Black Movement and Freedom: Questions of Cyclescapes, Cycling Planning, and Minstrelsy

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// Abstract

This paper investigates the following central question: What are the outcomes of the historical and ongoing restrictions placed upon the Black diaspora's physical movement? Related to my research question, I consider what the literature and archives have to say about Black experiences with movement and I engage with cycling-related scholarship on class and race, particularly as it relates to Black communities. I explore this in this paper to sufficiently contextualize the subject-matter I am engaging with. I argue that the historical and ongoing restrictions of the movement of the Black diaspora is subjectivity-producing and provides an alternative lens to better understanding anti-Blackness, and liberatory ways of understanding and engaging with movement. Additionally, to contribute to advancing an underexplored research topic in Black Geographies and further the growing scholarship on cycling and racism. Additionally, I explore the experiences of cycling and Black communities and conduct a research analysis on late nineteenth-century minstrel and other anti-Black imagery featuring bicycles.

This paper focuses on Canada and the United States, bringing cycling and transportation research into conversation with Black studies and Black geographies. I draw on archival materials from the late 1800s to early 1900s, alongside a counter-archival and discourse analysis. My sources include journalism, transportation planning data, and academic literature in social geography, anthropology, and history—all centred on cycling in North America.

Foreword

My Plan of Study examines equity in planning strategies and approaches. Over the course of my studies, I have concentrated on issues and topics pertaining to mobility, access, place, and equity in planning. I am considering these issues as they relate to growing urban inequality, with my areas of interest concentrated in Canada and the United States. The Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change provided me with the opportunity to build my knowledge about structural injustices and the role of planning in participating in these injustices, both in perpetuating and challenging them.

My time in the MES program provided me with the opportunity to more critically engage with these issues to enhance my understanding of how systems of power function to organize urban life and movement. In my studies, I engaged with literature exploring cycling planning and mobility

justice to further my understanding of (im)mobilities in Canadian and American metropolitan regions, in service of enhancing my understanding of the potential and harmful legacies of transportation planning. Mimi Sheller's pivotal monograph, *Mobility Justice* (2008), is a wide-spanning transdisciplinary study, of the micro and macro scales of mobility and the restrictions that accompany it. Mobility justice is a framework that analyzes and considers the role of inequality, power, and oppression in influencing patterns of movement. Mobility justice also lends itself to challenging contemporary paradigms and can facilitate a better understanding of the barriers impeding access to more just systems of mobility for marginalized people—so that these barriers may be challenged and dismantled (Sheller 2018).

Plan of Study learning objectives fulfilled by this paper:

i. Developing a solid foundation of knowledge concerning active transportation planning and mobility justice;
ii. Developing a strong understanding of how to generatively contest configurations of place, as well as discerning the manifestations of urban injustice, and how they can be connected to planning processes. I also want to probe approaches to tackling these injustices;
iii. Strengthening my understanding of community organizing for mobility justice; and
iv. Enhancing my understanding of the conditions and processes that can produce more just forms of mobility.

Dedication

I first and foremost would like to acknowledge my Ay, Hindu Abdirahman, who lovingly poured into me to make me the person that I am. I want to thank her for keeping me in her duas, sacrificing and encouraging me to receive education in a way that was inaccessible to her. I also want to thank my friend and mentor Shams el-Din Rogers for encouraging me in my education, growth and post-secondary schooling journey.

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My paper explores Black Movement as a theoretical framework and draws from multi-disciplinary scholarship. But I would be remiss not to mention my personal experiences with this concept. While historic and ongoing forces and my positionality as a Black person inspire this research, it is only made possible because of my background and familial circumstances. Drawing from Audre Lorde—"the personal is political"—and the political and historical encounter that influences this research focus is important for consideration. My research is only possible because of personal and familial experiences with Black Movement that were shaped by regimes of movement in present-day Ethiopia and Eritrea and the occupied Oromia and Somali Ogaden regions in the 1970s and 1980s. Specifically, many members of my family, including my parents, left Ethiopia during the Ethiopian Civil War, which took place from September 12, 1974, to May 28, 1991. The civil war in Ethiopia resulted in the creation of an Ethiopian diaspora for the first time in history, and this diaspora is where my parents met. While my parents have a shared cultural background and grew up a few minutes away from one another in Harar, Ethiopia, they only met after entering into the diaspora, after being displaced several times in a total of eight different countries and finally settling and meeting in Canada. Yet, they were eventually able to acquire

relative access to legal status, safety, and a home, which is not the experience for most Black refugees. While this paper explores the influences of the transatlantic slave trade and discussions of a slave trade predominately concentrated in West Africa, I consider that it has made a resounding impact on shaping Black Movement transnationally. The US-funded imperialism that bolstered the war still has a destabilizing effect on the country and the Horn of Africa region and was facilitated by forces that continue to shape Black Movement, impede Black freedom, and cause untold mass suffering. I believe that beginning to understand better, analyze, and contest these realities can lead to a better understanding of the present and advance imagining alternatives, more just ways of being, which I seek to do in a small way in this paper.

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Introduction

My research focuses on the experiences of the Black diaspora engaging in physical movement. A diaspora is a dispersion—or a movement—of people from a particular place of origin, and I consider this as it pertains to populations from sub-Saharan Africa. In my paper, I seek to examine how scholars have explored concepts surrounding what I call Black Movement to understand its historical and contemporary underpinnings. In my paper, I employ Black Movement as a lens to understand bicycle culture and anti-Blackness, and I explore how this permeates the archives as it pertains to cycling imagery. Specifically, I aim to understand the implications of Black Movement for my research and the experiences of Black people as it pertains to cycling as indicated in the archives, specifically, the Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs Division and the New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division. Additionally, I analyzed archival images from cycling historian and Major Taylor biographer Andrew Ritchie. In the final portions of this research paper, I have incorporated archival images, including stereographs, lithographs and illustrations depicting Black people with bicycles from the late 1800s and early 1900s, to analyze the context regarding race and racialization in Canada and the United States. I particularly engage with images from the years 1890 to 1900; I investigate this period because of how it coincides with the "bicycle boom," and informs in the production of the archival images I analyze in Chapter 2 of my research.

As a part of my research, I consider the question: What are the outcomes of the historical and ongoing restrictions placed upon the Black diaspora's physical movement? Further, I consider the following supplementary question: What do the literature and archives have to say about Black experiences with movement? I also explore what the cycling-related scholarship discusses as it pertains to class and race. Finally, I inquire into what nineteenth-century minstrel and other anti-Black imagery featuring bicycles articulate regarding my research inquiry.

In my paper, I theorize movement as an important window into understanding experiences of the Black diaspora, a window which presents the opportunity to understand the continued role of the transatlantic slave trade in structuring Black life. Moreover, researching movement and the Black diaspora provides a unique lens for theorizing freedom for Black people. In the academic literature, this area of study has not been completely fleshed out. I aim to inspect Black Movement

to contribute to the field of Black geographies and expand and make connections to the different ways that they have explored.

I argue that the contemporary globalized world is heavily organized around restrictions on movement and that this is of particular relevance to Black life. My research also demonstrates that engaging with movement is important for an understanding of our contemporary globalized world and geopolitical climate. Movement is integral to the understanding of the creation of Black subjecthood and the Black experience around the world, and of particular relevance to this study in Canada and the US. Moreover, much of this organization has been structured by initial mass involuntary movements of people begun at the onset of the transatlantic slave trade.

In this paper, I begin with an introduction to Black Movement, a concept and theoretical framework I introduce. Next, in Chapter 1, I explore diverse literature relevant to Black experiences with movement and cycling-related scholarship. I pursue my exploration of Black Movement by outlining my theoretical framework and providing a historical overview of Black Movement. I conclude the section on Black Movement by exploring Black Movement's relevance to freedom. In my first chapter, in my literature review, I explore and engage with the histories of contemporary movement and their relevance to Black subjects. Later, I explore cycling scholarship of contemporary experiences with cycling in Canada and the US, particularly focusing on cycling gentrification. In my literature review, drawn from cycling research, Black geographies, mobility justice research, and community organizing. I concentrate my research there because Black people and communities, and Black cyclists, are largely not considered in cycling, particularly in cycling advocacy—or are engaged with as an afterthought. Yet this change in cities, most acutely impact and marginalize Black people and cyclists. This occurs despite the increase in cycling, particularly in urban centres across Canada and the US. Moreover, cycling advocates are becoming more significantly influential political actors in contemporary cities in Canada and the US, which I will later review in further detail. This will be further inspected in the latter part of the paper but is particularly exemplified in the planning concepts espoused by Richard Florida (2002) and his theory of the "creative class."

Throughout this paper, particularly in Chapter 2, I engage with the discipline Black Geographies, which merges human geographies and Black studies considerations; and contemplates patterns and counterhegemonic alternatives lived and imagined space. Drawing from Black Geographies, McKittrick and Woods emphasize two factors that demonstrate how

Black Geographies are involved in the production of space. The first being how Black subjects and issues relevant to Black people are viewed as absent or continually regarded as absented, which is demonstrated in the lack of study and accessible local archival materials in my area of research. Of particular relevance to my research are the second and third factors:

> A second trajectory has to do with how the lives of those subjects demonstrate that 'common-sense' workings of modernity and citizenship are worked out, and normalized, through geographies of exclusion, the 'literal mappings of power relations and rejections.' Finally, although often camouflaged by these same processes, the situated knowledge of these communities and their contributions to both real and imagined human geographies are significant political acts and expressions (2007, p. 4).

The literature review's inclusion of cycling scholarship lends itself to an understanding of conceptions of Black people pertaining to cycling and movement, which I build upon in my counter-archival analysis in Chapter 2. I outline my research methodology, providing an overview of my research process and detailing my approach to discourse analysis and counter-archiving, as well as its relevance to my research. Later, in Chapter 2, I analyze late nineteenth-century archival data, analyze minstrelsy media depictions connected to the bicycle, and explore their implications for Black Movement, their ongoing historical and social relevance, and what it indicates as it pertains to Black Movement.

Chapter 1: Literature Review & Methodology

Black Movement

i) Black Movement: Theoretical Framework

Black Movement is my primary theoretical framework for investigating the outcomes of the historical and ongoing restrictions of Black people's movement configurations. To outline the scope of Black Movement, I draw from scholarship that includes political science theory around movement, Black Studies and Black Geographies scholarship, Mobility Justice scholarship, and geography. I draw from the aforementioned disciplines to further Black Movement as an analytical tool. Moreover, I consider what relevant knowledge they offer Black experiences with movement.

It is essential to contextualize the experiences of Black people to understand their particular experiences with movement/mobility to contextualize my research focus and counter-archival research. I argue that movement is significant to the Black diaspora. Relative to Black geographies, Black studies research in Canada and the US has engaged with key events or themes that pertain to movement. Moreover, the politics of movement are integral to Black life and Black geographies, but this has not been sufficiently attended to in the scholarship, especially where it might be most relevant in geography. Since the late 1960s, Black Studies or Africana studies scholarship has engaged with spatial elements of the systemic oppression confronting Black life and characterizing the oppression of Black communities though this has only recently become an area of study in the mainstream discipline of geography (Hawthorne, 2019). This only came about through tenacious organizing by Black academics, particularly Black women—to create space for this scholarly and political focus. Black Geographies is now a decade into its recognition and participation in mainstream geography. In this time, well-meaning academics, particularly in Canada in the US, in the burgeoning field of Black Geographies have drawn attention to the importance of space and placemaking in Black Geographies but have not concentrated directly on movement. In my research on Black Movement, I engage with the discipline of Black Geographies to further challenge mainstream geography to represent a key aspect of the spatial experiences of anti-Black racism, and I engage with Black Geographies to further expand the discipline and raise movement as an underexplored and generative area of study.

Political scientist Hager Kotef (2015) explores the contemporary conditions undergirding "the embodied and material practices of movement" in her insightful monograph, *Movement and the Ordering of Freedom* (p. xv). She explores the role of movement, both historically and contemporarily, in developing subjecthood. She asserts the mutually constitutive role of free and restricted movement in forming subjecthood and power. Furthermore, she interrogates the various influences or "technologie[s]," and restrictions upon citizenship, colonialization, patriarchal domination, displacement, and marginalization producing varied subjectivities and further subjection (p. 2). I draw from Kotef's considerations as they pertain to ongoing anti-Black practices influencing the technologies informing Black restrictions to movement. At the same time, Kotef explores these issues in her research into the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, as well as the expansion of transnational surveillance. While she does not contextualize this in the experiences of Black diaspora, her research offers essential on context on the socio-political circumstances structuring contemporary movement, which I draw upon, and I also engage with Black scholarship

to fill gaps where she lacks considerations of the role of Blackness in movement production. Brandi Thompson Summers (2019) similarly considers movement as a subject producing technology, grounding it in her Black Geographic analysis of gentrification and Black displacement in Washington D.C. Summers draws on Setha Low's *Spatializing Culture* (2016) to demonstrate the connection between body, landscape, and movement in the production of space and geographies. Low also underscores the integral role of individual movement and immobility in this iterative process of spatial and subjecthood production, noting:

> …'[People] create space through their bodies and *the mobility of those bodies*, giving meaning, form and, ultimately, patterning of everyday movements and trajectories that result in place and landscape.' It is not just the mobility of these bodies that produces space but also their immobility that shapes their surrounding landscapes (italics added by author) (as cited in Low, 2016, p. 8).

Kotef inspects the contemporary conditions informing movement—which is relevant to Black Movement and proposes that contemporary movement regulations are connected to broader socio-political forces. Like Kotef, I define movement as peoples' physical relocations or changes in the locations of people's bodies. She also astutely delineates movement as a subjectivity-producing technology and explores how distinct capacities to engage in movement create both diverging ways of moving and restrictions to movement. She emphasizes,

> Movement is a technology of citizenship or subjectivity…Thorough the production of patterns of movement (statelessness, deportability, enclosures, confinement), different categories of subjectivity are produced. Regimes of movement are thus never simply a way to control, to regulate, or to incite movement. Regimes of movement are integral to the formation of different modes of being. But movement is also a lens through which to trace models within which subjectivity is framed (Kotef, 2015, p. 15).

As Kotef indicates, experiences with movement co-constitute the development of subjecthood and marginalization, which is particularly important to the Black diaspora. Moreover, movement is a lens through which to consider the historical and ongoing regimes of movement influencing the Black diaspora's movement. Additionally, Black studies scholarship engages with how Black people and communities are not able to exercise their subjecthood and rights of citizenship and that Black life outlines the boundaries of citizenship. Furthermore, differential access to the ability

to engage in movement is an integral aspect of this. Similarly, drawing from Stuart Hall, geographer John G. Stehlin (2019) affirms how mobility operates as "…a modality through which differences such as race, class, gender, and the division of labor are lived…" (as cited in Hall, 2006, pp. 22).

Similar to Kotef, Mimi Sheller (2018) echoes the subjectivity producing role of movement in her framework mobility justice. I draw on Sheller's work from her comprehensive text *Mobility Justice*, which emphasizes the role of movement in producing subject formation and inequality, emphasizing, "…mobility injustices…are the process through which unequal spatial conditions and differential subjects are made" (p. 21). Sheller's research is relevant to my research, but for the purposes of her wide-spanning study, she explores contemporary and historic Black experiences with movement, but does into thoroughly develop this into an integral part of her framework, particularly the afterlife of slavery, while she later discusses postcolonial and Caribbean cultural theorists, and their explorations of slavery she doesn't like Black Movement thoroughly integrate in her analysis. She discusses the divergent historical and ongoing experiences with mobility experienced by Black subjects, but her work does not thoroughly consider this. I still draw from her work, particularly her conceptualization that subversive spatial politics and movement connect mobility justice corporeal resistance to mobility regimes, including racializing mobility regimes. The subjectivity and marginalization-producing role of movement informs the Black diaspora's differential capabilities for movement and the distinct experience of Black Movement.

Kotef's research has relevance to understanding movement and to further analyzing contemporary regimes of movement and Black Movement. However, Kotef does not grapple with the role of Blackness and Black subjecthood production as it relates to movement. I regard Kotef's omission of considerations of Black experiences with movement to be a shortcoming of her work because of the significant way contemporary movement and mobility regimes cohere around anti-Black restrictions to movement, but I seek to build upon her work for my research and what she highlights generally regarding how racism mediates movement, and oppressive mobility regimes restricting movement. Throughout the rest of my literature review, I couple Kotef and other scholars' research on movement with Black Studies and Black Geographies thinkers to further my theoretical framework of Black Movement and to better understand and challenge contemporary and historical regimes of movement.

