

UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI

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**RACE RIOTS IN WATTS, 1965, LOS ANGELES, 1992,
AND IN FERGUSON, 2014**

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Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci na téma Race Riots in Watts, 1965, Los Angeles, 1992, and in Ferguson, 2014 vypracovala samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucího práce a uvedla jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

V dne.....

Podpis.....

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“Hatred, which could destroy so much, never failed to destroy the man who hated, and this was an immutable law.”

-James Baldwin

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INTRODUCTION

America has always been promoting both multiculturalism and cultural diversity. Everyone wanted to live there because it represented the “American Dream”, however when people of different skin crossed the frontier, they had to face a completely different reality, far behind the American Dream. This reality found its basis on the oppression, segregation and racism. Not only they were rejected from the society, but they were also abused. The whites accepted them as a cheap and loyal workforce. However, after they did the hard work, the government established the regulations. Some of the minorities were sent back to their homes, some were sent to the camps, some, especially the African Americans were perceived as the outcasts of the society. Nevertheless, the blacks found the courage to resist and launched centuries full of the riots and little wars.

The aim of this thesis is to find out the reasons and underlying causes of the riots through three main racial disorders in Los Angeles in 1965, following in 1992 and closing with Ferguson in 2014. Nevertheless, the aim is not only to discover what led to these riots, but also to find out similarities as well as differences and to look at the role of the police officers, who played the main role in all the mentioned riots. Each chapter starts with a description of the riot, pointing out the particular cause. In the case of the riot in Los Angeles, in 1992, the focus is both on the failure of the state forces to prevent such accident and a comparison with the preceding conflict in 1965. Both the second and third chapter are going to concentrate on an analysis of two literary works, which are important for understanding the mentality of both the blacks and the whites and are going to serve as a rich material, since both works are supplemented by the reviews of journalists, scholars as well as students, whose opinions interestingly differ. The final subchapters offer a view on the cultural scene with the analyzed poems and songs from famous or starting artists, who are trying to reveal their feelings about the issue.

The first chapter is going to specialize in early race riots of the 1990s, focusing on the seven most serious ones. Then it concentrates on the issue of race and racism followed by a sequence of important events in American history and the role of the presidents, since several of them experienced the unrests and every reacted with

different tactics. Furthermore, the second part of the chapter is going to point out the response from the African Americans and to offer present perspective on the issue.

The second chapter will introduce the race riot in Watts in 1965 in a detailed analysis of the five days in which the riot took place. Apart from the riot, the tensions before 1965 as well as the Civil Rights Movement play important roles since they follow each other and especially the later one offers a view on the lives of the Civil Rights leaders. This chapter moreover concentrates on Central Avenue until 1928, followed from 1928 to 1950. After that, other settlements together with Westward and Southward movements are described in connection with the African Americans. The second part of the chapter offers a comparison of the L.A. riots in 1965 and 1992. The last but one subchapter is going to concentrate on the aftermath of the Watts riot. The riot will be mentioned with regard to the mainstream culture, with an analysis of the songs by Frank Zappa, Philip Ochs and a poem by Charles Bukowski. The final subchapter is going to analyze the novel *Little Scarlet* by the writer Walter Mosley, which takes place during the riots of 1965.

The third chapter is going to focus on the L.A. riot in 1992, starting with a description of the city, following with a trial of Rodney King. Then this chapter will concentrate on an outbreak of the riot but outlines equally important conflicts between two street gangs, the Crips and the Bloods, as well as the role of the institutions. The end of the chapter offers the aftermath of the riot, focusing not only on the African Americans, but on the Koreans as well, as this minority became much bigger victim in this later conflict. The novel for an analysis is *All Involved* by Ryan Gattis and songs analyzed in the mainstream culture are from Aerosmith, Tupac Shakur, David Bowie as well as from Offspring.

The last chapter will uncover the cause of the Ferguson Riot in 2014 with overall focus on the first and therefore the most prominent victim William Brown, whose death caused the protests all over the city. Statements of the witnesses will follow later in the chapter with stories of other victims such as Eric Garner, John Crawford, Tamir Rice and Akai Gurley. The second part of the chapter will deal with the city itself, with a question of fragmentation, race and class. As previous two chapters, this final one also offers the poems from a new generation of the black poets like Aya deLeon and Drew Gibson.

1 HISTORY OF THE RACE RIOTS IN AMERICA

Tensions began to appear between the North and the South, since inhabitants of the North did not want the slaves on their territory. They did not depend on them as much as the South, where needed slavery labor. This led to the division of America into two parts and caused the deadliest war. In 1857, the U.S. Supreme Court issued Dred Scott Decision, which decided not to liberate the slaves as well as ex-slaves. This decision led to the Abolitionist Movement, because it was felt that this was against the principles of America.¹

Black and white abolitionists cooperated, however their relationship was not easy. What united them was the hatred for slavery and fight for emancipation, but many white abolitionists were not able to consider the Blacks as their equals. However, they had to try to stay together, because mob violence began to increase. They became a threat to the social order. In the 1840s, leaders were escaped slaves. Speaker Henry Highland Garnet encouraged slaves to oppose their masters. Frederick Douglass, who was a leading spokesperson of the time, followed him. These two brave men were close friends, but had an argument, since their interpretations of Constitution differed. While Garrison regarded the Constitution as a pro-slavery document, Douglass took the wording of it to indicate federal authority to either restrict or destroy slavery.²

In 1857, the United States Supreme Court issued a decision in the Dred Scott case, which affirmed the right of slave owners to take their slaves into the Western territories. An important question appeared if slavery should be allowed in the West, which was decided by voting, however, when in the 1854 voting took place in Kansas, it was disturbed by the violence between the anti-slavery North and pro-slavery South. Dred Scott was a slave, whose owner had spent some time in Illinois and Wisconsin, which were free states that time. The Supreme Court was dealing with the question, and Roger B., a chief, decided on March 6, 1857 that Scott was not free in both states, because according to the chief, he was not a person under the U.S. Constitution, but a property. The decision caused regional tensions exploding into the Civil War.³

The extract from the Dred Scott decision sounds, “It is too clear for dispute, that the enslaved African race was not intended to be included, and formed no part of the people

¹ Tim Suereth, *Ferguson: America's Breaking Point* (Indiana: Elwood Press, 2015), 9.

² “Abolitionism,” Africans in America, accessed December 8, 2015, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4narr2.html>.

³ This Day in History, “Dred Scott Decision,” History, accessed December 9, 2015, <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/dred-scott-decision>.

who framed and adopted this declaration. They perfectly understood the meaning of the language they used ... and they knew that it would not in any part of the civilized world be supposed to embrace the negro race, which, by common consent, had been excluded from civilized Governments and the family of nations, and doomed to slavery”.⁴

President Abraham Lincoln was one of those, who advocated the civil rights, but his rejection of slavery was quite complex. He thought that this system would morally corrupt the nation and made a compromise letting the slavery exist, where the Constitution granted it, but he wanted to prevent its farther expansion. He was afraid that the restraint of slavery would lead to “ultimate extinction”.⁵

Lincoln tried to oppose the decision of Dred Scott’s case by attacking the Declaration of Independence, “The Declaration is of no practical use now, mere rubbish, old wadding left to rot on the battle-field after the victory is won. Now I appeal to all, are you really willing that the Declaration shall be thus frittered away? Shorn of its vitality and practical value, left without the germ or even the suggestion of the individual rights of man in it?”⁶

Because of this, the eleven Southern states began to hate him, which resulted in their refusal to write his name on their ballot. Nevertheless, he won the election in 1861, causing the Southern states to break away from the Union and creation of their own nation of Confederate slave-owning states. Georgia, Louisiana, Alabama, Florida, Texas, Mississippi and South Carolina with Jefferson David as their President formed this Confederation. North Carolina, Virginia, Arkansas and Tennessee joined later on. What happened next was a declaration of Civil War by Lincoln, which lasted for four years.⁷

In 1863, Abraham Lincoln issued an Emancipation Proclamation, proclaiming that all African Americans in the South should be free. This was a clever tactic with a goal of attracting the Southern slaves to enroll into the Union army. However, it meant no change. Slaves were free, but dependent. They were unable to find work in white America, but in the South, they encountered “Jim Crow” laws, which meant that slavery was still alive and the races were separate and unequal. Even though the Reconstruction

⁴ Suerreth, *America’s Breaking Point*, 9.

⁵ Jörg Nagler, “Abraham Lincoln’s Attitudes on Slavery and Race,” *American Studies Journal*, no. 53, (2009), accessed July 10, 2016, <http://www.asjournal.org/53-2009/abraham-lincolns-attitudes-on-slavery-and-race/>.

⁶ Gari Y. Okihiro, *The Great American Mosaic: An Exploration of Diversity in Primary Documents*, (Westport: Greenwood, 2014), 53.

⁷ Suerreth, *America’s Breaking Point*, 16-17.

should mean a new beginning for the slaves, the “Jim Crow” laws prevented white and black workers from being in the same room together. Furthermore, the African Americans were obliged to pay a poll tax when they wanted to vote and lynchings became part of everyday life. Lynchings later escalated to hangings. Lynching is an American invention, a family tradition in the South. The reasons for such a crime were arguing with a white man, an attempt to vote, self-defense or asking a white woman in marriage.⁸

1.1 Seven Unforgettable Riots

The summer of 1919, called ‘The Red Summer’ by James Weldon Johnson, represented the greatest period of interracial violence the nation had ever witnessed. The racial tensions were due to the great migration of African Americans from the South to the North during World War I. The population had increased from 44,000 in the 1909 to more than 100,000 ten years later. At that time, the white supremacist organization Ku Klux Klan renewed its violent activities in the South, including sixty-four lynchings in the 1918 and eighty-three one year later. During the summer, there were twenty-six race riots in the cities such as Chicago, Illinois; Washington, D.C.; Elaine, Arkansas; Charleston, South Carolina; Knoxville and Nashville, Tennessee; Longview, Texas; and Omaha, Nebraska. More than one hundred Blacks were killed and thousands were wounded and left homeless. The seven most serious ones were in Wilmington, North Carolina (1898), Atlanta, Georgia (1906), Springfield, Illinois (1908), East St. Louis Illinois (1917), Chicago, Illinois (1919), Tulsa, Oklahoma (1921) and Detroit, Michigan (1943).⁹

In November 1898 in Wilmington, North Carolina exploded the first major race riot since the Reconstruction. The Wilmington riot followed an election campaign in which intimidation and fraud brought in a white supremacist government. Democrats learnt a lesson from the Fusion campaigns of the Republicans and Populists. They knew they could not win against the alliance of Republicans and Populists, learnt the power of class politics and realized that only a campaign based on intimidation and gender as well as racial stereotypes would upset the Fusion alliance. Rebecca Latimer Felton

⁸ “Jim Crow Laws,” United States History, accessed November 28, 2015, <http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1559.html>.

⁹ Robert A. Gibson, “The Negro Holocaust: Lynching and Race Riots in the United States 1880 -1950,” Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, accessed July 4, 2016. <http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1979/2/79.02.04.x.html>.

attracted attention as the first woman to serve in the Senate, especially by her 1897' speech in which she supported lynching. She criticized white men for failing to protect their women from rapes by black men. Alexander Manly, an editor of Wilmington's leading black newspaper *The Daily Record*, opposed her and accused her of hypocrisy for ignoring white men' historical treatment of black women. The Democrats profited from Alexander and formed White's Government Union, whose aim was to ensure that all white men voted for them. On the day of election, November 8, the Democrats succeeded, but the environment was tense and intimidating. For the next two days, tensions broke, when Alfred Moore met an armed crowd at the Armory on Market Street, burning his press. The Republicans with Populists fled the city, while about thirty Blacks did not survive and many had to leave.¹⁰

One of the South's most sensational riots occurred in Atlanta, Georgia in September 1906. Georgian politicians based their campaign on the need to remove drunken Blacks from the society, since their presence caused white women to fear to walk the streets. Nevertheless, to the surprise of the candidates, white voters did not respond as vastly as was expected. They therefore tried to raise the hatred towards the African Americans by numerous assaults publicized in the local newspapers. *The Atlanta Press* had begun to treat black crime in a rebellious fashion. There were twelve rapes of white women in one week, which outraged the African Americans. *The Atlanta News* as well as *The Atlanta Georgian* faced accusation of printing false stories of black assaults on white women. What also contributed to the rioting was the fact that the Depression hit the country hard, causing many people had low income or were unemployed and the competition for the jobs created the tensions.¹¹

On September 22, some men gathered and discussed the local news, when a newspaper carrier walked by and was screaming "Extra! Read all about it!" in an attempt to sell *the Atlanta News*. One of them bought it and read about an attack of four white women. Therefore, he returned to his friends and together started a revolt. Soon, the crowd counted one thousand men. One African American man, unaware of the situation, was riding his bicycle in the direction of the crowd. The crowd knocked him off and beat. Meanwhile, an unknown black man had stabbed a white man, G. C.

¹⁰ Politics of a Massacre: Discovering Wilmington 1898, "Election Politics," Core, accessed July 13, 2016, <http://core.ecu.edu/umc/wilmington/>.

¹¹ Barbara A. Tagger, "The Atlanta Race Riot of 1906 and the Black Community," 35-63, (thesis, Atlanta University, 1984), accessed July 13, 2014, <http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2514&context=dissertations>.

Tomlinson, and the crowd increased to 1,500 rioters. Blacks were beaten to the death and the crowd split into smaller groups. Both races demanded the police department to solve the issue. Killings and beatings took place mainly in the business center of Atlanta. Mayor James G. Woodward ordered the crowd to go home, but rioters were screaming, "Kill the niggers!" therefore, the Mayor ordered the fire department to break it up with the fire hoses. Some went home, but some divided even into smaller groups and continued to search for blacks to kill.¹²

One incident took place in a trolley car, where four black passengers were attacked. One man was beaten so badly he could not be identified. The police tried to help the African Americans and participated in the beating. In the Downtown, the mob beat a black man to the death. They beat two black barbers with a brick and when they considered the barbers dead, they removed the victims' clothing and threw the bodies in an alley. Another black man was tortured in the same way and his body thrown on the top of the two victims. In the Darktown, whites were surprised by armed black residents, which prevented another massacre. Meanwhile, the riot emerged into the city, which ordered the state troops to patrol. The Grand Jury recommended both races to cooperate, and while investigating, the police found out many victims were not criminals, as was firstly thought, but hard working citizens. Both races arranged a meeting, which proved to be successful and created an organization called 'the Atlanta Civic League', aiming to solve the race problem by discussing the complaints. It resulted in temporarily improved relations, a release of sixty arrested blacks and a ban of *the Atlanta News*. After four days of rioting, ten blacks and two whites were dead, hundreds injured, and over a thousand escaped.¹³

In Springfield, Illinois, during August 1908, a three-day riot took place. It started by a white woman, who claimed, that an African American violated her. This case was however not the only one. Whites gathered around the jail, demanding both arrested black men, Joe James and George Richardson, to be lynched. When the sheriff transferred the suspects to a jail in a nearby town, a white mass run into the Negro section and lynched two innocent men, Scott Burton and William Donegan. Scott used his shotgun in an attempt to save himself, but did not manage, as well as eighty-four-

¹² Dianne Mathiowetz, "1906 Atlanta 'Race Riot' Was a Massacre," *Workers*, October 2, 2016, accessed July 14, 2016, <http://www.workers.org/2006/us/atlanta-1005/>

¹³ Barbara A. Tagger, "The Atlanta Race Riot of 1906 and the Black Community," 35-63, (thesis, Atlanta University, 1984), accessed July 13, 2014, <http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2514&context=dissertations>.

year-old William, who had been married to a white woman for more than thirty years. The crowd targeted shops with guns and ammunition to destroy the businesses owned by the blacks. As many as 300 African-American residents fled the city, but some fought back in the self-defense. By the time the National Guardsmen came, four whites and two blacks died, two were lynched and about 2,000 driven out of the city. This riot, in the home town of Abraham Lincoln, shocked white liberals, who met the following year in New York City with few prominent blacks to form the NAACP with a white reformer Jane Addams and a Black civil rights activist W. E. B. Du Bois. About 150 rioters ended up in a prison, but the Jury sentenced only one to thirty days in the prison.¹⁴

The East St. Louis, Illinois riot in 1917 started because of the fear of the white working people that African Americans' economic, political and social status was threatening their own. When the labor force of an aluminum plant went on strike in April, the company hired black workers. Although the underlying cause was a combination of several factors, the union blamed its defeat on the African Americans. The union meeting in May demanded East St. Louis to remain a white man's town, which was followed by a riot sparked by a white man. During the revolt, mobs demolished buildings and Blacks were beaten. Police officers took the injured to the hospitals and disarmed them, but beatings continued through June. On July 1, some whites were driving in Ford through the main Negro district and were shooting. Meanwhile a police car, also Ford, was driving down the street and the blacks, unaware, killed two police officers. The next day a new riot began. White Americans were stopping the cars, pulling the blacks off, stoning them, kicking them and shooting them. By midnight, the black section was in the flames. The official figures were nine whites and thirty-nine blacks, hundreds wounded. Nevertheless, the NAACP investigators estimated that between one hundred to two hundred Blacks were killed.¹⁵

One of the witnesses described the massacre, "African American men had their fingers cut off by the mob and their heads split open with axes. Will Morgan saw the mob make the African Americans swim into the Cahokia River, then shoot them, one being killed instantly. The others managed to struggle back to shore, only to be stoned to death by children. He saw them beat men down with revolvers; white men knocked

¹⁴ Gibson, "The Negro Holocaust."

¹⁵ "Wilmington Race Riot of 1988," Black Past.

African American women down, and then the white women would finish by beating them to death or nearly so.”¹⁶

The worst of the post-War race riots took place in Chicago, Illinois. It began on July 27, 1919, when a young black teenager, Eugene Williams, drowned after being stoned in Lake Michigan, which even though not officially segregated, belonged to the whites. People were revolting for a week as the police refused to arrest the white youth. Thousands from both races were involved in a series of fights, fifteen whites and twenty-three blacks died, and 178 whites and 342 blacks injured. More than one thousand families, mostly black, became homeless. After the rioting, the city suggested separate the housing in Chicago, but African Americans and liberal white voters rejected. The city officials organized the Chicago Commission on Race Relations to deal with the situation. The organization, consisting of six white and six black men suggested key problems such as competition for jobs, inadequate housing options for African Americans, inconsistent law enforcement and racial discrimination. President Woodrow Wilson blamed the whites for being the initiators of the riots and presented the efforts to improve the racial harmony with voluntary organizations and congressional legislation.¹⁷

The Tulsa, Oklahoma riot took place from May 31 to June 1, 1921. Following World War I, Tulsa was one of the richest African-American communities in the country known as the “Greenwood District”. The business district was referred to as “Black Wall Street”, but because of June 1921, the Greenwood area became devastated. Similarly, to the previous riots, the conflict began with a white girl charging a black youth with an attempted rape. The mentioned victim was Sarah Page and the accused one was Dick Rowland. The police arrested Dick the other day, but armed blacks run into the jail and barricaded the top floor to protect him from lynching. The quarrels between the whites and the blacks led to a race war. The blacks withdrew to the Greenwood Avenue business district. Machine-guns were brought into use, eight airplanes were employed to spy on the movements of the blacks and were used in bombing of the colored section. Four companies of the National Guard were called out, but by the time the order was restored, fifty whites and between 150 and 200 blacks were killed. Governor Robertson declared a martial law, nevertheless the efforts were

¹⁶ Suerreth, *America's Breaking Point*, 3.

