Westwell define historical film as “a fiction film showing past events or set within a historical period.”³⁴ Similarly, Shaw states that the primary characteristic that differentiates a historical novel from other types of novel is the milieu which the novel represents. Secondly, historical novels should involve “fidelity to the external world that a work represents.”³⁵

Shaw emphasizes the importance of historical accuracy and the need for authors to do their research to create a realistic and compelling historical setting. He mentions that the authors must consider the complexity of specific factors that influence the characters, such as their individuality with unique thoughts, feelings and ideas, but also their places within systems—belonging to small social groups such as families, and larger social groups including cities, regions, nations or races, all influenced by historical trends.³⁶ Thom, too, considers it a duty of an author to research and search for the truth. The author should engage in going through archives and old pictures and hearing out oral histories.³⁷ However, as Mickel emphasises, the greater part of what we consider history is fiction. Even what one believes to be true because they experienced it themselves has been fictionalised. Emotions, stances and impressions of the person influence the experience, making the telling of historical events slightly

³³ “Detroit,” IMDb, accessed November 19, 2022, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5390504/>.

“Detroit,” Letterboxd, accessed November 19, 2022, <https://letterboxd.com/film/detroit/genres/>.

³⁴ Annette Kuhn and Guy Westwell, *A Dictionary of Film Studies*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 575.

³⁵ Harry E. Shaw, “An Approach to the Historical Novel,” in *The Forms of Historical Fiction: Sir Walter Scott and His Successors* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 20.

³⁶ Shaw, “An Approach,” 25, 30.

³⁷ James Alexander Thom. *The Art and Craft of Writing Historical Fiction: Researching and Writing Historical Fiction*. (Writer’s Digest Books, 2010).

subjective.³⁸ Therefore, the author should be careful in considering some information facts when they could only be suggestions.

Tod adds other important factors that make a historical novel. The setting should help the reader to feel like they are travelling in time almost immediately. In a film, the costumes and their level of authenticity play a significant role, but such factors as landscape, architecture, food, entertainment and many others are equally as important. Tod mentions that trying to reach authenticity with the dialogue might discourage the reader/viewer, but it is suitable to include select vocabulary. Many themes, Tod claims, would be pictured differently according to different perspectives as abstract concepts like death, fate, loyalty or madness varied significantly in treatment and importance through periods and cultures. Similarly, the conflict is something the characters at the time and place would realistically deal with. The plot which fits into the period often revolves around historical events of the time and does not change historical facts. Lastly, world-building captures the realist state of how society worked in the period. The portrayal of customs, politics, religion, geography, social arrangements and many others significantly influence the degree to which the viewers engage with the story.³⁹ Overall, according to Tod, the author should aim for authenticity through projecting oneself into a person who lived at the time, to capture all of the factors, apart from the language, which should stay intellegible.

However, in terms of what standard historical fiction can effectively deliver, Shaw claims that there are limitations as it is not possible to carry “all levels of human experiences with equal success.”⁴⁰ The primary element to render is “the unique 'atmosphere' of an age in the past, to 'recapture the fleeting moment'.”⁴¹ Shaw explains that the individual characters and their personal stories tend to overshadow the historical events and processes they should represent. In contrary, the more focus on historical context and events there is, the less fully fleshed out the characters become as representations of complex human beings with their own motivations, desires, and personalities.⁴² Therefore, a good historical novel should delicately balance representing historical context and individual characters to ensure that the genre remains true to its historical focus.

³⁸ Emanuel J. Mickel, “Fictional History and Historical Fiction,” *Romance Philology* 66, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 58.

³⁹ M. K. Tod, “7 Elements of Historical Fiction,” (A Writer of History, March 2015).

⁴⁰ Shaw, “An Approach,” 48.

⁴¹ Shaw, “An Approach,” 25.

⁴² Shaw, “An Approach,” 48.

Not only are historical films a form of entertainment, but also a source from which scholars can study how people from different generations interpret and work with the past, as Trafton explains. He claims that historical films can bring into view parts of history which may not be included in the most popular tellings and therefore bring up the idea that history is subjective and stands on more than one telling. According to Trafton, historical films can also initiate thinking about and interpreting the past from new perspectives, which may bring up interesting debates and lead to new perspectives on viewing the present.⁴³ Historical fiction has the power to illuminate the complex social, political, and cultural forces that have shaped our world, and to help readers understand the continuity and change of history, claims Shaw. He also suggests that historical fiction can be a valuable means of exploring contemporary issues and concerns by providing a historical perspective on the present. In short, historical fiction is not only a valuable genre in its own right, but also a powerful tool for understanding the past and its impact on the present.

3.1. General Characteristics of Kathryn Bigelow's Work

With 10 feature-length films and the first Academy Award for Best Director won by a woman, Kathryn Bigelow (1951–present) is a prominent figure of contemporary cinema. Her style combines working within mainstream Hollywood cinema conventions with innovativeness. Within her work she explores topics of gender, race, family, sexuality, politics, and the influence of technology on society.

In Bigelow's repertoire of films, action prevails. Being one of few women directors working in traditionally male-dominated genres like action has earned recognition of media, which since her first feature film have been fascinated with her being "a beautiful woman who makes bloody films."⁴⁴ And, indeed, Bigelow's work shows consistency in display of violence. Bigelow does not avoid such topics as sexualisation of bearing a gun and working a violent job. In *Strange Days* (1995), Bigelow features such shots as point-of-view death from falling or rape to bring up the topic of the danger connected with technology and lack of boundaries in thrill seeking. *The Weight of Water* (2000), on a different note, presents violence as a sudden reaction to a threat to one's family.

Bigelow also combines action with melodrama, mostly demonstrated in exploration of dysfunctional relationships. Wilson notes that in Bigelow's films, "women often bear the

⁴³ John Trafton, "Historical Film," (Cultura Historica, October 2019).

⁴⁴ Keough, Peter, *Kathryn Bigelow: Interviews* (Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2013): X.

brunt of their [families'] destructiveness."⁴⁵ The theme is employed in *Blue Steel* (1989), where Megan becomes a police officer due to witnessing domestic violence in her own family, and has to make the decision whether to arrest the father or to trust his promises. In *Strange Days*, the viewer follows Lenny dealing with a failed romantic affair and Mace bearing the burden of being a single mother after having her partner put in jail for murder.

Benson-Allot describes Bigelow's employment of genres as "neither simply subversive nor easily classifiable as commercial."⁴⁶ The films are hardly classifiable into one genre as Bigelow spices them up with "concepts of the western, the horror, the road movie, the thriller, the science fiction film, and the cop film."⁴⁷ Despite Bigelow being associated with action, she does not "conform to the 'idea' of 'Kathryn Bigelow - Hollywood action director'"⁴⁸ as she chooses "film projects that depart from her previous works,"⁴⁹ such as adaptations or historical dramas.

Similarly, Bigelow refuses to be classified as a feminist director or female voice as she finds "such labels to be irrelevant,"⁵⁰ but plays with blurring traditional gender roles. For instance, in *Steel Blue*, Jamie Lee Curtis takes on a stereotypically male role of a police officer and elements of femininity and masculinity are contrasted on several occasions. Another of the numerous examples can be found in *Strange Days*, where Mace gets involved in fights to protect Lenny but is also depicted as a good mother.

In terms of characters, Bigelow's repertoire features "marginal and counter-cultural characters in conflict with social norms." In *Point Break* (1991), the story plays in favour to the free-spirited romantic surfer culture, which essentially cannot be captured by the time-bound and is contrasted with the repressed FBI agent Utah.⁵¹ Whether it be a dealer of an illegal technological device, the submarine crew, the Explosive Ordnance Disposal team, bikers or vampires, the characters are somehow situated outside of the society.

Depending on the intended effect on the viewer, Bigelow utilises various pacing. She often makes use of slow-motion, which centres an important contrast or impact on the characters, or

⁴⁵ Brenda Wilson, "Blurring the Boundaries," (Cinephile, accessed December 6, 2022).

⁴⁶ Benson-Allot, "Undoing Violence," 33.

⁴⁷ Katherine Barscan, "Kathryn Bigelow's Gen(d)re," (Cinephile, accessed December 6, 2022).

⁴⁸ Wilson, "Blurring the Boundaries."