For my study, of Black Movement, I also give some consideration to movement as it relates to political movement, I use the term Black Movement to describe movement through physical

space, but I also use this language as a nod to political movements. I consider Hall's (1990) work on the Black diaspora, and his insistence to expand understandings of "cultural identity," and perspective on the Black diaspora as dynamic and non-monolithic, and as "a result of a long and discontinuous series of transformations" (p. 231). Specifically, he notes that these "transformations" are akin to internal and political movements. Due to the politicization of Black life and because of the acute levels of marginalization that anti-Black racism confronts Black people with Black Movement also seeks to reference how Black political movements have played an instrumental role in challenging the structuring of the contemporary movement internationally, as well as to create more just mobilities and patterns of Black Movement. As I consider later in this chapter histories of resistance are important for considerations of Black Movement. Black Movement seeks to harken to the prominent political organizing, with both liberal and revolutionary leanings—particularly radical liberatory mass movements internationally for Black freedom in the mid-twentieth century, notably the 1960s Black power movement and Black civil rights movement in the US, Canada, and internationally. There were symbolic and political connections made between these decolonization movements. The 1960s also saw the success of movements for African independence, which saw more than half of the nations across the continent achieving independence in the 1960s. It doesn't matter if the gesture is small and singular or a widespread movement – both degrees of political movement can influence Black life and Black Movement and has the potential to disrupt, reject, and resist the status quo.

I deliberately chose to use the phrase Black Movement, rather than terms such as "mobility poor," developed by Tim Cresswall (2006) to describe the process through which various infrastructures are deliberately exclusionary towards Black, Latinx, and racialized immigrant communities. I chose to refer to related phenomena using Black Movement because it better articulates the chronology and the ongoing processes and spatial arrangements that produce the "mobility poor" and ongoing resistance to these uneven capabilities for mobility. Moreover, it frames communities less through a "deficit lens," which researcher Eve Tuck (2009) underscores as a persistent feature of "damaged-centred research" of marginalized communities (p. 409).

Historical and ongoing Black engagements with movement have sought to aspire towards employing what George Lipsitz (2007) describes as the "black spatial imaginary" (p. 13). Black Movement aspires to engage in "[n]ew spatial and social relations grounded in another kind of expertise—the "black spatial imaginary" (Lipsitz, 2007, p. 20). But unlike the "black spatial

imaginary," which theorizes a counterhegemonic alternative spatial imaginary to prevalent contemporary realities, Black Movement more thoroughly attends to and grapples with considerations of physical movement and prevalent (im)mobilities and alternative socio-spatial potentials in Black people's lives as important areas for theoretical consideration. Specifically, analyzing and contesting the immobilizing technologies emerging since the transatlantic slave trade that manifest contemporarily in the overpoliced "ghetto" or the dangers that can be experienced when "driving while Black."

Kotef insists that "the configuration — but also the production — of movement cannot be understood separately from schemas of race, gender, ethnicity, or class, in which bodies are produced and organized" (p. 138). To understand the historical and ongoing restrictions placed upon Black experiences with movement, I draw from political and social scholars that more broadly explore movement and its role in developing subject positions. I take the work of these scholars discussing the movement further, and I extrapolate on movement's relevance to the Black diaspora and the importance of considering going forward as it pertains to analyses of the movement. I further enhance this analysis by further considering the ongoing effect of slavery and its afterlives on Black Movement, and its historical and ongoing impact on Black experiences with movement.

ii) Black Movement: Slavery, Slavery's Afterlife, & Freedom

The impact of transatlantic slavery has had resounding geographic and ontological impacts. Black geographies scholar Rashad Shabazz (2015) stresses that "[t]he cruel technologies of slavery represented an entirely new ontology of space" (p. 6). I echo Black Studies scholarship that asserts that the transatlantic Atlantic slave trade racializes Black subjects as Black, but I also argue that slavery represents a new paradigm and ontology of movement, which emerged "in the wake" of the slave ship, to borrow from Christina Sharpe's seminal work, *In The Wake* (2016). Sharpe argues that globally, Black life across the diaspora remains informed by its existence in the afterlife of transatlantic slavery—Black life is informed by the historical and ongoing impact of containment in "the hold" of the slave ship, which can be seen in the structures and world order established and reinforced by the transatlantic slave trade. Furthermore, drawing from Kotef's scholarship on movement and merging it with Black studies scholarship, I argue that the movement of the slave ship and the immobilization of the Black people on said ship, which renders

the Black people on it as cargo, produces Black subjecthood, which further delineates the study of the movement of the Black diaspora as significant for consideration.

In Clyde Woods's research on New Orleans and Hurricane Katrina, he explores "the politics of citizenship" and its inaccessibility to Black subjects and the way in which it is indicative of the Black subjecthood and geographies, and its connection to limited access to movement (Woods, 2009; Woods, 2011; McKittrick & Woods, 2007). In the introduction to *Black Geographies* (2007), McKittrick and Woods also address this issue, noting that,

> Black and poor subjects are disposable precisely because they cannot easily *move or escape*. The combination of unavailable rights, *immovability*, and abandoned subjects – those subjects who were, prior to Katrina, forgettable, unseeable, and occupying the underside of democracy, and then, during the storm, catastrophically brought into view… (italics added by author) (p. 3).

In Rinaldo Walcott's book, *The Long Emancipation* (2021), he conceptually explores freedom, movement and its contemporary and historical significance to Black life. Like Kotef, Walcott explores the role of racialization in citizenship and its interconnection to movement. Walcott (2021) describes how "…Black movement has retained its animating force concerning questions of nation, citizenship, and freedom" (p. 37). Walcott's framing contributes to my consideration of Black Movement as a lens for comprehending and contesting the hegemonic order. He similarly explores the critical role of movement in producing subjecthood, but specific to Black experiences and the contemporary realities confronting Black people. Walcott emphasizes how a key site where the afterlife of slavery manifests itself is in its pronounced influence on how Black people move and their exclusion in the global imagination from belonging. Walcott continues:

> The project of Black movement, however, is not only conditioned by African or Black enslavement and continental exploitation and 'underdevelopment.' Black movement is also conditioned by global articulations of race and blackness conceived in the time of transatlantic slavery and African colonization and partition (Walcott, 2021, p. 39).

Walcott explores the role of movement and immobility in characterizing contemporary Black life. Similarly, in geographer Katherine McKittrick's *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (2006), she touches on how an element of ongoing Black Geographic

arrangements is its interconnection with movement, both restricted and coerced. McKittrick (2006) writes, “[t]raditional geographies did, and arguably still do, require black displacement, black placelessness, black labor, and a black population that submissively stays ‘in place’” (p. 9). Once again immobility and stunted movement appear as relevant to considerations of Black people’s physical movement.

Like McKittrick, Simone Browne (2015) foregrounds the role of space, the afterlife of slavery and restrictions on Black people’s movement in Canada and the US, but through Browne’s research in surveillance studies. Browne analyzes how the legacies and histories of transatlantic slavery inform contemporary surveillance architectures. She emphasizes “blackness as a key site through which surveillance is practiced, narrated, and enacted…” (Browne, 2015, p. 10). She outlines the emergence of “surveillance technologies installed during slavery to monitor and track blackness as property”—she specifically outlines surveillance as a mechanism imposed when Black enslaved people, often when they engaged in movement. Browne emphasizes how “[i]n the plantation system, the restriction of the mobility and literacy of the enslaved served as an exercise of power” (Browne, 2015, p. 53). Furthermore, many of these surveillance approaches were employed in response to fears surrounding the threat posed by Black mobility. Browne specifically outlines this regarding runaway notices, slave patrols, the creation of the Book of Negroes, the establishment of lantern laws in New York City, and fugitive slave notices. Lantern laws were eighteenth-century New York City laws mandating enslaved people to hold a lit candle while travelling around the city. The Book of Negroes is a ledger from 1783 listing the status of three thousand formerly enslaved people, detailing information on their name, age, gender, and occupation. The two-hundred-page document also listed the status of the individuals listed in the ledger, noting their point of origin, former masters, ultimate destination, and how they emancipated themselves from slavery. Browne underscores the historical importance of the book of Negroes to Black Movement because the ledger served as the first documentation of travel between Canada and the US (Browne, 2015).

Browne also explores countersurveillance strategies, including those pertaining to movement. She analyzes the documents and research from Franz Fanon underscoring the role of surveillance, and some countersurveillance strategies as key element of the history and ongoing experience of Black people in the US. “He mentions the themes of escape and blackness on the move found in Negro spirituals, the haunting lyrics of blues music and social death…” (Browne,

2015, p. 22-24). I consider her framework of “dark sousveillance,” which draws from “sousveillance,” a concept considering the surveillance exercised upon a member of the public who is not in a position of authority (Browne, 2015, p. 19). Yet, Browne considers “imaginaries that are oppositional and that are hopeful for another way of being” (Browne, 2015, p. 21). Furthermore, it operates as a tool of critique and method for Black subjects to assert their agency and functions as a counterhegemonic tool, which she describes as “a reading praxis” and analytical tool. She continues:

> Dark sousveillance is a site of critique, as it speaks to black epistemologies of contending with antiblack surveillance, where the tools of social control in plantation surveillance or lantern laws in city spaces and beyond were appropriated, co-opted, repurposed, and challenged in order to facilitate survival and escape. This might sound like Negro spirituals that would sing of freedom and escape routes (p. 21).

Browne’s research on anti-Black surveillance in Canada in the US and her framework of dark sousveillance traces the key role of surveillance in structuring the Black diaspora’s capabilities movement. Considering her research, one may conclude that exploring anti-Black surveillance allows for a stronger comprehension of the parameters in which the historical and ongoing surveillance technologies immobilizing the Black diaspora emerged and still structure Black experiences with movement. Additionally, Browne’s research delineates that since the onset of the transatlantic slave trade, the movement of Black people—particularly those pursuing their emancipation—has continued to be accompanied by surveillance. Dark sousveillance helps to further an understanding of the contestations to surveillances of Black Movement and helps to further an epistemological framework to explore Black Movement. Additionally, dark sousveillance develops an understanding of plantation surveillance and observes those in authority, which I further explore in my archival analysis; she explores dark sousveillance through movement in her analysis of posters warning Black Bostonians of slave catchers critiquing anti-Black surveillance helps to connect the centuries-long lineage of contesting and subverting surveillance technologies (Browne, 2015, 22).

Like the framework of “dark sousveillance,” Torkwase Dyson considers the counterhegemonic praxis “black compositional thought,” to be engaged in by Black subjects to pursue liberation, while drawing upon Sharpe’s concept of “the hold” (Wilson, 2019 p. 15). Both “dark sousveillance” and “black compositional thought” are spatial strategies, and both consider

the role of movement in the pursuit of freedom for Black people. Dyson's concept explores the ongoing legacy of resistance in the ways enslaved Black people continually contested the various manifestations of the enclosure of "the hold" and enacted alternative "compositions" or modalities, whether in architecture, physical space, geography, to physically or energetically to enact resistance and operate collectively as "networks of liberation" (Wilson, p. 17). Moreover, enslaved Black subjects would physically navigate or plan to physically navigate these spaces to exert agency, specifically to advance their self-driven movement and contest the violent immobility of enslavement. Dyson notes that "black compositional thought" is still relevant to considerations of freedom, deepens comprehension of the historical restrictions placed on Black Movement, and demonstrates how the immobility confronting Black Movement has always been accompanied with resistance to these restrictions.

Restrictions on the movement of the Black diaspora characterized enslavement and anti-Black violence, yet defiance and contestation of these oppressive forces have concurrently been enacted. Walcott (2021) emphasizes how, for centuries, potential freedom and liberation for Black people have continued to be thwarted and the central role movement has played in Black life and possible freedom. He underscores the following:

> The limit of the idea of freedom as actually occurring for Black people is most clearly seen when movement happens. Our push toward freedom is marked principally by the problems that Black movement poses for nations and citizenship. Once Black people *move*, the limits of freedom and autonomy announce themselves. The brutality with which Black movement is greeted makes movement central to Black being and central to the idea of freedom (p.14).

In Gretchen Sorin's *Driving While Black* (2020), she explores the history of Black car ownership and its resounding cultural significance. She investigates the role of the car in bolstering and enhancing Black movement and explores the history and significance of Black movement and travel. Studies on the impact of the automobile on the public emphasize the narrative around individual mobility and freedom bolstered through the car, particularly in the post-WWII era, but this was much more significant for Black Americans who were not comparably mobile. Sorin (2020) stresses the importance of mobility, movement, and its restriction, noting that "for black people, mobility was always most highly prized because it was often and historically been an impossibility" (p. xi). Relevant to my research, Sorin explores how Black Americans used movement while employing the automobile as a tool to contest spatial configurations and create alternative spatial

patterns and mobilities in the twentieth century. Sorin explores how Black people in the US engaged in movement in defiance and contestation of racist norms, which I similarly explore in my research. Sorin (2020) also notes how Black drivers, upon the popularization of access to automobiles, "pushed back again the laws and routines of segregated communities, crossing back and forth between 'white spaces' and 'black spaces'" (p. xiii); moreover, that "[g]oing out on the road was for them, as it was for so many black Americans, an act of quiet rebellion" (p. 17). Additionally, that through using the automobile they contest racism and the racist restrictions to their permeated every aspect of life, particularly in the Jim Crow south, and asserted their desires for citizenship

Both Sorin and Walcott connect the restrictions on contemporary Black mobility to the transatlantic slave trade. Sorin (2020) underscores that, "the restrictions on African American mobility in the United States began four centuries ago, with the involuntary journey from Africa to the New World" (p. 2-3). Sorin and Walcott's texts are two texts that, more than most, foreground and directly engage with Black Movement and mobility. Sorin's analysis takes an approach that focuses more specifically on the experiences of Black Americans in her analysis of Black movement and mobility. In contrast, Walcott takes a more transnational approach—yet common themes emerge pertaining to Black life. Walcott's analysis and more strongly align with my research focus. The common themes that are evident in their work are the threats to Black people that emerges when engaging in movement; in addition, the ongoing ways Black communities would defy and contest these restrictions, and the central role of Black mobility and movement the pursuit of freedom. Sorin takes a more liberal historical analysis in her engagement with Black Movement. Walcott doesn't just consider Black Movements a central experience—but as central ontological experience and contemporary Black existence. Moreover, Walcott more astutely asserts that the existence of the Black subject contests the nation-state and citizenship altogether—which he insists display their limits as they encounter Black people; he demands their entire reconceptualization for Black people to actualize freedom. He stresses that Black life and movement pose an existential threat to the nation-state and freedom, bringing these concepts into contestation. Sorin takes a more liberal analysis that explores the discriminatory history confronting Black histories of movement in the US, but I believe it falls short, because it regards these histories as an aberration of American democratic ideals—rather, I like Walcott, consider these ideals as founded upon Black subjugation—particularly which is particularly expressed through restrictions to movement.

Sharpe (2016) goes on to underscore the importance of attending to the reality that Black life exists in "the wake," necessitating a focus on "containment, regulation, punishment, capture, and captivity," language that attends the integral role that the afterlife of slavery plays in global and "everyday" Black Movement (p. 21). Sharpe (2016) foregrounds the role of involuntary movement, stating the following:

> In the wake, the semiotics of the slave ship continue: from the *forced movements* of the enslaved to the forced movements of the migrant and the refugee, to the regulation of Black people in North American streets and neighborhoods, to those ongoing crossings of and drownings in the Mediterranean Sea, to the brutal colonial reimaginings of the slave ship and the ark; to the reappearances of the slave ship in everyday life in the form of the prison, the camp, and the school (p. 21).

Drawing upon Sharpe's analysis, I echo that the slave ship and residing in "the hold" is relevant for comprehending Black people's experiences engaging in movement and influences the outcomes and ongoing restrictions to Black Movement.

McKittrick (2006) echoes Sharpe's theorization surrounding the role of the ship and its hold on influencing Black subjectivity but explores it as a "technology" and geographic terrain. Furthermore, McKittrick (2006) articulates how the slave ship operates as an apparatus, stating:

> The physicality of the slave ship, then, contributes to the process of social concealment and dehumanization but, importantly, black subjectivity is not swallowed up by the ship itself. Rather, the ship, its crew, black subjects, the ocean and ports, make geography what it is, a location through which *a moving technology* can create differential and contextual histories (italics added by author) (p. xii).