¹⁷ “The Chicago Race Riot of 1919,” *History*, accessed July 13, 2016, <http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/chicago-race-riot-of-1919>.

inadequate, many homes were looted and \$1,500,000 worth of property was destroyed by fire.¹⁸

The initiator of the riot in Detroit, Michigan in 1943 appeared an increased racial disagreement over the sharp rise in the black population, which led to the competition for jobs and housing. In the early 1900s, a leader Homer Warren argued, “Detroit is going to grow and grow. We are going to have a million people within a few years, do you know why? Because we got Henry Ford.” Henry Ford was the first man to give an employment to the thousands of African Americans.¹⁹

On June 20, a riot broke out on Belle Isle, a recreational area used predominately by the African Americans. The fights escalated into a major conflict. The African Americans at the Forest Social Club in Paradise Valley found out the whites had thrown a black woman with her baby from the bridge, therefore they gathered near Woodward, breaking windows and looting. In a nearby area, whites heard the blacks raped a white woman near the same bridge, thus they waited outside the Roxy Theatre on Woodward for men exiting the theatre to beat them. White crowds attacked the blacks in the downtown area and traveled into the black neighborhoods by car, where they faced sniping. Both groups went into the streets with Woodward as their dividing line. Whites set the cars, which belonged to the blacks, on the fire. A white doctor was beaten to death while making a phone call in a black neighborhood. Mayor Edward J. Jeffries was called to help, but not until the whites entered Paradise Valley, the Mayor sought the assistance from President Franklin Roosevelt. By the time, 6,000 army troops arrived, twenty-five blacks and nine whites were killed and property damaged exceeded \$2 million.²⁰

Interplay of several factors caused these race riots. The nature was not only social, but also political and economic. Joseph Boskin, author of *Urban Racial Violence* (1976), observed six general patterns in the major twentieth century race riots. Firstly, in almost all of them, it was a white person, who began the incident. Secondly, in the majority, some extraordinary social condition prevailed, like prewar social changes, wartime mobility, post-war adjustment, or economic depression. Thirdly, the majority took place during the hot summer months. Fourthly, a rumor played very important role,

¹⁸ “1921 Tulsa Race Riot,” Tulsa History, accessed July 13, 2016, <http://tulsahistory.org/learn/online-exhibits/the-tulsa-race-riot/>.

¹⁹ “Wilmington Race Riot of 1988,” Black Past.”

²⁰ Michael Rodriguez and Thomas Featherstone, *Detroit's Belle Isle: Island Park Gem (MI)*, Images of America, (South Carolina: Arcadia Press, 2003), 84-7.

causing many riots. Fifthly, the police force was ever involved as a precipitating cause or perpetuating factor. Lastly, in almost every riot, the fighting occurred within a black community.²¹

1.2 Defining Race and Riots

The issue of race remains at the center of the social structure and hidden consciousness of the United States. Many white Americans mitigated their guilt about slavery and its lasting effects. They argue they were not straight responsible, because they arrived after the Civil War. However, even if they were not directly responsible they were often involved in keeping the disabilities that African Americans have suffered and still benefit from the advantages as a favored group. Moreover, America still carries its reputation as a country that enslaved the people imported from Africa as well as the country that tries to evolve the democracy. It is therefore understandable that persisting hatred between the white Americans and the African Americans have created ongoing tensions in the American system.²²

The tensions in the United States have been developing for many years. In the 1950s, the situation culminated into the Civil Rights Movement and the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the 1960s. Some progress appeared concerning civil and racial rights, but the movement had stopped and America has prospered on the economic principles of slavery. America cannot be considered a country, where slavery began. The Eastern European Slovaks were enslaved in such a high numbers that the term 'slave' came from the slang name for Slovaks, who were known as 'Slavs'. Even though slavery was eventually abolished the African Americans did not feel much of the change, because it was still difficult to live in the South, especially after the passage of the restrictive "Jim Crow" and "Pig laws".²³

The Pig laws were one of the laws passed by the white Americans living in the South, because they lost a steady stream of free labor in the war. Unemployment became illegal for the African Americans after the war. Moreover, they could be punished by a fine of \$50 dollars. It was also called 'a black code', because it applied to only those, whose color of the skin was black. Nevertheless, it differed a little bit

²¹ Gibson, "The Negro Holocaust."

²² Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 10-12

²³ Suerreth, *America's Breaking Point*, 1-2.

compared to the Pig Law that made the penalty for a crime committed by a black person even harsher.²⁴

The period of the Reconstruction gave rise to a serious problem, which lied in the refusal of the ex-slave owners and ex-slaves to live next to each other. This caused a mass rioting primarily in the South and led to expelling and killing of the African Americans. Lynchings were so common that Federal Legislation had to be passed and even Mark Twain wrote an essay about this issue and named it “The United States of Lyncherdom”. He wrote the essay in the 1901 as a reaction to a newspaper account of the Missouri lynching. Twain was thinking about using it as the introduction to his book, but he eventually decided not to, because he was afraid, he “would not have even half a friend left down there”.²⁵

Gunnar Myrdal, a Swedish Nobel laureate economist, opposed to the usage of the term ‘riot’ to describe the interracial conflicts, but preferred the term a ‘terrorization’ or ‘massacre’ instead. The race riots occurred in both the North and the South, but were more characteristic of the North. They were primarily urban phenomena, while lynching was a rural one. In the South, the white Americans used lynchings to punish or abuse the African Americans, but in the North, the reason was to get rid of the minorities from a white neighborhoods and their workforce. Although lynchings were decreasing slightly by the turn of the century, the race riots went the other way around. The greatest number of the race riots occurred during and after World War I. During this period, the North was concerned with the migration of the blacks from the South, and displacement of some whites. The South was concerned about the possible demands of returning black soldiers, who were unwilling to slip back into second-class citizenship.²⁶

The rioting continued, but a reversal came in the 1950s, when during the Civil Rights Movement, the African Americans demanded the equal rights and fought for the their freedom. Malcolm X belonged to well-known activists, who did not hesitate to choose violent means of civil disobedience. Maybe more renowned one was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who chose more radical and peaceful approach. However, both lost their lives in the endless fight. In the 1960s, the African Americans began to fight violently against the aggressive police force as well as the public officials. In many

²⁴ Nikki Jones, “Something Smells Like a Pig, You Say?” *The Public Intellectual*, May 2, 2011, accessed November 21, 2015, <http://thepublicintellectual.org/2011/05/02/if-it-smells-like-a-pig/>.

²⁵ Mark Twain, “The United States of Lyncherdom,” People Virginia, accessed November 17, 2015. <http://people.virginia.edu/~sfr/enam482e/lyncherdom.html>.

²⁶ Gibson, “The Negro Holocaust.”

communities, white political power structure prevented the minorities from having the voice in their community's governance.²⁷

1.3 Slavery

Even though the Declaration of Independence from 1776 proclaimed all men are equal, the United States practiced slavery even after the Abolitionism. Slavery existed throughout the world, because it provided a cheap labor. The African-American slaves helped to build the economic foundations of the new nation. The slaves were sold or traded with as a valuable source. The Atlantic slave trade provided the slave labor for farming and industry to the New World of the South and North America and the Eastern slave trade used them as servants as well as warriors.²⁸

The slave importation was carried out in two mass waves. The first wave began in the South America in the 1500s with Portugal as the main importer, supplying also Spain until the 1580. Then unification of these two countries took place and slave trading was temporarily prohibited. The English, Dutch and French however continued in their business. The second mass wave concerned the importation into the North America and The Caribbean in the 1600s. A first settlement was in Jamestown, Virginia, in the 1619 with the aim to help the production of tobacco and rice. By the 1700s, gold was discovered in Brazil and cotton together with sugar production turned out to be a successful business. The cotton gin followed in 1793. It is estimated that about six to seven million slaves were imported to the New World during the eighteenth century. In the 1700s, eighty percent of the inhabitants of Caribbean islands were enslaved Africans. In Santo Domingo, a revolt led to the establishment of Haiti as the first independent black nation outside of Africa in 1804.²⁹

Slavery was never widespread in the North, though many executives became rich on the expense of the slave trade and investments in the Southern plantations. In the nineteenth century, America's Westward expansion and growing Abolition movement in the North provoked a debate about slavery, leading to the American Civil War (1861-1865). Even though as many as four million slaves were freed by the victory of the Union, slavery continued during the Reconstruction (1865-1877), the Civil Rights

²⁷ David Howard-Pitney, *Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and the Civil Rights Struggle of the 1950s and 1960s: A Brief History with Documents*, 1st ed. (UK: St's Martin Press, 2004), 25-26.

²⁸ Suerreth, *America's Breaking Point*, 8-9.

²⁹ Page duBois, *Slavery: Antiquity and Its Legacy*, Ancients and Moderns, 1st ed. (NY: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2010), 1-2.

Movement of the 1960s and the Emancipation. After the American Revolution (1775-1783), many colonists started to relate the oppression of the black slaves to their own oppression by the British and called for the Abolition. Between the 1774 and 1804, the Northern states abolished slavery, but “peculiar institution”, euphemism for slavery, remained. Though the U.S. Congress outlawed the African slave trade in 1808, the domestic trade flourished and slave population in the U.S. tripled over the next fifty years. By the 1860s, it had reached nearly four million. Slaves in the antebellum South represented about one-third, they lived on the farms, could not read or write and many slave women were forced into the sexual relationships with their masters, who rewarded them with favors, but punished the disobedient ones. The law did not accept slave marriages, but still they did marry and raised children. Some masters welcomed the opportunity; others did not hesitate to divide the family. The revolts occurred, such as the case of Gabriel Prosser in Richmond in the 1900s and Denmark Vesey in Charleston in 1822, but few succeed.³⁰

The riot that terrified the white slaveholders the most was by Nat Turner in Southampton County in Virginia, August 1831. The crowd consisted of the seventy-five blacks, who murdered sixty whites in only two days before they were defeated by the armed whites and the state forces. Supporters of slavery saw this act as a confirmation of the fact that the blacks were nothing more than the inferior barbarians, who needed slavery to discipline them. In the South, this led to the strengthening of slave codes. In the North, it provoked the growing Abolitionism. From 1830 to 1860, the movement gained the strength in the North with Frederick Douglass and white supporters William Lloyd Garrison with Harriet Beecher Stowe in the charge. Many abolitionists believed slaveholding was a sin, but others, free from religious beliefs, considered slaveholding regressive. A loose network of safe houses helped the Fugitive slaves to escape from the plantations to the North as early as in 1780. It was known as the ‘Underground Railroad’, gaining intensity in 1830, helping from the 40,000 to 100,000 slaves. The name had nothing to do with the railroad or underground, it was a secret action, requiring a secret name.³¹

³⁰ “Slavery in America,” *History*, accessed July 14, 2016, <http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/slavery>.

³¹ Thomas Wentworth Higginson, “On This Day in 1831, a Bloody Uprising in the Virginia Countryside,” *The Atlantic*, August 21, 2013, accessed July 14, 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2013/08/on-this-day-in-1831-a-bloody-uprising-in-the-virginia-countryside/278905/>.

In 1820, an unpleasant debate took place, dealing with the federal government's right to restrict slavery in Missouri, which ended in the compromise. Missouri was accepted into the Union as a slave state, Maine as a free state, Western territories North of Missouri's Southern border were to be free zones. In 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska Act opened all new territories to slavery by asserting the rule of independence over congressional edict, leading pro and anti-slavery forces to battle it out in the new state of Kansas. Three years later, the Supreme Court's decision in the Dred Scott case cancelled the Missouri Compromise by ruling that all territories are open to slavery. The Thirteenth Amendment in 1865 officially abolished slavery, the Fourteenth in 1868 promised the former slaves to receive the rights of citizenship and the "equal protection", and the right to vote in the Fifteenth added up two years later. Nevertheless, the laws were often ignored or violated and the Reconstruction became only another frustration for the African Americans.³²

1.4 Response from the African Americans

Black people resisted the oppression. This resistance was expressed in three ways: violence, migration to the North, and organized non-violent protests. There are records of numerous cases of individual as well as collective acts of black retaliatory violence. Although it seemed unreasonable, because it led to more lynching and violence, the blacks frequently armed themselves and fought back in the self-defense. Through the pages of *The Crisis* from 1910, W. E. B. Du Bois occasionally encouraged the blacks to fight back. A. Phillip Randolph, an editor of the socialist newspaper *The Messenger*, also advocated a physical resistance. The NAACP defended the legality of black retaliatory self-defense from mob attack as well. Poet Claude McKay in 1921 captured the sentiment of many militant Negroes in his poem "If We Must Die": "If we must die let it not be like hogs: hunted and penned in an accursed spot! ... If we must die; oh let us nobly die dying but fighting back."³³

By the World War I, the blacks were prepared to defend themselves in many parts of the country, even in the Deep South. Most of the race riots were the results of the African Americans' revenge to the white acts of violence. However, in most cases, because of the overwhelming white superiority, blacks' resistance was pointless.

³² "Slavery in America," *History*, accessed July 14, 2016, <http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/slavery>.

³³ Gibson, "The Negro Holocaust."

Another response of the black people was the Great Migration, which began shortly before World War I. Between 1910 and 1920, more than 500,000 blacks fled from the oppressive South to the industrial centers of the North. The annual rate of the migration reached 75,000 by the 1920s. Black leaders considered the non-violent protests the most effective weapons. The pioneer was a black woman Ida B. Wells-Barnett, an editor of the *Memphis Free Speech*. She rallied anti-lynching sentiment in the U.S. and England and served as a chairperson of the Anti-Lynching Bureau of the Afro-American Council. Wells published several pamphlets, revealing the barbarity of lynching, including *A Red Record* written in the 1894.³⁴

The struggle to make lynching a federal crime was long and pointless. At the beginning of the twentieth century, precursors of the NAACP called for an investigation of the lynchings and legislation to enforce the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. In 1900, a Negro Congressman George White introduced America's first anti-lynching bill, but it soon died in the House Judiciary Committee. In the first year of its existence, the NAACP initiated a campaign against lynching and all forms of racism and discrimination. Its attempts to secure federal anti-lynching legislation, such as the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill, was unsuccessful, however, the Association's nationwide and interracial fight against the lynching eventually helped decrease the annual number in the United States.³⁵

1.5 Present Perspective on the Race Riots

More than half a century passed since the African-American inhabitants experienced the civil disorders, which were taking place in more than 300 cities and made relationship between white and blacks greatly complicated. These riots were usually short so that lot of people had no idea that America experiences any disturbances. Nevertheless, there were such riots that left a lot of devastation behind, taking place mostly in the bigger cities, where the police had to intervene in most of the cases. White Americans turned their faiths to the governments and other institutions, because they hoped the authorities would cut an end to the revolts.³⁶

³⁴ Gibson, "The Negro Holocaust."

³⁵ Equal Justice Initiative, *Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror*, 2015, 18-23, accessed July 22, 2016,

<http://www.eji.org/files/EJI%20Lynching%20in%20America%20SUMMARY.pdf>.

³⁰ Abu-Lughod, *Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles*, 3.

At the end of July, 1967, President Lyndon Johnson addressed the nation: “We have endured a week such as no nation should live through: a time of violence and tragedy. I want to talk about that tragedy and I want to talk about the deeper questions it raises for us all. Let there be no mistake about it - the looting, arson, plunder, and pillage, which have occurred are not part of the civil rights protest. There is no American right to loot stores, or to burn buildings, or to fire rifles from the rooftops. That is crime and crime must be dealt with forcefully, and swiftly, and certainly under law. Innocent people, Negro and white, have been killed ... Worst of all, fear and bitterness, which have been loosed will take long months to erase. The criminals who committed these acts of violence against the people deserve to be punished and they must be punished. The violence must be stopped, quickly, finally, and permanently. All of us know what those conditions are: ignorance, discrimination, slums, poverty, disease, not enough jobs. We should attack these conditions. This is not a time for angry reaction. It is a time for action. We can stop it. We must stop it. We will stop it.”³⁷

President Johnson announced the appointment of an Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders with the governor Otto Kerner, who became to serve as Chairman and Mayor John Lindsay being Vice Chairman. The Commission’s goal was to investigate the origins of the disorders and make recommendations to the President himself, to the Congress, to the State Governors, and to the Mayors for measures to prevent such disasters in the future. This Commission had an access to the facts that were in the hands of Federal Bureau of Investigation. After seven months, the Commission issued a report called ‘Kerner Report’ with its best-known conclusion, stating that the United States is moving towards two societies, one black and the other one white, which are separate and unequal. The Report deals with three themes. The first one focuses on the conditions of race relations as well as racial minorities. The second one on the success or failure of the social policies advocated by the Commission and the last one on alternatives to those policies that promised to improve the lives of poor citizens.³⁸

Because of the decision to study civil disorders of summer 1967, the Report ignored serious riots, which took place in three largest cities. The report for example did

³¹ Lyndon B. Johnson, “Speech to the Nation on Civil Disorders,” Miller Center University of Virginia, accessed September 20, 2015, <http://millercenter.org/president/lbjohnson/speeches/speech-4040>.

³⁸ Stephan Thernstrom, Fred Siegel and Robert Woodson, “The Kerner Commission Report” (lecture on Poverty and Inequality, the Heritage Foundation, June 24, 1998), accessed September 30, 2015. <http://www.heritage.org/research/lecture/the-kerner-commission-report>.

not mention uprisings in 1964 and 1965 in New York and Los Angeles as well as Chicago riot of 1968. The topic such as unemployment was discussed together with educational opportunities for minority students, and last but not least welfare and housing's recommendations.³⁹

³⁹ Abu-Lughod, *Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles*, 5-6.

2 RACE RIOT IN WATTS IN 1965

This riot, described as “ghetto revolt”, was mainly racially motivated, starting on August 11, 1965, lasting for five days. The riot resulted in thirty-four dead people, thousands injured, 4,000 arrested and property of millions of dollars damaged with hundreds of buildings burnt. However, the L.A. riot was not the only one in the 1960s, because this decade was known for the Civil Rights Movement in which people fought not only against the segregation, but also against other forms of discrimination as well as anti-war movement against the involvement of America in the Vietnam War.⁴⁰

This period was the most turbulent one, concerning American race relations. In the last decade, open racism was socially acceptable. There were riots in Harlem, Rochester, Jersey City, Philadelphia, as well as in Chicago. In the early 1920s, Los Angeles was a racially divided city. Because of the expansion of economy, a lot of Mexicans and African Americans came for the better standard of living. They however did not have the access to the higher paid jobs and due to the economic crisis in 1929; many were deported back to their native land.

2.1 Racial Tensions before 1965

An interesting reversal came in the 1960s, based on who fights against whom. In the earlier times, it was the whites against the blacks, but this has changed and is the opposite way in the present. The reason for rioting in the early 1900s was the influx of the black workers into Northern cities and taking jobs from the whites. The 1960s could be understood as a reaction of the blacks, fighting back against the authorities, which were considered their oppressors, by means of looting and beating. Even though President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, which banned discrimination based on race, color, religion and national origin, the riots broke out in Harlem on July 16, 1964, when a fifteen-year-old black boy was shot by a white police officer. The riot lasted for six days with more than 4,000 participants. This incident is the first one to give a rise to a wave of violence in the 1960s, appearing in 750 cities.⁴¹

Two weeks later, a police officer in Rochester arrested a nineteen-year-old black youth for public intoxication at a party. The participants got involved into the conflict,

⁴⁰ Teresa Grimes, *National Register of Historic Places: Historic Resources Associated with African Americans in Los Angeles*, (United States Department of the Interior: 2009), 1-15, accessed February 23, 2016, <http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/pages/1054/files/african%20american%20la%20mpdf.pdf>.