⁴⁹ Wilson, "Blurring the Boundaries."

⁵⁰ Barscan, "Kathryn Bigelow's Gen(d)re."

⁵¹ Wilson, "Blurring the Boundaries."

changes the scale.⁵² In *K19: The Widowmaker* (2002), she jumps rapidly between in moments of tension and “elongates other shots that emphasize small moments of devastatingly bad luck”⁵³ to engage the viewer. Similarly, in *The Hurt Locker* (2008), the perspectives shift between different participants in the bomb scenes.

Lastly, in terms of casting, Bigelow plays with viewers’ expectations, and either builds on actors’ reputation and previous roles, or subverts the expectations. Barscan mentions Jamie Lee Curtis’ reputation as the “scream queen,” or the “final girl” in horror movies. While not escaping from the victim role, Bigelow puts her into the position of a strong policewoman. Wilson also points out the rumours about Curtis’ androgyny, which are reflected in her role standing between traditionally feminine and masculine.⁵⁴ On the same note, Barscan notices that Keanu Reeves’, Patrick Swayze’s, and Lori Petty’s characters in *Point Break* are all, personality-wise, built upon their previous roles. In contrast, casting Harrison Ford in a role of the strict Vostrikov resulted in confusion among the audience, as the actor, despite being established in action films, tends to portray heroes.⁵⁵ This unstable use of contrast with, and adherence to the actors’ previous roles further builds up Bigelow’s reputation of an unpredictable genre-bender.

That, in conclusion, is what makes Bigelow a unique filmmaker, genre-bending being one of the most significant contributions that Bigelow brings to the table. Not only does she distance herself from the traditional definitions of genres and often creates films that are difficult to classify, but Bigelow also refuses to picture gender, relationships within families, characters in relation to the world, and even the actors in a predictable way. Bigelow’s films lack labels, and that is what makes her a remarkable filmmaker.

4. The Depiction of Racial Issues in Kathryn Bigelow’s *Detroit*

Detroit is a dramatisation of the Algiers Motel Incident, the case of police violence amidst the 1967 rebellion in the Motor City, directed by Kathryn Bigelow in collaboration with Mark Boal.

The story revolves around a couple of young Black men, Larry and Fred, who find refuge in Algiers amidst the uprising. The men befriend a group of Black men and a couple of white

⁵² Benson-Allot, “Undoing Violence,” 37, 40, 41.

⁵³ Benson-Allot, “Undoing Violence,” 41.

⁵⁴ Barscan, “Kathryn Bigelow’s Gen(d)re.”

⁵⁵ Barscan, “Kathryn Bigelow’s Gen(d)re.”

women who reside in the motel. The incident starts as Carl, one of the residents, jokingly shoots a starter gun, which attracts a group of officers from the Detroit Police Department, a National Guardsman, and a Black security guard named Dismukes, who works nearby. The police storm the building suspecting that there is a sniper in the motel, and immediately shoot Carl dead, staging self-defence. The other residents are lined against a wall, interrogated, beaten, and threatened while the officers, the guardsman, and Dismukes search for the gun. The police come up with a game of taking the suspects one by one into a room, interrogating them, and staging their execution to motivate the others to confess. The authorities take turns in the game until one officer misunderstands and shoots a suspect dead. The police again excuse the act for self-defence and let Larry and another resident go under the condition of staying silent. The last suspect, Fred, is then executed for non-compliance. The next day, the DPD get information about what happened. Two of the guilty officers confess while Krauss, the most tyrannical of them, unsuccessfully tries to escape. Later a trial is held. The survivors give testimonies, but the racist jury makes them seem untrustworthy, finally ruling the policemen not guilty.

With this film, Bigelow wanted to revisit the history on its 50th anniversary and put it on display for those who have not been acquainted with this case, which can be read from the film poster, saying “It’s time we knew.” “I thought, OK, that’s 50 years ago and yet it obviously underscores the severity of the situation (now), and how far we have yet to go in order for this country to heal or to come out from under the shadow of this constant inequity,” Bigelow explained her thought process behind the creation of the film.⁵⁶ Sugrue, a historian and Detroit native, said he hoped for *Detroit* to take “a sophisticated, sensitive approach to the material instead of a sensationalist one.”⁵⁷ The question is, does Bigelow achieve her goal of speaking to the persisting problem while fulfilling Sugrue’s hopes?

4.1. Standpoint towards Racism

When it comes to the forms in which racism appears, it is mainly prejudice and discrimination which come to white people’s minds first.⁵⁸ However, there is more than just this that needs to be covered in a film that aspires to speak about both the past and current problems with racism in the USA. There are three levels of racism—personally mediated, systemic, and

⁵⁶ Hinds, “Can ‘Detroit,’ the Movie.”

⁵⁷ Hinds, “Can ‘Detroit,’ the Movie.”

⁵⁸ Camara Phyllis Jones, “Levels of Racism: A Theoretic Framework and a Gardener’s Tale,” *American Journal of Public Health* 90, no. 8 (August 2000): 1212–1213.

internalised racism. This part of the thesis asks whether Detroit portrays racism as a systemic or personally mediated issue.

Jones defines personally mediated racism as

prejudice and discrimination, where prejudice means differential assumptions about the abilities, motives, and intentions of others according to their race, and discrimination means differential actions toward others according to their race. It manifests as lack of respect, suspicion, devaluation, scapegoating, and dehumanization.⁵⁹

According to Jones, systemic, or institutionalised racism is defined as

differential access to the goods, services, and opportunities of society by race. (...) It is structural, having been codified in our institutions of custom, practice, and law, so there need not be an identifiable perpetrator. (...) With regard to material conditions, examples include differential access to quality education, sound housing, gainful employment, appropriate medical facilities, and a clean environment. With regard to access to power, examples include differential access to information (including one's own history), resources (including wealth and organizational infrastructure), and voice (including voting rights, representation in government, and control of the media).⁶⁰

Because the film mainly portrays the mistreatment of Black people by legal authorities, the analysis is going to focus on the instances where the authorities exploit their power to cause harm to the African Americans.

Firstly, there is the question of the police officers involved in the incident. During the majority of the film, the main attention sticks to Krauss, a brutal, authoritarian officer, and his colleagues. The film does not show a single part of Krauss' personal background, not a single moment of self-doubt, not even a glimpse of mental discomfort, which makes Krauss a one-dimensional caricature of a villain with zero consciences. Krauss' mercilessness is shown at the beginning of the film as he shoots an unarmed looter, and the degree escalates as the film goes on.⁶¹ Once in the Algiers, he is shown as an influence to his colleagues, who seek validation in doing their job well.

His colleague Flynn is portrayed as a hot-headed and racist officer who is quick to use violence and intimidation to maintain control over the situation. He shows little empathy for the victims and seems to enjoy exerting his power over them. He is also shown to be a follower, easily swayed by the actions of his superior officer, Krauss.

⁵⁹ Jones, "Levels of Racism," 1212–1213.

⁶⁰ Jones, "Levels of Racism," 1212.

⁶¹ Kathryn Bigelow, *Detroit* (First Light Production, 2017), 00:16:00–00:16:40.

Demens, on the other hand, is portrayed as a naive, more sympathetic character who is initially uncomfortable with the extreme tactics used by his fellow officers. However, he ultimately goes along with their actions, showing a willingness to follow orders and conform to the group mentality. He represents the insidious danger of officers who may not personally hold racist beliefs but are willing to go along with them in order to maintain their position of power.

Krauss, the lead of the group, embodies the “bad apple” metaphor, meaning that the problem lies with a few “rotten” individuals rather than with the system or culture that may have contributed to their behaviour. The term is often used in discussions about police misconduct, where some argue that only a small number of officers engage in excessive use of force and that the majority of police officers are good and ethical.