She also articulates how the slave ship was also engaged by Black subjects as a site of resistance housing "an oppositional geography," which developed in contestation of the ship's carceral and ontological power. McKittrick (2006) notes the following:

> ...[The slave ship] also expose[s] a very meaningful struggle for freedom *in place*. Technologies of transportation, in this case the ship while materially and ideologically enclosing black subjects...also *contribute to the formation of an oppositional geography*: the ship as a location of black subjectivity and human terror, black resistance, and in some cases, black possession (italics added by author) (p. x-xi).

Echoing this notion of oppositional geographies, Walcott labours the point that Black people continually participate in the defiance of the ongoing influence of the afterlife of slavery on restrictions of movement and the pursuit of freedom. Borrowing once again from Kotef's work on movement and identity production, she similarly articulates how various identities formed through "im/mobility" can operate as a counterhegemonic force. She mentions, "[i]dentity itself can become (or be revealed as) fluid, and movement can thus function as a critique of stable and static images of subjectivity." (Kotef, 2015, p. 138). Walcott argues that "...Black subjects refuse the slave ship logics imposed on their movement around the globe, the question of freedom appears in the face of limits as a still urgent one for late neoliberal modernist capitalist states" (Walcott, 2021, p. 50).

iii) Black Movement: A Brief Historical Overview

Throughout this paper, I contend that pivotal moments in the experiences and histories of the Black diaspora—specifically within the contexts of Canada and the US—are intrinsically linked to both movement and the restrictions imposed upon it. As such, Black Movement can operate as a critical tool for analyzing these events. Some notable events that illustrate this dynamic include the Great Migration, the onset of white flight in the 1950s and the accompanying Black immobility, the history of Black Pullman Porters, waves of immigration, marronage, and beyond (McKittrick & Woods, 2007; Rutland, 2018). Considerations of historical Black Movement are particularly important for understanding the ongoing restrictions imposed on Black Movement. Furthermore, since the onset of the transatlantic slave trade, resistance has been a longstanding element of the Black radical tradition, and the ways that it has been exercised have frequently emerged in contestation to the restrictions to the movement of Black subjects (Robinson, 1983). Resistance has, in large part, emerged in accompaniment with restrictions to the historical movement of the Black diaspora.

One of the most prominent recent historic examples of Black communities engaging in mass movements to actualize freedom—particularly in the twentieth century—is in the Great Migration, sometimes referred to as the Black Migration or the Great Northward Migration, which took place from 1910 to 1970, and was the movement of six million Black Americans from the rural Southern US to other regions in the country (Wright, 2025). Including urban areas of America, in the Northeast, Midwest, and West. Black communities left the South in pursuit of better lives and an

escape from the Jim Crow laws and their accompanying racial violence—particularly the threat of lynchings (Fernandez, 2023).

Marronage, refers to the self-emancipation and escape of enslaved Black people in the Americas throughout the history of the transatlantic slave trade, and represented a noteworthy resistance to the institution of slavery. Marronage is a significant example of the contestation of the restrictions to Black Movement, as well as an engagement in movement as a form of liberatory practice. Marronage referred to escapes whether short-term escapes referred to as, petit marronage or grand marronage, long-term or permanent escapes, which would result in the establishment of maroon communities or settlements. Counterinsurgency practices included using hiding seeds and sustenance and escape routes/maps in braiding patterns to indicate escape plans and maps, engaging in marronage, and establishing autonomous free communities (Bledsoe, 2017). A prominent example is the Underground Railroad leading to Canada from the United States. However, in Canada, the narrative was usurped from a story of the resistance of Black people asserting their agency and claiming their freedom, but rather an anti-Black national narrative and historical imagination of Canada as a haven for Black people, despite much evidence to the contrary (Solomon, 2023). Marronage scholar Alan Bledsoe (2017) describes marronage as a subversive and transformative spatial praxis. Moreover, he characterizes marronage as “[m]ore than simply a reaction to slavery and non-being, marronage was perhaps one of the most creative and emergent methods of life-building found in the modern world.” (p. 30). Tracing the ongoing legacy of maroon communities in the Americas, Bledsoe underscores Brazil as a nation where the history of its maroon communities, Quilombos, looms large in the national narrative and is a legacy drawn from ongoing Black struggles for freedom.

Following the American Revolution, Black Loyalists settled East of current-day Manitoba, in what constituted Upper Canada, and, later, Lower Canada, particularly in the area that now constitutes Nova Scotia (Rutland, 2018). In the latter quarter of the nineteenth century, Canada’s rapidly growing rail industry began recruiting Black Pullman Porters from Canada, the US, and the West Indies (Oyeniran, 2019). Pullman Porters were men—and predominately Black men—hired by the Pullman Company who worked as sleeping car porters from around 1867 to the 1920s. The jobs were considered decent and relatively well-paying, particularly relative to the employment opportunities available to Black men at a time, when they were extremely scarce (Oyeniran, 2019).

In Stehlin's (2019) study of cycling-related urban gentrification, he aptly notes how bicycles act as "the cheapest and most accessible form of mobility, and poor people should stand to benefit most from being freed from the burdens of car ownership" (p. x). However, he also underscores how in the US, "[p]eople of color have absorbed the majority of harms of the automobile era, from the highway construction that destroyed their houses to the exhaust that promotes their asthma..." (p. x). Moreover, these effects were most acutely experienced by Black communities. As the civil rights movement was making advances and began generating wins against housing and zoning-related discrimination in the court system, the highway system presented an opportunity to entrench segregation through different means and destroy different Black communities. At the time of The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 and the ensuing mass highway construction across the US, highways symbolized economic development and progress in the post-WWII era of planning, which largely served the advancement of white communities (King, 2021). This is indicative of what Ted Rutland (2018) describes as an urban planning system with "...a deep-rooted structure of anti-blackness which has shaped planning's dealings with all city residents, Black and non-Black" (p. 4). In Rutland's *Displacing Blackness: Power, Planning, and Race in Twentieth-Century Halifax* (2018), he explores North American planning's ongoing anti-Black urban planning history:

> The moves of modern planning, its attempts to create a life-improving urban terrain, are rendered conceivable and achievable by the displacement of blackness – sometimes physically (physical displacement) and sometimes symbolically (displacement from the field of planning's concerns). Displacing blackness, physically and symbolically, is the unending work of modern planning (p. 4).

Of relevance to Black Movement, and contemporary planning considerations, the construction of highways, particularly in the US, but also in Canada, indicate relevant areas of consideration for Black Movement. Instances of highway-related displacement occurred in Canada and the US and supported the enhanced flow of traffic and tax revenue to white suburban communities. Similarly, Sheller (2018) describes how "[a] mobility justice perspective...leads one to ask how some people's freedom of mobility impacts and depends on others' coerced mobilities, slowed mobilities, uprootings, and re-routings" (p. 96). Of relevance to my research, the prioritization of the movement of white citizens has historically been encouraged and facilitated by restrictions to Black Movement.

Black displacement for the purposes of highway construction, partocularly in the 1950s and 60's was a prominent phenomenon resulting in the displacement and forced movement of numerous Black communities. In Vancouver's Hogan's Alley community, the 1970 creation of the Georgia and Dunsmuir viaducts, completed in 1972, destroyed the only Black neighbourhood to have formed in the city's history (Compton, 2019). The I-81 in Syracuse, New York displaced the 15th Ward community, which at the time was home to nearly 90% of the city's Black population. The entire neighbourhood was razed in the 1960s, displacing 1,300 families and informing the city's ranking as one of the top ten most segregated metro regions. The I-85, built in the 1960s, cut through Montgomery, Alabama's only middle-class Black neighbourhood. The I-94 in the Rondo neighbourhood in St. Paul, Minnesota, displaced one in eight Black residents of the city and displaced hundreds of residents and businesses in the 1950s and 60s (Fernandez, 2023). These are some examples, but many more exist and continue to this day. These legacies persist, as evidenced by the 3 billion dollar proposed expansion to the West I-526 interchange in Charleston County, South Carolina, which would force approximately 100 majority Black North Charleton residents and businesses to move (Fernandez, 2023). Furthermore, echoing Stehlin, this legacy persists as it relates to gentrification, including cycling-related gentrification. Stehlin (2019) asserts that "...rolling back the effects of automobility should be a matter of justice," though contemporarily, "bicycling has been incorporated into highly unequal processes of urban growth now flourishing in the US (pp. x-xi). I further explore these issues in the cycling portion of this paper's literature review. He continues:

> ...[T]he long half-century of automobility strangled investment in all other forms of mobility, the turn toward active transportation would constitute a just correction of resource allocation. Equally a reversal of the urbicidal patterns of twentieth-century growth, and a renewal of dense urban places, would appear to serve the interest of justice. But the renewal of places is not equivalent to the restoration of the capabilities withheld from people of color and the working class through the past eighty years of urban policy. The houses and streets they called home may return to glory without them (pp. 17-18).

Rinaldo Walcott's essay, The *Black Aquatic* (2021), examines the enduring relationship between the Black diaspora and water, particularly the Atlantic Ocean, since the onset of the transatlantic slave trade and the lasting impact of that forced movement. He explores how "[t]he black aquatic names the claim that blackness itself is birthed in salt water—the Atlantic Ocean as

a first instance—and then later becomes a kind of saline embodiment of early modern and late modern new life forms or Black selves" (Walcott, 2021, p. 35). He emphasizes how racial hierarchy and power structures established at the start of the slave trade are still ever-present (Walcott, 2021, pp. 69-71). Moreover, the initial forced Black Movement and its impact created the current state of forced and coerced movements of migrants in the Global South, particularly Black African migrants. Walcott (2021) brings together the interconnections between the coerced movement of Black and other racialized subjects in the global south, to the ongoing displacements, and coerced movements that characterizes Black life, and a concept I explore, Black Movement, in the afterlife of slavery.

Contemporary Cyclescapes: The Rolling Signification of the Bicycle

A growing body of literature has emerged contesting dominant hegemonic perspectives on contemporary urban cycling culture and cycling gentrification, yet much of this has not sufficiently explored Black perspectives. I consider what this literature says about Black experiences with movement or policies that have the potential to impact Black communities and their experiences with movement, particularly contemporarily as it relates to gentrification. Various scholars have used frameworks exploring how the varied meanings of cycling vary depending on the context, which I draw from to analyze how this can be relevant for understanding Black experiences with movement.

John Turpin explores cycling marketing and history in the US. Turpin draws from cultural anthropologist Luis Vivanco, and his research emphasizes the contextual importance of interpreting the bicycle or the period it is from. Quoting Vivanco, Turpin (2018) underscores that "specific technological conditions, practices of life, social relations, cultural meanings and political-economic dynamics...help produce important variations across cities, countries, and social groups in how people think about and interact with bicycles in their everyday lives" (as cited in Vivanco, 2013, p. xxi). Similarly, Zach Furness (2010) explores contemporary cycling in the US. Furness (2010) notes that "the processes that collectively fix meaning around the bicycle, the act of cycling or even the cyclist him- or herself are historically rooted, geographically and contextually specific, and shaped by dominant ideologies and everyday habits" (p. 10).

Citing Jeremy Withers and Daniel P. Shea's 2016 book, *Culture on Two Wheels*, Turpin (2018) describes the bicycle as a rolling or floating signifier as "perpetually taking on new and

varied significations" (p. 4). The symbolic complexities of the bicycle are crucial to its cultural significance. Melody Hoffman first introduces this concept of the rolling signification of the bicycle; she further elaborates on this in her book, *Are Bike Lanes White Lanes?* (2016). She notes that "the bicycle has cultural understandings embedded in it," and emphasizes the variations in these cultural meanings and that "the bicycle's meaning changes in different spaces, with different people, and in different cultures" (p. 6). Furthermore, she asserts how "the "rolling signification" of the bicycle, informs it varying capacity to "build community, influence gentrifying urban planning, and obscure and reify systemic race and class barriers" (p. 6).

Geographer Glenn Norcliffe (2016) has prominently explored the geography and significance of the bicycle. Specifically, he emphasizes how he "examined the bicycle…in a number of contemporary and historical settings and found it to be an object that touches upon human geographies in many complex and subtle ways… the cycle is the artifact that most comprehensively captures the economic and social geographies of the modern age" (p. 1). Norcliffe also notes the importance of cultural perceptions on geography, specifying how "overlain on these social geographies are a series of intricate cultural understandings of the bicycle. Identities are not inherited or innate conditions but are cultural constructs" (p. 5).

In addition, Norcliffe (2016) articulates how "[c]losely tied up with these cultural geographies are the political geographies of the bicycle" (p. 6). In his text, he notes political geographies related to industrialization and manufacturing at the beginning of the nineteenth-century in Britain and the US and its growth in Taiwan and China. He also notes this role as it relates to "a local geographical scale" weighing scarce opportunities between cycling advocates and the automobile lobby, which "pit the politics of capital accumulation against liveable city alternatives, green politics, state capitalism and assorted city and regional support policies" (p. 6-7).

In *Cyclescapes of the Unequal City* (2019), geographer John Stehlin introduces his theory of the "cyclescape," to describe the role of the bicycle in our contemporary cities. He outlines a cyclescape as "a field of struggle over what cities will become in the twenty-first century" (p. xv). Drawing on the seminal geographer Doreen Massey, he emphasizes that a cyclescape is a location "constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together" (Stehlin, 2019, p. xv). The comprehensive *Bicycle Justice and Urban Transformation: Biking for all?* considers inequality in cycling in American cities, and the framework they present, "bicycle

justice,"—similar to Stehlin's concept of a "cyclescape," considers what cycling will mean to contemporary American cities (Golub et al., 2016). However, I regard "bicycle justice" as going further by conducting an analysis and more distinctly outlining a vision—resembling the "black spatial imaginary"—of more equitable, accessible and safe cycling infrastructure. I use the concept of "bicycle justice" and a "cyclescape" as a framework to analyze the contemporary trajectories of cycling advocacy within Black communities. This framework also helps me examine shifts in cycling practices in Canada and the US and explore how alternative equitable cyclescapes inviting to Black Movement might function.

Historic and ongoing restrictions to Black people's movements persist contemporarily as it relates to everyday engagements in movement, such as commuting or navigating their communities. Available data indicates that Black people and neighbourhoods with more sizeable Black populations are overrepresented in road fatalities—including in cycling fatalities. (City of Toronto, 2025; MacEacheron, et al. 2023). In addition, Black people face heightened risk and likelihood of harassment through exposure to law enforcement and discriminatory harassment, while engaging in movement, often referred to as "driving while black." Also, based on available data, Black people are also overrepresented as individuals lacking access to motor vehicles (MacEacheron, et al. 2023; City of Toronto, 2025). Furthermore, increasingly in the cultural imagination of who cyclists are—or, in our current age, who cities want cyclists to be, particularly in neoliberal city planning—will have a resounding impact on the future of urban life in North America.

Shifting Conceptions of Cycling, Class, and the City

In the context of Canada and the US, cycling is nominal. The vast majority of trips in both countries are not made by bicycle. However, the bicycle has been recognized as playing a notable role in what some have coined the contemporary "urban renaissance," and in the broader future of the city. Nominal as it may be, the bicycle looms large in the imagination of what North American cities are and what they will become, and importantly, for whom. In metropolitan regions across North America, there have been shifts in demographics, with an increasing concentration of people of colour living in the suburbs and decreasing in the urban neighbouhoods. Central urban areas, particularly in the US for decades were largely considered less desirable—until recent years, where they have seen the return of capital and wealthier white populations. A shift that has coincided and clashed with movements for cycling; Stehlin (2019) interrogates this shift and the underlying

inequality that has accompanied it. He describes this change as follows: "…the image of the bicycle has shifted from a vehicle of last resort (signifying racialized urban poverty) to a symbol of choosing a cosmopolitan, less carbon-intensive life (making visible the return of the largely white middle class" (p.11).

Integrating cycling infrastructure into the production of urban space has not occurred simply from the recognition that cycling can support environmental or social good. Social, and environmental ideology was the primary focus of the cycling advocacy of the '60s and '70s, which buttresses the current related, yet distinct wave of advocacy (Stehlin, 2019; Hoffmann, 2016). Bikes in these earlier movements provided an avenue to rethink bikers' relation to space and the modern economy. A cycling advocacy focus centring on the development of infrastructure to support cycling may now seem intuitive. However, the generation of cycling advocates that emerged from the '60s/'70s movements were in-large part not focused on developing infrastructure to support cycling, rather this is a contemporary focus.