⁴¹ Michael W. Flamm, “The Original Long, Hot Summer: The Legacy of the 1964 Harlem Riot,” *The New York Times*, July 2014, accessed February 24, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/16/opinion/16Flamm.html?_r=0.

when they heard a child was attacked by a police dog and a black woman was slapped by an officer. The crowd expanded to 2,000 rioters and began looting and burning buildings with Molotov cocktails. Police Chief William Lombard tried to scatter the protesters, but they started throwing stones at him and eventually they overturned his car. Thus, he ordered his officers to use weapons, pronounced a state of emergency and called the National Guard. The situation evolved into a ban of all liquor stores by a city manager Porter Homer and a curfew from 8:00 p.m. This riot ended with 1,000 arrests.⁴²

In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Odessa Bradford stopped her car on August 28 at the corner of 23rd Street and Columbia Avenue. She was checked by two police officers who ordered her to remove the car from the roadway. A problem appeared, when she told them she was unable to start the car. They reacted by pulling her away from her car, in that moment an onlooker stepped in to help her. Both ended up arrested. Rumors spread that a white officer killed a black woman. This provoked a crowd that who dealt with the situation by looting and burning white owned businesses for two days. Police tried to calm the rioters down without using any force. When the Civil Rights Act passed in the same year, California passed the Proposition 14 aiming to block the “fair housing” section from having any force. However, this made minorities very angry, because they considered it an injustice through a “Jim Crow” type of law.⁴³

2.2 The Civil Rights Movement

The race riot in Detroit, Michigan is claimed to be the worst of all, taking place on July 23, 1967. This riot was a reaction to an incident involving police brutality, but the fundamental cause was a shortage of adequate housing, poor education facilities, over-oppressive police force and last but not least, high unemployment. The first incident happened in the night in a bar called the “Blind Pig” and ended up with eighty-seven arrests, which led to looting and burning buildings. Then the violence spread to other parts of the city. To stop the riot, all the possible means were established, such as a curfew, closing the businesses down restriction of alcohol, but nothing helped. Representative John Conyers jumped on his car and shouted, “We’re with you! But please! This is not the way to do things! Please go back to your homes!” However, it

⁴² “July’ 64,” Independent Lens, accessed February 24, 2016.
<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/july64/timeline.html>.

⁴³ Suereth, *Ferguson: America’s Breaking Point*, 93-4.

did not bring any improvement either. George Romney, the Governor of Michigan, asked for a help of the 8,000 national guardsmen, 360 police officers, 4,700 U.S. Army Paratroopers and 800 state troopers. However, the numbers were not very comforting: forty-three people died, 7,200 arrested and 1,189 injured.⁴⁴

After that, the whites wanted to leave the city as soon as possible. In 1967, as many as 60,000 white Americans left Detroit. One year later, other 80,000 looking for safety in the white suburbs joined them. Martin Luther King protested against the situation in the 1950s and 1960s. He was trying to support the African Americans to stand up for equal rights, but on the other hand, he frightened the whites. In his speech, in May 5, 1966, he tried residents to imagine, what the visitors from the outer space would think about their actions, “They would observe that for death planning we spend billions to create engines and strategies for war, millions to prevent death by disease and other causes that we spend paltry sums for population planning. Even though its spontaneous growth is an urgent threat to life on our planet ... our planet is inhabited by a race of insane men whose future is bleak and uncertain.”⁴⁵

King represented a powerful force in the Civil Rights Movement. In 1963, he gave his famous speech “I have a dream” at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C., where more than 250,000 people were listening, how he gives his opinions about peaceful civil disobedience and a suggestion of one of his aides. He stated, “There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, ‘When will you be satisfied?’ We can never be satisfied, as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horror of police brutality. Our children are stripped of their adulthood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating, ‘For Whites Only’. As long as the Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and the Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. Even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. That one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed, ‘that all men are created equal’. That one day the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. That one day even the state of Mississippi will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. That our little

⁴⁴ Tabitha C. Wang, “Detroit Race Riot (1967),” Black Past, accessed February 24, 2016, <http://www.blackpast.org/aah/detroit-race-riot-1967>.

⁴⁵ Suereth, Ferguson: *America’s Breaking Point*, 96-97.

children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”⁴⁶

The gathering, where he spoke was the largest one in Washington, D.C.’s history. He became the Civil Rights leader and claimed that government should pay \$50 billion to compensate the harm made on the African Americans. He was silenced by the assassination in Memphis, Tennessee before the biggest civil rights event of his career. The plan was, it will take place in 1968 in Washington, D.C., called “The Poor People’s Campaign”, but he was shot into his jaw before he could reveal some important facts about race relations in America. He was aware of the danger that was aiming at him. In his speech called “I have been to the Mountaintop”, he claimed, “And then I got to Memphis and some began to say the threats, or talk about the threats that were out. What would happen to me from some of our sick white brothers? We have some difficult days ahead, but it does not matter with me now. I would like to live a long life, but I am not concerned about that now. I am happy tonight. I am not worried about anything. I am not fearing any man.”⁴⁷

Other Civil Rights leaders tried to continue in his mission, but none got as much support as Martin Luther King. After his assassination, in more than 110 cities, the riots burst out. These riots were the worst acts of widespread civil disobedience that country had ever seen. Although the riots helped to promote the public attention, they left many communities poor with businesses relocated to the safer neighborhoods, leaving the decay behind their backs.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Rev. Martin Luther King, “I Have a Dream...,” Archives, (Speech by the Rev. Martin Luther King At the “March on Washington,” 1963), 3-6, <https://www.archives.gov/press/exhibits/dream-speech.pdf>.

⁴⁷ “Martin Luther King, Jr.: I’ve Been to the Mountaintop,” American Rhetoric, (Mason Temple, Memphis, Tennessee, April 3, 1968), accessed February 24, 2016, <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkivebeentothemountaintop.htm>.

⁴⁸ “Martin Luther King Jr. Assassination,” History, accessed July 12, 2016, <http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/martin-luther-king-jr-assassination>.

2.2.1 The Downtown Settlement

Picture 1. Downtown Los Angeles



Source: Picture from Patricia Berman, “DLANC Selects 4 new members. Alameda East Business Seat to Be Filled at June 11, 2013 Town Hall,” Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council, May 28, 2013, <http://www.dlanc.org/news/dlanc-selects-4-new-members-one-be-filled-june-11-2013-town-hall-0>.

The date of the first phase ranges from 1890 to 1900, when the African Americans gathered in the downtown area around the “Brick Block”, located near property owned by an African American pioneer Bidy Mason on San Pedro Street. Bidy was born a slave but she achieved financial success. She sued her master for a freedom, invested in real estate on Spring Street, which earned her a lot of money and became well-known philanthropist in this area. Soon, the businesses began to expand around. It began in 1888 with Frank Blackburn’s coffee and chophouse, followed by G. W. Hawkins’ furniture store, Clisby and Henderson’s grocery as well as J. R. Walker’s restaurant with Ramsey’s barbershop with hotel-restaurant owned by A. J. Jones. Because of the first phase spreading to the Northern and Western cities, the race enterprises accounted for a way of strengthening the economy and pride. The community pushed southward and hit Skid Row at 5th Street, aiming to grow their community away from “drunks”

paradise”, spreading to Central Avenue, which became the center of African Americans in Los Angeles.⁴⁹

2.2.2 Central Avenue until 1928

The second phase began around 1900 and lasted for twenty years between 8th and 20th Streets. This phase witnessed full flowering of black community life. Central Avenue was referred to as “Black belt of the city”. It was previously inhabited by the Anglos, Mexicans, Asians and Europeans and was divided into two broad sections: the Westside and the Eastside. The former one was the place of the wealthy whites, while the later one was for the poor and ethnically different with Central Avenue belonging to this group. The Eastside was a broad area of Los Angeles representing everything East of Main Street. Because it appeared as racially open, it led to the feeling that L.A. was an open city for the blacks, characterized as “the golden age”. However, outside this area, they met with resistance. Neighborhood like Florence was inaccessible for the blacks and if the whites caught them there, they faced verbal and physical harassment.⁵⁰

The blacks soon started to settle around Central Avenue with their businesses and institutions. Expanding southwards, it bordered by San Pedro Street to the West and Alameda Street to the East, constituting a racial boundary line. Central Avenue was long before inhabited by the Europeans, Asians, Mexicans and Anglos with their small business around 1900, but as late as the 1920s, less than twenty percent of Central Avenue was inhabited the African Americans. They lived in peace next to other minorities such as the Japanese, Jews, Italians, Chinese and Koreans.⁵¹

The diversity reduced the sense of social isolation and the blacks intentionally claimed this area as their own community place, with numerous businesses as well as churches. One of the executives, Sidney P. Dones, opened his company at 8th Street and Central offering real estate, legal services and insurance. Later on, others followed such as Murray Pocket Billiard Emporium and Cigar Stand, Robinson’s Empress Ice Cream Parlor, Rose’s Variety Store. In 1916, the Booker T. Washington Building at 10th Street and Central was opened by Dones and the Southern Hotel together with the Angelus

⁴⁹ African American History Month, “Historic Resources Associated with African Americans in Los Angeles,” National Park Service, accessed February 23, 2016, http://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/afam/2010/afam_los_angeles.htm.

⁵⁰ Walter C. Rucker and James N. Upton, eds., *Encyclopedia of American Race Riots*, (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2007), 372.

⁵¹ “Historic Resources Associated with African Americans in Los Angeles,” African American History Month.

Theater was built. Two years later, the blacks owned 185 businesses and still others appeared, like two black-owned newspapers *The California Eagle* and *The New Age*. By the late 1920s, Central Avenue and 41st Street were homes for the African Americans with the Lincoln Theater at 23rd Street, the Second Baptist Church at 24th Street, the Colored YAMCA at 28th Street as well as Elks Hall at 33rd Street, the important structures, which represented the growth of this community.⁵²

To own a house meant a lot for the African Americans. It is connected with the era of Reconstruction, when owning a property was associated with freedom. Later on, it symbolized hard work. Maybe the most important factor was the economic independence. Suburban life signified fresh air, thick gardens, open spaces and silence. In 1910, as many as forty percent owned a property, nice houses, which according to W.E.B. Du Bois, “Represented the most beautiful housed group of colored people in the United States”.⁵³ Central Avenue cannot be considered a “ghetto” until the 1920s, because even though the blacks dominated the area, it does not change the fact they coexisted with other racial and ethnic groups and could freely move, contrary to Cleveland, Chicago or New York, where they faced segregation. It was a black pride and boosting of businesses that played a more important role in L.A. than elsewhere. Nevertheless, with 1920, a turning point came in the terms of the intensification of racial segregation practices as the population rose with settlement spreading southward, but stopping at Slauson Avenue and families trying to exceed the line met violent resistance. The South was not the only one, as the Eastern and the Western borders of Alameda and San Pedro Streets were determined as well.⁵⁴

2.2.3 Central Avenue from 1928 until 1950

In 1928, the Somerville Hotel was opened, which was very significant event, since the hotel was built by John Somerville for the NAACP. Their mission was to ensure the educational, political, social and economic equality of rights and to eliminate racial discrimination. The hotel served for the African Americans in segregated L.A. and was considered the nicest black hotel in the nation with many important celebrities, staying

⁵² Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje and Eddie S. Meadows, eds., *California Soul: Music of African Americans in the West (Music of the African Diaspora)*, (California: University of California Press, 1998), 79-82.

⁵³ Kenneth L. Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland, 1870-1930*, (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 42-43.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

or performing there such as Louis Armstrong, Bessie Smith, Langston Hughes and W. E. B. Du Bois.⁵⁵

Other three important buildings decorated the area, the Somerset Hotel, the Hudson-Liddell Building and the Golden State Mutual Insurance Building. This southward shift was the fastest one not only due to the businesses, but also because of the change of the place for manufacture with over one hundred industries located there. Mostly the whites owned housing and as early as in the mid-1920, the area showed a sign of decline. Nevertheless, there was a rise of newcomers during the 1930s, counting as many as 17,500 blacks and over the next ten years, 25,000 followed. They lived comfortably in this area, because of the fact that the Mexicans and Filipinos were sent back into their lands and some Japanese returned to Japan. The blacks constituted sixty percent of the population between 1930 and 1940 with mixed classes. They were buying properties around Central Avenue forming a boulevard by 4th Street to the North and Slauson Avenue to the South and San Pedro and Alameda Streets to the West and the East.⁵⁶

By the 1940s, Watts became predominantly an African-American community. The period is considered the true “Great Migration” during the World War II and the migration reached extraordinary levels with more than 140,000 blacks coming. They represented a diverse group regarding culture, class, politics and religion, changing the character of the community. During the war years, 50,000 newcomers settled in and around Avenue, however the boundaries were unbreakable with Alameda to the East and Broadway to the West and Slauson to the South. With more arrivals, they became more visible, provoking the whites. Yet the area had its good block, ranked as one of the America’s best ten cities for the African Americans. However, they faced shortage of accommodation, which caused that many newcomers settled in Little Tokyo, known as Bronzeville, previously occupied by the Japanese, who were sent to the internment camps in 1942. About 70,000 blacks lived there during the war even though the accommodation had a capacity only of 30,000. The blacks owned jazz clubs like Shepp’s Playhouse and Club Finale and when the Japanese came back from the war, they found themselves in the overcrowded black settlements.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Historic Places, “Dunbar Hotel,” Los Angeles Conservancy, accessed February 24, 2016, <https://www.laconservancy.org/locations/dunbar-hotel>.

⁵⁶ “Historic Resources Associated with African Americans in Los Angeles,” 9.

⁵⁷ “Bronzeville: Little Tokyo, Los Angeles,” Bronzeville, accessed February 24, 2016, <http://bronzeville-la.ltsc.org/>.

2.2.4 Other Settlements

Considering historical development, Watts owes its initial growth to the railroads constructed by the Mexicans. Those employed by Pacific Electric usually settled there, because it was for them more convenient than the transportation. Meanwhile, the African Americans decided to stay as well, because Watts offered cheap housing. Until World War II, the residents divided into the Mexicans and African Americans, lured by the vision of labor. The population in Watts and South Central Avenue has risen to 650,000 in 1965. The reasons for the settlement varied, some moved in because of the jobs, others due to their personal choice and some sub-standard areas turned into desirable neighborhoods. As the war ended, the African Americans were fired and many of the industrial plants closed. By the 1950s, North-South Harbor Freeway was constructed, which replaced the street-level rail lines and formed a barrier between Watts to the East and the West including South Central.⁵⁸

Watts was similar to Harlem, where most businesses were run by the owners, who however did not live in the community. Compared to South Central, which was referred to as “High Harlem”, reaching its boom in the 1920s. These could proudly spend their time in an active jazz scene, churches and community organizations. With the opening of suburban construction for the whites, the defense line among Slauson Avenue broke down and by the 1960s, the African Americans and some poor whites remained in South Central and Watts, the Mexicans stayed east of the downtown. The Latinos started to move into Watts and South Central, which disturbed initial predominance of the blacks.⁵⁹

There appeared to be four main settlements on the Eastside. The Furlong Tract situated between 50th and 55th Streets, Alameda and Long Beach Avenue. This area was developed by the Irish farmer James Furlong. There, the Furlong tract’s 51st Street School was built in 1910 as the first African-American school in Los Angeles. Unfortunately, it was destroyed by fire, but rebuilt as the Holmes Avenue Elementary School. Watts is definitely one of the most important areas known as the “Mudtown”, which attracted the poor class of Southern black migrants. However, few famous African Americans lived there such as Chico Hamilton or Tom Bradley. Watts was incorporated in 1907 and was joined to L.A. in 1926. By the 1940s, Watts was thirty-five percent black and by the 1950s, it became all black. Boyle Heights and the West

⁵⁸ Rucker and Upton, *Encyclopedia of American Race Riots*, 371.

⁵⁹ Abu-Lughod, *Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles*, 203-204.

Temple were other settlements. From 1900 until 1950, the population comprised of the Jews, Japanese, Mexicans, Russian Molokans, Armenians, African Americans and Italians. However, the wealthy whites began to settle and bought out most of the blacks.⁶⁰

In 1923 and 1924, the African Americans also settled in the Westside. West Jefferson and West Adams became most favorite asylums. However, during the expansion, they caused fears among the whites, who were fighting back by expensive housing, thus only the wealthier blacks could afford it. Some whites preferred the Japanese, claiming they are neater and cleaner, do not bother, but others preferred the blacks, who according to them take care of their own business, have nice homes and leave the whites alone. The area that was most exclusive was the “Sugar Hill”, which was originally an asylum for the prosperous whites. In 1938 however, the blacks got across the boundary, when Norman Houston bought a house there, followed by Louise Beavers, Hattie McDaniels, J. A. Somerville, the executive Horace Clark and activist Betty Hilli.⁶¹

2.2.5 Westward and Southward Movement

The 1950s meant a transition from multiethnic and multiracial Eastside to almost all black South Central. The middle class blacks moved out of Central Avenue, heading to the West and the South, due to the now cancelled restrictions. The blacks were welcomed at work, had economic means and legal rights to move, where they find a better housing. However, everything had its advantages and disadvantages. Even though they won the Civil Rights struggles and improved the conditions, it had a depleting effect on Central Avenue community. The settlement, referred to as the “South Central”, became increasingly black between 1940 and 1970 with boundaries of Exposition and Jefferson in the North, Alameda in the East, Rosecrans in the South and Crenshaw in the West. Within this area, there were the black neighborhoods of Avalon, South Vermont and Watts as well as unincorporated black communities of Westmont, Florence and Willowbrook. This expansion was a process of resistance of the whites, who reacted with violence.⁶²

⁶⁰ Allen John Scott, *The City: Los Angeles and Urban Theory at the End of the Twentieth Century*, (University of California Press, 1998), 342-3.

⁶¹ Scott Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press: 2010), 59.

⁶² Scott, *The City: Los Angeles and Urban Theory at the End of the Twentieth Century*, 445-8.

In this period, the blacks represented both professionals as well as blue-collar workers. Together with the income from their working wives, they could afford the neighborhood. Compared to Central Avenue, this area constituted low crime with good homes and decent schools. Even though West Adams did not have any clear center like Central Avenue, number of businesses and community institutions moved there. These included Golden State Mutual Life Insurance building as well as First AME Church. By the late 1950s, blacks moved further West to Leimert Park, Inglewood and Baldwin Hills. Crenshaw became a significant commercial center, where an organization called the 'Crenshaw Neighbors' was established, promoting a stable integration.⁶³

Campton is another example of the settlement area in the South, which began as a community for blue-collar families. This area was all white for decades. However, the blacks crossed the line in the 1950s by moving into the Western area. The expansion faced with violent resistance from the whites, but by the 1960s, this area was forty percent black. For many African Americans, Campton was a symbol of postwar suburban dream, which finally changed as the community's resources decayed with the influx of the Latinos. Pacoima was another settlement far from South L.A., having origins as a suburb for the workers on the Southern Pacific railroad. Its population included the blacks, Mexicans as well as Japanese. During the World War II, as many as 2,000 blacks moved in, many were defense workers with another 6,000 coming in the 1950s. Pacoima became a place of modern ranch homes, close to the recreational areas and represented a short commute to the downtown. A small number settled elsewhere by the 1960s such as Pasadena, Monrovia, Santa Monica, Pomona and Altadena however the blacks did not meet with much acceptance, compared to the Mexicans and Asians. Furthermore, the blacks suffered the highest levels of segregation in L.A. In the same year, Central Avenue became all black for the first time, due to the Asians and Latinos moving into other neighborhoods. Nevertheless, as the black professionals and executives were looking for homes elsewhere, they took their churches, clubs and other institutions with themselves. What remained behind was a poor area, representing black Los Angeles.⁶⁴

⁶³ "Historic Resources Associated with African Americans in Los Angeles," 9–11.