Indeed, the majority of the Detroit Police Department is not pictured in the same way Krauss and his two fellow patrolmen. Boal, the screenwriter of *Detroit*, states that “what [the film] is really about (...) is the complicity of the white people around this pathological cop in excusing and justifying his crimes,”⁶² but there is not much that would confirm this idea in the film. Starting with the most contradictory examples, there is a couple of understanding characters among the DPD, like Krauss’ superior, who directly calls him a “racist fuck,”⁶³ or another officer who takes care of the beaten up and collapsing Larry and takes him to the hospital.⁶⁴ These men do not seem like they would be fine with seeing their colleagues beating up a group of innocent Black men. On the other hand, there is also the policeman who threatens a young man that he will kill him for noncompliance.⁶⁵ There is not enough scenes based on which the viewer could analyse the DPD as an institution, and based on the examples, it can be evaluated that there are “good cops” and “bad cops.” With the lack of evidence in the film, it is difficult to agree with Crowdus’ statement that the DPD is shown as “an otherwise humanitarian police department,”⁶⁶ but there is also not enough effort when it comes to portraying injustice rooted in the white supremacist police system.

⁶² Kate Hagen, “BAFTA Screenwriters’ Lecture Series: Mark Boal on DETROIT,” (The Black List Blog, Nov 28, 2017).

⁶³ Bigelow, *Detroit*, 01:50:10–01:50:20.

⁶⁴ Bigelow, *Detroit*, 01:33:10–01:34:10.

⁶⁵ Bigelow, *Detroit*, 00:32:35–00:32:45.

⁶⁶ Gary Crowdus, Herb Boyd, Melba Joyce Boyd, Mary Corey, Geoffrey Jacques, Dan Georgakas, Frank Joyce and Paula J. Massood, “The Battle of the Algiers Motel: A Critical Roundtable on Kathryn Bigelow’s ‘Detroit,’” *Cinéaste* 43, no. 1 (Winter 2017): 13.

Another notable part of the film takes place in the courtroom, where the witnesses give testimonies. The aspect that falls under systemic racism is that there is no representation of African Americans on the jury, which could make it easier for discriminatory practices to pass. That is what happens, as Krauss' lawyer discredits the trustworthiness of the witnesses, asking questions like "Have you ever been arrested? How many times? How many nights have you spent in jail for criminal acts?" which ultimately contributes to the police being acquitted of all charges. These questions are based on the high rate of young African American men having a criminal record and, as Alexander cites Cahill, "reinforced by media imagery that has helped to create a national image of the young black male as a criminal."⁶⁷ Those ideas repeat throughout the film, for example, in the passage where the police suggest that a Black Vietnam veteran who is held captive in the motel is a pimp.⁶⁸ Discrediting the Black men because they fulfil the racial stereotypes and putting them into the position of being interrogated about their personal history in the first place is a combination of suspicion, racist assumptions, which can be considered personally mediated racism. Combined with the misuse of legal power and lack of representation of Black people in the jury, which would fall under systemic racism, this part of the film shows how individual and systemic racism go hand in hand. However, this is the only section that features a problem in the system and not in the individual, which does not make the cut to persuade the viewer that systemic issues are what the film is really about.

Unfortunately, what one remembers of the film is not "the way that racism works in an institution like the Detroit police department circa 1967," as Boal says.⁶⁹ While "both Poulter and Bigelow have confirmed that Krauss is a composite character meant to represent all the officers present that night,"⁷⁰ the film does not give that away therefore it seems that the film pictures "a single instance of police brutality rather than a work connected to the grand sweep of its opening history lesson," as Jenkins states.⁷¹ While what happened inside the Algiers, in reality, was a hate crime, there is more to the story as there was an entire rebellion going on at the same time, which was a reaction to systemic issues, and the same system allowed for the incident to happen. "The fact that we're seeing African-Americans trash their own neighborhoods expresses something that's profoundly implosive yet necessary: an incendiary

⁶⁷ Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010), 121.

⁶⁸ Bigelow, *Detroit*, 01:13:15–01:13:45.

⁶⁹ Hagen, "BAFTA Screenwriters' Lecture Series."

⁷⁰ Menachem Rephun, "Kathryn Bigelow's *Detroit*: A Case Study in Evil," *Film Criticism* 41. no. 3 (Fall 2017).

⁷¹ David Jenkins, "Detroit," review of *Detroit*, by Kathryn Bigelow, *Little White Lies*, accessed February 20, 2023.

had-it-up-to-here hopelessness tinged with a weary nothing-more-to-lose masochism,” Gleiberman states.⁷² The court was not the only place where Black people were deprived of justice. And as *Detroit* bears the name of the city, the film fails to display what was going on there apart from the incident with enough complexity.

4.2. Portrayal of Black Agency

Black agency refers to the ability of Black individuals and communities to act independently and make their own choices, particularly in the face of systemic oppression and marginalization. Ince defines Black agency as “the power that lies in Black people and Blackness as a politically and socially capable identity.”⁷³ In *Detroit*, Black individuals exercise agency in various ways, particularly in response to the systemic racism and police brutality they face. How is Black agency represented in the characters and the film in general?

Melvin Dismukes is a hard-working, dutiful, blue-collar worker who cares about his and others’ safety. Dismukes exercises Black agency in *Detroit* through his efforts to maintain peace and using his position of authority to help those who are vulnerable, demonstrating his commitment to his community and the values of justice and equality. As a Black security guard, he uses his position of authority to try to prevent the escalation of violence between the police and the protesters.

The first time when the film frames his personality is when on his shift, Dismukes notices a dispute outside the shop he is guarding. A Black adolescent, who is caught running around after the curfew, provokes the policeman, who in return threatens to kill him.⁷⁴ Dismukes decides to intervene and takes on the role of the Black authority figure as he gets the boy out of the situation saying he is Dismukes’ nephew. The boy, however, expresses distaste for how Melvin acted instead of gratitude. Melvin feels the need to protect him, but the boy calls him “Uncle Tom,” an epithet used for Black people who are excessively obedient to white people.⁷⁵ The scene shows that Dismukes uses his agency to help those who are oppressed. In the beforementioned scene, however, it seems like the young man feels patronised and stripped of his own agency by Dismukes.

⁷² Owen Gleiberman, “Film Review: Kathryn Bigelow’s ‘Detroit,’” review of *Detroit*, by Kathryn Bigelow, *Variety*, July 23, 2017.

⁷³ Jelani Ince, “On Black Agency,” (I AM Zine, accessed March 11, 2023).

⁷⁴ Bigelow, *Detroit*, 00:32:25–00:32:45

⁷⁵ Bigelow, *Detroit*, 00:33:00–00:33:45.

A few minutes later, national-guard jeeps stop near the shop, and Dismukes, again, decides to prevent conflicts by offering the guardsmen coffee and stopping for a chat.⁷⁶ This scene further confirms his preference for safety over rebellion. Melvin asserts his humanity and care for his people in almost an overprotective way.

It is probably his protective personality that leads Melvin into the motel. He holds onto his role as the negotiator and tries to calm down the situation by helping the officers find the gun so that the torture of the young men and women stops. Despite the risks involved, Melvin chooses to stay at the Algiers Motel until the interrogation stops with the vision of reasoning with the police and persuading them to stop their abusive behaviour while also providing comfort and support to the hostages. He wants to be helpful, trying to ensure the suspects' cooperation and thus get the suspects out of the situation. Nevertheless, the police tolerate Melvin only for his position as a fellow armed man in a uniform, but not enough to give him any power in the situation, which makes him more of a bystander who complies with the police and does not dare to interrupt their brutality as he believes it is the smartest move to ensure survival. As Dismukes takes one of the beaten-up suspects upstairs to look for a gun, the suspect says, "They're gonna kill us, man," to which Dismukes answers, "Why, you gonna be crazy?" which further confirms his idea that compliance and producing as little drama as possible will eventually save the suspects.⁷⁷ He even considers bringing the police alcohol he finds upstairs in order to get more time for searching the motel for the gun, which, as he insists, exists, and continues telling the suspects to confess. While not participating in the torture, Dismukes does not question much of what the police say. One of the suspects logically explains to Dismukes that Aubrey, who has been shot dead, would not be able to grab the policeman's gun in self-defence, but Dismukes washes it off the table with what seems like a complete denial of what the suspect told him.⁷⁸ The idea is that despite being present in the motel, he does not want to get into any problems.

His respect, politeness, and obedience of the rules unspokenly set by the police during the incident, however, do not save him in the end. The next day, Dismukes' is called as a suspect to the police station, where he claims that he heard numerous shots from the outside and the three men were already dead when he arrived there.⁷⁹ After the trial, where he is acquitted of all charges, Dismukes vomits, which could be a sign of overwhelm with emotions such as

⁷⁶ Bigelow, *Detroit*, 00:34:20–00:36:00.