Advocacy efforts to promote cycling across North America have increasingly articulated the benefits of cycling not only to the health of the rider and society, or to the environment but also for its economic value, which is increasingly being recognized as multifold, which has increasingly come under scrutiny in environmental justice scholarship. Julian Agyeman and Stephen Zavestoski (2020) aptly articulate the divergent contemporary shift related to prominent environmental justice scholarship. They trace a key increasingly prominent environmental justice issue, gentrification spurred by neoliberal urban planning practices that push for "greener neighbourhoods," which can include sustainable "amenities" like bike lanes and frequently displace racialized lower-income residents in the process. Furthermore, Stehlin underscores that economic considerations are a key consideration informing the growth in the adoption of cycling infrastructure across North America, and that previously prominent cycling infrastructure activist proponents could not have spurned such change.

Cycling as "good for business" has become a key slogan and organizing principle in bicycle advocacy in North America. Cycling facilities bolster neighbourhood desirability; studies have shown a correlation between proximity to cycling infrastructure or bike share stations and the inflation of property values (El-Geneidy et al., 2016; Hoffmann, 2016). Case studies have illustrated that cycling infrastructure can boost retail sales; patrons who arrive at businesses on bikes rather than in automobiles spend more on local businesses (Stehlin, 2019). Cycling has also been

encouraged to increase employee productivity and lower absenteeism rates due to illness (Hendriksen et al., 2010). There are also significant economic costs that come with gridlock: the amount of time commuters spend in gridlock increases the time to move goods. In addition, regular engagement in cycling and other active transportation methods by the wider public has been recognized as a means to decrease investment in healthcare costs linked to inactivity. The encouragement of cycling-related tourism can also generate millions of dollars for regions and has been recognized to increase local tourism.

Cycling has been argued to provide solutions to the social, economic, and environmental crises confronting North American cities–though the focus on economics has become particularly apparent. Cities are increasingly competing to attract human and economic capital and to position themselves well to thrive in the currency economy. Correspondingly, “bicycle infrastructure becomes another valuable amenity in the urban portfolio” (Stehlin, 2019, p. xiii). Stehlin, recounting the work of Winifred Curan and Trina Hamilton on the neoliberal city, writes, “Any improvement to the lived experience of place can be capitalized as exchange-value” (p. 174).

Urban amenities such as cycling infrastructure cultivate a desirable "ecosystem" for the supposed "best and the brightest," often referred to as the "creative class." Richard Florida (2002) outlines the "creative class" as science, technology, arts, finance, and healthcare professionals that fall under the categories "super-creative core" and "creative professionals." While Florida does not specify their race, class cycling, and gentrification, scholars have widely underscored that these professionals are meant to be understood as young white-collar white, middle to upper-class professionals (Golub et al., 2016; Hoffman, 2016; Lugo, 2018). The development of Florida's theories surrounding the "creative class" and "creative economy" has become one of the most widely adopted urban growth strategies of recent times. Florida underscores the importance of supporting the development of attractive public amenities to attract this "creative class." He also specifically notes that cycling is particularly common amongst the "creative class." Drawing the connection to cycling and the "creative class," Florida (2002) says the following, "To climb onto a bicycle and become the engine is a truly transformative experience — a creative experience" (p. 174). The degree of Florida's influence is partly evidenced by the numerous cities that have hired his consulting firm and the many more that espouse a desire to build more "creative" cities and economies. This outlook fixates on attracting more desirable customers–who are presumed to be able to navigate the city by bike. These imagined customers are also supposed to have deeper

pockets, echoing Florida's critics. This overlooks the presence of current residents with smaller disposable incomes, but this logic is, of course, not an anomaly.

The economic impact of the Valencia bike lanes, or the "Valencia epiphany," was one of the first documented instances of cycling and gentrification, which bolstered the displacement of the Latino residents of San Francisco's Mission District but clearly delineated a now widely embraced ethos in North America, of bicycle infrastructure as "good for business" (Stehlin, 2019). Scholars describe them as advancing a paradigm shift in cycling advocacy, one focusing on engaging in the planning process and developing infrastructure to support cycling and do so through economic generation. Some cities had previously given a degree of political recognition to cycling initiatives, including cities like Toronto, which in 1975 established its Toronto Cycling Committee (Koehl, 2024). However, the success of the Valencia bike lanes and the connection of public amenities like cycling infrastructure and urban growth politics provided to the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition (SFBC) heightened access to the ear of municipal government, providing cycling advocacy groups with growing government influence and what many of them had been striving to acquire for decades, legitimacy (Stehlin, 2019).

The SFBC and other bicycle organizations have long operated as a network, sharing ideas and being influenced by one another; wider advocacy networks shape bicycle promotion strategies, within these networks, where the “Valencia epiphany” began to circulate (Stehlin, 2019). Cities began to embrace the concept of a Creative Economy, first articulated by Florida (2002) in the 2000s, coupled with the financial impacts of the 2007 recession at the municipal level—which left already cash-strapped municipalities with significant fiscal shortfalls—cities were eager to make changes to attract upwardly mobile residents–even at the costs of marginalized residents who had long called those cities home (Stehlin, 2019).

Racism and classism are particularly significant issues erecting barriers to access to cycling in Canada and the United States. Cyclists in Canada and the US are disproportionately lower-income and racialized cyclists that in some cycling and equity scholarship have been referred to as “invisible riders” Hoffman, 2016; Lugo, 2018). In contrast, Jonathan Anajaria’s scholarship has made valid considerations that challenge the term as reifying a binary or reductive. Yet, “invisible riders” as a concept has helped with considering the needs and experiences of marginalized cyclists, particularly as it pertains to race and class. Cycling in Canada has, in large part, increased in central Canadian cities, areas that have undergone or are undergoing processes

of gentrification (Savan et al., 2019). Data from the Canadian national organization The Centre for Active Transportation, or TCAT's "Building a Bike Culture Beyond Downtown" report, has illustrated a decline in cycling in the suburbs of Toronto, whose residents are more increasingly populated by people of colour, while there has been a significant increase in the city's downtown core whose residents are increasingly becoming whiter and wealthier (Ledsham et al., 2019). Across Canada, there is very limited data and studies on cycling, class and race. Income inequality and poverty are deeply racialized, and a recent article explores this in one of the most comprehensive studies released on this, focusing on 20 years of commuter data from 1996 to 2016, which found that a majority of cyclists across the country are white men, but with a particular overrepresentation of low-income white men (MacEacheron et al., 2023). The study authors note the limitations of using commuter data, particularly how it does not account for many trips. Stehlin further explores these considerations as it relates to data on cyclists of colour, noting that it does not capture the experiences of the unemployed and do to the racialization of unemployed/disproportionately high rates of unemployment experienced by people of colour.

Bicycle Justice and Urban Transformation: Biking for All? makes considerations of class and consumption in twenty-first century North American cycling and broader culture, noting, "for white people with economic security to promote bicycling throws a harsh light onto the struggle by many to even enter the mainstream of our consumptive society" (Golub et al., 2016, p. 11). Cyclists assumed not to own or operate a car are presumed to have additional disposable income and act as an 'untapped resource,' illustrating the predominance of the 'bourgeois' urban bike rider with disposable income as the standard/idealized user. In Canada and the US, the car is conceived as a central rational and desirable element of the mass consumption society.

This shift to a focus on economic development is rather new and takes place at different scales, with varying outcomes and potential consequences. Cycling advocacy, by and large, espouses a dedication to equity, and more cycle-able cities are a product of diligent advocacy, as well as complicated political processes, operating in tandem with the contradiction and promise of the city. In their piece, *Who is 'World Class'? Transportation Justice and Bicycle Policy,* Melody Hoffman and Adonia Lugo (2014) insist that "bike advocates should be aware of the unjust implications of selling cycling," which most notably in North American cyclescapes, include racialized gentrification (p. 59).

Methodology

I utilize the methodological approach of counter-archiving and discourse analysis for this paper. Discourse analysis is an approach to studying language and its societal impact. Counter-archiving is an archival practice and approach that challenges and seeks to supplement mainstream archival practices, particularly concentrating on histories or subjects that acutely experience historical and ongoing marginalization. I use counter-archiving to understand the experiences of Black communities in North America, and I use it to further my framework of Black Movement. My archival research explores shifts in social discourse, which produce minstrel imagery. I mainly consider Stuart Hall's (1981) assertion that, while ideologies can be perceived as naturally occurring, they are not, and their pivotal role is their ability to bolster the "transformation of discourses" and "social consciousness" (p. 101). Additionally, Hall underscores the role the media plays in proliferating ideologies and conceptions of race. As it pertains to the media, Hall (1981) states, "'Racism and the media' touches directly the problem of ideology, since the media's main sphere of operations is the production and transformation of ideologies. An intervention in the media's construction of race is an intervention in the ideological terrain of struggle" (p. 100). Hall's conceptualization of the media's influential role in bolstering certain racist understandings is relevant to the analysis I explore in Chapter 2.

In my archival research, I mainly analyze the shifting social discourses during the emergence of minstrel imagery in the abolitionist era, from the late 1700s to 1865, Reconstruction era, from 1865 to 1877, and post-Reconstruction Era, from 1877 to the early twentieth century (Morrison, 2019). My research will employ discourse analysis and counter-archiving as a method of contestation and resistance to the archive. Since their establishment, dominant archives and are archival institutions have operated with white supremacist and colonial aims, and they were not created to document Black people as subjects but as property. Where Black subjects begin to appear in the archive, they were documented enslaved people in the middle passage. They were rendered as chattel and unable to engage in self-directed movement, except in their forced movement through being transported as goods and property.

My research combines the study of minstrelsy with an analysis of how photographic technology developed. I use counter-archiving to contest the anti-Blackness in the archive and contribute to the research on the connections between minstrelsy and cycling in the late

nineteenth century. Furthermore, my research seeks to critically interrogate the violence and pervasive anti-Blackness embedded within the archival images and media landscape I examine. My analysis is informed by the archival framework Saidiya Hartman outlines in *Venus in Two Acts* (2008). Hartman describes the process of interpreting and engaging in archival research as a process which "...mimes the violence of the archive and attempts to redress it..." (Hartman, 2008, p. 1). She aptly notes that engaging with and uncovering archival data from enslaved and formerly enslaved people is not a neutral or transformative act—and cannot be divorced from the current configuration of the archive's violence. Moreover, Hartman emphasizes that the archive maintains its roots in subjugation. However, "...rearranging the basic elements of the story, by re-presenting the sequence of events in divergent stories and from contested points of view, I have attempted to jeopardize the status of the event..." (Hartman, 2008, p. 1).

An approach I took to redress the violence in the archive, was my approach with labeling my figures. Most of the images I use for my analysis are titled, and some are captioned with "minstrel talk," which is racist and offensive language caricaturing African American Vernacular English which was a common feature of minstrels this can be specifically seen in, Figures 1, 3, 4, 7, and Figures 8 to13. Yet, many are also titled in the archive with this racist language, and all but one of the Library of Congress archive, the one hosting, Figure 8, acknowledge or make note of the images as racist depictions. Figure 8 just briefly makes mention of it being a "Caricature issued as part of the 'Darktown Comics' series,"—but it is still titled in the archive with that caricature and racism laden language. The titling approach replicates/reconstitutes the violence and does not contest it. I took the approach of not titling the figures based on the images that the archives use, which were originally titled using the caricatured portrayals.

In my archival research, I examine data from 1890 to 1900, Blackface minstrel images and history, and stereographic, lithograph, and other illustrated images that served the same aims of caricaturing Black people and engaging with Blackface minstrelsy practices. I analyze these images to explore Black Movement in the post-Reconstruction era, the experience of Black cyclists, and early engagement with Blackness and cycling in popular culture. Moreover, by considering archival research approaches, I situate the context that minstrel emerge from—notably their emergence in the Antebellum era, into their ubiquity in the Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction era, and how they operated as a tool to reify racialized oppression and are

indicative of the reverting attitudes towards populations of Black people in the US Reconstruction Era.

In my research, I explore minstrel and anti-Black imagery to engage in a counter-archive process that contests the violence and racism in the archive related to Black Movement and attempts at freedom Black people sought to actualize in the mid-to-late nineteenth century.
In my archival research, I examine data from 1890 to 1900, Blackface minstrel images and history along with stereographic, lithograph, and other illustrated images that served the same aims of caricaturing Black people and engaging with Blackface minstrelsy practices. I analyze these images to explore Black Movement in the Reconstruction era, and to explore the experience of Black people and bicycling, and early engagement with Blackness and cycling in popular culture. Moreover, in accordance with archival research conventions, I situate the context that the images emerge from—notably their emergence in the Reconstruction Era, and how it operated as a tool to reify, racialized oppression, and are indicative of the attitudes towards populations of Black people in the Reconstruction Era. In my research, I explore minstrel and anti-Black imagery to engage in a counter-archive process that contests the violence and racism in the archive related to Black Movement and to the attempts at freedom that Black people sought to actualize in the mid-to-late nineteenth century.

I engaged in archival research as a component of my research, particularly to further a better exploration of my research inquiry focused on discerning the historical experiences of Black cyclists and Black people engaging in movement in Canada and the US. My employment of an archival analysis, specifically, a counter archival approach will situate the broad themes of anti-Blackness and white supremacist imagery in the archives. In engaging with these images, I conduct a counter-archival analysis of relevant images and my broader research inquiry as it pertains to the legacy of Black movement and the historical experiences of Black people and cycling. I have 15 images originating from the US included for my research, the images are dated from 1890 to 1900.

The archival images I engage with are particularly relevant as they pertain to cycling history, media consumption, racial production and most notably, regarding Black Movement. The timing/era the images take place in coincide with two relevant periods in American history at the post-Reconstruction Era and the significant influx in European immigration patterns in the US and shifting conceptions regarding race and whiteness in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Reconstruction was a historic period in the United States, which followed the

emancipation of millions of Black Americans. The general public responded to these newly freed populations with racial violence, and of relevance to my research, restrictions on Black people's mobility. Additionally, there were many immigrant white populations in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century that were outside of the bounds of what was considered white, previously, but for the interests and aims of the white settler-colonial state, these categories shifted, and I argue that my archival research displays this and its particular relevance to Black Movement. I argue in this section that both broader historical shifts supported the ongoing thwarting Black Movement and reifying a "white spatial imaginary" (Lipsitz, 2007), which I further explore in my analysis of the images included herein.

The late 1800s "bicycle boom," which peaked in the 1890s, coincided with the popularity of Blackface minstrelsy images and shows. Initially, the bicycle was costly and only accessible to wealthier households, mainly as a leisure activity, predominately for white upper-class or upper-middle-class men, and operated as a tool of class distinction, which persisted until the early twentieth century. This period coincides with anti-Black imagery, minstrel shows, and cartoons that used the bicycle to further anti-Black tropes to dehumanize Black people and delineate Black people as occupying the lowest of social stations. A lot of the early images related to Black people and cycling in archives were minstrel images that reinforced the minstrel tradition and embodied post-emancipation conceptions of Black people, further entrenching additional anti-Black narratives.

I argue that the prominence of bicycles—though initially only amongst the elites—coinciding with the popularity of minstrel images and bicycles, saw the intermingling of the two in a manner that is relevant to understanding the racialized histories of cycling and conceptualizing Black Movement, and histories where it was thwarted. In this, I undertake a discourse analysis exploring where Blackness and Black people were imagined, as is illustrated in minstrels at the beginning of the cycling movement, which is an essential and under-analyzed site of consideration. For much of the nineteenth century, continuing well into the twentieth century, Blackface minstrelsy was a popular part of American culture and later gained popularity in Canada and the US (Morrison, 2019; Thompson, 2018). My research traces the prevalence of bicycle and cycling-related images in Canada and the US that feature anti-Black caricatures, minstrel cartoons, or minstrel shows (Le Camp, 2005; Ritchie, 2014).