⁶⁴ Josh Kun and Laura Pulido, *Black and Brown in Los Angeles: Beyond Conflict and Coalition*, (California: University of California Press, 2014), 36-9.

2.3 Outburst of the Riot

Around 7:00 p.m., on the first day of the riots, a white motorcycle officer, Lee Minikus, pulled over a car driven by a young African American man on the corner of 116th and Avalon for speeding. Twenty-one-year-old driver Marquette Frye admitted he drank vodka with orange juice, but did a sobriety test. Meanwhile, his brother Ronald ran out of the car and told in the neighborhood what was happening, therefore a crowd of 200 to 300 people gathered. Tired of his mother's remarks, Frye vented his anger on the officer, who called up backup. Finally, the struggle ended around 7:25 p.m., with the arrests of two brothers and their mother. Ronald was jabbed in his stomach and Marquette cut on his forehead by the baton as well as jabbed. As they were leaving however, someone spat at the police, who entered the crowd and arrested a suspected woman Joyce Ann Gaines. She struggled against the arrest with the help of her friend Jimmy Ticey, but both ended up in the police car. Meanwhile, the crowd divided into small groups and ran into streets to find officer Minikus. Around 8:00 p.m., violence burst out and disturbance extended into eight blocks. To manage the situation, the Los Angeles Police Department (L. A. P. D.) sent one hundred officers, however the white color of the officers' skin did not help the situation at all. People threw bricks and bottles, but later on started to set the automobiles on fire.⁶⁵

Police thought they stabilized the situation, however by 1:00 a.m., the crowd extended to 1,500, including not only men, but also women as well as children. At 4:00 a.m., the situation calmed down, but at 2:00 p.m., a meeting of community leaders in Athens Park was called to discuss the troubles of the residents, aiming to prevent any further revolts. The officers were asked to retire from the problematic areas and were replaced by African-American officers, but Deputy Chief of Police, Roger Murdock, refused the proposal. By 6:00 p.m., 2,000 people gathered at Athens Parks and rioting began again. Molotov cocktails became widely used weapon. After midnight, rebellious residents gathered in front of Police Headquarters, but the deputy sheriffs subjugated them. Five hours later, the National Guard was requested for 1,000 troops. For a whole day, people were rioting, which led to the inability of the L. A. P. D. and the Sheriff's Department to control the spreading violence. In the evening, 2,000 national guardsmen were on their way, but were deployed as late as 10:00 p.m.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Rucker and Upton, *Encyclopedia of American Race Riots*, 373.

⁶⁶ Abu-Lughod, *Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles*, 205.

Picture 2. “Hands Up, Don’t Shoot,” LA Riot in Watts, 1965



Source: Picture from Dorothy Charles Banks, “Hands Up, Don’t Shoot, LA Riot in Watts, 1965,” Ferguson, Missouri 2014 Started Many Decades Ago, <http://dcbanks.blogspot.cz/2014/12/ferguson-missouri-2014-started-many.html>.

The Friday night was undoubtedly the worst one even with the arrival of the California National Guard. The first victim of that night occurred between 6:00 and 7:00 p.m., when one of the African-American onlookers was killed during an exchange of gunfire. Still, the violence spread beyond Watts to a wide area of Southeast L.A. The authorities were unable to stop the riots even with joining their forces. In the early morning, on Saturday 14, one hundred engine companies were fighting fires in various areas however, one of the firefighters was crushed to the death because of a fallen wall and a deputy sheriff was killed, when a weapon of another deputy was discharged by a mistake. The only solution for the authorities was to change the tactics. Lt. Gov. Anderson performed on a television to impose a curfew, which meant that it was against the law for a person to be on the streets after 8:00 p.m. It looked like the curfew was the right thing to do since the streets, with the exception of some little outbreaks, were quiet. The peace continued until Sunday, therefore the curfew was cancelled on Tuesday, August 16, meaning the race riot is over. According to the McCone Commission Report, the results of rioting are thirty-four deaths and 1,032 injuries. Among the injured ones were 773 civilians, 136 firefighters, 90 police officers, ten national guardsmen, twenty-three individuals from other government agencies. L. A. Coroner considered twenty-six deaths as justifiable homicides, five as homicides and one as accidental. In the case of the twenty-six deaths, sixteen of them were caused by the L. A. P. D. and seven by the National Guard. During the rioting, property

damage was estimated at \$40 million. As many as 600 buildings were looted or burned with a complete devastation of 200 houses. The number of rioters, who were arrested, is estimated at 3,438 individuals.⁶⁷

On August 24, John A. McCone from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) appointed a commission, whose aim was to investigate the cause of the riot. They issued a report four months later, on December 2, cautioning that it was only a beginning of a future violence, but gave a list of recommendations, which included large-scale job training, literacy program as well as placement program. All this made means of processing complaints against the police better. Much remained as it was, but much changed such as a new health center, a shopping center, a post office, a clothing store. However, the situation got worse concerning the unemployment, resulting in more than one-third of the families living below the poverty line with the highest infant mortality rate as well as incidence of infectious disease.⁶⁸

2.4 Comparison of the L.A. Riots of 1965 and 1992

The Watts riot cannot be understood as the beginning or the end of the interracial violence, because Los Angeles has been full of racial and ethnic tensions ever since the day of its foundation. In 1781, the Spanish settlers of a small colony named Los Angeles were the Indians, blacks, mulattos and mestizos. In the following fifty years, few whites joined and controlled the export of hides and tallow. The California Gold Rush in the 1840s attracted the Mexicans and Anglos, however it became a reason for America to conquer California and by 1846, U. S. declared a war on Mexico. The first racial riot took place on Calle de los Negros in 1871, where the victims were the Chinese, who became together with the Mexicans subjects of police brutality and racial profiling with the highest rates of arrests. The situation did not improve, because as soon as the Great Depression burst out, they were placed on the trains and sent to their countries.⁶⁹

The riots were mostly directed by the whites towards the “minorities”, so these were “race riots” in the original sense. In this case, the minority is the term for a category of lesser power with unequal rights and social as well as economic inferiority. The opposite, the majority, were the whites in the 1850s, however they

⁶⁷ Rucker and Upton, *Encyclopedia of American Race Riots*, 375-6.

⁶⁸ Myrna Oliver, “John A. McCone, 89; Helped Establish CIA,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 16, 1991, accessed July 27, 2016, http://articles.latimes.com/1991-02-16/news/mn-1097_1_john-alex-mccone.

⁶⁹ Abu-Lughod, *Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles*, 203-204.

lowered to the minority status as well. In Watts, there have been two major revolts. The race riot of 1965 is considered the worst of the riots that broke out in more than one hundred cities with one following in 1992 in the West of Watts. These two riots were very similar to each other, because they took place within the same area, where the socially weaker minorities lived. The form of the violence consisted of looting and battles with motorists or authorities. The rioters vent their anger on businesses run by outsiders.⁷⁰

The victims of the riots differed, while in 1965 the victims were the Jews, in 1992 they were the Koreans. Attitudes towards the authorities were also different. In 1965, the whites supported them, but the blacks felt they are ineffective. They felt unfavorable towards the white Mayor and the police chief. In 1992 however, all ethnic groups considered the L. A. P. D. ineffective. To compare the participation in both riots, the participants in 1965 were almost all black. In 1992, on the other hand, over half of the arrested rioters were Latinos. In 1965, the dominant view in each ethnic group was that it was a black protest, while in 1992 only the blacks saw it mainly as a protest. What the whites, Hispanics and Asians saw, was looting and the crime.⁷¹

They differ also in the origin of the rioters, whereas in 1965, many of the African Americans were newcomers, in 1992, they were old settlers. The race riot in 1992 expanded more widely, causing the “curfew zone” was extended to almost the entire city, which exceeded the rioting of 1965. Because it was bigger, more protesters were arrested, more precisely 16,291 and 2,383 were injured, fifty-two killed. It took 20,000 L. A. P. D. and seven military forces to subdue those, who were revolting. The riot of 1992 was more noteworthy and sympathetic since Rodney King’s case was broadcasted throughout the world and as many as sixty percent of the whites disagreed with the verdict of the Jury, while the prior incident in 1965 was forgotten quicker. For the blacks the verdict represented the fact that nothing had changed in twenty-seven years. In both cases, the aim was to attract the attention of authorities towards their needs, but they were not successful.⁷²

⁷⁰ Jill Edy, *Troubled Past: New and the Collective Memory of Social Unrest*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 167-74.

⁷¹ Peter Kivisto and Georganne Rundblad, eds., *Multiculturalism in the United States: Current Issues, Contemporary Voices*, 1st ed., (California: Pine Forge Press, 2000), 87-8.

⁷² Abu-Lughod, *Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles*, 237-8.

2.5 Aftermath of the Riot

In August 2005, organizations representatives together with community residents met to plan the Watts Renaissance, seeking to consider the solutions to poverty. The residents hosted the Watts Summer Festival, which was according to them the oldest African-American cultural festival in the United States. The idea of festival was came up with during the summer, following the race riot and integrated two years later with the aim of redirecting the energies of the community into the positive solutions by developing the pride, awareness of the culture as well as political conscious. The festival was a memorial to the thirty-four victims of 1965. This event attracted a worldwide attention as many African Americans participated in, including James Brown, Nancy Wilson, Stevie Wonder, Barry White, Charles Wright and the Staple Singers. The result of this festival was a donation from the city, state, county and federal officials.⁷³

The L.A. County Commission on Human Relations helped organize an anti-riot coalition that suggested the festival as a solution against the persisting hostility and pro-riot activism. On the other hand, the pro-riot part considered the riots as a legitimate form of the black protest, claiming that the Watts Riots are the calls to revolution, destroying white domination. The vision of a festival prevailed, but violence, gangs and the police eventually destroyed the hope. The event was thriving between 1966 and 1973 however declined one year later. Between 1975 and 1979, the festival was cancelled until the order could be restored. In the 1980s, the support was not as strong as before. The distinction between the festival and the rioting was for many confusing. *The Los Angeles Times* named the festival “A Summer Carnival of Riot” and *The Times* considered the disturbance not as a race riot, but a violent youthful liveliness. In 1966, as many as 35,000 people visited the festival with the crime rate being the lowest since 1947.⁷⁴

Nevertheless, the festival had also its opponents, who were nobody else than the L. A. P. D. At that time, several blacks organized self-help programs, indicating new directions like Action Committee on the Urban Crisis, Afro-American Cultural Association, Community Pride and Sons of Watts. Radicalized adults set into the streets, preaching a pro-riot ideology as a black protest. The sponsors of the festival

⁷³ Rucker and Upton, *Encyclopedia of American Race Riots*, 375-6.

⁷⁴ Bruce M. Tyler, “The Rise and Decline of the Watts Summer Festival, 1965 to 1986,” 61-81, accessed July 27, 2016, <https://journals.ku.edu/index.php/amerstud/article/viewFile/2902/2861>.

contradicted the violence and supported the view that the event was an effective anti-riot measure. However, in 1968, the festival ended in violence with three dead people and forty-one injured. The Crisis Coalition was called up to fight against the police brutality, takings its complaints to the L.A. City Council, where the black leaders threatened the war between the police and the blacks would become tenser if the police did not stop their activity. This event finally became a place for having words of gangs with police and radicals with anti-radicals. The Watts Summer Festival broke down because of many groups as well as individuals, who wanted to use this event for their own purposes. The law-enforcement agencies opposed the event, criminals and gangs disrupted the festival, fighting among themselves, trading in drugs, attacking participants, with a terrorist threat from Isaac Racism in 1974.⁷⁵

2.6 The Riot in the Mainstream

The Race riot in Watts has been mentioned in several movies, novels or songs such as the one from Frank Zappa called “Trouble Every Day”.

“Trouble Every Day”

By Frank Zappa

Well I'm about to get sick,
 From watchin' my TV.
 I mean to say that every day,
 Is just another rotten mess,
 And when it's gonna change, my friend
 Is anybody's guess.
 So I'm watchin' and I'm waitin',
 Hopin' for the best.
 Even think I'll go to prayin',
 every time I hear 'em sayin',
 That there's no way to delay.
 That trouble comin' every day,
 Wednesday I watched the riot,
 Seen the cops out on the street,
 Watched 'em throwin' rocks and stuff,
 And chokin' in the heat.
 Seen the smoke and fire,
 And the market burnin' down.
 Hey, you know something people?
 I'm not black,

Well, I seen the fires burnin',
 And the local people turnin'
 On the merchants and the shops,
 And it's the same across the nation.
 Black and white discrimination.
 All that mass stupidity,
 That seems to grow more every day.
 Each time you hear some nitwit say.
 He wants to go and do you in,
 because the color of your skin.
 Just don't appeal to him.
 (No matter if it's black or white),
 Because he's out for blood tonight.
 But I bet there won't be many live
 To see it really end,
 'Cause the fire in the street
 Ain't like the fire in the heart.
 Don't you know that this could start
 On any street in any town,
 Our country isn't free,

⁷⁵ James Maycock, “War within War,” *The Guardian*, September 15, 2001, accessed July 27, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2001/sep/15/weekend7.weekend3>.

But there's a whole lots a times, And the law refuses to see.⁷⁶
I wish I could say I'm not white.

In the song, Frank Zappa sings about how is he sick of watching the news, because every day is the same and no one knows when it is going to change. He is waiting, hoping the situation will calm down, thinking about praying. On Wednesday, he was watching the rioting and saw the police officers' behavior towards the rioters. The singer informs others he is not black, but sometimes regrets he is white. He claims that fire in the street is not like fire in the heart and let everyone know that this could happen in any street in any town. The seriousness of the situation is emphasized by its comparison to the issue of racism in the whole nation. Frank Zappa considers the racists stupid people, whose silliness grows every day. In the last passage he stresses, a few survivors will live to see the end of the rioting, as many more lose their lives.

“In the Heat of the Summer”
By Philip Ochs

<p>In the heat of the summer, when the pavements were burning, The soul of a city was ravaged in the night, After the city sun was sinkin.' Now no one knows how it started, why the windows were shattered. But deep in the dark, someone set the spark, And then it no longer mattered. Oh, where are the white silver tongues, Who forgot to listen to the warnings? On and On come the angry, No longer following reason. And all the stores were the target now, where just the other day they were buyin. Drunk with the memory of the ghetto.</p>	<p>Drunk with the lure of the looting, and the memory of the uniforms, shoving with their sticks, Asking, “Are you looking for trouble?” “No, no, no,” moaned the mayor. “It's not the way of the order.” Baricades sadly were risin. Bricks were heavily flyin, and the loudspeaker drowned like a whisperin' sound, when compared to the angered emotions, and when the fury was over, and the Shame was replacing the anger. So wrong, but we've been down so long, and we had to make somebody listen.⁷⁷</p>
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Philip Ochs also mentions the riot in his song “In the Heat of the Summer”, where he describes, how the city is devastated in the summer night, but no one knows how it happened, why suddenly there is a fighting on the streets? Why are people hidden at their homes? No one cares about the cause anymore, because the most important thing

⁷⁶ Frank Zappa, “Trouble Every Day Lyrics,” (video) posted April 9, 2010, accessed March 24, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=girnJH7tvpM>.

⁷⁷ Phil Ochs, “In the Heat of the Summer,” (video) posted March 26, 2012, accessed March 24, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLhT8s6w7rU>.

is to survive. People are angry, do not listen to the orders, they do not listen to their reason and target stores, where they had bought the goods yesterday. He satirizes the police officers, who are asking if the rioters are looking for trouble and describes, how the barricades are raised and bricks are flying in the air. He stresses the silence of the loudspeaker, compared to the strong angered emotions of the rioters. Ochs then concludes his song, stating that shame replaced the anger in the morning and all realized they went too far, but their goal was to make someone listen.

“Who in the Hell Is Tom Jones”

By Charles Bukowski

I was shackled with a 24 year old girl from
New York City for two weeks
About the time of the garbage strike out there,
And one night my 34 year old woman arrived
And she said, “I want to see my rival.”
She did and then she said,
“O, you're a cute little thing!”
Next I knew there was a screech of wildcats
Such screaming and scratching,
wounded animal moans, blood and piss.
I was drunk and in my shorts.
I tried to separate them and fell,
Wrenched my knee. Then they were through
the screen door and down the walk
And out into the street.

Squad cars full of cops arrived.
A police helicopter circled overhead.
I stood in the bathroom
And grinned in the mirror.
It's not often at the age of 55
That such splendid things occur.
Better than the Watts riots.
The 34 year old came back in.
She had pissed all over herself
And her clothing was torn
And she was followed by 2 cops
Who wanted to know why.
Pulling up my shorts
I tried to explain.⁷⁸

Charles Bukowski is among those poets, who incorporated the riot into their poems. His poem is called “Who in the Hell Is Tom Jones,” describing a man, having an affair with a twenty-four-year-old girl during the rioting. Nevertheless, his wife finds it out and wants to see her rival. After they meet, they fight. The drunk, unfaithful man compares them to the wild animals with their screaming and scratching. He tries to stop them but fails and they appear in the middle of the riot. The man remembers a lot of police officers coming with helicopter circling around, but the man thinks about the affair at the age of fifty-five and points out it is still better than the Watts riot. Bukowski concludes the poem by the arrival of his beaten wife followed by two police officers, who want to know what happened.

⁷⁸ Charles Bukowski Poems, “Who in the Hell is Tom Jones?” Famous Poets and Poems, accessed March 24, 2016, http://famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/charles_bukowski/poems/13236.

2.7 Analysis of the Novel *Little Scarlet* by Walter Mosley

Walter Mosley is the author of the mystery series about the character Easy Rawlins. Nevertheless, he rejects to be labeled as a writer of mystery fiction since he has written also plays, screenplays, science fiction, short fiction and essays. In an interview in 1997, he said, “If I had to make my whole life writing mysteries, it would not be as bad as going to work every day, but it would be kind of awful. I am very interested in lot of different things. And I am not interested in being defined by the genre.”⁷⁹

He has received a Grammy Award and the Anisfield-Wolf Award. Born in Los Angeles, he currently lives in New York. Mosley is the author of fifty books and was designated a Grand Master by the MWA as a first writer of color to be recognized since the establishment of the award in 1955. The author explores the issues of race such as prejudice, main protagonist experiences in L.A. streets during the final days of the race riot in 1965.⁸⁰

The novel can be defined as a mystery detective novel. Nevertheless, as Agustín Reyes Torres thinks, “the genre might be mystery, but the underlying questions are moral and ethical, even existential”.⁸¹ Nowadays, the detective genre is known thanks to the novels of Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett, but it originated much earlier, in Europe in the 1880s. Growing urban centers witnessed rise in crime as well as literacy rates and these two created a market for “crime fiction”.⁸² The detective story began with Edgar Allan Poe in the nineteenth century, who introduced the tales of reasoning, beginning with “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” and “The Purloined Letter”. Except for Poe’s detective character C. Auguste Dupin, another contributed to the development of the genre. It was Arthur Conan Doyle, who created the world’s most famous sleuth Sherlock Holmes.⁸³

The author claims he owns a lot to Albert Camus, especially to his masterpiece *The Stranger* from 1942, where he gained an inspiration for his main character Easy.

⁷⁹ Charles E. Wilson Jr., *Walter Mosley: A Critical Companion (Critical Companions to Popular Contemporary Writers)*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2003), 19.

⁸⁰ Michael Berry, “More ‘Easy’ Detective Work,” Walter Mosley, accessed July 3, 2016, <http://www.waltermosley.com/more-easy-detective-work/>.

⁸¹ Agustín Reyes Torres, “Easy Rawlins’s Identity: a Unique African American Male Detective,” (Universitat de Valencia, 2011), accessed August 13, 2016, 33, https://www.academia.edu/3164499/Easy_Rawlins_Identity_a_Unique_African_American_Male_Detective.