⁷⁷ Bigelow, *Detroit*, 01:04:37–01:04:42.

⁷⁸ Bigelow, *Detroit*, 01:04:50–01:05:15.

⁷⁹ Bigelow, *Detroit*, 01:40:05–01:40:47.

anxiety, stress, and trauma.⁸⁰ But it is also possible that he feels a sense of guilt or responsibility for the deaths at the motel, even if he was not directly involved in the violence.

In conclusion, Melvin Dismukes is a complex character, and such is his role in the incident. The film portrays him as a character who tries to do what he believes is right, even if his actions ultimately prove to be ineffective. The viewer can see Dismukes being active in situations when he feels confident and can assert his authority. When it comes to putting himself and others at risk, he is careful and rational. Dismukes tries to gain respect as a Black man through being polite and helpful, and to bridge the gap between the Black and white communities in the city, which makes him seem like a subscriber of Booker T. Washington or M. L. King's ideologies.

Larry Reed is a passion-driven frontman of The Dramatics, a Motown-inspired R&B group. His personality and degree of commitment to racial integration and liberation evolve with what Reed experiences during the rebellion. Reed is devastated by losing his opportunity for a big break with his band, The Dramatics, when the event they are supposed to sing at is cancelled due to the unrest in the streets. While on the bus home, his bandmates talk about getting off on the 12th Street and being a part of the rebellion, but Reed hesitates by saying that they are working musicians. One of them confronts Reed, proclaiming, "I can't be singing when I'm supposed to be out there swinging."⁸¹ In contrast with his bandmate, it can be interpreted that Reed wants to avoid conflict, not as actively as is characteristic for Dismukes, but by not participating in something that could cause trouble.

After the incident, Reed does not share the joy of being invited by a record company that wants to hear The Dramatics with his bandmates. In this part of the film, the way that Reed and the band act is opposite to the bus scene at the beginning. When the band pressures Reed to join them in the studio, Reed feels uneasy about a white man coming into the room to judge the quality of their music. He advocates his feelings, "I'm not singing so white motherfuckers can dance." Reed can no longer relate to his bandmates in pursuing a career in music to earn money and fame. During the dispute, Reed's bandmate asks, "Since when do you care if white folks dance anyway?"⁸² This question highlights the change in Reed's mentality, later confirmed by declining the opportunity, along with financial success, for the sake of morality and mental comfort. The film finishes with Reed, broke and living in substandard housing,

⁸⁰ Bigelow, *Detroit*, 02:03:55–02:04:15.

⁸¹ Bigelow, *Detroit*, 00:26:45–00:26:55.

⁸² Bigelow, *Detroit*, 01:53:30–01:53:45.

finding a job as a choir director in a Black church. The job lets him use his music to speak out against oppression and promote liberation. This part brings the audience a sense of relief as Reed finds a community to which he can contribute his talents and in which he feels safe.

In summary, Larry Reed's personality and beliefs evolve throughout the film as a result of a traumatising experience. Initially hesitant to participate in the uprising, Reed eventually shifts his priorities from pursuing a music career for fame and fortune to using his music as a tool for social justice and liberation. He rejects the opportunity to perform for a white record company and instead finds purpose and a sense of community as a choir director in a Black church. His exercise of Black agency is a powerful representation of a person acting under his values and boycotting an industry he finds oppressive. The film ultimately portrays Reed's journey towards finding his voice and using his passion for music to fight against oppression.

Fred Temple, a young Black man who is also held captive and interrogated by the police in the motel annexe, exercises his agency by refusing to betray his friends.⁸³ Fred's agency is reflected in his choosing to maintain his dignity and resist the oppressive forces that seek to silence him and his community.

Lastly, The Dramatics exercise Black agency in Detroit through their music and their performances during the uprising. As a Motown-inspired R&B group, The Dramatics work hard to establish themselves as professional musicians despite the limitations that the primarily white-operated industry can use against them. By continuing to perform despite the dehumanisation and marginalisation tied to their identities, The Dramatics assert their voices in the face of systemic oppression.

Through their resilience, their protectivity, and their refusal to submit to their oppressors, the characters in the film assert their voices and their humanity, demonstrating their resilience and their commitment to justice and equality.

But while Bigelow's *Detroit* portrays powerful examples of Black agency through the actions of characters like Larry Reed, Melvin Dismukes, and Fred Temple, some critics argue that the film overlooks the broader political and social context of the riots and how Black people were exercising agency and resistance both during the riots and in their everyday lives.

The film focuses on the dramatic events of the Algiers Motel incident and the trial that followed, but does not delve as deeply into the structural and systemic forms of oppression

⁸³ Bigelow, *Detroit*, 01:31:45–01:32:40.

that Black people were fighting against or how they were building community and solidarity in the face of that oppression. Moore complains that the film lacks a complex reaction of the Black community.⁸⁴ What he thinks the film gives away is that the community experienced great sorrow due to the incident. That, however, Moore claims, was not the only reaction in reality, but just a Bigelow's interpretation.⁸⁵ Not only did the incident spark grief, but also shock and anger in the African American community. The incident highlighted the deep-seated racial tensions and police brutality and fueled further distrust and resentment towards the police and the government among the city's Black residents. Many community leaders and civil rights activists condemned the incident and called for justice for the victims. The fact that the police officers involved were eventually acquitted of all charges only furthered the sense of injustice and outrage among Black Detroiters.

Following that, a particular point that *Detroit* omitted was the People's Tribunal set up by Dan Aldridge and Lonnie Peek, the members of the Black Power organisation City-Wide Citizens Action Committee. The Tribunal in the Shrine of the Black Madonna emulated a racially inclusive formal trial, with, among others, the prominent activist Rosa Parks in the jury. In this trial, Senak, Paille, August, and Dismukes have been found guilty of first-degree murder, while officially they were never convicted.⁸⁶ This event attracted over 2,000 attendees and news media coverage, and, according to Aldridge, was an opportunity to "show the world that what it meant to be Black in America."⁸⁷ Other attendants of the Tribunal considered it a vital moment for opening the eyes of the uninformed ones, for motivating those who may have feared standing up for their racial identity, and for developing stronger racial unity.⁸⁸ By omitting the Tribunal, the filmmakers decided to strip the film of a key moment in the story where Black people unite and create a platform where they can be heard out. This point has been opened by several critics including Crowdus, who states that by leaving out such an important part of the history and replacing it with prolonged scenes of racially motivated violence, the filmmakers flatten the potential of the film, "asking viewers

⁸⁴ Moore, "Three Days," 34.

⁸⁵ Moore, "Three Days," 33.

⁸⁶ Jeanne Theoharis, "The People's Tribunal on the Algiers Motel Killings," (Rosa Parks Biography, accessed March 13, 2023).

⁸⁷ "The People's Tribunal," Rise Up Detroit, accessed March 13, 2023, <https://riseupdetroit.org/chapters/chapter-3/part-3/the-peoples-tribunal/>.

⁸⁸ Rise Up Detroit, "The People's Tribunal."

merely to empathize with Black victimhood rather than begin to understand black political agency.”⁸⁹

It has not been Crowdus only who has mentioned that the emphasis on Black victimhood in *Detroit* takes away other significant aspects. Boyd, too, argues that the film pictures the Black adolescents only as tragic victims.⁹⁰ From this point of view, Bigelow’s intention to “put a national spotlight on the Algiers Motel killings”⁹¹ is not as much about the men who have been killed during the incident as it is about the killings.

It is the moments when *Detroit* often shows African Americans as a blurred mass of bodies that remove the young men from the spotlight, The Black people who are given identities end up lined face against the wall in the motel annexe, unable to move while the audience watches how they are objected to torture. Characteristically for Bigelow, the camera works to generate suspense for the film, but at the same time, it makes the suspects unrecognisable from one another. It closes up on the tears running down the suspects’ faces, shaking fingers, praying hands, and faces of people lying in pain after being beaten up. It moves fast and shakingly, following Krauss’ movement and capturing reactions in the expressions of the young people. Moore perceives that *Detroit* “... glories in the many young Black men [Krauss] tortures and murders—the film too grainy and the lighting too hastily considered to distinguish them from each other, to humanize Black lives in general—and then glories again as this bad-apple cop is never held accountable for his crimes.”⁹² The lack of complexity in characters is especially not desirable in the men murdered in the motel—Aubrey Pollard, Carl Cooper, and Fred Temple—because if the goal is to remember the victims and expose the story to the wider public, the film does not radiate that it has been made with the same people in mind.