Research Process

My archival research process began with sourcing materials from primary documents housed in reputable libraries, archives, and online databases. I initially sought out the series mentioned in Adonia Lugo's book, Bicycle/Race, where she explored the contemporary American cycling movement's relationship with issues of race and racism. I was already engaging with her text as a part of developing my literature review, and she briefly mentioned racist minstrel imagery depicted in the "Darktown Cyclery," a series which I discuss in my research. Lugo's text was light on citations and did not include citations of a source, so I proceeded to conduct an online search after not finding the series in different local Toronto libraries. Eventually, I was able to find and access images from the series in the Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs Division. Specifically, I was able to locate the series in the collection Popular Graphic Arts.

I sought support for my research from libraries accessible to me in Toronto, at the Ontario Archives, Toronto Public Library, and through York University Libraries, but locally was not able to find any archival materials relevant to my research. I conducted archival research using readily available online sources, particularly because most of that archival data exists in the United States. Initially, I was not able to find any cycling minstrel-related information or research as it pertained to Canada, except when I turned my attention to exclusively minstrel-related images or other archival material produced in Canada; there I was able to find the only mention of this. In my research process, I specifically found this data mentioned in Lorraine Le Camp's research in their 2005 PhD dissertation*, Racial considerations of minstrel shows and related images in Canada*, which details the pernicious history of some of these shows in St. John's Newfoundland (Le Camp, 2005). Their research tracks minstrel shows and Blackface in Canada and reveals the presence of bicycle-related minstrel shows throughout the 1890s. The first show Le Camp was able to trace took place on May 10th to 11th, 1894, in Saint John, New Brunswick Opera House and was titled "Bicycle Club Minstrels." The next show took place on May 18th to 20th, 1898, in Saint John, New Brunswick, in the Mechanic's Institute and was titled "Bicycle & Athletic Club Minstrels." (Le Camp, 2005, p. 349). After completing my research based on what was accessible in primary sources, I sought out materials from secondary sources where there were gaps in my research. In my secondary research sought out documents from secondary sources by reputed researchers and sought and received support find sources through support from York Libraries.

Counter-Archival Research Approach

In the edited work, *Working in the Archives* (2010), Thomas Masters defines archival work as "...the reader's constructive, subjective ordering and making meaning out of what [they] choose to examine" (Masters, 2010, p. 159). In my archival research, I engage in a discourse analysis of minstrel bicycle-related archival images in a manner that has not been similarly pursued through an interdisciplinary analysis and a subjective organizing of minstrel cycling images that offer insight into Black movement and the ongoing restrictions placed upon it. In my counter-archival research, I seek the lives of the nameless Black subjects depicted in Figures 1 to 4 and extrapolate how the cartoons, illustrations, and translations depicted in Figures 5 to 15 came to be.

My counter-archival research endeavours engage in discourse analysis to remedy some of "...the violence that produced numbers, ciphers, and fragments of discourse..." –particularly to delineate the social conditions and history that produced minstrel images, including in the archives I analyze in Figures 1-15 (Hartman, 2008, p. 7). Moreover, through my counter-archival research approach, I seek to contextualize social discourse around minstrelsy in the late nineteenth century, particularly concerning representations of bicycles. I am analyzing these archival materials with a lens that considers how Black Movement and the afterlives of slavery manifest in the archive, particularly socio-cultural shifts pertaining to racism in Canada in the US at the turn of the twentieth century. Drawing from Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E. Truman (2021), as I pursued an obscured history depicted in my archival photographs, and considered an approach to counter-archival analysis that recognizes how the archive is bound with power and erasure, and dictates what is worthy of remembering, I seek to upturn that in my research on minstrel images. Additionally, I engage with the archives, with a cognizance of Hartman's (2008) emphasis that a counter-archival research approach is inherently limited by the anti-Black violence captured in the archive and the harm accompanying re-engaging those archival documents. However, I also pursue my archival material with how she considers counter-archival narratives as disruptive of the authority of the traditional archive and recovery and generative possibility, which I consider as I analyze what minstrel archival images convey as they relate to Black movement.

In my research, I considered David Altheide and Christopher Schneider (2013) research as it pertains to discourse analysis. They describe the text's objective "to help researchers understand culture, social discourse, and social change" (p. 6). I situate this approach in my research in the context of post-Reconstruction America, and as new photographic and media

technologies came into prominence. Following the recommended approach by Altheide and Schneider, I study these archival materials as "representations of social meanings and institutional relations." Altheide and Schneider draw from Judith Davidson and Silvana diGregorio's *Qualitative Research and Technology in the Midst of a Revolution* to approach qualitative research. The purpose of this particular research approach is the following:

> Documents are studied to understand culture—or the process and the array of objects, symbols, and meanings that make up the social reality shared by members of a society. We agree that "qualitative analysis is a process that requires the exploration, organization, interpretation, and integration of research materials (data)" (Atheide & Schneider, 2013, p. 7).

Alexis E. Ramsey (2010) in her contribution to *Working in the Archives* also emphasizes the importance of contextualizing archival research. Both texts emphasize the importance of becoming familiar with the context of the source, and of analyzing several documents. Ramsey's edited volume emphasizes how "the researcher needs to look for *contextual traces* that situate the document in time and place" (Ramsey, 2010, p. 173). Similarly, Atheide and Schneider recommend an approach that considers the "ecology of communication," to consider the data's emergence, particularly as it pertains to technological advancements that resulted in the emerging communication mediums. By providing the contextual information that archival researchers stress providing archival materials, and to further my research analysis, I contextualize the archival materials I engage with, based on the historical and social information available, particularly as it pertains to the emergence of minstrel images as well as lithograph and stereograph technology.

Stereograph & Lithograph Research Background

My research attempts to situate the use of stereographs and lithographs, which in the period I am studying were significant communication technologies of important social relevance to my research. The stereograph images subject to my analysis, can be found hereafter in this paper, and can be identified in the List of Figures. Stereographs were very popular in both the United States and Europe from approximately the mid-1850s through the beginning of the twentieth century (Rosenblum & Newhall, 2024). Their popular usage coincided with the widespread dissemination of minstrel and other anti-Black imagery and bolstered their dissemination. I am studying archival materials from the images dated from 1890 to 1900. Seven of the images that I am

analyzing are stereographs originating from the United States. Five of them are images, while two are print written on the back of stereograph images. The stereographs are from the New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division. In consideration of the "ecology of communication" that stereographs emerged in, stereographs were invented in 1832, though it was in the mid-nineteenth century when the technology was refined and popularized, mainly in the US and Europe (Atheide & Schneider, 2013, p. 45). In my research, I came across many relevant stereograph images, which can be seen in Figures 1 to 7. All the images, including the stereograph images I analyze are from the US, few are archived with details on publishers and where they were circulated recorded. Three of the images, and where they appear to have been circulated are noted on the margins, and American cities along with Toronto are mentioned, specifically in Figures 1 and 4.

Along with stereographs, I also analyze lithograph images published between 1892 to 1897. The lithograph images that I study are from Figure 8 to 13. All the lithographs analyzed were created by Currier and Ives, a printmaker based in New York City, which operated from 1835 to 1907 (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020; Le Beau, 2000). Lithography was a planographic printing process (University of Oxford, 2025). Lithography was created in 1798 in Munich. It became popular with French artists in the mid-1800s, lithography technology, particularly which produced images in colour, became extremely popular in the 1890s, and increasingly so internationally at the time when most of these images were produced (University of Oxford, 2025).

Not all of the images I subject to an archival analysis list their publishers. Noted are Keystone View Company and Underwood & Underwood, the former in Figure 7 and the latter in Figure 4. Both publishers were significant and influential stereograph publishers at the time. Underwood & Underwood was established in 1884 and was considered one of the most influential stereograph publishers by 1901 (TMU Archives, 2024). The Keystone View Company was also a major distributor of stereographic images, and was active from 1892 to 1963, and by 1905 it was the largest stereograph producer in the world (TMU Archives, 2024).

To contextualize my archival research and advance my theoretical framework Black Movement, I draw from multidisciplinary scholarship exploring movement, the key historical research on the Black diaspora, and cycling and gentrification related scholarship. Additionally, to further advance my conceptual framework of Black Movement and develop an understanding of

the historical experiences of Black people with movement, I engage in archival research using the methods of counter-archiving and discourse analysis. My archival research contextualizes the history behind the stereograph, lithograph, and illustrations depicting minstrelsy, which I analyze in Chapter 2. I analyze Figures 1-15 with consideration of their depictions of Black subjects and their broader implications for the historic ongoing movement of Black subjects.

Chapter 2: Pedaling Minstrelsy: A Collision of the Bicycle and Minstrelsy in the Post-Reconstruction Era

Minstrelsy in Motion: Evolving Racialization and Minstrel Caricatures

Minstrelsy depicted perceptions of Black Movement and continues to offer insight into conceptions surrounding Black Movement in the dominant "white spatial imaginary" (Lipsitz, 2007, p. 13). Furthermore, minstrel depictions are illustrative of how Black Movement was conceived as deviant by the wider population, but tolerable when confined to the plantation. Minstrel images emerging during the abolitionist era—particularly as it was gaining traction, and the Reconstruction Era portrayed a shifting political reality and utility (Morrison, 2019). Minstrelsy became widely popular while the abolition movement was gaining traction. Scholars consider that minstrelsy sought to reconcile the contradiction of slavery in American society and capture a desire for anti-Black racial violence and a return to slavery because of the offence that emancipation and the free movement of Black people were supposed to have posed to civilized white society (Riggs, 1987). These beings must be controlled by what is being conveyed. Minstrel images were appealing and widely consumed by the American public because they were indicative of the inner desires of the public. As such, Minstrels were influential forces that shaped reality for the large portions of the population (Riggs, 1987). Emancipation was initially processed as an existential threat and disruption to the social order in the South. Still, in the North, it came to threaten the perceived status quo, particularly as Black people moved to urban centres (Riggs, 1987; Shabazz, 2015). As the perceived threat of this new Black labour force presented itself, this racial hostility worsened.

Minstrel images mirrored the evolving racial tensions in America, particularly as it pertains to Black people's right to movement. Minstrel imagery incited and provided justification for racial violence, seeking to convey that slavery was suitable for the enslaved person. Such images bolstered the conception that slavery domesticated and civilized Black people, and in the absence of white control, they would return to savagery (Riggs, 1987). Furthermore, the light-hearted and carefree slaves were represented as heedless of racism and poverty. Minstrel images rose to prominence during the Reconstruction Era, when the enslaved Black person became a challenge to the political interests of the establishment. Harkening back to a supposed golden era with harmless, content slaves, the first precursor to minstrelsy, the archetype of the 'Sambo' particularly embodied this conception. The 'Sambo' was considered a jovial, unkempt, and

carefree Black man. He is portrayed as lazy and averse to work and revelling in the pleasures of song, dance, and food. The caricature is represented as a 'happy slave,' content and communicating to the American public that the plantation was a haven (Riggs, 1987). The 'Sambo' was particularly conceptually potent in the post-emancipation political climate because, during the Antebellum Era, Black people in American media were portrayed as docile. The violent and gruelling work on the plantation could never have operated had enslaved people behaved in a manner embodied by the 'Sambo' (Riggs, 1987).

One of the most potent and widespread minstrel images developed and continued to influence restrictions on Black Movement was 'Jim Crow,' a dim-witted, widely popular Blackface minstrel character, which emerged around the 1830s. The exaggerated mimicry of a 'Jim Crow' dance was prominent in minstrel shows and images. 'Jim Crow' is the first Blackface minstrel character performed. It was first developed when Thomas Dartmouth Rice, in 1828, created and performed the dance. Rice sought to create a dance that acted as a mimicry of a disabled Black man dancing. Its creator invented the 'Jim Crow' character by performing a song and dance that was meant to emulate a slave on a Southern plantation (Riggs, 1987). Therefore, depicting a Black person immobilized by the geography of the plantation, and content with there place therein. This lively character became one of the most powerful forces in the politics of slavery and, I argue, Black Movement. The original 'Jim Crow' dance was co-opted from a dance that emerged after dancing was outlawed on plantations in 1690. The dancing prohibition forbade crossing legs, and to subvert it, enslaved people began dancing in a manner where they shuffled their feet. Considering Browne's framework of "dark sousveillance," I assert that the original creation of what later evolved into the 'Jim Crow' dance was created out of a dark sousveillance strategy, contesting the restrictions on Black Movement, yet that was co-opted to produce a caricature that continues to have resounding influence on restricting Black Movement (Browne, 2015).

'Zip Coon,' is one of the caricatures that most evidently embodies fears of Black Movement. 'Zip Coon' was created out of the figure of the Sambo (Riggs, 1987). The 'Sambo' was associated with older and docile Black people that compiled with pre-emancipation restrictions to Black Movement, and "knew their place," and accepted Jim Crow laws, discrimination. But after emancipation, 'Zip Coon' emerged for the purpose of displaying Black people's "absurd" and "failed" attempts to adapt to freedom—that they could not properly be integrated. Moreover, that they are undeserving of freedom and its accompanying right to move. The caricature of 'Zip Coon'

is a trope/minstrel character that was embodied in the minstrel images in Figures 7 to 14 (Morrison, 2019). The distinct use of bicycles in the 'Darktown' minstrels are integral for consideration because it furthers the troop of 'Zip Coon,' an urban dandy caricature depicted as well-dressed and aloof. This character is illustrated as attempting to emulate elements of "high" society but being 'naturally' incapable of achieving such status. Matthew Morrison (2019) describes 'Zip Coon' as follows:

> ...[Zip Coon] effectively embodies the irony and fear of black "upward" mobility throughout the nation, as he also performs the class frustrations of an urban, white working-class immigrant population on the rise between the 1820s and the 1840s. The middle-to-upper-class African American impostor of "Long Tail Blue" and "Zip Coon" emerged while slavery was on the decline throughout the North, also the time when urban class conflicts were developing along racial lines (p. 804).

'Zip Coon' was meant to illustrate that Black people are unable to adapt to white society and incapable of engaging in the movement of the white people the character impossibly sought to emulate. It conveys to the consumer of 'Zip Coon' minstrel images that it is outrageous for him to dare contest the social hierarchy, particularly a hierarchy where 'Zip Coon' puts himself along an upper-class white man—and above supposedly more deserving working-class white people, that increasingly regard emancipated Black people as a threat in the labour market. Furthermore, the working-class white man embraces 'Zip Coon' to bolster a conception that places himself as a Black person and in closer proximity to the upper-class white man, and restricting supporting concepts that incite violence and threaten Black movement is how he chooses to do so. The inaccessibility of the bicycle in the late-eighteenth—except for—upper-middle class men furthers what the 'Zip Coon' represents, the supposed ridiculousness of Black people to think they could be free and that they could possess the status of an upper-middle class white man.

The archetype of the 'Sambo' was construed as lazy and not interested in movement. Furthermore, he was construed as *desiring* the carceral landscape of the plantation. Subsequent anti-Black caricatures grappled with the prospect of Black people moving, particularly in the wake of the abolition movement. I argue that the threat of Black Movement influenced the evolution of subsequent racial caricatures and minstrel images, specifically 'Jim Crow,' the 'Sambo,' the 'picaninny,' and the 'brute.' 'Jim Crow' and 'Zip Coon' are the most common minstrel tropes, and

particularly foreground 'Jim Crow' is an anti-Black depiction of an imagined plantation slave's distorted dancing and body movements, while 'Zip Coon,' in the mind of the broader public is depicted as inconceivably attempting to move through white society in perverse and improper bodily movements. These images evolved because the freedom to move was fundamental to Black freedom and, therefore, threatened the white power structure.

The 'brute' or the 'black brute,' or 'savage' was a caricature that depicted Black men as innately animalistic and criminal, necessitating containment, punishment, or death. Some of these caricatures also portrayed Black men as hideous and frightening creatures, sometimes depicted engaging in volatile movements or in a jungle, furthering the concept of Black people, and specifically Black men, as primitive and animalistic and a danger to white society, particularly to white womanhood. The 'brute' caricature emerged in the Reconstruction Era, as during enslavement, the lazy 'Sambo' was previously the dominant perception of Black men. I assert that the threat of free Black people and Black people moving led to the creation of this conception of the 'brute' to restrict Black people's movement and contest their deservedness of freedom manifested in the ability to move uninhibited. Furthermore, Black people, in this conception, transitioned from being content with enslavement and its accompanying immobility to being too unintelligent and indolent to move (Riggs, 1987).