⁸² Andrew Knox, “Good Cop, Black Cop: Comparing Easy Rawlins with the Standard Gumshoe Detective Archetype,” *Scribd*, September 25, 2010, accessed August 14, 2016, 1-2, <https://www.scribd.com/document/38137553/Little-Scarlet-Essay>.

⁸³ Charles E. Wilson Jr., *Walter Mosley: A Critical Companion*, 20-4.

Just as other writers, Walter also uses existentialism to explore the issue of race.⁸⁴ He is using the genre to explore the African-American experience in L.A. since forties until sixties, showing the inequality is not the matter of an individual but the entire community. The author said the theme of his novels was “the black migration from the Deep South to Los Angeles and this blue-collar existential hero moving through time.”⁸⁵ He is however not the only writer, who has chosen this genre. Together with Barbara Neely, Anthony Gar Haywood, Eleanor Taylor Bland, Valerie Wilson Wesley and Nichelle Tramble, Walter Mosley is trying to push this genre into foreground. A lot of African-American and ethnic detective fiction have been published lately however the reasons for its flourishing remain a mystery. Paula Woods, one of the pioneering scholars of detective fiction, argued about the usage of black detective protagonists, she claims, “It lets readers know that African Americans are not just the victims of perpetrators of crimes but are also those who try to correct the balance that murder upsets.”⁸⁶ She claims the reason for the high number of writers dealing with this genre is, “maybe as an outgrowth of the hunger Americans of all colors have developed for black writing. African American mystery writers have also begun to claim the spotlight.”⁸⁷

Published in 2005, the novel belongs to the African-American literary tradition, since all the major and minor protagonists are African Americans, who are trying to cope with racism and violence and who consider family and home two most important values in their community. In terms of grammar, it is also easily recognizable through imperfect syntax and usage of slang or vulgarism, which belong to the language of ghetto.

The narrator is the first person major protagonist, African American Ezekiel Rawlins, who is asked to help to the Police Department, led by Gerald Jordan and detective Suggs. The problem they face is a murder of a young black woman Nola Payne, who is thought to be murdered by a white man, whom she invited to her apartment after he was being beaten on the streets. This type of mystery is called a

⁸⁴ Richard Gray, *A History of American Literature*, 2nd ed., (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 233.

⁸⁵ Ben Greenman, “Covering Mosley,” *The New Yorker*, January 19, 2004, accessed August 14, 2016, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2004/01/19/covering-mosley>.

⁸⁶ Daylanne K. English, “The Modern in the Postmodern: Walter Mosley, Barbara Neely, and the Politics of Contemporary African-American Detective Fiction,” in *American Literary History*, Volume 18, Nr. 4, Winter 2006, 772-96, accessed August 13, 2016, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/206645>.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

“whodunit”, which is a murder with an unknown culprit.⁸⁸ The police does not want the public to know, therefore they hold the case in secret and since “Easy” has his detective office and knows the L.A. streets very well, he is the right person. Ezekiel agrees without realizing, how much there is at the stake, such as his life and protection of his beloved family.⁸⁹

The novel is the ninth one in the series about Easy. This time the novel begins by Easy, looking at the damage on the streets, after the riot. He describes what he sees, “It had been like that for the past five days: me holding myself in check while South Los Angeles went up in the flames of a race riot; while stores were looted and snipers fired and while men, women, and children cried, “Burn, baby, burn” and “Get whitey”.”⁹⁰

Easy experiences the whole situation subjectively. He shows his stance towards the riot, “I had resisted it all through the riots: the angry voice in my heart that urged me to go out and fight after all of the hangings I had seen, after all of the times I had been called nigger and all of the doors that had been slammed in my face. I spent my early life at the back of buses and in the segregated balconies at theaters. I had been arrested for walking in the wrong part of town and threatened for looking a man in the eye.”⁹¹

In the third chapter, Ezekiel sees a dead body of Nola for the first time, which starts off his investigation. He interrogates her aunt Miss Landry, who claims White man killed her niece and shot her in the eye after she had died. During the investigation, Easy creates a friendly relationship with this lonely woman as she starts to fade and loses her mind under sedatives. Ezekiel sets out at Grape Street, the place of the murder, with a letter in his pocket written by Jordan, which should protect him against getting into the prison for being a black man, searching ghettos of L.A.⁹²

In the seventh chapter, Ezekiel introduces his family, his girlfriend Bonnie and their two children, who are not their own, but they take care of them as if they were their blood. The eldest child is a son called Jesus and a younger daughter Feather. Even though Ezekiel is not a believer, he called his son Jesus and thinks about God during the riots, such as while introducing himself, he says, “Ezekiel, named after the Bible.”⁹³

⁸⁸ David Bell and Gerald Porter, *Riots in Literature*, ed., 1st. ed. (UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 145.

⁸⁹ Walter Mosley, *Little Scarlet*, (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2005), 3-9.

⁹⁰ Mosley, *Little Scarlet*, 5.

⁹¹ Mosley, *Little Scarlet*, 17.

⁹² Mosley, *Little Scarlet*, 15-21.

⁹³ Mosley, *Little Scarlet*, 244.

Throughout the novel, the riots are fore-grounded, but there are other problems mentioned as well, such as the Vietnam War, the World War II and Germany. He even compares the race riot in Watts to the war in Germany, “It looked like Germany did when we marched in at the end of the war.”⁹⁴

His first witness is Bobby Grant, who saw the beating of the white men before hurrying into Nola’s apartment. While searching for him, he comes across a beautiful woman named Juanda, who attracts him more than he wanted to. His second stop was at the victim’s house, where he found out her address book is missing. Ezekiel does not know where to go next so he stops to see his friend Ginny Wright at the Cox bar, where he meets another woman, who attracts him, called Benita, a helpless woman searching for her lover, Ezekiel’s friend “Mouse”.⁹⁵

In the sanatorium, Miss Landry says Nola had a boyfriend called Toby McDaniels and the man, whom Nola saved, was Pete. Ezekiel went on travelling with his friend Mouse, who would take him to see ‘Loverboy,’ Nate Shelby, to get the papers from the Pete’s car. After that, Ezekiel goes to the sanatorium to see Miss Landry, who was meanwhile, put under sedatives and taken care of by a nurse Tina Monroe. Tina goes with Ezekiel for a coffee and reveals him when Geneva Landry was twelve she was raped by a black man on their family farm.⁹⁶

Ezekiel goes to the house of Peter Rhone, finding out his name from the car papers. Peter appears to be white, beaten man, in love with Nola, who after helping him called her friend to drive him home. Ezekiel believed he did not kill her, but did not know what to say to the L. A. P. D. He makes a date with Juanda, who gives him a name, of the man, who took Peter away from Nola. The man is Brother Piedmont. Piedmont tells him he saw another man there, a homeless, whose “home” Ezekiel went searching and found the gun, which Nola was shot with. Easy knows the name of the killer: Harold. While discussing it with Suggs, the detective tells him he found about twenty cases of murdered black women, whose deaths he connects with Harold.⁹⁷

At home, Ezekiel has a visit, a friend Jackson Blue, who advises him to look for a man called Bill, who is a preacher, and everyone, who is lost, comes to his shelter. Pretending to be one of those, Ezekiel gets all the names, containing the first name Harold and leaves. He remembers a name of Harold’s aunt Jocelyn. Meanwhile his

⁹⁴ Mosley, *Little Scarlet*, 53-60.

⁹⁵ Mosley, *Little Scarlet*, 66.

⁹⁶ Mosley, *Little Scarlet*, 116-122.

⁹⁷ Mosley, *Little Scarlet*, 128-35.

friend Jackson calls he knows, where Harold is, in Watts Community Men's Shelter. Ezekiel tries to ask for Harold Brown, because of the six surnames he had at disposal, this one appeared the most common. Nevertheless, he was mistaken, because this Harold beats him almost to death, therefore he is forced to run away to his friend Mama Jo, who takes care of him.⁹⁸

On the way home, police officers arrest him and take him to the police station, where Johnson announces he has forty-eight hours to solve the case with the help of Suggs. They try another Harold with a surname Ostenberg, and visit his aunt, who however refuses to speak. Ezekiel, searching the block by himself, finds one woman, willing to help him. She tells him about Harold's childhood. His father left, mother did not want to take care of him since he was black and she pretended to be white. She made her maid pretend she is his real mother, but she did not manage the pressure and left. Her name was Honey May. When Harold was twelve-year-old, he left too and became a derelict. When back at his office, Ezekiel calls Miss Ostenberg and blackmails her to come into his office otherwise he will tell everyone the truth.⁹⁹

During the visit at Honey May's place, he learnt a place, where Harold often wanders about. Ezekiel gives the picture of Harold he got from Honey to Suggs and goes to his office, when suddenly someone starts to fire from the gun and hit him. After waking up in the hospital, he runs away and calls Jackson's girlfriend Jewelle to drive him to Ostenberg' house. Something was happening at their place, since there are many police cars in front of the house coming for Ezekiel and Jewelle soon after their arrival. However, thanks to his letter from the L. A. P. D., they release them, but before that, he finds out Jocelyn is killed and Harold hurt. Meanwhile, Suggs calls and announces Nola's aunt Geneva died after falling into comma. Ezekiel receives a message from Honey, who asks him to come into her apartment. Since she sounds urgent, he goes there and sees a dead body of Harold, who is shot. Nevertheless, the examination reveals the bullet was not the main reason he died. He was also poisoned. Ezekiel knew it was Honey, who wanted to make things right. After visiting Jackson, Ezekiel learns he was given a license for his detective activities.¹⁰⁰

Towards the end of the novel, Ezekiel comments on the rioting, "The effects of the riots were still in evidence. Small knots of people moved around listlessly from corner

⁹⁸ Mosley, *Little Scarlet*, 222-8.

⁹⁹ Mosley, *Little Scarlet*, 242-8.

¹⁰⁰ Mosley, *Little Scarlet*, 302-6.

to corner. The police would break them up whenever they began to congregate. I saw one man getting arrested for refusing to move on.”¹⁰¹

The journalist John Orr, one of the reviewers of the novel, fought with the amount of rage the novel contains at the beginning, but did not stop reading and considers it beautiful. In his own words, “A great novel, significant addition to the story of America, a marvelous bit of writing that will make it a study book for students of literature”.¹⁰²

Kevin Burton Smith, a Montreal editor, critic, author, essayist, columnist and book reviewer for *January Magazine*, considers Walter Mosley belong to the few, trying to draw people’s attention to the racial issue. He considers his latest novel “The most powerful and most potent work yet”.¹⁰³ Smith highlights Mosley’s decision to build his career on making fun of society’s evils in both his fiction and non-fiction, trying to reveal the truth by scapegoating race, class and gender. He does not consider him a boring writer at all but one of America’s better storytellers. Together with other two crime novels of Robert B. Parker’s *Double Play* from 2005 and George Pelecano’s *Hard Revolution* from 2001, *Little Scarlet* from 2008 completes the trio, dealing with issues of black and white racism in America. Smith considers the novel “Provocative and challenging, bristling with intelligence and emotion, a fine recapitulation of Mosley’s favorite themes”.¹⁰⁴ The critic praises the novel does not lack personal depth as well as narrative range. During racial and social unrest, the readers experience a passionate, bold and angry look at America’s latest past. Smith stresses the great choice of the main character Easy, who is a real man, flawed by prejudices, biases, weaknesses, but is perceptive and self-aware. With reference to the racial discrimination, Smith states Mosley rejects finger pointing, but gives a little light into the darkness, admitting nothing is right and we all have to find the justice. The author stresses we should care about race, implying, “We ought never to let our awareness of the things that tear us apart override our concern for those things that bind us together”.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Mosley, *Little Scarlet*, 252.

¹⁰² John Orr, “Sea Change in an Ocean of Anger for Walter Mosley’s Easy Rawlins,” *Triviana*, July 2004, accessed August 13, 2016, <http://triviana.com/books/mystery/mosley3.htm>.

¹⁰³ Kevin Burton Smith, “There’s a Riot (or Two) Goin’ on ...” in *January Magazine*, accessed August 13, 2016, <http://www.januarymagazine.com/crfiction/littlescarlet.html>.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

Walter Mosley, celebrated by his biggest high-profile fan, the former president Bill Clinton, reveals the names of several well-known writers, who influenced him as well. One of them is Du Bois with *The Souls of Black Folk* from 1903, with whom he shares a strong conviction, concerning the importance of the education for the African Americans.¹⁰⁶ Apart from Du Bois, the playwright August Wilson also influenced Mosley. Both have a great deal in common, especially the idea of showing black characters, ordinary men, sitting in a room talking over their issues.¹⁰⁷ Considering the main character, Mosley modeled his Easy Rawlins after Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* from 1952.

Daylanne K. English in her essay quotes Stephen Soitos, who in one of the earliest book-length studies of African-American detective fiction states, "Black detective authors have gained a measure of respectability and recognition ... as readership and acceptance of black detectives become more diverse".¹⁰⁸ She stresses Helen Lock goes further, arguing, "The interest can be at least partially explained by its relevance to the realities, concerns and history – indeed the entire epistemology – of the African-American experience".¹⁰⁹

William Plummer in his thesis discusses the expansion of American mythology in Walter Mosley's Easy Rawlins series. According to him, the series provide an excellent chance to explore the America's mythology since it is unique in giving the reader an opportunity to analyze the contemporary, urban and African-American male perspective. He analyzes three kinds of myths, the American Adam, the American Frontier, and the American Dream. The protagonist Easy represents the American Adam because of his innocence and conflicts with society.¹¹⁰ Mosley focuses on the urban frontier of Watts, its violent nature, connected to poverty. The physical environment, where the narrative takes place is the most important. It is a Wild West and the frontier is a result of the conflict between the society and an individual. Easy faces a conflict between the call of the urban wilderness and the pursuit of the American

¹⁰⁶ Agustín Reyes Torres, "Easy Rawlins's Identity: a Unique African American Male Detective."

¹⁰⁷ Logan Hill, "Free Radical," *New York*, accessed August 14, 2016, <http://nymag.com/nymetro/arts/books/14455/>.

¹⁰⁸ Daylanne K. English, "The Modern in the Postmodern: Walter Mosley, Barbara Neely, and the Politics of Contemporary African-American Detective Fiction," *Oxford Journals*, volume 18, issue 4, (Winter 2006): 772-796, accessed August 14, 2016, https://works.bepress.com/daylanne_english/6/.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ William Plummer, "The Expansion of American Mythology in Walter Mosley's Easy Rawlins Series," (thesis, Georgetown University, 2010), 4-5, accessed August 13, 2016, <https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/553372/plummerWilliam.pdf;sequence>.

Dream, rooted in a hard work. Plummer in his essay stresses black residents cannot get ahead even if they work harder than white ones.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Plummer, "The Expansion of American Mythology in Walter Mosley's Easy Rawlins Series," 39-105

3 RACE RIOT IN LOS ANGELES IN 1992

No one would expect that the City of Angeles would become a place, where the deadliest race riot since the Civil War was going to take place. Mayor Tom Bradley was sure the city together with Southern California awaited a great destiny, as it was very popular among the people, who were still coming in the vision of the American Dream.¹¹²

Cullen in *The American Dream* (2003) claims, people have used different means to identify themselves over the course of human history, the means were blood, religion, language, geography, or shared history. Yet the U.S. was a creation of the collective imagination, inspired by the existence of allegedly New World. The American Dream became something everyone could understand. Nevertheless, Cullen stresses there is not the only one Dream but several others. He furthermore deals with this topic with reference to the Puritan enterprise, The Declaration of Independence, upward mobility, the dream of equality, the dream of home ownership and the coast.¹¹³

Cullen quotes Boorstin, who claims, “America has been a land of dreams. A land where the aspirations of people from countries cluttered with rich, cumbersome, aristocratic, ideological pasts can reach for what once seemed unattainable”.¹¹⁴ Cullen furthermore deals with the question of money, which is the dream for the majority. He states, “Sometimes better and richer and fuller is defined in terms of money – in the contemporary United States, one could almost believe this is the only definition – but there are others, a religious transformation, a political reform, an educational attainment, a sexual expression: the list is endless”.¹¹⁵

According to Ryan Gattis and Rosanna Boscawen, “L.A. is a Western town, which started out as a Wild West town, with even Wyatt Earp living there, who was one of the most celebrated legends of the American West. The sheriffs considered themselves cowboys. They still wear brown with big hats, their guns on their hips”.¹¹⁶

Los Angeles consisted mostly of the whites, when the Mayor was a child, however the situation changed by the 1990s, becoming a ‘salad bowl’ of cultures,

¹¹² Lou Cannon, *Official Negligence: How Rodney King and the Riots Changed Los Angeles and the LAPD*, (NY: Basic Books, 1999), 3.

¹¹³ Jim Cullen, *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation*, (NY: Oxford University Press, 2003), 3-10.

¹¹⁴ Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Image: Or, What Happened to the American Dream*, (NY: Atheneum, 1962), 61.

¹¹⁵ Cullen, *The American Dream*, 7.

¹¹⁶ Ryan Gattis and Rosanna Boscawen, “All Involved: a Novel of the 1992 L.A. Riots,” Los Angeles, 1992, <http://www.lariotsallinvolved.com/>.

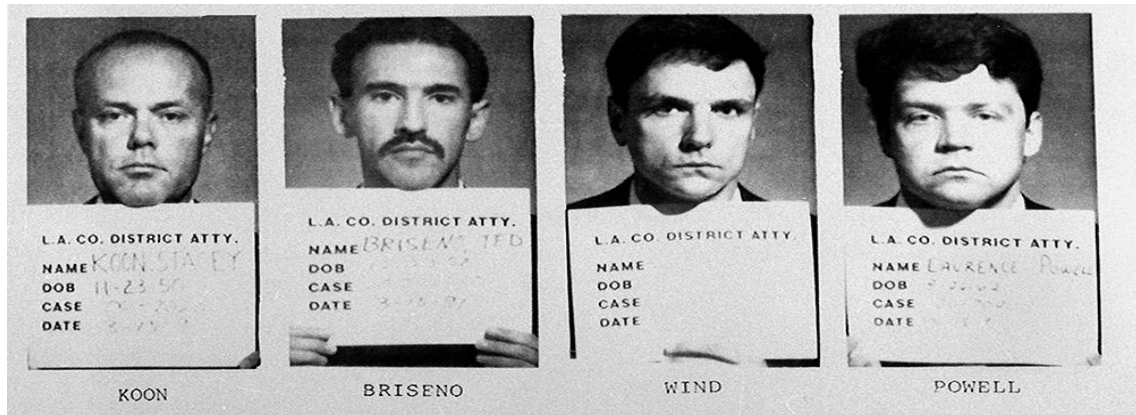
according to which the newly arrived immigrants retain some of the unique aspects of their culture and these characteristics are visible within the American society like ingredients in the salad. In this salad bowl, 106 languages were spoken, one fifth of the inhabitants were born elsewhere, almost half of the public school children spoke Spanish at home and the Roman Catholic Church was the most influential institution.¹¹⁷

The Mayor considered the city harmonious, where the Latinos, Asians, blacks as well as whites could co-operate to enrich the region, but this would be impossible, considering the competition for the jobs. He claimed, “Los Angeles has touched the imagination of America. She has become an idea, a longing in men’ breasts. She is the symbol of a new civilization, a new hope, another try”.¹¹⁸

3.1 The Trial of Rodney King

Los Angeles riot is also known as Rodney King’s riot, because it was the verdict of his case, which caused the following six days of rioting. The rebellion started on April 29, 1992 as a reaction against declaring four police department officers innocent in the case of the police brutality.¹¹⁹

Picture 3. The Four Police Officers Who Stood Trial



Source: Picture from Ryan Gattis and Rosanna Boscauwen, “All Involved: a Novel of the 1992 L.A. Riots,” Los Angeles, 1992, <http://www.lariotsallinvolved.com/>.