Lastly, a point often questioned by critics is the term “journalism,” which Bigelow and Boal use to describe the film. The filmmakers cooperated with several real people involved, including Julia Delaney, Melvin Dismukes, and Larry Reed. However, Boyd argues that these people provide unreliable perspectives as two of them used the film to “conveniently reinterpret history to their personal advantage,” and the last one’s memory is damaged due to post-traumatic stress disorder.⁹³ Moore, too, believes that “a great many details presented as

⁸⁹ Crowdus et al., “The Battle,” 14.

⁹⁰ Crowdus et al., “The Battle,” 12.

⁹¹ Hinds, “Can ‘Detroit,’ the Movie.”

⁹² Moore, “Three Days,” 31.

⁹³ Crowdus et al., “The Battle,” 13.

factual are invented or remain in dispute.”⁹⁴ Though it has been Just like the tribunal, omitting certain parts or editing them does not do the real story justice. Among the most frequently discussed is the role of Melvin Dismukes in the film as, in reality, the man has allegedly contributed to the beatings in the motel. James Sortor testified that Dismukes had beaten him with “a stick, blackjack, you know. One of them long sticks like a club. (...) He just struck me with the stick and asked me where the gun was.”⁹⁵ With the choice of leaving out the possibility of Dismukes’s involvement in the violence, Bigelow simplifies the story and divides the roles based on the characters’ race. Likewise, Bigelow decided to fictionalise the main three policemen by giving them new names and saying they were inspired by the real officers —David Senak, Ronald August, and Robert Paille. At the same time, all of the Black men portrayed in the film bear the names of their real-life counterparts. This choice has been made for legal reasons. However, it is another one of the numbers of other incorrectly portrayed or disputed elements which prove how misleading the term “journalism” is.

Detroit’s portrayal of Black agency cannot be evaluated as either successfully or nonsuccessfully executed. In individual characters, *Detroit* shows various manifestations of Black agency. Nevertheless, in the larger scope of things, the film forgets what is meaningful when representing collective Black agency. “Bigelow has made a movie about a radical political event without focusing on the event or its participants. A riot is about power, however fleeting. But Bigelow's protagonists don't have any agency. They don't steal groceries, break windows, or snatch TVs. The film ignores the wrath and the broken heart of Black Detroit,” states Corey.⁹⁶ The omission of the People’s Tribunal and imperfect portrayal of the reaction to the incident, as well as the entire rebellion strip the film of its historical authenticity. In addition, the dehumanisation of the victims and simplification of the character of Melvin Dismukes does not help *Detroit* keep up the “sophisticated, sensitive approach”⁹⁷ Sugrue wished for.

4.3. Impact on the Viewer

Films, in general, are meant to have an impact. In *Detroit’s* case, Bigelow hoped for the film to influence public opinion on social issues, give viewers a different view of society than they’re used to, broaden their horizons, and provoke emotions. Among the previously discussed elements like authenticity, the portrayal of violence is another element which plays

⁹⁴ Moore, “Three Days,” 31.

⁹⁵ John Hersey, *The Algiers Motel Incident*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1968): 303.

⁹⁶ Crowdus et al. “The Battle,” 13.

⁹⁷ Hinds, “Can 'Detroit,' the Movie.”

a notable role in building the impact on the viewer. In *Detroit*, the viewer is exposed to a graphic portrayal of murders and beatings of African Americans, plus the sexual abuse of a couple of white women, aiming to be as realistic as possible. As previously established, the utilisation of violence is one of Bigelow's strong points, especially in films with action elements, but it can as well be questioned concerning picturing racially motivated violence.

The first viewpoint from which the question can be interpreted is how the film impacts white viewers. Nowadays, it is hardly new information to most people in the West that Black people in the USA have faced and still do face violence because of their race. In the past few years, the media published real-life documentation of numerous cases of police brutality against African Americans. Therefore, it can be argued that, in most cases, it is not necessary for white people to watch a film about another case of violence targeted at a racial minority 'for them to know' that this was, and still is, happening.

Crowdus expands on this idea:

Politically well intentioned film makers Mark Boal and Kathryn Bigelow seem less interested in illuminating the sociopolitical roots of that urban uprising than in opportunistically demonstrating their liberal bonafides and sympathies at a time when unwarranted or disproportionate police violence against black Americans throughout the country is evident to anyone who watches TV, reads print media, or follows social media.⁹⁸

Those who contradict the fact that racially motivated violence still exists despite the media coverage are probably not prone to changing their minds due to watching *Detroit* because the film does not make any direct link towards the current state of racism in the USA.

But whether they are aware of the presence of racism in the USA or not, it would be a massive over-generalisation to claim that the film falls completely short when it comes to impacting white viewers. The film can spark conversation about these issues. By portraying the events of the Detroit riots, the film can stimulate those who want to learn about the historical roots of racial tensions in America and how these issues continue to affect society today. The film can also encourage viewers to engage in discussions about police brutality, racism, and social justice. Especially to those who are not Americans, the film can be a motivation to reconsider their own conception of racism and to learn more about the African American community, their culture, and issues.

⁹⁸ Crowdus et al., "The Battle," 13.

Another thing to consider is what the effects are on the perpetrators of racial violence. While every person reacts differently, which is a statement that applies to the entirety of the chapter, it is difficult to avoid the assumption that some people may like to consume the content for violence. Clark considers the unhinged depiction of violence in *Detroit* as “a semi-pornography of abuse that can only numb or, viewed by the wrong eyes, titillate.”⁹⁹ Similarly, Lawson states that “an argument could be made that these scenes of torture are not without a kind of prurience.”¹⁰⁰ This can be likened to a scene in *Strange Days* where the viewer watches quite a graphic scene involving rape and murder from a first-person perspective. In this scene, the victim is wired to the brain of the rapist using the SQUID technology, so she simultaneously experiences his feelings. Not only may this scene be triggering for sexual assault survivors, but it may also serve those who seek out rape-themed pornography.

There are plenty more films that employ a narrative showing the tragic hate-crime victim trope with the aiming to commemorate history and learn a moral lesson from it. The trope appeared, for instance, in the 1999 drama *Boys Don't Cry* (Kimberly Peirce, 1999), inspired by the true story of Brandon Teena, an American transgender man who was sexually assaulted and murdered. Especially when directed by non-members of a given minority, it is not uncommon to see films depicting true stories of marginalised communities negatively critiqued for the same misdoings.

How does the film impact African Americans? While representation often brings a sense of belonging and comfort in relatability to marginalised communities, seeing characters with similar looks and experiences in situations such as the scenes of beatings, which take up half of the footage, may cause distress. Clark himself calls it “one of the darkest moments [he has] experienced in a cinema for some time,” and says he would not “recommend [it] to anyone already feeling emotionally pulverized by the ongoing spectacle of anti-black American racism.”¹⁰¹ Similarly, Bastien admits she “was disturbed so deeply by what [she] witnessed that [she] left the theatre afterward in tears.”¹⁰² Having several Black critics say that the film's graphic nature caused them to feel uncomfortable, it can be summarised that it is necessary to approach the film with caution and to be aware of its potential impact on one's emotional well-being.

⁹⁹ Ashley Clark, “Detroit,” review of *Detroit*, by Kathryn Bigelow, *4Columns*, accessed March 12, 2023.

¹⁰⁰ Richard Lawson, “*Detroit* Review: Kathryn Bigelow’s Harrowing Drama Has an Uneasy Power,” review of *Detroit*, by Kathryn Bigelow, *Vanity Fair*, July 23, 2017.

¹⁰¹ Clark, “Detroit.”

¹⁰² Angelica Jade Bastien, “Detroit,” review of *Detroit*, by Kathryn Bigelow, *Roger-Ebert.com*, July 28, 2017.