The violent consequences of the imagery of the 'brute' cannot be stressed enough because the proliferation and adoption of the caricature of the 'brute' in the white public consciousness fundamentally disrupted Black Movement; it justified and incited lynch mobs, which influenced the proliferation of mass anti-Black racial violence (Riggs, 1987). The mass racial violence of lynching that the 'brute' caricature helped fomented was widespread in North America, particularly in the US South. While lynching existed throughout slavery, it increased during the Reconstruction Era and peaked in the post-Reconstruction Era, specifically from the 1890s to the 1920s (PBS, 2025). These lynchings restricted Black Movement, and a key aspect of their instigation was a perceived improper navigation—or movement—through public space. Historically, targets of lynchings included Black men alleged to have interacted with white women or political activists. In response, Black acts contesting the violence of lynching and the 'brute,' caricature that instigated it, or engaging in "Black sousveillance" strategies like the Great Migration—which began when lynchings peaked in the post-Reconstruction Era—have had resounding consequences up until today.

Understanding connections between cycling and masculinity, particularly as it pertains to the trope of the 'brute' ascribed to Black people, and particularly Black men, is relevant for consideration because they have implications for the ongoing restrictions placed around Black people engaging in movement. Furthermore, how Black people concurrently experience race and class continues to shape Black experiences with Black Movement in the twenty-first century, and just like in the instance of Major Taylor, transcends the degree of status and influence they wield. Major Taylor, a Black professional cyclist, is widely considered one of the first Black American sports icons. Taylor lived from 1878 to 1932 and, at an early age, began training in track and road cycling racing. He started professional racing in 1896 and shortly thereafter began to be depicted in minstrel images (Ritchie, 2014). The images of Major Taylor I analyze in Figures 14 and 15 offer an essential window into considerations of masculinity and Black Movement.

The minstrel archival images I examine in Figures 1-15 are dated from 1886 to 1900 and engage with are relevant to considerations of historical and ongoing restrictions placed upon Black Movement in North America. They were one of the first depictions of Black people in publicly available mass media. Moreover, the images were produced at a time that provides a unique insight into a pivotal period in North America, particularly as connected with Black Movement. The minstrel archival images in Figures 1-15 are dated from 1886 to 1900 and are relevant to considerations of historical and ongoing restrictions placed upon Black Movement in North America. Moreover, the images were produced at a time that provides a unique insight into a pivotal time in North America, particularly with Black Movement.

i) **Depictions of the 'Picaninny':** Stereograph Images 1-4

Figures 1-4 are stereograph images from 1891 to 1900 that depict and caricature Black children in a manner indicative of post-Reconstruction era conceptions of Black Movement. Based on the information available in the archive, relevant details regarding the subjects are unavailable, including their names, ages and how they may have come to participate in these photographs. Figures 1-4 appear to depict and mock young Black boys supposedly making a bicycle in dilapidated settings. All of the photos depict the boys with what seems to resemble the rim of a bicycle wheel and spokes detached from the rim, placed above it, distant from where they usually sit placed on the rim. The boys appear to be depicted making futile efforts to build a bike. The images appear to represent the Black children as failed problem solvers. Seemingly attempting to re-create bicycles they cannot afford, yet incapable and immobile subjects because of their lack of

wealth and intelligence, and incapable and unworthy of engagement in movement and transcending their immobile statuses.

I argue that stereograph images 1-4 depict the racial caricature of the ‘picaninny,’ which is an important consideration for the perception of the movement of Black children. The ‘picaninny’ was the most prominent anti-Black caricature of Black children for a significant amount of US history (Pilgrim, 2024). I assert that the anti-Black minstrel caricature that Figures 1-4 particularly embody is the ‘picaninny’ because of the particular way the children in the images were depicted. The ‘picaninny’ is regarded as dirty, possessing an unkempt appearance, and is depicted on the ground (Pilgrim, 2024). Moreover, Figures 1-4 depict the children as impoverished and downtrodden. The ‘picaninny’ would also often be represented side-by-side with animals, as is displayed in Figure 4, where the boy in the image appears alongside a cat. Also, they were usually portrayed on greeting cards or postcards, though the images are neither; they were meant to be widely distributed and served a similar function. The subjects in Figure 1-4 had skin tones ranging from medium brown to dark Black, characteristic of depictions of the ‘picaninny.’ However, in one way, most depictions of the ‘picaninny’ had a slight variation from the images in Figures 1-4 (Pilgrim, 2024). The trope typically includes eight- to ten-year-olds, while the boys in the photos appear to be approximately the age of preteens, and most of the depictions are in cartoons (Pilgrim, 2024).

The ‘picaninny’ depictions in Figures 1,2, and 4 indicate that they were conceived as undeserving of freedom and participation in American society; this is particularly evident in the domestic setting, like a living room. In Figure 2, a quilt can be seen on the couch to the rear of the subject. Such quilts are more commonplace in African American homes and more culturally significant. I argue that the site of the image is particularly relevant because the boys, based on the setting and how they are seated on the floor, are *unnaturally inhabiting* a space conceived through the “white spatial imaginary”; this is particularly clear in Figure 2, where proper images of white people line the wall, contrasted with how the child in the image is depicted (Lipsitz, 2007, p. 13). Instead, the child figure plays into the repeated notion that emancipated Black people are incapable of living correctly, that the subjects in the image are deprived of the domesticating, the*immobilizing* influence of slavery, and that the legitimate context for the domestication of Black people is on the plantation—a site that immobilizes and fixes them in place—their imagined natural home. Rather than “properly” using a living room by inhabiting a clean and tidy living room and

being seated on the couch and occupying it with family, and one's own portraits on the wall. Moreover, this is furthered by the trope of the picaninny, who is often seen as unintelligent, helpless and fated to perceived inferior status, yet not truly regarded as capable of legitimate victimhood or considerations of sympathy, which is only accessible to whiteness and white children.

a. **Figure 1: *Stereograph Image #1***

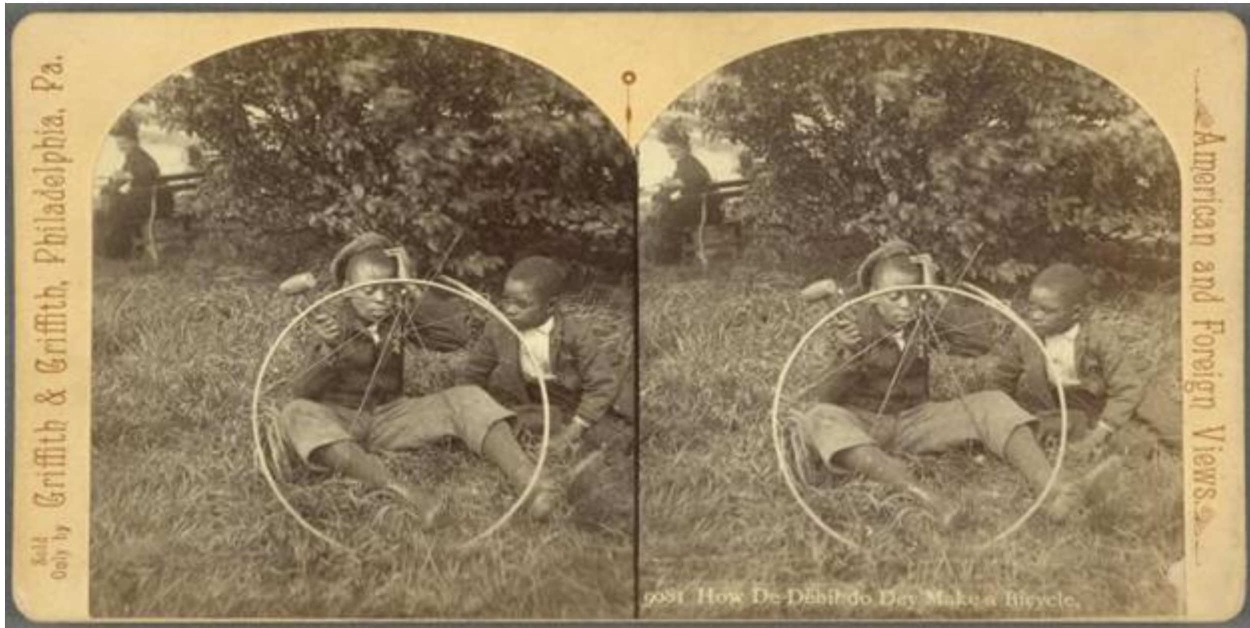

Figure 1: Stereograph image #1 (New York Public Library, 1900).

Figure 1 is an image originally issued in 1900 and was noted in the archive as being distributed by Griffith & Griffith and photographed by William Herman Rau (New York Public Library, 1900). The image is titled, "How De Debil Do Dey Make a Bicycle," and this is also a caption on the image, which is noted in the bottom right of one image. Also to the right of the image are the indeterminate numbers "9081." On the left side margin of the image, "Sold Only by Griffith & Griffith, Philadelphia, PA" is noted vertically in the margins. On the right side of the image, "American and Foreign Views." is noted. Depicted in Figure 1 are two Black boys. They both appear dirty and wearing tattered clothing, a key aspect of the 'picaninny' caricature. In addition, the boy on the left, in the foreground of the image, is wearing small, ill-fitted clothing. He is pictured seemingly scratching his head with his left hand, by his improper and ill-fitted hat— in confusion, using his left hand and holding a hammer in his right hand. The boy on the right is turned towards the boy on the left and glances at him with an absent-minded gaze.

In the background of the image, at the uppermost portion of the image, there is a tree, and to the left of the tree is a white woman turning, looking over her left shoulder, gazing at the boys. Her sunglasses—which she appears to remove to gawk at the boys—are in her left hand; the woman is dressed in a black hat and what appears to be a black shirt and skirt or a dress. She seemingly appears to have some sort of smile on her face and appears to sneer at the children. The woman is seated on a park bench, while the boys are displayed sitting in the grass. She seems to gawk at the boys in the image with judgement, and the contrast between her placement on a park bench and above them is depicted as superior.

b. Figure 2: *Stereograph Image #2*

Figure 2: Stereograph image #2 (New York Public Library, 1890).

Figure 2 is an image from 1890 titled "Trying to Make a Bicycle," and it is also captioned on the stereograph. Additionally, "Album Series" and "American and Foreign Views" are also noted vertically on the margins of the image. There is a Black boy depicted in the image in what appears to be a living room dirty and in disarray. The Black boy has a hammer in his right hand and is scratching his head with his left hand. In front of him is the rim of a bicycle wheel, which he is staring down at. He is seated on the floor in front of two seats; to the right of the image, behind him, to the right, is a wooden chair, and to the left is a couch. On the wall appear to be partially torn

portraits; one more clearly in the centre left above the boy depicts a white child standing upright in clean white clothing, offering a stark contrast to the Black boy in the foreground of the image.

c. Figure 3: *Stereograph Image #3*

Figure 3: Stereograph image #3 (New York Public Library, 1900).

Figure 3 is a 1900 image, which contains three Black boys and bicycle parts and is titled and bears the caption "How de Debble do da Make a Bicycle?" Under the title in smaller font, "Copyright. 1891. by Strohmeyer & Wyman" is noted. Additionally, "Popular Series" is repeatedly noted vertically in the left and right margins of the image (New York Public Library, 2025). There are three boys in the image who appear dishevelled and confused and who are depicted as barefooted and seated on the floor and crates while surrounded by tools and items, with a bicycle wheel in front of the boy in the centre. The boy to the right is holding an axe in his left hand, and his head is leaning against his right hand. He appears stupefied. Just as the boy in Figure 1, the boy to the left is depicted as if he can't even properly wear a hat. The boys appear to be in some kind of tool shed; some of the tools are hard to discern. In front of them are tools strewn across the floor: there is a saw, a pair of pliers, and other assorted items. The boys are surrounded by a barrel, a watering can and planks to their right and left.

d. Figure 4: *Stereograph Image #4*

Figure 4: Stereograph image #4 (New York Public Library, 1891).

Stereograph image #4 is an 1891 image titled “How de Debble Does dey make a Bicycle?,” which is also captioned on the stereograph; under the caption, in smaller font, is “Copyright. 1891. by Strohmeyer & Wyman.” The archive notes that the copyright holder is Strohmeyer & Wyman, and the distributor is listed as Underwood & Underwood. Additionally, vertically, the margin of the image further mentions details on the publication of the image. On the left side margin of the image, the archive once again mentions the copyright holder, “Strohmeyer & Wyman Publishing,” and beneath in smaller text, “New York, NY.” In cursive, on the right-side margin of the image, it says, “Sold only by Underwood & Underwood.” Additionally, beneath it, “New York, Liverpool, Toronto Canada, Ottawa Kansas” is listed, which appear to be locations where the distributor had offices.

The boy in Figure 4 appears to be kneeling in a dirty and disorganized living room. He is surrounded by tattered papers, which are strewn across the floor, which are stained with brown splotches and garbage. He is kneeling in front of what appears to be two seats and is seated between them on the floor; on the right side of the image is a wooden chair. To the left of the image, there appears to be a couch strewn with various items. The boy scratches his head with his left hand and holds a hammer with the other. He is partially leaning against the couch with what appears to be a

misshaped, improperly rounded rim of a bicycle wheel; the spokes of the wheel are attached to a hub that is held far outside its proper position in the wheel. To the right of the boy is a cat, which appears to be the cleanest element of the photograph.

ii) **Translating the Racial(ized) Self:** Stereograph Images 5-6

The stereograph images examined in Figures 5-6 are from 1891 and 1899; they provide a generative perspective on the role of white racial production in impacting historical and ongoing restrictions to Black Movement. In Canada and the US, Blackface minstrel performances evolved with the shifting understandings of "whiteness" and who was white, and this was done through reified anti-Black violence and restrictions on movement that minstrel images laid the groundwork for. A significant component of the production and circulation of these caricatures and Blackface minstrelsy more broadly was to delineate who belonged as a component of national identity and who did not, which Figures 5 and 6 illustrate. Figures 5 and 6, including Italian and German translations, are illustrative of how these immigrant populations, which had long not been understood to be "white," increasingly began to be understood as white. This is evident in how these images invite a white gaze/audience to collectively participate in the dehumanization of Black people—a key component of Blackface minstrel shows. "As the masked character entered the stage, the initial presentation of a blackened face and caricatured posturing added a level of artifice that encouraged the audience to internalize this stereotype as an accurate portrayal of a black "other" in relation to their (white) selves." (Morrison, 2019, p. 797). Matthew Morrison demarcates evolving perceptions of whiteness, contrasted to the Black minstrel character through the movement and performance enacted historical images that maintain an ongoing influence on Black Movement. I also consider how these minstrel depictions show advanced processes of racialization, acutely demonstrating the subjectivity-producing influence of movement, specifically in the production of whiteness and Blackness.