Note: From left to right: Sgt. Stacey C. Koon, Officer Theodore J. Briseno, Officer Timothy E. Wind and Officer Laurence Powell.

¹¹⁷ Joshua DeLorenzo, “Social Theories of Immigration,” New York State High School Regents Exam Prep Center, accessed February 11, 2016, <http://www.regentsprep.org/regents/ushisgov/themes/immigration/theories.htm>. 2000.

¹¹⁸ Cannon, *Official Negligence*, 4.

¹¹⁹ Madison Gray, “The L.A. Riots: 15 Years after Rodney King,” *Time*, accessed July 7, 2015, http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007/la_riot/article/0,28804,1614117_1614084_1614512,00.html.

Because the Jury was transferred into the white and richer area, the composition looked as follows: ten white men, one Hispanic and one Asian, who spent only one day dealing with the accusation of the officers. They were charged with an assault, using a deadly weapon, filing a false report and using excessive force. The Jury did not reveal how they reached the verdict, just saying, “They (the police officers) were afraid he (Rodney King) was going to run or even attack them”.¹²⁰

What led to the accident in Rodney King’s case was the police, who tried to pull him over in Lake View Terrace in the San Fernando Valley, because his speed was reaching 110 mph. According to the police, he resisted the arrest and was under the influence of drugs, which turned out to be a false accusation. This misunderstanding led to the beating, which lasted for about fifteen minutes and King ended up having skull fractures, broken bones as well as teeth and permanent brain damage. The officers were unaware of the fact George Holliday was monitoring them and soon the tape appeared on TV, which caused that the people became horrified. Everyone had known about the police brutality and racial profiling for some time, but this was for the first time someone had a proof. After the tape was played nationwide, it captured much of the U.S. public attention and soon became an international media sensation. One of the police officers, Sgt. Koon, took a part in the beating and shooting with an electronic dart gun, however over the next year, the police officers were acquitted. Koon tried to blame the media in his book *Presumed Guilty: The Tragedy of Rodney King Affair*.¹²¹

The riot is often referred to as media-driven, since when people woke up the other day they thought there would be no more of the unrest, because the police would be in their duty. However, after turning their TVs on, they found out it is a “free-for-all,” which led to the conclusion, if there was no police officer present why would they not join in?¹²²

¹²⁰ Seth Mydans, “The Police Verdict; Los Angeles Policemen Acquitted in Taped Beating,” *The New York Times*, April 30, 1992, accessed July 7, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/books/98/02/08/home/rodney-verdict.html>.

¹²¹ Gray, “The L.A. Riots: 15 Years after Rodney King,” *Time*.

¹²² Gattis and Boscawen, “All Involved: a Novel of the 1992 L.A. Riots,”

Picture 4. Rodney King Being Beaten by the Police Officers



Source: Picture from Daily Mail Reporter, “Police Sergeant Involved in Rodney King Beating Now Works as Luxury Limousine Driver,” *Mail Online*, December 11, 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2246193/Stacey-Koon-LAPD-sergeant-involved-Rodney-King-beating-works-luxury-limousine-driver.html>.

3.2 Outbreak of the Riot

The riot broke in the evening after the public learnt the verdict. The speed was incredibly fast with people venting their anger by attacking the liquor stores and fast-food places, targeting white Americans. The helicopter news crews were monitoring the whole situation. Inhabitants of mixed origins united against the police. The evidence shows that of the first 5,000 arrests, more than fifty percent were the Latinos, only ten percent the whites and the rest were the African Americans. Only a while after the verdict, the L. A. P. D. received a report that a young man had thrown a brick at a passing truck in Hyde Park and others began to join in the attacks on passing motorists. Several hundred demonstrators, many of them white, gathered at Parker Center and asked for Chief Daryl Gates’ resignation. Because they did not live to see the response, they began to break the windows. However, the police soon calmed them down. By the evening, the riots took place all over the city from the Santa Monica Freeway to Pico Boulevard. The Mayor declared a local state of emergency and Governor Pete Wilson ordered the National Guard to activate 2,000 troops.¹²³

¹²³ Rucker and Upton, *Encyclopedia of American Race Riots*, 381.

Apart from the beating of Rodney King, others factor contributed to the riots, such as the 1980's recession that caused high unemployment as well as racial tensions between the white Americans, African Americans, Hispanics and Asians. On the first day of the riot, 22 of April, a white truck driver Reginald Denny, unaware of the verdict, stopped at the traffic light, but was put out of his car by Damian Williams and beaten. Reginald survived, thanks to the black neighbors, who guided him to Freeman Memorial Hospital, where he later recovered after brain surgery. The helicopter again monitored the whole incident.¹²⁴

Media focused mainly on this case throughout the riots, unaware or not interested in the story of an immigrant from Guatemala, Fidel Lopez, who suffered just as Reginald Denny. He was put out of his car at the corner of Florence and Normandie and kicked. One of the attackers smashed a car stereo on Lopez's skull, poured him by the gasoline and sprayed a black color on his body.¹²⁵

Except for Rodney King's case, which is the best-known one, there appears to be another story of injustice, which however ends up with a death. On March 16, only thirteen days after Rodney King's beating, Latasha Harlins, a fifteen-year old black girl, entered a liquor store on Figueroa in order to buy some orange juice. When she put it into her bag and wanted to pay, a runner of the store named Soon Ja Du, accused her of stealing and tried to take the bag from her. Latasha reacted by hitting the owner and when she was about to leave, the Korean woman shot her in the back of her head.¹²⁶

The police were sent away on the first day of the riots, and the other day was a complete mess with South Los Angeles being in the flames. President George Bush gave a speech against the rioting saying, "Anarchy would not be tolerated. I would use whatever force is necessary to restore order".¹²⁷ The President ordered the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate the possibility of a charge against the L. A. P. D. officers. The Governor Pete Wilson asked for federal assistance, which however was not available until the following day. The most significant event of the third day was Rodney King's speech, "People, I just want to say, can we all get along? We'll get our justice. They've won the battle, but they haven't won the war. We are all stuck here for

¹²⁴ "LA Riots," South Central History.

¹²⁵ Steve Lopez, "The Forgotten Victim from Florence and Normandie," *Los Angeles Crimes*, May 6, 2012, accessed October 8, 2015, <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/may/06/local/la-me-0506-lopez-riot-20120506>.

¹²⁶ Rucker and Upton, *Encyclopedia of American Race Riots*, 444-5.

¹²⁷ Taritrott, "Rodney King Beating and Riots – GNN Documentary" (video), March 6, 2011, accessed April 7, 2016, 16. 39, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tWhYmb1sANM>.

a while. Let's try to work it out.”¹²⁸ As many as 1,000 inhabitants gathered for a peace rally at Willshire and Western in the Koreatown after a long night of the shooting in the neighborhood. Even though Rodney King made the speech, the riots were spreading all over the city.¹²⁹

On the fourth day, first 6,000 looters were going to be charged, but the process did not start earlier than in the afternoon. Meanwhile a demonstration took place in the Koreatown with 30,000 activists. On the fifth day, the National Guard entered and started to mitigate the situation. Because it began to calm down, the harbor freeway was re-opened. On the last day, people started from the zero and went back to their work. However, the statistics stated more than 40,000 people lost their jobs. From May 2 through May 4, the U.S. Army and Marines sent 4,000 soldiers to repress the crowd and calm reappeared. Surprisingly, the Department of Justice announced on May 2 that Rodney King's case would be investigated again. Although the Mayor declared the end of rioting on May 4, the infrequent violence continued for several days. The institutions such as banks, schools and businesses re-opened, but the State Guard stayed until May 14 together with soldiers, who left not sooner than on May 27. Thousands of people participated in law breaking, looting and murders. The riot ended with 60 dead people, 10,904 arrests and more than 1,000 buildings burned down with estimated damage of \$1 billion.¹³⁰

3.3 Attitudes of the Institutions

An establishment of the Christopher Commission took place that found racial profiling and excessive use of force as a norm in the L. A. P. D., which led to a temporary armistice between the two largest street gangs, the Crips and the Bloods, which were fighting with each other before the riot. Raymond Washington, a high school student, formed the Crips in 1969. His aim was to create an organization in response to an increasing level of police harassment of black community. The acronym Crips stands for 'Community Resources for Independent People', which is quite similar in style to the Black Panther Party formed in 1966 by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale in Oakland, California. The Panthers executed the self-defense of the minority communities against the U.S. government. The party was one of the first organizations

¹²⁸ Taritrott, "Rodney King Beating and Riots – GNN Documentary" (video), March 6, 2011, accessed April 7, 2016, 21.13, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tWhYmb1sANM>.

¹²⁹ Gattis and Boscawen, "All Involved: a Novel of the 1992 L.A. Riots,"

¹³⁰ Ryan Gattis, *All Involved*, 2nd ed., (New York: Ecco Press, 2015), 1.

in the history known for its struggle for ethnic minority and working class emancipation. They tried to achieve social and political equality across gender and color.¹³¹

The Crips had a problematic relationship with the police, arrested as often as possible, but convicted on poor evidence. The obsession of the police departments with black community is supported by the fact that by 1971, two million African Americans were arrested each year. It was almost impossible for men to find a job with a report. Because of the high unemployment, problems with security of families began. When people could not eat or clothe their children, they stole. The illegal economies have become the only means of survival and unfortunately, youth found a power within the gangs, because the bond between the members was so strong that they would die or kill for each other.¹³²

The L. A. P. D. has gained a bad reputation under their Chief Daryl Gates. The officers were seen as gang-bangers with badges. In the Major's Gen. James D. Delk words, "The police were also telling gang members that the National Guard was a much bigger gang. They felt those were terms the gang members could relate to".¹³³ There were about "2,600 citizen allegations of excessive force against L. A. P. D. officers between 1986 and 1991 as well as 1,400 officers being investigated on a suspicion of using such force, less than one percent was prosecuted".¹³⁴

Units were created in the law-enforcement departments, carrying out gang intelligence, an investigation, a suppression and prevention functions. However, the activities did not mean only negative tactics. For example, the Los Angeles Sheriff Department's Operation Safe Streets (OSS) handled the situation very efficiently, because they worked in the same community, knowing the members of the gangs very well. According to Gen. James D. Delk, "Race had nothing to do with it, it was based on background. The problems had bubbling for a long time. After Soon Ja Du got off

¹³¹ Brian Baggins, "History of the Black Panther Party," *Marxists Internet Archive*, accessed September 20, 2015, <https://www.marxists.org/history/usa/workers/black-panthers/>.

¹³² Frank Stoltze, "Forget the LA Riots – Historic 1992 Watts Gang Truce Was the Big News," *Southern California Public Radio*, April 28, 2012, accessed April 8, 2016, <http://www.scpr.org/news/2012/04/28/32221/forget-la-riots-1992-gang-truce-was-big-news/>.

¹³³ Gattis, *All Involved*, 262.

¹³⁴ Rolf Loeber and David P. Farrington, *Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders: Risk Factors and Successful Interventions*, (California: Sage Publications, 1999), 293-4.

on probation. Koreatown made itself an armed camp and took law enforcement into their own hands".¹³⁵

Between 1989 and 1993, the officers killed as many as 217 people. On November 19, 1991, Henry Peco was killed in Imperial Courts Housing Project in Watts. A month later, Dewayne Holmes and his family organized the Henry Peco Justice Committee and people went into the streets. The truce started two weeks before the riot and members of the gangs participated as well. The aim was to end the brutality and to create jobs and work programs. On April 26, everyone could benefit from a "free passage" through Watts. However, in October, the truce leader was sentenced to seven years for stealing \$10 dollar. His mother set out on a mission with Geri Silva from the Equal Rights Congress and a small group of mothers. They established the Los Angeles Chapter of Mothers ROC, which included one hundred members in the Inland Valley, California, Chicago, Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri. It gained media attention and led to the help of organizations such as Community in Support of the Truce (CIST), Coalition against Police Abuse (CAPA) or Black Awareness Community Development Organization (BADCO).¹³⁶

On April 1, earlier that year, the Commission led by Warren Christopher evaluated the performance of the L. A. P. D. and found out that there were 8,274 false accusations from the complaints by citizens made against the officers. Almost twenty-five percent of all dealt with the excessive force. The recession of the 1980's Reaganomics hit the lower class areas of Los Angeles very hard. The area of South Central was preoccupied with negative attitudes towards the African American workers. This led to a joblessness rate around fifty percent and cutting of a housing budget about the same number. Healthcare became unaffordable and the infant mortality rate had a poorer rating than in Africa or Asia. The tensions became unavoidable, since demographics had changed. Black population uncontrollably rose during and after World War II. By the 1990s, the number reached incredible 993,000. Although they began to move into Inglewood, Hawthorne and Paramount, the Hispanics moved in and together with the Koreans, bought stores formerly owned by the African Americans. The Asian population more than doubled and the Hispanic population increased as well.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Gray, "The L.A. Riots: 15 Years after Rodney King," *Time*.

¹³⁶ Panther Members, "Los Angeles Gangs: The Bloods and the Crips," *Socialist Alternative*, <http://www.socialistalternative.org/panther-black-rebellion/los-angeles-gangs-bloods-crips/>.

¹³⁷ Rucker and Upton, *Encyclopedia of American Race Riots*, 378.

3.4 Aftermath of the Riot

After the riot, people demanded a new trial for the officers, who had been earlier declared innocent and the public awaited the verdict nervously for seven days, but finally lived to see the Federal Jury's decision on April 17, 1993. The Jury convinced Sgt. Stacey Koon and the officer Laurence Powell for violating Rodney King's civil rights and sentenced them to thirty months in prison, but acquitted Timothy Wind and Theodore Briseno.¹³⁸

The plan after the rioting sounded easy, to rebuild the L.A., but surprisingly the plan met with the criticism from the beginning. The discontent was aimed at the Chairman Peter Ueberroth, since some people had a feeling that a white executive was not a perfect choice, so the co-chairs were added, including a black man and a Latino. People also demanded to enlarge the 'Rebuild L.A.'s mission to include the health, education as well as housing. The organization expanded to include ninety-four people. John Mack, who headed the Urban Leagues of Los Angeles up until 2005, claimed it was successful for twelve years, where they placed 3,000 or more members of the community, who were previously unemployed or underemployed. The only thing they had to do to qualify was to be able to read at the eighth grade level, which appeared to be a huge problem. He added that the program did not end because of its own failure, but because of the failure of the school system. Less than two years after the riots, the Northridge earthquake caused damage of \$20 billion with 20,000 residents left homeless, therefore the efforts to rebuild the city were unfulfilled.¹³⁹

Twenty years after the riot, the unemployment rate climbed up to eleven percent, which is even higher than in 1992. After the unrest, the blacks and the Latinos in South Central and Southeast Los Angeles suffered from poverty and unemployment. In South Central, thirty-one percent lived below the poverty level. According to Los Angeles Urban League in 2011, the unemployment rate for the African Americans was more than sixteen percent, for the Latinos it was twelve percent and for the whites almost nine percent. With reference to the education, the blacks are far behind the whites, because of the higher rates of dropouts and lower college completion rates. Violence and joblessness helped drive the blacks from South L.A. Today the black population is about thirty percent. On the other hand, there is a sharp increase of the Latino

¹³⁸ Rucker and Upton, *Encyclopedia of American Race Riots*, 383 – 384.

¹³⁹ Ina Jaffe, "After L.A. Riots, a Failed Effort for a Broken City," *NPR*, April 29, 2012, accessed July 15, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/2012/04/29/151608071/after-l-a-riots-an-effort-to-rebuild-a-broken-city>.

immigrants, who constitute more than sixty percent. Vicky Lindsey, the founder of the project ‘Cry No More’, focusing on victims of violence, said, “Things have improved between law-enforcement and the community, but she added some police officers have the same mentality as in 1992”.¹⁴⁰

According to the New America Media, a multimedia ethnic news agency, the impact on the Korean community was ignored. This minority lost about 3,000 businesses during the rioting. Therefore, the L.A. riot had an intense psychological, economic and ideological impact on them and was often referred to as a “turning point”. Almost forty percent of the Korean-Americans considered leaving the city and many lost their belief in the “American Dream”.¹⁴¹

The riot is by some scholars regarded as a rebellion or a revolutionary activity. Besides, Los Angeles was a hybrid social revolt with three major dimensions. It was a revolutionary protest typical of African-American history, concerning the demands for the equal rights. Secondly, it was a major post-modern riot, a rebellion of not just poor people, but those poor classes in Southern California, who had been most mercilessly affected by the recession. Thirdly, it was an interethnic conflict.¹⁴²

3.5 The Case of the Koreans

After the Korean War, only a small number of the Korean immigrants joined the L.A. community, but the number increased after the U.S. Immigration Law in the same year. Some of them were educated others not, but all were ambitious. They joined in without considering how others receive them. However, they got an employment and by 1990, they owned 350 small stores in South Central. The relations began to be much tenser than in 1965 after the murder of Latasha Harlins. Soon Ja Du was charged with a first-degree murder. The trial took only four days and she was sentenced to a ten-year prison, placed on probation for five years on the condition she will perform 400 hours of the community service and pay a \$500 fine and full compensation for the funeral as well as medical expenses. The black residents were outraged, since they compared this verdict to that “not-guilty-one” of Rodney King. By 1990, as many as 145,000

¹⁴⁰ Thandisizwe Chimurenga, “Twenty Years after L.A. Riots, Change is Hard to Measure,” *The Final Call*, May 7, 2012, accessed July 15, 2016, http://www.finalcall.com/artman/publish/National_News_2/article_8815.shtml.

¹⁴¹ Edward Taehan Chang, “Los Angeles Riots and Korean-African American Conflict,” 305-6, accessed February 17, 2016, <http://space.snu.ac.kr/bitstream/10371/88557/1/10.%20Special%20Address%20%20Los%20Angeles%20Riots%20and%20Korean-African%20American%20Conflict.pdf>.

¹⁴² Rucker and Upton, *Encyclopedia of American Race Riots*, 383 – 384.

Koreans were living in the L.A. County. They lived in the neighborhoods segregated by an income, but not by an ethnicity. The symbolic beginning of the Koreatown was the opening of the Olympic Market in 1971 and by 1980, the district was officially designated the Koreatown by the city. Nevertheless, the Koreatown was different. In 1990, only forty percent of the businesses were owned by this minority and ten percent consisted of the Korean Americans, as the Latinos were the overwhelming majority. The Korean-American community felt betrayed by the L. A. P. D., which abandoned them and protected white-owned stores instead. With a declining Korean's prosperity, the area's reputation also deteriorated, but it was worse in South Central, where the shop owners did not get the compensation to rebuild their shops.¹⁴³

3.6 The Riot in the Mainstream

Just as the L.A. riot in 1965 has been recorded in lot of songs, poems, novels and movies, the riot from 1992 is as well. For example, the song "Hellrazor" from Tupac Shakur (2PAC) is dedicated to Latasha Harlins.