Not only can the audience experience a variety of feelings, but it can be suggested that the cast also had to deal with emotional pressure while shooting. According to Brody, “what Bigelow has her actors do for the benefit of the camera is repellent to imagine.”¹⁰³ Similarly, Moore feels that “regardless of message, *Detroit* reinflicted violence, by whites, on the bodies of young black men, and not in history. It did this on set.”¹⁰⁴ In an interview with ODE, Poulter talks about how he felt in the role of Krauss, “that was difficult, it was not a comfortable place psychologically to be in.” However, Poulter also talks about it being a safe space while filming and emphasises that there was mutual respect in terms of the actors’ boundaries.¹⁰⁵ Despite the reassurance, an argument could be made that Bigelow did not need to go to such extremes considering both the viewers and the actors.

Detroit manages to convey plenty of effect on the viewers. As mentioned in this chapter, the emotional impact is among the most notable. But apart from that, it can as well be a learning point, whether it be for viewers’ opinions, beliefs, behaviours, or general knowledge. For instance, Will Poulter mentioned that the film was, at the time, being “considered by the [Detroit] police chief James Craig as required viewing for new recruits to enforce the need to not allow for racially motivated police work.”¹⁰⁶ Considering that Temple, Pollard, and Cooper are not names commonly mentioned in the discussion about killings by law enforcement, like the recent cases of Michael Brown, Philando Castile or Breonna Taylor, whose deaths led to protests, the film can bring a part of history, which is not talked about very often, to the spotlight. Lastly, *Detroit*, whether it be intentional or not, includes numerous elements encouraging critical thinking, which inspired this thesis.

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to analyse the historical drama *Detroit* directed by Kathryn Bigelow, in terms of how it displays racial issues. The main goal was to find out how Bigelow’s *Detroit* works with the topic of racial injustice and whether it achieves an “eye-opening” effect while still being respectful towards Black people and their communities. Through a wider lens, it can be summarised how the way of picturing different aspects of African American history can affect the impression the film can leave.

¹⁰³ Richard Brody, “The Immoral Artistry of Kathryn Bigelow’s “Detroit”,” review of *Detroit*, by Kathryn Bigelow, *The New Yorker*, August 4, 2017.

¹⁰⁴ Moore, “Three Days,” 38.

¹⁰⁵ ODE, “DETROIT: Will Poulter on Playing a Racist Cop,” accessed March 15, 2023, online video, 3:24, <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5y1a8y>.

¹⁰⁶ ODE, “DETROIT: Will Poulter.”

This thesis defined that the Long hot summer rebellions of 1967 manifested strong frustration with systemic racism. Black people in the USA, specifically in Detroit, had been let down in many different aspects. They were excluded from the housing market and from integrating into white neighbourhoods, which confined them to the poorest and most crowded areas with substandard living conditions. In later decades, Black neighbourhoods were partly demolished due to urban renewal. In terms of job opportunities, there were very few options, so many African American men had to work low-paying and physically demanding blue-collar jobs. While on the job, they were not invited to join a union and were not eligible for a promotion. Among other problems, police brutality, tensions with white citizens and a lack of representation in the justice system, which made it more open to discrimination, were present in Detroit and other cities. The combination of these factors was what catalysed the uprising, which took a toll on tens of lives and caused the destruction of cities. In the film, named after the city of Detroit and situating the plot in the 1967 rebellion, there is very little about the city's problems or about the problems of African Americans caused by systemic racism. Instead, it mainly focuses on an instance of personally mediated racism, which, though also important, is not a complex reflection of what the conditions for Black Detroiters were in 1967.

Another point with which the thesis dealt is Black agency and its manifestation in the characters and the film in general. *Detroit* shows Melvin Dismukes as an authoritative man whose priority is to protect other Black people while not risking getting himself and others in trouble. Larry Reed is a young man whose expression of Black agency develops after the traumatic event he has gone through. Larry decides that it is better for him to be independent of white people in his career and finds pride and joy in working at a local Black church. Fred Temple exercises his agency by standing up against injustice, which costs him his life. Lastly, the Dramatics do not hesitate to push through with their art despite the obstacles they have to face as African Americans in a white-led industry. *Detroit* highlights the ways in which Black individuals resist oppression, often at great personal costs, and manages to show how Black agency can be manifested in the lives of different people.

On the other hand, the film forgets to work with Black agency as a whole. *Detroit* excludes key elements which capture Black agency in the community, such as the complex reaction to the incident and the People's Tribunal, which was the only moment when the officers were ruled guilty. *Detroit* also does very little to portray the victims as individual characters and

rather focuses on them being the tortured bodies in intense scenes. In addition, the film edits some facts, which, according to Hersey's coverage of the incident, happened differently or are still in dispute.

Lastly, the analysis focused on how the film affects its audience. It is mainly the presence of violence, a characteristic of Bigelow's films, that plays a role in this chapter. *Detroit* can provoke many different reactions in the viewer. Some of them may feel very uncomfortable, some may feel indifferent, and others may get motivated to learn more about Black history, reconsider their perception of racism, or even use it to train recruits for the police force. However, some suggest that the aspect of violence in the film may also be of interest to perpetrators of racial violence. But in general, the film teaches about a part of Black history which, like all the others, does not deserve to be forgotten.

As for the aim of the thesis, *Detroit* is not an outstanding film, which would open the eyes of the public, and neither is it perfectly respectful to both the victims and other Black people.

Bigelow's depiction of racial issues is imperfect due to the lack of complexity in which racial inequality demonstrates itself. Her portrayal of racism as mainly individual takes away from the fact that it goes hand in hand with systemic racism, which is barely touched upon in the film. The lack of accuracy due to editing facts and displaying disputed details does not play well into the idea of journalism, which Bigelow uses to characterise the film. Though she uses interesting examples of Black agency in the characters, the agency in Black Detroiters is lacking. Lastly, the depiction of violence on Black bodies may by some be viewed as disrespectful, though the film may have a range of other effects on the audience.

In the end, it is what the audience wants to see and what stays in their minds after watching the film that counts. In general, it can be concluded that directors or other creatives who portray the history and lives of minorities, especially those they are not a part of, should mainly focus on keeping the historical events true to fact. Apart from that, their work should give a complex outlook that would be beneficial, and not disrespectful to the members of the given minority.

Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá tématem rasové nerovnosti mezi Afroameričany a bílými Američany ve snímku *Černobílá Spravedlnost* (anglicky *Detroit*) režisérky Kathryn Bigelow. Film se odehrává v kontextu roku 1967 a rebélií, které během léta onoho roku probíhaly v předních amerických městech včetně Detroitu, který vypůjčuje filmu původní název. Film ztvárňuje reálný incident v motelu Algiers, během kterého přišli rukou policie o život tři mladí Afroameričané. Práce si klade za cíl analyzovat, zda film vyobrazuje rasismus v daném kontextu jako systemický nebo individuální problém, jakým způsobem zachycuje koncept „Black agency“, a, posledně, jaké reakce může film v divácích vyprovokovat. Na základě této analýzy shrnuje, zda je film schopen naplnit očekávání režisérky, čímž bylo nasměrovat pozornost publika na stáletrvající problémy Afroameričanů způsobené rasismem. Kathryn Bigelow chtěla filmem „otevřít publiku oči“ a projevit respekt obětem incidentu v motelu Algiers.

První kapitola práce se zabývá faktory, které ovlivňovaly životy Afroameričanů v Detroitu a vyústily v rebélii roku 1967. Mezi tyto faktory spadala diskriminace v oblasti práce, jak už v nedostatku pracovních příležitostí, které by byly otevřeny Afroameričanům, tak i přímo na pracovišti, kde pro ně byla téměř nulová možnost kariérního růstu nebo připojení se k odborům. Dalším faktorem byla diskriminace v oblasti bydlení. Mnozí Afroameričané žili z finančních důvodů v předražených obydlích s několika dalšími rodinami a v podprůměrných podmínkách. Status těchto obydlí byl zachován skrz techniku „redlining“, která obyvatelům rizikovějších oblastí nedovolovala pojištění nebo půjčky. Ti, kteří si mohli dovolit vlastní bydlení, byli vyháněni obyvateli bílých sousedství, nebo byli do segregovaných oblastí nasměrováni realitními makléři. Mezi další faktory spadalo policejní násilí, nízká nebo žádná reprezentace v právním systému, a neshody s bílými obyvateli. Nespokojenost s podmínkami, které byly kvůli výše zmíněným faktorům Afroameričanům nastaveny, přerostla ve vzbouření vůči systému, který léta na potřeby Afroameričanů nereagoval.