Scholarship had drawn links to white immigrant individuals considered "ethnic whites" but not widely accepted as white who performed in Blackface to allow access to whiteness. As culture studies and Blackface scholar Dr. Cheryl Thompson outlines, "for ethnic immigrant whites, 'blacking up' and then 'wiping off' the burnt cork mask performed a different function. It enabled them to move from immigrant 'other' to full citizen"—a position inaccessible to immobilized Black people even in the Emancipation Era (Thompson, 2018). Archival images 5 to 6 provide insight into

discourse influencing Black experiences with movement, particularly in the period of these images' origin, the late 1890s. I observed an interesting phenomenon in Figures 5 and 6. The back of the print from Figure 7, which is seen in Figure 6, translates the title/deriding minstrel talk into French, Spanish, Italian, Swedish, German, and Danish. Similarly, the back of the print in Figure 4 is seen in Figure 5. The title and insulting minstrel talk are seemingly translated into Swedish, French, Russian, German, and Spanish. These translations displayed in Figures 5 and 6 indicate who is expected to be spectators to the dehumanization of Black people as inferior citizens—specifically that it is the white citizen, immigrant or otherwise, that is welcomed to participate in this degradation as a means to cohere and affirm their white identity. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, immigrants to Canada and the US from Southern and Eastern Europe, as well as Germany, were just beginning to be considered white (Roediger, 1991). These immigrants were previously racialized as non-white, but in this period, they increasingly became incorporated into communities conceptualized as white; the use of the languages Italian, Russian, and German are particularly noteworthy (Roediger, 1991). Moreover, these groups' racialization into whiteness occurred through juxtaposing these communities with Black people, which these images astutely articulate.

e. Figure 5: *Stereograph Image #5*

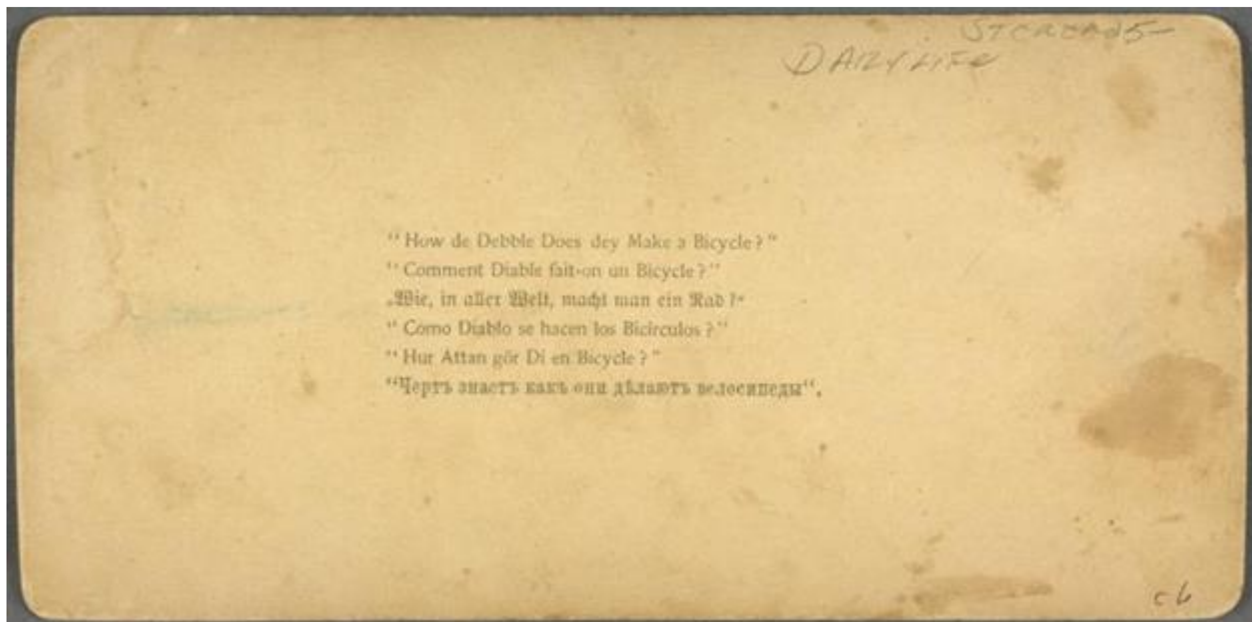

Figure 5: Stereograph Image #5 (New York Public Library, 1891).

The image in Figure 5, displays the back of the print seen in Figure 4. It is an 1891 document, that lists its copyright holder is Strohmeyer & Wyman, and the distributor is listed as Underwood & Underwood. The image appears to display translations into five different languages, which appear to be French, German, Russian, Spanish, Dutch, and Russian. (New York Public Library, 2025).

f. Figure 6: *Stereograph Image #6*

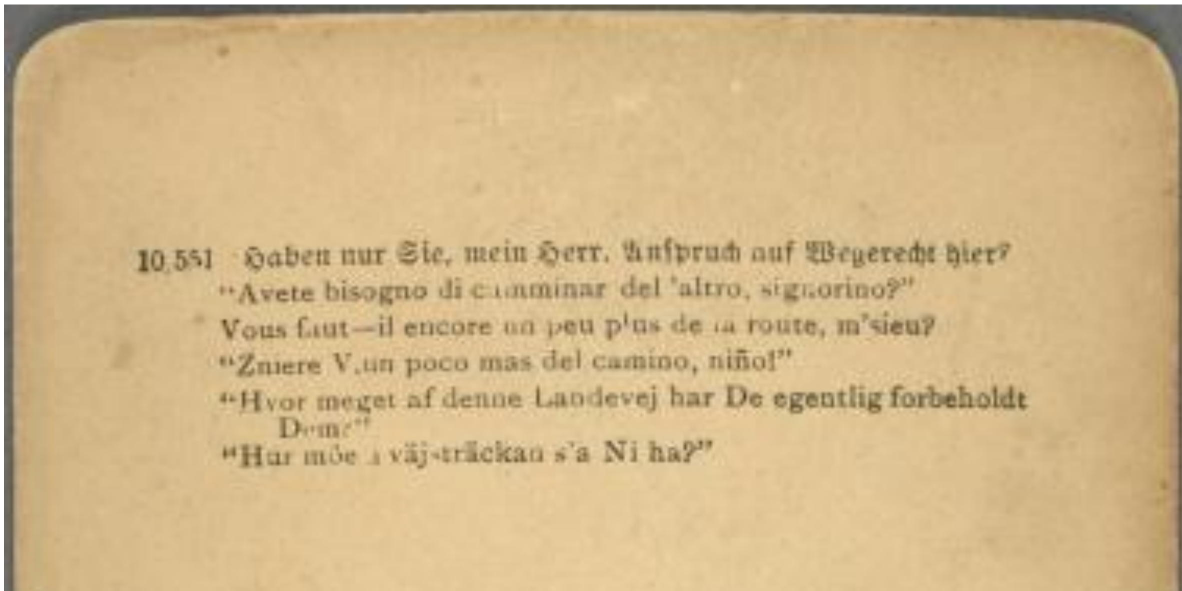

Figure 6: Stereograph image #6 (New York Public Library, 1899).

Figure 6 is the back of Figure 7, a stereograph image that was published by Keystone View Company Manufacturers and Publishers in 1899. Before the text, the numbers "10 551" are listed, but what they refer to is unclear. Similar to Figure 5, the back includes translations into six different languages, which appear to be French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Dutch.

iii) 'Zip Coon' and 'Jim Crow' Depictions: Stereograph & Lithograph Images 7-13:

The images from Figures 7-13 illustrate and depict 'Sambo' and 'Zip Coon' caricatures (Riggs, 1987). Cartoons were particularly impactful ways of depicting minstrel images. Cartoon images--including the ones I analyze in Figures 7-13, widened the terrain for minstrel performance and imagery. The contortions of the body and the exaggeration of features that these minstrel

characters depicted could be represented and pushed further while enhancing the entertainment and furthering the hyperbolic depiction of both the performance and the Black subject—ultimately, having broad impacts on the dehumanization of Black people and Black Movement in the broader cultural imagination (Riggs, 1987).

From 1890 to 1900, the printmakers Currier and Ives ran a called “Darktown Bicycling,” an offshoot of its best-selling lithograph image series “Darktown Comics,” created in the 1970s. The “Darktown Bicycling” images I use in my paper are seen in Figures 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13. The series is also mentioned in Evan Friss’ book On Bicycles: A 200-Year History of Cycling in New York City. On the series, Friss (2019) says the following: “popular cartoons and caricatures, like Currier and Ives’s Darktown Bicycle Club series, linked the bicycle with degrading stereotypes, depicting black men and women riding like buffoons— adopting poor form, crashing frequently, and losing races” (p. 61). However, Friss does not explore the deeper meaning behind certain elements of the lithograph images further. Adonia Lugo better analyzes the root of these portrayals in her book Bicycling/Race. Lugo (2018) writes, “Early bicycling expressed the stark inequality of the time, including its outright racism. The presence of black people circulating on bicycles was alternately comical and offensive to whites” (p. 160). Describing the “Darktown Bicycling” series Lugo (2018) says, “The joke was that these uppity people would have the audacity to think that bicycling, a pastime of white leisure, was for them” (p. 160). However, Lugo does not further extrapolate or situate this within the wider phenomenon of similar Blackface minstrelsy and the distinct minstrel characters embodied in the series. I seek to explore further by contextualizing the emergence of these minstrel images through my counter-archival research approach, connecting those images to their origin through the afterlife of slavery and connecting them to the historical and ongoing restrictions of movement placed on the Black diaspora.

Bryan Le Beau (2000), quoting Harry Peters, the foremost collector of Currier and Ives prints, writes, “Currier and Ives were businessmen and craftsmen ... but primarily they [were] mirrors of the national taste, weather vanes of popular opinion, reflectors of American attitudes…In their prints can be found the whole florid panorama of our national life in the mid-nineteenth century…Currier and Ives created a pictorial record of nineteenth-century America, but not as conscious historians” (Le Beau, 2000, p. 71). Moreover, he underscores that Currier and Ives produced materials, including minstrel images, that were acceptable to the masses. He also states how “Currier and Ives never intended to create or promote fine art, or even to produce prints of

great value. Rather, they sought to produce images of nineteenth-century America that would be attractive to their largely middle-class clientele" (Beau, 2000, p. 71). Le Beau also concentrates his research around a timeframe that overlaps with my research (1840 to 1880). He also considers the Currier and Ives series that I include in Figures 8 to 13, their best-selling series, "the Darktown Series," running from the mid-1870s to the early 1890s, which he writes,

> ...Currier and Ives's representation of African Americans from the 1840s through the 1880s which, in fact, reflects that history in all its twists and turns and complexities. What we find in that fifty-year run of prints is an initial inclination to picture the horror of slavery, from which the company quickly retreated; the withdrawal of African Americans into the background of prints on life in antebellum America; their being summoned during the 1850s, '60s, and '70s as the cause of sectional politics and civil war; and finally, at the end of the century, their being pictured as completely incapable of advancing beyond their previous condition of servitude to live like "civilized whites." My primary focus will be on the final stage of this pictorial narrative as told in the company's best-selling Darktown series-a large collection of prints all but unknown today (Le Beau, 2000, p. 71).

g. Figure 7: *Stereograph Image #7*

Figure 7: Stereograph image #7 (New York Public Library, 1899).

The image above is a stereograph image from 1899, and it is titled, 'How much ob dis road are you 'titled ti, suh.'" Of relevance in the archive, the image is listed in the archive as a part of the archive's 'Blackface Entertainers,' 'Bicycles & tricycles,' 'Accidents,' and 'Minstrel Shows' topics. Additionally, "St. Louis, MO" and "Meadowville, GA" are also noted vertically on the right-side margins of the image, along with the copyright holder. Additionally, "Keystone View Company Manufacturers and Publishers" is noted on the left-side margins of the image and as a publisher in the archive.

The image in Figure 7 displays a chaotic image, which is arranged to depict a collision between a white male cyclist and a "Black" male pedestrian. Strewn on the ground is the broken bicycle of the cyclist and an upturned bucket with vegetables spilling onto a dirt country road. The cyclist is to the right of the image and is wearing a jersey, riding boots, and a bewildered expression, and his position on his back. The person on the left, who appears to connote a Black man—but in actuality appears to be a white man in Blackface—lies on his side in ragged attire and is turned to the cyclist and is wagging his finger at him, in a caricature of "Black dialect" asking him how much of the road he considers himself entitled to. The image is meant to connote that emancipation has led to inferior Black people navigating in a non-functional manner and disrupting society and social order. The vegetables in the image further this notion because they allude to the Black people's "natural" role in completing "low-skilled" plantation and agricultural labour. Further, he is depicted as unfit to transcend/move away from performing this labour outside of his proper role as a simpleminded slave on the plantation in mainstream white society.

h. Figure 8: *Lithograph Image #1*

Figure 8: Lithograph image #1 (Library of Congress, 1897).

Figure 8 is a black and white image from 1897 titled "Darktown Bicycling-Scooped De Pear." The image was published in 1897 in New York City by Currier and Ives. A sign is depicted in the background, along a fence, which says "Darktown." The illustration is in the Library of Congress archive; it is a lithograph described in the archive as a "Caricature issued as part of the 'Darktown Comics' series." The image depicts a disorienting scene, an illustration of a bicycle crash between two cyclists and a passerby on a wide countryside road. In the image, bicycle parts, objects, and bananas are tossed up into the air. The bananas clearly connotate the depictions of Black people as animalistic and the racist comparisons made to monkeys and apes. The image portrays the subjects with big eyes and caricatured lips, commonplace in minstrel images. I argue that image depicts Black people as being too unintelligent and incapable of engaging in self-directed movement because the chaotic crash takes place on a wide country road with very few road users. Furthermore, I believe it seeks to depict free Black people as incapable of the most mundane engagements with free movement.

i. **Figure 9: *Lithograph Image #2***

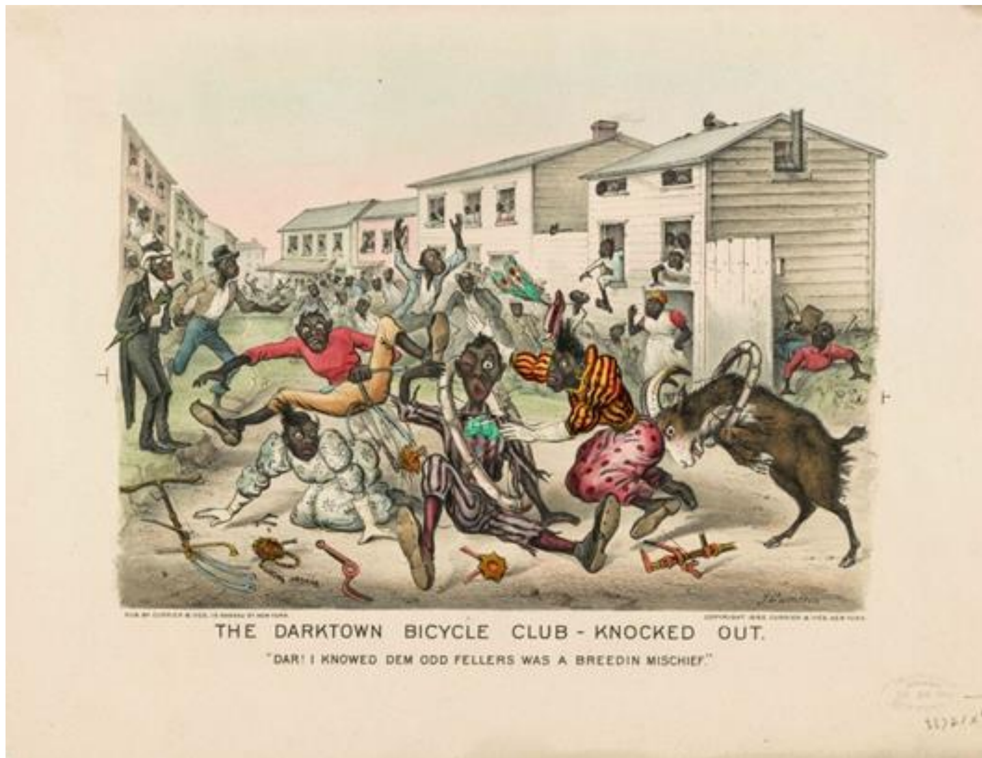

Figure 9: Lithograph image #2 (Library of Congress, 1892).

Figure 9 is titled and contains the text "The darktown bicycle club-knocked out: 'Dar! I knowed dem odd fellers was a breedin mischief.'" The image was published in 1892 in New York City by Currier and Ives in the Library of Congress archive. It is a lithograph described in the archive as a "Caricature issued as part of the 'Darktown Comics' series." The illustration is meant to be set in the series depicted location 'Darktown'; there are six people in the centre of the image in fancy attire depicted with minstrel caricatures, with big, exaggerated lips and eyes, but they are being attacked by what appears to be a ram. The people in the back of the image in informal attire stare on as the ram headbutts through the wheel of the bike and into one person in the scene while broken bike parts are strewn across the ground. I assert that this illustration seeks to depict free Black communities as improperly transcending their social station; this transgression is made clear with the supposed consequences—through being attacked by the ram largely just being experienced by the cyclists dressed as 'Zip Coon.' Furthermore, their incompetent attempts at engaging movement indicate how free movement for Black people can only produce chaos and

disorder, with the implication being that the plantation is the most optimal site for organizing Black Movement.

j. Figure 10: *Lithograph Image #3*

Figure 10: Lithograph image #3 (Library of Congress, 1892).