"Hellrazor"
By Tupac Shakur

A young nigga askin questions while other suckers was guessin.
Elementary wasn't meant for me, can't regret it.
I'm headed for the penitentiary, I'm cuttin class.
Tell me Lord can ya feel me?
I keep my finger in the trigger,
cause some nigga tried to kill me
and mama raised a hellraizor, everyday gettin paid.
They come to get ya, it's like a motherfuckin trap,
and they wonder why it's hard bein black.
Dear Lord can ya feel me, gettin major.
Why you let the police beat down niggaz.
God come save the youth.
I'm prayin but my enemies won't go away,
and everywhere I turn I see niggaz burn.
Dear Lord can ya hear me, it's just me
A young nigga tryin to make it on these rough streets
I'm on my knees beggin please come and SAVE ME
Dear Lord if ya hear me, tell me why,
little girl like LaTasha, had to die.
She never got to see the bullet, just heard the shot.
Her little body couldn't take it, it shook and dropped,

¹⁴³ Abu-Lughod, *Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles*, 245-8.

and when I saw it on the news I see busta girl killin 'Tasha,
that's just life in the ghetto, do or die.¹⁴⁴

In the song, Tupac mentions the education at the very first, which even though one of the most important things, was not for him, as the prison awaits him instead. However, he stresses he was smarter than the others since he always asked the questions, while others only guessed. A young teenager, who is trying to survive in a wild ghetto streets, is the narrator. The singer asks the Lord if he can feel him, while he has his fingers on the trigger. He asks him, why can he leave the police officers to beat his friends, how could he let a young girl Latasha died? He mentions she could not see the bullet, since she was shot from behind. He pleases him to forgive him his mistakes and to save the youth, to save the world. In the last sentence, he mentions that it is how it goes, when you are in the ghetto. You have to shoot otherwise you will die.

“Livin’ on the Edge”

By Aerosmith

There's somethin' wrong with the world today.
I don't know what it is.
Something's wrong with our eyes.
We're seein' things in a different way,
and God knows it ain't his.
It shore ain't no surprise.
The light bulb's gettin dim.
There's meltdown in the sky.
If you can judge a wise man,
by the color of his skin,
then mister you're a better man than I.
Tell me what you think about your situation,
complication, aggravation.
Is getting to you.
If chicken little tells you that the sky is fallin,'
even if it wasn't would you still come crawlin,'
back again.
I bet you would my friend.
Something right with the world today,
and everybody knows it's wrong
But we can tell 'em no or we could let it go
But I'd would rather be a hanging on¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ 2PAC, “Hellrazor,” posted November 25, 2015, accessed July 7, 2016,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dx6h3ERSNcA>.

¹⁴⁵ Aerosmith, “Livin’ on the Edge,” posted December 24, 2009, accessed July 7, 2016,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nqcL0mjMjw>.

The famous music band Aerosmith was also inspired by 1992' race riots in their song "Livin' on the Edge," where they stress there is something wrong with the today's world, especially they highlight the fact we see things differently. The song maintains the human eyes are damaged because they judge on the grounds of the color of the skin. Nevertheless, the message the band is trying to cover is more complicated than that. The atmosphere of the song reminds the end of the world, as the light bulb does not shine as it used to or the meltdown appears in the sky. The catastrophe, which is explicitly described in this passage, refers to the contemporary perception of the issue of race and racism, since the situation is worse than it used to be and maybe it could escalate to some misfortune.

"Black Tie White Noise"

By David Bowie

<p>Getting my facts from a Benetton ad, I'm lookin' thru African eyes Lit by the glare of an L.A. fire I've got a face, not just my race. Bang, Bang I've got you babe. Sun comes up and the man goes down. We reach out over race and Then die in the flames, singing "we shall overcome." There'll be some blood no doubt about it, but we'll come thru don't doubt it. I look into your eyes and I know you won't kill me. But I look into your eyes, and I wonder sometimes,</p>	<p>Oh Lord, just let him see me. Lord just let him hear me. Let him call me brother. Let him put his arms around me. Let him put his hands together. Reach over race and hold each other's hands. Walk thru the nite thinking We are the world. I look into your eyes and I know You won't kill me. They'll show us how to break the rules But never how to make the rules Reduce us down to witless punks Facist cries both black and white, who's got the blood who's got the gun.¹⁴⁶</p>
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David Bowie and his wife Iman moved to L.A. after their wedding, but it was during the riots, therefore Bowie recorded a song called "Black Tie White Noise", based on the unrest. In the song, the singer is looking through the African eyes lit by the glare of a fire. He makes an interesting word play with two different meanings of the sentence "when the sun comes up and the man goes down". The first interpretation is the literal one, when the sun is up, the conflicts between the whites and the blacks escalate to such an extent, the victims of the conflict lie on the grounds, hurt or dead. The figurative

¹⁴⁶ "David Bowie, "Black Tie White Noise" (music video), posted February 26, 2009, accessed July 7, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pU7aU71KWr8>.

interpretation is that when the sun is up, people should normally be up as well, which means to be happy and cheerful. This orientational metaphor is here violated since the humankind changes into the wild monsters. It is more reasonable to think that the narrator of the song is a white American since he wishes his African-American friend acknowledges him, calls him brother, which is usually how the blacks address each other. He would like to put his hands around his friend's neck and hold each other hands. The singer mentions that even though there will be blood, he believes the humankind will overcome it.

“L. A. P. D.”
By Offspring

When cops are taking care of business,
I can understand,
But the L.A. story's gone way out of hand.
Their acts of aggression,
they say they're justified,
But it seems an obsession has started
from the inside.
They're shooting anyone,
who even tries to run.
They're shooting little kids with toy guns.
Take it to a jury but they don't give a damn,
Because the one who tells the truth
is always the policeman.
Beat all the niggers.
Beat whoever you see.
Don't need a reason.
(We're) L. A. P. D.

The city of L. A. feels like a prison
helicopters overhead and bullets
whizzing by.
Martial law ain't no solution
Police brutality's just social pollution
They say they're keeping the peace
But I'm not buying it,
because a billy club ain't much of a who
pacifier.
“Protecting your freedom”
Now that's just a lie
It's an excuse for power,
That's more like an alibi.
Law and order doesn't really matter
You take it to a jury,
They'll throw it in your face,
because justice in L.A. comes in a can of
mace.¹⁴⁷

The Offspring's song “L. A. P. D.” is about Rodney King's trial. In the song, the band maintains that usually the police officers can solve the situation efficiently, but concerning the Los Angeles riots, they failed terribly. The singer maintains the officers' behavior is like an obsession, shooting everyone, who is on the street, if it is a child with a toy gun or a person, trying to save his life by running. An interesting reference is made in the sentence, “They're shooting little kids with toy guns”, where the band implicitly alludes to the case of Tamir Rice, a twelve-year-old victim, who was shot by the police officers while playing with a faked gun. They continue, portraying a the true

¹⁴⁷ “The Offspring, “L. A. P. D.,” posted August 19, 2007, accessed July 7, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_4LYZC97hmM.

nature of the Grand Jury, which does not care about the African Americans being beaten by the police officers, because it is always the white authority, who is right. The band describes the activities of the L. A. P. D. in a very provoking way, encouraging the police officers to beat all the niggers since they do not need any reason. The officers believe they are mitigating the situation by using a billy club, but the point is they have the power over the minority and can use it since they are not going to be sentenced. The message the band is trying to make is that nobody cares about you in L.A., when you are black.

3.7 Analysis of the Novel *All Involved* by Ryan Gattis

Ryan Gattis is a novelist born in Illinois. He is a lecturer at Chapman University in Southern California as well as member of L.A. urban art crew UGLAR. The author was in his teen years, growing up in Colorado during the riots. His experience was however only distal with the only chance to accept the portrayal of media. In his own words, these were “The scariest things he seen on the television”.¹⁴⁸

Before the novel *All Involved*, Gattis published *Roo Kickkick & the Big Bad Blimp* and *Kung Fu High School*. However, it was *All Involved: a Novel of the 1992 L.A. Riots*, which won the American Library Association’s Alex Award & the Lire Award for Noir of the Year in France. The novel, published in 2015, is currently translated into eleven languages. He was working on the novel for two and half years, during which he spent some time with a former Latino gang members, nurses, firefighters and other citizens. The phrase – All Involved – is slang for anyone involved in the gang life.¹⁴⁹

When Gattis spoke with the residents of L.A. about the accomplishment of the riots they claimed, “It helped them to understand the city better, its fracture, to know certain types of people. Furthermore, they stressed when a disaster like this happens it is for some reason. They had to find a way for not happening it again, but according to them; it created the unity in an unexpected ways”.¹⁵⁰

This piece of the fiction is the part of both African-American and ethnic literary traditions. Compared to *Little Scarlet*, *All Involved* does not offer only the African-

¹⁴⁸ Gattis and Boscawen, “All Involved: a Novel of the 1992 L.A. Riots.”

¹⁴⁹ Laura Miller, “All Involved by Ryan Gattis Review- Gang-War in Latino LA,” *The Guardian*, May 22, 2015, accessed March 24, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/may/22/all-involved-ryan-gattis-review-gang-war-la>.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

American protagonists, but also the Korean since the riot was in a large measure about them as well as because of the murder of Latasha Harlins by the Korean owner. The novel is written mostly in the ghetto slang since the protagonists belong to the opposite sides of gangs. The author, apart from the issue of racism, deals with the question of multiculturalism, which he portrays as a failure, quoting one of his characters, “You plunk a bunch of people down from all over everywhere, keep them in their corners and don’t let them mix and figure shit out”.¹⁵¹

The novel is set in Los Angeles in Lynwood during the 1992’s riots, following the liberation of the two police officers for the beating of Rodney King. As Mikey, one of the characters explains, “People must think that what happened to Rodney King was isolate, but they don’t know that everybody’s got a Rodney King in his neighborhood, somebody the cops beat like a drum of good or bad reasons. He might not be black, either. He might have brown skin instead”.¹⁵²

Gattis describes the period of lawlessness since the police officers gave up intervening into the riot. The novel is divided into six days and each day tells a story of the three characters. The stories are narrated by a first person, with seventeen narrators in a total. At the first sight, the structure seems rather chaotic however, the further reader gets in the story, the more he understands the link between the characters and their role in the novel. The novel is a one big story about the fighting between two gangs and about protecting their members while killing ‘the others’. As one of those, belonging to the gang of the Blood, talks about Crips, “There’s no other game in Lynwood now, just us and some Crips, but we’re good with them. We have an understanding”.¹⁵³

The first day begins with a violent and brutal murder of Ernesto Vera, who is on his way home from the work, thinking, “My boss is worried what’s happening up, will come down here. He does not say trouble or riots or nothing. He just says, ‘that thing North of here’”,¹⁵⁴ when suddenly some car stops and asks him about his brother, because of not giving them the information they wanted, he is chased, beaten and stabbed to death. Before he dies, he refers to Rodney King, “When I’m passing houses, I only hear TVs on, and all the anchors are talking about is looting and fire and Rodney

¹⁵¹ Leo Robson, “Keeping it Real: All Involved by Ryan Gattis,” *The New States Man*, July 2, 2015, accessed August 11, 2016, <http://www.newstatesman.com/culture/2015/07/keeping-it-real-all-involved-ryan-gattis>.

¹⁵² Gattis, *All Involved*, 348.

¹⁵³ Gattis, *All Involved*, 244.

¹⁵⁴ Gattis, *All Involved*, 4-5.

King and black people and anger”.¹⁵⁵ Ernesto’s brother Lupe learns about the murder and is outraged, he is driving to see the body and finds out there is one local nurse, who tried to save his brother’s life, but was too late. Lupe is planning the revenge by slaughtering almost the whole gang. The day concludes with another murder of Ray Vera, shot by the L. A. P. D., betrayed by his people.¹⁵⁶

The other day reveals, who betrayed Ray, it was his friend José Laredo, known as “Big Fate”, who claims he had to do it to protect his family. José is involved in some illegal businesses and during taking over; he kills Sunny because he gives him false goods. Another character, Antonio Delgado, beats up Cecillia, Momo’s sister. He steals his money and with Molotov Cocktails burns his house, thinking he killed her.¹⁵⁷ The author depicted the scene very precisely, concerning the use of Molotov Cocktails, because these were used as a main weapon, thrown at the police officers while rioting.¹⁵⁸

When Antonio is escaping, the police shoots him, meanwhile the last character, Kim Byung-Hun, narrates her story. This Korean girl witnesses the rioting in the Koreatown. She is driving with her father as well as with two other men. All are armed. They are listening a Korean radio, when she thinks, “Everything has a context. If you understand the context, you understand the cause and the effects that come out of it. So if the riot is an effect, what caused it? Rodney King and the video, of course, but there is something else, a girl named Latasha Harlins”.¹⁵⁹ They appear in the middle of the riot and Kim shoots a black rioter, but the officer arrests her, because she does not have the permission for her weapon. She desperately tries to tell him they should take care of the burning building full of people, but he does not care. In the police car, she says, “This is what injustice feels like”.¹⁶⁰

The third day starts to clear the things out. The character Gloria Rubio is the nurse, who tried to save Ernesto’s life. She is having a night shift, thinking about Ernesto, since she knew him well. She fell in love with a firefighter Anthony Smiljanic, who is going to the hospital, because his colleague was seriously injured by one of the rioters.

¹⁵⁵ Gattis, *All Involved*, 8.

¹⁵⁶ Gattis, *All Involved*, 57-64.

¹⁵⁷ Gattis, *All Involved*, 88-107.

¹⁵⁸ David McCormack and Damien Gayle, “Missouri National Guard Sent into Ferguson after Eighth Night of Violence,” *Daily Mail*, August 18, 2014, accessed April 10, 2016, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2727579/Pictured-The-moment-demonstrator-34-shot-Ferguson-riots-police-fire-teargas-protectors-ANOTHER-night-violence-begins.html>.

¹⁵⁹ Gattis, *All Involved*, 123.

¹⁶⁰ Gattis, *All Involved*, 122-132.

There appears to be one patient, later on recognized as Antonio.¹⁶¹ The firefighter, when leaving hospital, notices a refrigerated trailer and when he opens it, he discovers ten bodies. One of them is of Ernesto Vera. He thinks, “Cops are just greasing people”.¹⁶² Last character is Abejundo Orellana, “Momo”, whose house is burnt and who blames Fate for that. He is angry, planning the attack. The third day is also the day, when the riot spread into the other neighborhoods. Anthony mentions, “Now, in a run-of-the-mill emergency situation, we send a fireman to the hydrant, he opens it, and we squirt, but in the thirty or so hours since this riot kicked off, we’ve been learning this all over the Southland. You send one to the hydrant, he gets hassled, so you send two to the hydrant, and they get hassled too, so it’s gotten to the point where you don’t even bother opening a hydrant without two escort cars, each one blocking both ends of the block”.¹⁶³

Fourth day is described through the eyes of the former Los Angeles fire department battalion chief as, “The wild west with paved streets”.¹⁶⁴ The most important event of the day is a massacre of Trouble’s crew issued by the Robert Alan Rivera’s gang, which attracted the National Guards. Robert states, “Law-enforcement is allowed to mislead in order to obtain confession or further evidence ... a lot of them (policemen) still remember when Lynwood used to be a mostly white neighborhood, and they’d kill us all if they could get away with it”.¹⁶⁵

On the fifth day the major General James D. Delk, a commanding officer of the National Guard, says, “The police were also telling gang members that the National Guard was, in effect, a much, much bigger gang. They felt those were terms the gang members could relate to”.¹⁶⁶ The character here is an anonymous, but he claims he is ‘the Big, Bad Wolf.’ He does not want to reveal his identity, but it is clear he is not one of the police officers or the National Guard, but he is of much higher rank, since he talks about his team and gives statistics such as number of gang population (102,000) with the responsibility for murders in 771 cases in 1991. When he speaks to Big Fate about killing people, he utters, “Repetition is the only thing that gets through to these animals. I know this because I am an animal myself. Our game plan is simple. We aim for joints and small bones mostly. We break hands. We break ankles. We break knees

¹⁶¹ Gattis, *All Involved*, 137-147.

¹⁶² Gattis, *All Involved*, 179.

¹⁶³ Gattis, *All Involved*, 149.

¹⁶⁴ Gattis, *All Involved*, 202.

¹⁶⁵ Gattis, *All Involved*, 231.

¹⁶⁶ Gattis, *All Involved*, 262.

and elbows too”.¹⁶⁷ A story of Jeremy Rubio is happier, as he saw the intervention made by the Anonymous, but managed to leave the city and started a new life. However even in Phoenix he meets with violence and gangs, portrayed by a twelve-year-old-boy, Josesito Serrato, who owns a weapon and wants to become a part of the gang.

Miguel Rivera, one of the characters on the sixth day, says, “People all over the world think Los Angeles is a city of angry black folks now. Those must think that what happened to Rodney King was isolated”.¹⁶⁸ He visits Momo’s sister he has saved from the burning house with his father. Meanwhile they stop for a meal, where they meet a homeless person as well as Ernesto’s brother with his gang. After coming back, their house is burnt out. While they are leaving for better life, his father throws a Molotov cocktail to burn the rest, which makes his son wondering, “Maybe that’s how these riots are for everybody around here. You know you’re gonna lose, but you kick and fight to lose as little as possible. It could be property, or health, or a loved one, but it’s something and when it’s gone, it’s gone for good. No one feels peace tonight, and we haven’t for days. The curfew may be lifted, but it doesn’t mean things are normal, or that they’re fixed”.¹⁶⁹

However, Ryan Gattis shows his opinion not only through the gang members, but through the homeless, who speaks to the city, “You’re a damned black city! You’re a black city with a black heart and black ash blowing around your black asphalt streets. That’s what you’ve been. What you are today. What you’re always going to be”.¹⁷⁰

Nevertheless, to conclude, Ryan claims Los Angeles is nowadays more wonderful place with a lower crime rate as well as better situation between gangs. He believes the situation is better due to better economy, compared to 1992. He also adds, when people find something they can occupy themselves with, then almost everyone is going to do that, instead of getting into the trouble.¹⁷¹

Ryan Gattis, in an interview with *Breitbart News*, revealed his fascination about the fact the protests spread into all corners of the country after the verdict. He was surprised by its length and the scope of violence. The author furthermore stresses, the crimes

¹⁶⁷ Gattis, *All Involved*, 271.

¹⁶⁸ Gattis, *All Involved*, 348.

¹⁶⁹ Gattis, *All Involved*, 357-358.

¹⁷⁰ Gattis, *All Involved*, 324.

¹⁷¹ Gattis and Boscawen, “All Involved: a Novel of the 1992 L.A. Riots.”

during the rioting were the crimes of opportunity rather than the protest. Nevertheless, 1992 was the worst year in the history of L.A. for homicide.¹⁷²

Laura Miller, a reporter for *The Guardian*, claims the novel does not deal much with the race relations in L.A. and the police officers do not play such an important role either. She furthermore thinks there are two novels in *All Involved*, one of them is the weaker portrayal of the city, and another one is the lack of civil order. In Miller's own words, "The story is a familiar but briskly suspenseful gangster yarn".¹⁷³ She highlights, Gattis makes the story more difficult than he should since each chapter is narrated in the first person and with several different characters. Moreover, according to her, he has often recourse to clichés and some lines would rather pass high-end genre films but not the literature. Except for that, Miller adds some passages remind a diary or a paragraph from a magazine, dealing with the history of local graffiti artists. She is afraid the readers could easily miss out the author's clever metaphors. She criticizes his attempt to make gangsters more humane than they actually are. On the other hand, apart from all the imperfections, Miller stresses the author spent much time, making the extensive research to get into the characters.¹⁷⁴

According to Michiko Kakutani from *the New York Times*, the novel is "His breakthrough, it is gritty, nerve-racking, sometimes excruciating in its violence and at the same time animated by a bone-deep understanding of its character's daily lives in a gang-ravaged neighborhood".¹⁷⁵ Kakutani compares Gattis' style to the passionate one of a Richard Price novel *Monster: The Autobiography of an L. A. Gang Member* from 2004, its energy to a Rashomon-style documentary and even to John Updike's "Rabbit", where the author tries to attribute the meditative literary thoughts to his characters, but these are more like his own. Kakutani, on the other hand, considers Gattis a "Ventriloquist but also as a method actor, inhabiting an array of characters".¹⁷⁶ According to him, however, the characters are hardly representative types, since their

¹⁷² William Bigelow, "Interview: L. A. Riots Novelist Ryan Gattis Sees 1992's Mayhem through the Eyes of Gangs and Firefighters," *Breitbart*, April 29, 2015, accessed August 11, 2016, <http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2015/04/29/interview-l-a-riots-novelist-ryan-gattis-sees-1992s-mayhem-through-the-eyes-of-gangs-and-firefighters/>.