V druhé kapitole práce jsou porovnávány ideologie předních afroamerických aktivistů a myslitelů. Booker T. Washington věřil, že je třeba vybudovat si respekt skrze zapojení se do budování ekonomických hodnot, čímž by se Afroameričané stali důležitou a respektovanou složkou dělnictva. Tím by se, dle Washingtona, posílily mezirasové vztahy. Na druhé straně W. E. B. Du Bois navrhoval, aby Afroameričané měli zástupce mezi vysoce vzdělanými, kteří by skrze předávání vědomostí dalším vytvořili řetězec, který by šířil vzdělání mezi další

generace. Co se týče M. L. Kinga a Malcolma X, jejich ideologie se rozcházel z pohledu na potřebu násilí. King jakožto křesťan prosazoval myšlenku nenásilného protestu proti nespravedlnosti. Naopak X se nestranil násilí jakožto formy obrany proti násilným útokům. Na základě myšlenek Elijaha Muhammada zastával osamostatnění Afroameričanů, protože integraci nepovažoval za dostatečnou. Přestože King a X přistupovali k dosažení práv Afroameričanů z odlišných směrů, tyto dva směry se protly v ultimátu, které dalo podnět k uznání volebního práva Afroameričanům, a to v době, kdy protesty ještě probíhaly nenásilně. Kapitola slouží pro ilustraci toho, že přes společný cíl rasové liberace se mohou myšlenky a cesty rozcházet, zatímco jedna nevyklučuje druhou. Podobným způsobem se také rozchází projevy „Black agency“ u postav ve filmu, čemuž se práce věnuje v praktické části.

V rámci poslední oblasti v teoretické části je poukázáno na specifika historického filmu/románu, kterým je také *Černobílá Spravedlnost*. Kapitola poukazuje na nutnost důkladné rešerše v historické oblasti a zohlednění faktorů ovlivňujících autenticitu, například vyobrazení motivů, rolí abstraktních pojmů ve společnosti, nebo tvorby světa s jeho vztahem ke společenským hierarchiím, zvykům, politice, náboženství, atd. Zároveň je v této kapitole rozebrána tvorba režisérky Kathryn Bigelow, která je známá pro překračování žánrových hranic, vyobrazování násilí, ale zároveň i pro využívání prvků melodramatu, jakož i hru s genderovými stereotypy a s nepředvídatelným hereckým obsazením.

Co se týče analytické práce, je čtenáři nabídnuta rychlé uvedení do dění ve filmu. Následně jsou definovány pojmy „institucionalizovaný“ a „individuální“ rasismus. Analýzou vykreslení institucí a jednotlivých osob, projevujících rasistické chování, je zjištěno, že film se zejména soustředí na vyobrazení rasismu jakožto individuálního problému, který je ztvárněn jednostranně zápornou postavou policisty Krausse. Na systemický rasismus naráží pouze scéna v soudní síni, kde je bezprávi podpořeno nulovým zastoupením Afroameričanů v porotě. Krom toho se *Černobílá Spravedlnost* nezaobírá problémy v rámci města jako celku, což by mohlo být očekáváno vzhledem k původnímu názvu filmu. Kvůli nedostatku reprezentace systemického rasismu film nedostatečně ztvárňuje komplexní odraz problémů detroitských Afroameričanů.

Dále se práce věnuje konceptu „Black agency“, a to, jakým je ve filmu tento koncept vyobrazen. Pojem „Black agency“ se dá definovat jako schopnost Afroameričanů svobodně jednat, zejména v konfliktu s diskriminací a institucionalizovaným rasismem. V rámci jednotlivých postav prezentuje *Černobílá Spravedlnost* rozsah různých projevů „Black

agency“ od snahy ochraňovat ostatní Afroameričany, přes nezávislost na podpoře bílých lidí, po schopnost se kariérně prorazit navzdory rasové diskriminaci. Na druhou stranu film nevyužívá části příběhu, které jsou pro Afroameričany jakožto komunitu důležité. Mezi těmito částmi se nachází lidový tribunál, který byl jediným, kde byli policisté prohlášeni vinnými. Dále *Černobílá Spravedlnost* nakládá s oběťmi incidentu spíše jako s objekty, čímž je dle kritiků spíše odosobňuje, než jim projevuje respekt. V neposlední řadě film upravuje fakta, či z nevyřešených informací fakta vytváří, čímž podkopává svou snahu o pověst žurnalistického filmu.

Posledním bodem analýzy je dopad filmu na publikum. V *Černobílé Spravedlnosti* hraje výraznou roli násilí, což se také odráží v reakcích afroamerických kritiků, kteří vyobrazení násilí na jiných Afroameričanech v tak velkém měřítku považují za netaktní. V bílém publiku může film podpořit zájem o větší porozumění a rozšíření znalostí v oblasti lidských práv a černošské historie. Je ale také možné, že pro některé z diváků bude film pouze dalším filmem o „běžné“ rasové nespravedlnosti, v extrémních případech by mohlo násilí i zaujmout.

Závěrem analýzy je poznatek, že *Černobílá Spravedlnost* není oči otevírajícím filmem. Film nehovoří o komplexnějších problémech existujících díky institucionalizovanému rasismu a není ani věrným zpracováním incidentu. Zároveň ale nepadá jeho obsah vniveč, protože pokud divák chce, může si z filmu podněty odnést. *Černobílá Spravedlnost* není ani respektuplnou připomínkou obětí, které jsou ve filmu poměrně odosobněny. Film neodráží ani důležitý moment, který vyobrazuje aktivitu černošské komunity v reakci na incident. Přes tyto nedostatky *Černobílá Spravedlnost* vyobrazuje ne příliš známý incident, který by neměl být ztracen v dějinách. Obecně může být z této bakalářské práce usouzeno, že pro tvůrce médií zaměřujících se na historii menšin, zejména těch, kterých sami nejsou součástí, je důležité vystihnout historické události takovým způsobem, aby nezkraslovaly doložená fakta a nepostrádaly komplexní pohled přínosný pro zástupce té oné menšiny.

Bibliography

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press, 2010.

American Studies @ The University of Virginia. "Of the Faith of the Fathers." Accessed October 29, 2022. <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper/DUBOIS/ch10.html>.

Bastien, Angelica Jade. "Detroit." Review of *Detroit*, by Kathryn Bigelow. *Roger-Ebert.com*, July 28, 2017. <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/detroit-2017>.

Barscan, Katherine. "Kathryn Bigelow's Gen(d)re." *Cinephile*, accessed December 6, 2022. <http://cinephile.ca/archives/volume-4-post-genre/essay-1/>.

Benson-Allot, Caetlin. "Undoing Violence." *Film Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (Winter 2010): 33–43. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/fq.2010.64.2.33>.

Bigelow, Kathryn. *Blue Steel*. Lightning Pictures, 1989.

Bigelow, Kathryn. *Detroit*. First Light Production, 2017.

Bigelow, Kathryn. *The Hurt Locker*. Voltage Pictures, 2008.

Bigelow, Kathryn. *K-11: The Widowmaker*. Intermedia Films, 2002.

Bigelow, Kathryn. *Point Break*. Largo Entertainment, 1991.

Bigelow, Kathryn. *Strange Days*. Lighstorm Entertainment, 1995.

Bigelow, Kathryn. *The Weight of Water*. StudioCanal, 2000.

Bill of Rights Institute. "Letter from Birmingham Jail." Accessed October 26, 2022. <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/primary-sources/letter-from-birmingham-jail/>.

Black Past. "(1963) Malcolm X, 'Racial Separation'." Published January 22, 2013. <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/speeches-african-american-history/1963-malcolm-x-racial-separation/>.

Black Past. "(1964) Malcolm X's Speech at the Founding Rally of the Organization of Afro-American Unity." Published October 15, 2007. <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/speeches-african-american-history/1964-malcolm-x-s-speech-founding-rally-organization-afro-american-unity/>.

Brody, Richard. "The Immoral Artistry of Kathryn Bigelow's 'Detroit'." Review of *Detroit*, by Kathryn Bigelow. *The New Yorker*, August 4, 2017. <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/richard-brody/the-immoral-artistry-of-kathryn-bigelows-detroit>.