The image is an illustration titled and captioned "the darktown bicycle club - on parade: 'Hooray for de rumatic! Don't she glide lubly.' The image was published in 1892 in New York City by Currier and Ives and accessed in the Library of Congress archive. The image is a lithograph titled "Caricature issued as part of the 'Darktown Comics' series." The image depicts four Black people with bulging lips and eyes consistent with minstrel images bicycling through the fictional 'Darktown' while other members of the town look onwards, or in the case of one resident, pull a Ram by a rope around its neck on the right side of the image. The cyclists are depicted in the 'Zip Coon' caricature, with their outlandishly fancy attire and their attempts to emulate upper-class white people, but being incapable of doing so; this is particularly evident in how they are cycling in an absurd and improper manner, with their legs kicked up and forward. It captures a conception that Black people cannot properly move, let alone bicycle, through space.

k. Figure 11: *Lithograph Image #4*

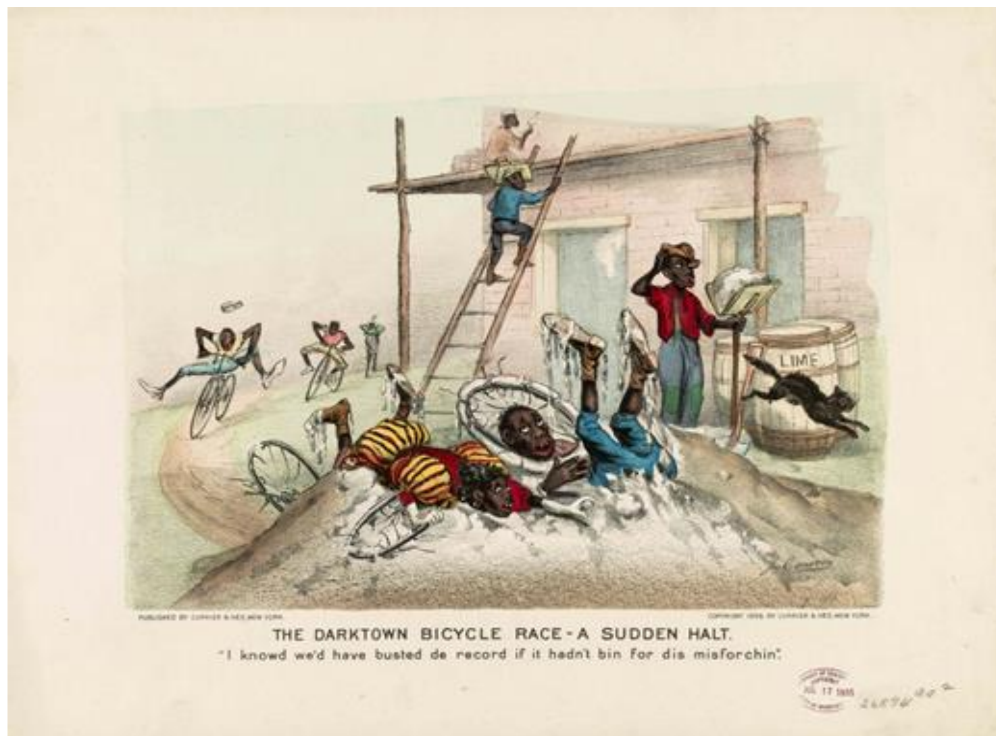

Figure 11: Lithograph image #4 (Library of Congress, 1895).

The image is an illustration titled, "the darktown bicycle race-a sudden halt: 'I knowd we'd have busted de record if it hadn't been for dis misforchin.'" The image was published in 1895 in New York City by Currier and Ives in the Library of Congress archive. It was a lithograph titled, "Caricature issued as part of the 'Darktown Comics' series." The image depicts cycling in the imagined 'Darktown' that is the series namesake and depicts Black cycling clumsily and improperly. One of the cyclists in the image crashed his bicycle, while three appear to be about to crash. In contrast, the cyclist that crashed is pictured beside a monkey dressed as 'Zip Coon,' seemingly equating them to one another and alluding to the man being comparably animalistic. The Black man in the back of the image seemingly further portrays the Black characters in the scene as unintelligent characters unworthy of freedom and free movement. In the image, a subject to the right is depicted wringing a book as a broom because he seemingly has no other use for knowledge. Books were costly then, and he was described as too unintelligent to use them.

l. Figure 12: *Lithograph Image #5*

Figure 12: Lithograph image #5 (Library of Congress, 1895).

Figure 12 is a lithograph from 1895 from the Library of Congress archive captioned and titled "The darktown bicycle race-the start: 'Now for de fastest record eber known.'" The image was published in 1895 in New York City by Currier and Ives. The archive hosting the lithograph image notes it as a "Caricature issued as part of the 'Darktown Comics' series." The image depicts what appears to be a bicycle race on a dirt road in an all-Black town referred to as 'Darktown,' presumably depicting the fictitious 'Darktown' from the series. There are four Black cyclists illustrated cycle racing and a dozen onlookers. Also depicted in Figure 12 are homes full of Black people peering out windows and over fences. The bystanders are not embodying the trope of 'Zip Coon' because they are dressed in very different attire and are not engaging in contorting minstrel depictions with their bodies. Only the racers are in fancy attire, in stripped puffed, sleeved dress shirts, and are depicted with bulging eyes and big lips, which is characteristic of the 'Zip Coon', particularly considering the subjects' use of bicycles for recreation. In 1895, cycling would have been regarded as an activity for the white upper class and indicative of the racers stepping outside their social station, which is depicted as a comical and ridiculous assertion. The extreme distortion

of the bodies of the racers bent on their bikes depicts elements of the 'Jim Crow' minstrel character, while the bystanders embody the acceptable position for the Black body.

m. Figure 13: *Lithograph Image #6*

Figure 13: Lithograph image #6 (Library of Congress, 1886).

Figure 13 is an illustration titled, "On His Style: 'Take a mity smart lokymoky to kotch dis coon!'" The image was published in 1886 in New York City by Currier and Ives. The Library of Congress archive hosts the image; it is listed as a lithograph and is noted as a "Caricature issued as part of the 'Darktown Comics' series" (Library of Congress, 2025). The image depicts a minstrel

caricature image of a Black man. He is depicted with huge, exaggerated eyes and lips and fancy attire, specifically wearing stripped socks and a stripped cap, dress pants, and a dress shirt with a bow tie. He is shown cycling through the countryside on a penny-farther or high-wheel bicycle with thin tires that cannot withstand traversing bumpy surfaces, but he is depicted as absentmindedly cycling into the danger represented as train tracks, despite the sign to his top left that says, "watchout for the locomotive." In the caricature of a “Black dialect,” he is noted as flouting the message on this sign and says that a locomotive would have to be “smart” to catch him, satirizing the danger ahead of him and seemingly obliviously and unintelligently engaging in reckless movement. I argue that the individual is illustrated as unintelligent when engaging in movement and undeserving of the right to move. Also, I assert that the image embodies the 'Zip Coon’ in its depiction of the character's attire and use of a bicycle.

iv) **Cycling & Post-Reconstruction Era Masculinity:** Major Taylor Caricatures 14-15:

Since the onset of the transatlantic slave trade, Black men have been unable to embody hegemonic patriarchal masculinity, which is a key aspect of the minstrel and anti-Black images I explore in my analysis of Figures 14 and 15. When the bicycle was initially largely inaccessible for Black people because of its steep financial cost, the masculinity embodied in early cyclists would also not be accessible to them because of the anti-Blackness undergirding hegemonic gender. Black feminist scholarship critically examines how Black individuals are frequently excluded from or unable to embody hegemonic gender norms, and is evidenced throughout the depictions in Figures 1-15. Furthermore, the brutality of transatlantic slavery, as articulated by groundbreaking Black feminist Hortense Spillers (1987), 'ungendered' Black subjects, as its extreme violence created an ontological rupture that disrupted their understanding of identity and gender.

In his book, Turpin explores American culture and explores the relationship between the bicycle and masculinity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Though Turpin’s analysis does not grapple with race and Blackness, he draws important connections to how “the bicycle represented upper-class masculinity in the 1880s” (p. 5). “The expense of the bicycle resulted in its ability to denote class…The act of cycling during the late nineteenth century was also a social statement.” Continuing, Turpin (2018) notes the class perceptions restricted access to the bicycle:

> Initially, it was a statement of wealth, as the working class did not have the financial means to spend $150 on a luxury item like a bicycle. As the number of manufacturers increased and prices decreased by more than half, greater numbers of people were able to participate in the activity. It was at that point that cycling became an expression of manhood for classes other than wealthy elites. Thus, cycling has demonstrated multiple, often competing masculinities over time and the way the bicycle was used as an expression of manhood has expressed several shifts over time (pp. 8-9)

Figures 14 to 15 further evidence attitudes towards Black masculinity because of the ways they depict Major Taylor, a Black professional cyclist and widely considered one of the first Black American sports icons. Taylor lived from 1878 to 1932, and at early age began training in track and road cycling racing at an early age (Ritchie, 2014). He began professional racing in 1896. Many of the archival minstrelsy images depicting Black people along with bikes feature Major Taylor, and the images I discovered during my research were from across the world, but I selected Figures 14 and 15, two images pertaining to the scope of my research for Canada and the US. In the images, he is depicted as either childlike or animalistic. Taylor embodied dominant masculine ideals through his power, wealth, and athleticism and conferred by being a decorated champion professional athlete, yet there was a proliferation of denigrated caricatured depictions of him with minstrel tropes and exaggerated features. However, I assert that this is because of his embodiment of a challenge to hegemonic standards that pertain to gender and race—modelled after white men. Taylor possessed key traits of hegemonic masculinity, discipline, strength, power, and wealth, which challenges the power structure and the dominant conception of Black men as the lazy 'Sambo,' the 'Zip Coon' with a false entitlement to status, or the deranged movements of 'Jim Crow.' The tropes that minstrel images depict of lazy, incapable Black people, and particularly Black men, are clearly defined by Major Taylor and how he had engaged in Black Movement.

Taylor had a remarkable life and career—particularly considering the opportunities afforded to Black people in post-Reconstruction America. Taylor was a decorated cycling racer and is considered one of the first Black sports icons. Taylor began cycling professionally in 1896, which coincided with the rise of these cycling-related minstrel images and was depicted in many cycling minstrel images throughout the course of a career as a world-travelling champion bike racer and prominent figure challenged the minstrel caricatures that came out of the Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction era and the conception that minstrels espoused that Black people fared

better as enslaved people, which threatened the status quo and power structure. Moreover, the 'Zip Coon' supposedly considering himself as above a certain social station and "his place" struck a chord with the general public—so Major Taylor's exceptional and prominent challenges of the status quo are even more disruptive. The depiction of him in Figure 14 takes a divergent approach from the other 14 images, which depict the 'Zip Coon,' 'Sambo,' or 'Picaninny,' rather here he is depicted as the 'brute.'

a. Figure 14: *Major Taylor*

Figure 14: Major Taylor caricature image #1 (Ritchie, 2014).

Figure 14 displays an image from Cycling Life Magazine, published on April 26, 1894. Noted on the image is the text "fast black," which alludes to and attempts to represent champion cyclist Major Taylor. In Figure 14, Taylor is depicted biking on his well-known racing bike, a Peugeot fixed-wheel track bike. Yet, everything else about the image distorts his image into an animalistic minstrel depiction as a naked ape or monkey-like animal. Taylor's face is most notably depicted as

grotesque and animalistic. Furthermore, he is depicted with exaggerated and protruding eyes and lips, which is a regular feature of minstrel depictions. In this image, whiteness is positioned in stark contrast with the depicted Black subject. There is a small white subject in the distance waving at the depiction of Taylor in the image appearing to wave at Taylor, to get him to slow down or return to whence he emerged, which is an environment that appears to be a jungle, thereby depicting him as a 'brute,' and therefore a threat to the public. Similar to most depictions of the brute caricature, the illustration in Figure 14 portrays Taylor as hideous and terrifying. Minstrel images emerging in the Reconstruction Era began to depict Black people—and notably Black men as brutish and rebellious.

b. Figure 15: *Major Taylor*

Figure 15: Major Taylor caricature image #1 (Ritchie, 2014).

Figure 15 is an image from February 23, 1894, illustrating Major Taylor as a minstrel character with exaggerated eyes and lips. It also depicts him as 'Zip Coon' because it displays him in a suit and displays him getting ejected and literally "kicked out." The image is titled, Major Taylor's situation," from Bearings Magazine, and specifically references the League of America Wheelmen's (L.A.W) formalized 1894 ban on Black cyclists. His depiction as 'Zip Coon' is

particularly potent as it depicts him attempting to transcend social position but being firmly put back into it, his assumed place in the social order. However, Taylor, as an individual, embodies a key aspect of Black Movement, that Black subjects continue to challenge the “white spatial imaginary” and persist in the face of restrictions on Black Movement (Lipsitz, 2007, p. 13).

My analysis of archival minstrel imagery in Chapter 2 about the bicycle offers a generative opportunity for understanding the historical and ongoing impact of restrictions on Black Movement. In my archival research, I undertake a counter-archival and discourse analysis considering archival images depicting the caricatures and racial tropes of the ‘picaninny,’ ‘Sambo,’ ‘Zip Coon,’ and ‘Jim Crow’ and their relevance to considerations of the historical Black Movement. In Figures 1-15, I evaluate the shifting discourse and social landscape of abolitionist, Reconstruction, and post-Reconstruction America, and underexplored counter-archival research, which articulates shifting racialization but also evolutions as it pertains to threats that the historic Black Movement presented.

Conclusion

Understanding the role of physical movement—or Black Movement—in the experiences of the Black diaspora is fundamental to understanding the history and future of the Black diaspora. Furthermore, contextualizing the experiences with movement to the Black diaspora of North America and, more broadly, provides a generative area for consideration. I argue that considering Black relationships with movement in Canada and the US are particularly noteworthy in our contemporary socio-political climate, where mobility-restricting practices abound in increasingly restricted capacities to engage with movement, gentrifying cities—considering historical strategies of resistance being is evermore important. Further, much can be gleaned from the centuries-old engagements with Black Movement.

Movement is a key site for producing subjectivity and understanding the modalities through which oppression is lived, which is particularly generative to consider for Black subjectivity. Black Movement is a generative framework for developing an understanding of the historical and ongoing restrictions to Black Movement. The ongoing defiance of restrictions to the movement of Black people, in traditions of marronage, migration, and more, indicate that Black people will continue to defy their placement in “the hold” so long as they cannot freely engage in Black Movement.

Minstrel images emerging in the post-Reconstruction era provide unique insight into shifting conceptions surrounding Black people and their presence in wider society. My discourse analysis and counter-archival research analysis make evident that there are clear linkages between Black Movement and minstrelsy, and the means by which bicycles appear in the images furthering racial caricatures but also offer a unique window into the discourse surrounding cycling and class in the late eighteenth century.In my archival research, I encountered two key issues regarding the scope and resources for my research. A limitation of my archival research was my exclusive focus on Black experiences related to cycling from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century and then the twenty-first century, which leaves a sizeable gap in historical timelines in my research. Still, the limited scope of my research made it not possible to explore that gap from the early twentieth to the early twentieth century. Another limitation of my research is that there has been a lack of research making analytical connections between cycling and minstrelsy, particularly considering class, race and cycling. I sought to address this gap in my research. However, many of the archival resources relevant to my research that I sought did not exist in Canada and could not be found. I found more archival materials on Black history from US archives, which indicates that fewer caricatures were produced in Canada. I also believe it indicates a more significant phenomenon in which Canada does more to absent Black people and engagement with its Black experiences and antiblackness from its national narrative (McKittrick, 2006).

Blackface minstrelsy originated in the US and was more prevalent and integral to the social fabric of the United States in the late nineteenth century, so more materials were produced and archived. Also, what cannot be dismissed is that United States Black archives are more institutionally resourced than in Canada. I searched for archival images through different online archives that I could access. In those archives, I found the images I sought for my research, particularly as they pertained to archival images from the United States, where I had more limited access to archives and archival support from librarians. I was able to find some images through the National Library of Congress. In addition, I found additional images on the bicycle historian and Major Taylor biographer Andrew Ritchie's website. Ritchie was remarkably able to research and publish minstrel illustrations that pertained to Major Taylor. Further research should be conducted to explore the experiences of Black cyclists around the advent of the bicycle, and it should be more readily accessible in Canada.

Attending to considerations of the historical and ongoing restrictions placed upon the Black diaspora's physical movement is key to understanding Black liberatory traditions and thought and to imagining freedom. As Walcott aptly emphasizes, "moving without bounds might be a significant ethical answer to claims of and for reparations. Unfettered Black Movement is a strike against empire and global reorder" (Walcott, 2021, p. 52). Engagement in the movement for Black people "in the wake" of the slave ship has and will continue to be a liberatory praxis integral to conceptualizing and actualizing freedom.

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