Clark, Ashley. "Detroit." Review of *Detroit*, by Kathryn Bigelow. *4Columns*, accessed March 12, 2023. <https://4columns.org/clark-ashley/detroit>.

Cobb, Jelani. "The Reasons for the 1967 Riots are Still Relevant Today." *The New Yorker*, published July 28, 2017. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-reasons-for-the-1967-riots-are-still-relevant-today>.

Crowdus, Gary, Herb Boyd, Melba Joyce Boyd, Mary Corey, Geoffrey Jacques, Dan Georgakas, Frank Joyce, and Paula J. Massood. "The Battle of the Algiers Motel: A Critical Roundtable on Kathryn Bigelow's 'Detroit'." *Cinéaste* 43, no. 1 (Winter 2017): 10–16. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26356820>.

Detroit Under Fire. "III. Uprising and Occupation, 1967." Accessed February 26, 2023. <https://policing.umhistorylabs.lsa.umich.edu/s/detroitunderfire/page/1967>.

Evans, Farrel. "The 1967 Riots: When Outrage Over Racial Injustice Boiled Over." *History*, updated June 21, 2021. <https://www.history.com/news/1967-summer-riots-detroit-newark-kerner-commission>.

Figures of Speech. "The Language of Violence." Accessed October 26, 2022. <https://www.speech.almeida.co.uk/malcolm-x>.

Gleiberman, Owen. "Film Review: Kathryn Bigelow's 'Detroit'." Review of *Detroit*, by Kathryn Bigelow. *Variety*, July 23, 2017. <https://variety.com/2017/film/reviews/detroit-review-kathryn-bigelow-john-boyega-1202502122/>.

Hagen, Kate. "BAFTA Screenwriters' Lecture Series: Mark Boal on DETROIT." *The Black List Blog*, Nov 28, 2017. <https://blog.blcklst.com/bafta-screenwriters-lecture-series-mark-boal-on-detroit-90fb19dfb8f3>.

Hanover College History Department. "Booker T. Washington 'The Case of the Negro'." Accessed October 29, 2022. <https://history.hanover.edu/courses/excerpts/111bwash.html>.

Hersey, John. *The Algiers Motel Incident*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1968.

Hinds, Julie. "Can 'Detroit,' the Movie about the 1967 Algiers Motel Killings, Start a National Dialogue?" *Detroit Free Press*, accessed March 11, 2023. <https://eu.freep.com/story/entertainment/2017/07/24/detroit-1967-riot-algiers-motel-killings-movie-kathryn-bigelow-john-boyega/491896001/>.

History Matters. "Booker T. Washington Delivers the 1895 Atlanta Compromise Speech." Accessed October 30, 2022. <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/39/>.

IMDb. "Detroit." Accessed November 19, 2022. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5390504/>.

Ince, Jelani. "On Black Agency." *I AM Zine*, accessed March 11, 2023. <https://www.iamzine.com/on-black-agency.html#>.

Jenkins, David. "Detroit." Review of *Detroit*, by Kathryn Bigelow. *Little White Lies*, accessed February 20, 2023. <https://lwlies.com/reviews/detroit/>.

Jones, Camara Phyllis. "Levels of Racism: A Theoretic Framework and a Gardener's Tale." *American Journal of Public Health* 90, no. 8 (August 2000): 1212–1215.

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/practice/resources/equitylibrary/docs/jones-allegories.pdf>.

Keough, Peter. *Kathryn Bigelow: Interviews*. Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2013.

Kuhn, Annette, and Guy Westwell. *A Dictionary of Film Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Lawson, Richard. “Detroit Review: Kathryn Bigelow’s Harrowing Drama Has an Uneasy Power.” Review of *Detroit*, by Kathryn Bigelow. *Vanity Fair*, July 23, 2017. <https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2017/07/detroit-kathryn-bigelow-review>.

Letterboxd. “Detroit.” Accessed November 19, 2022. <https://letterboxd.com/film/detroit/genres/>.

Maloney, Thomas N., and Warren Whatley. “Making the Effort: The Contours of Racial Discrimination in Detroit’s Labor Markets, 1920–1940.” *The Journal of Economic History* 55, no. 3 (September 1995): 465–493. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/46544160_Making_the_Effort_The_Contours_of_Racial_Discrimination_in_Detroit%27s_Labor_Markets_1920-1940.

Marable, Manning. *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*. London: Penguin Group, 2011.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, Stanford. “Nonviolence and Racial Justice.” Accessed October 26, 2022. <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/nonviolence-and-racial-justice/>.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, Stanford. “Chapter 1: Early Years.” Accessed October 26, 2022. <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/publications/autobiography-martin-luther-king-jr-contents/chapter-1-early-years/>.

Mickel, Emanuel J. “Fictional History and Historical Fiction.” *Romance Philology* 66, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 57–96. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44741973>.

Moore, Anne Elizabeth. “Three Days in Detroit: Kathryn Bigelow, tour guide.” *The Baffler*, No. 37 (Winter 2017): 26–38. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26358582>.

National Humanities Center. “Writing.” Accessed November 6, 2022. <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai3/protest/text10/text10read.htm>.

Nimtz, August H. “Violence and/or Nonviolence in the Success of the Civil Rights Movement: The Malcolm X–Martin Luther King, Jr. Nexus.” *New Political Science* 38, no. 1 (2016): 1–22. <http://gsjhr.ms.ds.iscte.pt/2017-18/violence%20Civil%20Rights.pdf>.

ODE. “DETROIT: Will Poulter on Playing a Racist Cop.” Accessed March 15, 2023. Online video, 3:24. <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5y1a8y>.

Pierce, Kimberly. *Boys Don’t Cry*. Independent Film Channel Productions, 1999.

Rephun, Menachem. "Kathryn Bigelow's Detroit: A Case Study in Evil." *Film Criticism* 41, no. 3 (Fall 2017). <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/f/fc/13761232.0041.323?view=text;rgn=main>.

Rise Up Detroit. "The People's Tribunal." Accessed March 13, 2023. <https://riseupdetroit.org/chapters/chapter-3/part-3/the-peoples-tribunal/>.

Shaw, Harry E. "An Approach to the Historical Novel." In *The Forms of Historical Fiction: Sir Walter Scott and His Successors*, 19–50. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983.

Sugrue Thomas J. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014.

Teaching American History. "Of Booker T. Washington and Others." Accessed October 29, 2022. <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/of-booker-t-washington-and-others/>.

Theoharis, Jeanne. "The People's Tribunal on the Algiers Motel Killings." Rosa Parks Biography, accessed March 13, 2023. <https://rosaparksbiography.org/bio/the-peoples-tribunal-on-the-algiers-motel-killings/>.

Thom, James Alexander. *The Art and Craft of Writing Historical Fiction: Researching and Writing Historical Fiction*. Writer's Digest Books, 2010.

Tod, M. K. "7 Elements of Historical Fiction." A Writer of History, March 2015. <https://awriterofhistory.com/2015/03/24/7-elements-of-historical-fiction/>.

Trafton, John. "Historical Film." *Cultura Historica*, October 2019. <https://culturahistorica.org/the-historical-film/>.

Vancouver Island University. "'The Black Revolution' Speeches (1964)." Accessed October 30, 2022. https://web.viu.ca/davies/H323Vietnam/Malcolm_X_speeches.htm/.

Vidal, Belén. *Figuring the Past: Period Film and the Mannerist Aesthetic*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012.

Widick, B. J. *Detroit: City of Race and Class Violence*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989.

Wilson, Brenda. "Blurring the Boundaries." *Cinephile*, accessed December 6, 2022. <http://cinephile.ca/wp-content/uploads/2008/10/wilson-bigelow.pdf>.

X, Malcolm. *February 1965: The Final Speeches*. New York: Pathfinder Press, 1992.

Yale University. "'The Talented Tenth' [excerpts]." Accessed October 29, 2022. <https://glc.yale.edu/talented-tenth-excerpts>.

Young, Jeremy C. "Booker T. Washington and the White Fear of Black Charisma." African American Intellectual History Society, accessed October 29, 2022. <https://www.aaihs.org/booker-t-washington-and-the-white-fear-of-black-charisma/>.