¹⁷³ Laura Miller, "All Involved by Ryan Gattis Review – Gang War in Latino LA," *The Guardian*, May 22, 2015, accessed August 11, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/may/22/all-involved-ryan-gattis-review-gang-war-la>.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ Michiko Kakutani, "Review: 'All Involved' by Ryan Gattis is Set in the Days after the Rodney King Verdict," *The New York Times*, April 29, 2015, accessed August 11, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/30/books/review-all-involved-by-ryan-gattis-is-set-in-the-days-after-the-rodney-king-verdict.html>.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

dreams are rooted in their pasts. They have complicated relationships with their family and friends. In Kakutani's view, the author can offer his knowledge of tradecraft and at the same time, he manages to put the characters' stories into a larger portrait of the city.¹⁷⁷

Claire Allfree, from *The Independent*, sees the novel as a gloomy portrait of the America's youth. Claire compares the novel to a Greek tragedy because "Blood gets blood in the disenfranchised streets of Lynwood so that before long, the novel has taken on a hideous, inexorable momentum".¹⁷⁸ Just as the above-mentioned reporters, so this one praises Gattis' deep research thanks to which the novel "Has a blisteringly persuasive documentary quality and an inevitable sociological dimension".¹⁷⁹ Claire claims that even though Gattis does not give any answers to the issue, his claustrophobic portrait of the generation narrates its own story. She stresses the elegance and beauty of the novel, but she adds it is mostly physical.¹⁸⁰

Carl Wilkinson, a reporter for *The Financial Times*, compares the violence of the novel to the TV thriller *The Wire* (2002-2008), and its structured plot with its overlapping characters to John Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer* from 1925. Wilkinson highlights Gattis' ability to convey the variety and complexity of the gang system with its members. He however points out that the picture Gattis is trying to make is maybe more tragic than the general narrative of the riots and that the individuals embody the conflicting qualities.¹⁸¹

Leo Robson, from *The New States Man*, claims the novel balances between a documentary realism and analytical detachment, offering an authentic long view. The novel is credible "According to which the HBO crime drama *The Wire* would be found a little sanitized and Spike Lee's 1989 film *Do the Right Thing* is practically a sitcom".¹⁸² Robson furthermore stresses there is a great deal of repetition, concerning the cynicism about the world and institutions. "Gattis' preferred method of forging intelligent distance from all the 'fires on the top of fires' is to have his present-tense

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Claire Allfree, "All Involved by Ryan Gattis, Book Review: Blood on the Streets of Los Angeles," *The Independent*, May 7, 2015, accessed August 11, 2016, <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/all-involved-by-ryan-gattis-book-review-blood-on-the-streets-of-los-angeles-10231880.html>.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Carl Wilkinson, "'All Involved,' by Ryan Gattis," *The Financial Times*, May 22, 2015, accessed August 11, 2016, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/4eff625e-fd44-11e4-9e96-00144feabdc0.html#axzz4GwaxNZgn>.

¹⁸² Leo Robson, "Keeping it Real: All Involved by Ryan Gattis," *The New States Man*.

narrators momentarily take their mind off their circumstances and lay down a few thoughts. In a novel so devoted to the here and now, the effect can only seem artificial”.¹⁸³

Doug Johnstone from *The Big Issue*, shares the same opinion as the others, “*All Involved* is a compelling look at the broken nature of American society”.¹⁸⁴ Apart from the inevitable violence, the reporter maintains an appearance of a black comedy, but above all adrenaline-soaked story. Johnstone agrees Gattis made a great accomplishment on his research, getting inside the heads of all characters. He furthermore stresses Gattis’ attempt to show how a chaos in a huge city extends much farther than the small area in which the riots took place.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Doug Johnstone, “All Involved by Ryan Gattis – Review,” *The Big Issue*, May 20, 2015, accessed August 11, 2016, <http://www.bigissue.com/reviews/book-reviews/5245/all-involved-by-ryan-gattis-review>.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

4 RACE RIOT IN FERGUSON IN 2014

The riot began in the morning on August 9, when Dorian Johnson and Michael Brown left the Ferguson Market. No one would believe this led to a worldwide debate over excessive usage of force by the police and the race relations in America. What happened was that Michael Brown was shot by one of the police officers. Michael's friend Dorian told the Grand Jury he encountered Michael a month or two before the incident. Brown was living with his grandmother, but had to move to his friend across the street. When they came across each other at the parking lot, they decided to have a cigarette. Therefore, they went to Ferguson market, where however according to Dorian, his friend tried to steal some. The clerk wanted to call the police, if they did not leave. Dorian did not feel comfortable because all was monitored on the camera. When they were walking down West Florissant, the police car was heading to them, an officer Darren Wilson said they should go on the sidewalk. Michael replied they are only one minute from their homes, but the police officer opened the window and took him for his neck, saying he is going to shoot. About few minutes later, the police officer eventually fired and hit Brown into the chest, but he did not stop and fired several more shots.¹⁸⁶

Witnesses had different points of views about what happened. However, according to a time record, the clerk really called the police. Presumably, Brown, Johnson and Wilson had a misunderstanding that resulted in a death of Brown. A police supervisor arrived and the police secured the area in three minutes after the shooting. The neighbors asked police to help Michael, but the police insisted he is already dead and does not need any assistance. Chris Cebollero, the supervisor, told the reporters he tried Brown's pulse and discovered his injuries were not compatible with life so he did not performed any saving measures. The news spread very quickly with officers of the St. Louis County Police Department as well as detectives' arrival. The body of the victim was removed after four and half hours later, which raged both the witnesses and Brown's family.¹⁸⁷

4.1 Statements of the Witnesses

As many as sixty-two victims described the incident. Piaget Crenshaw claimed she knew what happened, because she was looking from her apartment while waiting

¹⁸⁶ Suereth, *Ferguson: America's Breaking Point*, 167.

¹⁸⁷ Dan Good, "Ferguson Police Shooting: Witnesses Stunned as Shots Ring Out," *ABC News*, March 12, 2015, accessed April 9, 2016, <http://abcnews.go.com/US/ferguson-police-shooting-witnesses-stunned-shots-ring/story?id=29575860>.

for her friend Tiffany Mitchell. She saw how the police officer tried to pull Brown into his vehicle and started to chase him then she heard shooting. Tiffany Mitchell wanted to videotape it, but heard a shoot so she went out of the way and saw Brown running away followed by the officer. When Wilson fired on him, Brown gave up, but the officer was shooting until Brown dropped down. Michael Brady was at home, when he heard some disobedience on the street and came on the scene, witnessing the final confrontation. He saw how the officer was firing three or four times, but reported that he does not remember if Brown was giving up. Emanuel Freeman was living in a basement garage. He tweeted the police is shooting at Brown right outside his apartment window with the exact time of the death, 12:01 p.m. He reported that Brown looked like eighteen or nineteenth-year-old with his family standing there and was sure he heard seven shots.¹⁸⁸

However, after more than two weeks, the Saint Louis Grand Jury decided that the officer Darren Wilson is innocent. Robert McCulloch, the St. Louis County Prosecutor, said the witnesses cannot be trusted since several admitted they did not see the shooting, they saw only part of it or they were just repeating what they heard on the streets. Others changed their story after some time. Therefore, the Grand Jury had to decide whom and what to believe. More than 5,000 pages of the testimonies turned out to be incredible. For example one of the witnesses, whose testimony was at first damaging to Officer Wilson, admitted she lied, because the investigators pressed her. Another claimed that Michael was on his knees, when the officer shot him in the head, but then revealed she made the story up. There was also a case of racism, when one of the witnesses posted a racist comment online.¹⁸⁹

4.2 The Ferguson Riot in Details

The officer Darren Wilson made his statement during a St. Louis radio show, claiming he was talking with two men in the middle of the street, telling them to get out, but they rejected and were yelling at him. Meanwhile, he got a report of the robbery and noticed the boys have stolen cigarettes in their hands. Therefore, he tried to get out of his car, but they shut his door violently. When he managed to get out, Brown pushed him back.

¹⁸⁸ James Queally, "What Key Witnesses to the Michael Brown Shooting Have to Say," *LA Times*, August 21, 2014, accessed April 9, 2016, <http://www.latimes.com/nation/nationnow/la-na-nn-ferguson-witness-accounts-20140821-story.html>.

¹⁸⁹ Ana Cabrera, "Ferguson Witnesses Admit They Lied to the Grand Jury," *WWLP*, December 16, 2016, accessed July 15, 2016, <http://wwlp.com/2014/12/16/ferguson-witnesses-admit-they-lied-to-the-grand-jury/>.

He punched him so the officer took his gun. Both were running away and the officer was trying to stop them, but Brown started provoking him so the officer started shooting. Last shot hit victim's forehead and he fell in front of the officer. The relatives were on the place of the accident shortly after his death. However, they were not allowed to see his body nor were they given any information, concerning his death. Some white sheet was put over his dead body, but it was too late because many people already witnessed the accident.¹⁹⁰

Dr. Baden, an examiner of the body, claimed it was not right to leave the body there for such a long time, taking into consideration the hot temperature and the crowd. What also angered the crowd was the violation of the memorial by the police. Sharon Pace, Missouri State Representative, helped Brown's mother to place the candles and the flowers on the place her son died, but then one of the police dogs urinated on the memorial. The police worsen the situation, because when leaving the scene, they drove over it. The protesters began to walk into the streets and block the police cars.¹⁹¹

The reaction from National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was quick. The President Esther Haywood stated, "We are hurt to hear that yet another teenage boy has been slaughtered by law enforcement. We plan to do everything within our power to ensure that the Ferguson Police Department as well as the St. Louis County Police Department releases all details pertinent to the shooting".¹⁹² In the evening, Brown's mother led the movement to the Ferguson Police Department, where they protested against the shooting. She expressed complaints that the officer did not have to shoot so many times when her son was giving up. A press conference took place at 10:00 a.m., where St. Louis County Police Chief Jon Belmar answered some questions to clarify the shooting. In his view, Brown attacked the officer and during their struggle, Brown tried to take officer's gun away from him. Then the shooting took place.¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ Julie Bosman and Joseph Goldstein, "Timeline for a Body: 4 Hours in the Middle of a Ferguson Street," *NY Times*, August 23, 2014, accessed April 9, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/24/us/michael-brown-a-body-timeline-4-hours-on-a-ferguson-street.html>.

¹⁹¹ Taylor Wofford, "What We Learned from an Independent Autopsy of Michael Brown," *News Week*, October 18, 2016, accessed April 9, 2016, <http://europe.newsweek.com/what-we-learned-michael-browns-autopsy-265247?rm=eu>.

¹⁹² Suereth, *Ferguson: America's Breaking Point*. 167-181.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

A candlelight vigil attracted thousands of supporters, who rushed into the streets and blocked Florissant Road with words, “We want answers, no justice, no peace”. Some began hitting patrol cars. About 8 p.m., they began to loot, burn and destroy everything, including twelve businesses. In the early morning, the Jennings School District schools cancelled their first day of classes. About five hours later, hundreds gathered outside the Ferguson Police Department with the aim of the justice for Brown’s death, but more than seven ended up arrested. Two hours later, the St. Louis County Police Department released they will reveal the name of the officer responsible for Brown’s death. Civil rights activist attorney, Benjamin Crump, decided to represent the family of Michael Brown. The press conference took place the next day in Jennings, Missouri, where his family asked rioters to stop the violence, but at the same time demanded the justice. In the evening, the NAACP organized a prayer for the community members and the civil rights leaders.¹⁹⁴

At 10 a.m., the protesters appeared at the St. Louis County Police Department for a peaceful protest with their list of demands. The promise of releasing the name was reconsidered because of the threats from social media. The Chief, Tom Jackson, claimed he could refuse to give the name if there is a risk of the officer’s safety, but they have seventy-two hours to release the name if asked by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). The protesters meanwhile extended to several hundreds. Later on, a letter was issued by the ACLU Executive Director, Jeffrey Mittman, which said, “We request that you provide a copy of the incident report for the shooting of Michael Brown on August 9, 2014. If any part of this request is denied, please send a letter listing the specific exemptions upon which you rely each denial, and provide the contact information for the official to whom we may appeal”.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴ NAACP, *NAACP Statement on the Death of 18-year-old Michael Brown*, by Cornell William Brooks, accessed April 9, 2016, <http://www.naacp.org/news/entry/naacp-statement-on-the-death-of-18-year-old-michael-brown>.

¹⁹⁵ American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri Foundation (ACLU), *In the Circuit Court of Saint Louis County Twenty-First Judicial Circuit State of Missouri*, by Joan M. Gilmer, circuit clerk, (St. Louis County, 2014) Exhibit 1-2, accessed April 9, 2016, http://www.aclu-mo.org/download_file/view_inline/1262/535/.

Picture 5. “Hands Up, Don’t Shoot” In Ferguson, Missouri, 2014



Source: Picture from Dorothy Charles Banks, “Hands Up, Don’t Shoot, LA Riot in Watts, 1965,” Ferguson, Missouri 2014 Started Many Decades Ago, <http://dcbanks.blogspot.cz/2014/12/ferguson-missouri-2014-started-many.html>.

However because the rioters did not get the name, they started their war by attacking John Belmar to give the name within one hour otherwise they will release the information about his daughter. Nevertheless, he refused and became a target of an online attack. The riot had also an impact on the economics due to the rise of gun sales, which even quadrupled. The President Barack Obama stated, “The death of Michael Brown is heartbreaking and Michelle and I sent our deepest condolences to his family and his community. I know the events of the past few days have prompted strong passions, but as details unfold, I urge everyone in Ferguson, Missouri, and across the country, to remember this young man through reflection and understanding”.¹⁹⁶

Before the noon, the community volunteers gathered in a parking lot of the Baptist Church of Ferguson for a prayer. The request about public record to Missouri American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) was denied, “In ref to your request for incident report involving Michael Brown, This is an on-going investigation and we are unable to release a copy at this time”.¹⁹⁷ However, the report was eventually released eight days later, on August 20. In the afternoon, Brown’s body was given to his parents. At 6:00 p.m., the police department released a statement about their sorrow for the Brown’s

¹⁹⁶ Lindsay Holst, “President Obama Delivers a Statement on the Ferguson Grand Jury’s Decision,” *White House*, November 24, 2014, accessed March 1, 2016, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/11/24/president-obama-delivers-statement-ferguson-grand-jurys-decision>.

¹⁹⁷ American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri Foundation (ACLU), *In the Circuit Court of Saint Louis County Twenty-First Judicial Circuit State of Missouri*, by Joan M. Gilmer.

family. At night, the police decided to send every protester home. Al Jazeera reporters became a target, shot with rubber bullets and tear gas, when trying to escape the police broke down their lights and turned their cameras towards the ground. AL Jazeera considered the attack as an assault of freedom and demanded the investigation. Ryan J. Reilly, a reporter, was at McDonald's restaurant near the protest site, when the heavily armed police entered and told everyone to leave, as Reilly was leaving, he was taken away by the officers for trespassing. Wesley Lowery, another reporter, was arrested, because he was in a public restaurant and was prohibited to videotape there even though he had the right to do it. Later in the evening, Antonio French was arrested for an unlawful assembly while observing activities of the police and the protestors. In the morning, he was released and another press conference took place, during which the Police Chief, Tom Jackson, had to answer why the reporters were treated so badly the other evening.¹⁹⁸

At 3:30 p.m., the Missouri Governor, Jay Nixon, stated he will direct the team to provide the security in Ferguson and encouraged the St. Louis County and the Ferguson Police Departments to release the name of the officer. Barricades were removed to reduce the tensions between protesters and the police and the crowd got better. The Thursday was the first break during the riots.¹⁹⁹

In the evening, the demonstrators in the cities all across America joined to hold the silent vigils. They wore red ribbons and shouted, "Hands up, don't shoot", while giving the names of the black men, killed by the police. The police finally revealed the name Darren Wilson. After the noon, the family of Michael said they are outraged because of the way the information was published. The American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit against the St. Louis County Police Department to get access to the "Incident Report". Rioting began that night, when a group of rioters started throwing the rocks and bottles at the police, who eventually left and rioters' target became the Ferguson Market. In the afternoon on the other day, the protesters gathered outside the Ferguson

¹⁹⁸ Zoë Schlanger, "Journalists Arrested, Assaulted, and Teargassed in Ferguson," *News Week*, October 14, 2014, accessed July 15, 2016, <http://europe.newsweek.com/journalists-arrested-assaulted-and-teargassed-ferguson-264610?rm=eu>.

¹⁹⁹ Yamiche Alcindor, Amer Madhani and Doug Stanglin, "Hundreds of Peaceful Protester March in Ferguson," in *USA today*, August 19, 2014, accessed April 9, 2016, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/08/14/ferguson-missouri-police-clashes-shooting-anonymous/14046707/>.

Police Station to hold the silent vigil and because of the previous night's riots, the curfew was issued.²⁰⁰

With flash bang grenades going off, tanks rolling down and tear gas canisters exploding, the situation reminded a war. Seven people ended up in a prison and one hospitalized. The curfew was prolonged until the other night. An autopsy revealed Brown was shot at least six times from the front and once from behind. That day, two men were shot and thirty-one arrested. The Gov. Nixon called up the National Guard, because it was the worst night since the death of Michael Brown. Barack Obama claimed, violence was caused by a small minority, throwing the Molotov Cocktails.²⁰¹

The National Bar Association announced their filling of a lawsuit for the information about the death of Brown. The association was founded in 1925, being the nation's oldest and largest national network of mostly African-American attorneys and judges, representing the interests of 60,000 lawyers, law professors, students as well as judges. The protests began peacefully, but turned out violent again. Brown's parents gave an interview, calling for a peace and praying for a justice. At 1:00 p.m., two police officers shot a twenty-three-year-old man only four miles from Ferguson. According to them, the victim threatened the officers, but the incident was not connected with Ferguson's rioting. Dozens of people began protesting. The earlier calmness descended into a chaos after the Missouri Highway Patrol Captain, Ron Johnson, tried to mend fences with the protesters. Nevertheless, people wanted the justice, which ended up with seventy-eight arrests.²⁰²

At the conference, Ron Johnson said, the protests were not as confrontational as the previous day. Clergy persuaded some protesters to go home, however, extremists stayed, throwing bottles at the police and attacking local businesses. The Grand Jury should decide whether there was enough evidence against the officer Darren Wilson or not. Twelve Jurors appointed and there had to be at least nine of them to agree for sufficient evidence, which could last several months in any other case, but this one. The night from August 20 to 21 was calm with many protesters leaving the scene.

²⁰⁰ Suereth, *Ferguson: America's Breaking Point*, 213-214.

²⁰¹ Larry Copeland and Yamiche Alcindor, "Day 9 in Ferguson: 78 Arrested; only 4 from Ferguson," *Navy Times*, August 19, 2014, accessed April 9, 2016,

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/news/nation/2014/08/19/2-shot-dozens-arrested-in-ferguson/14274835/>.

²⁰² Counter Current News Editorial Team, "National Bar Association Lawyers Release Statement Indicating Ferguson Prosecutor Corruption," *Counter Current News*, November 28, 2014, accessed July 15, 2016, <http://countercurrentnews.com/2014/11/national-bar-association-lawyers-release-statement-indicating-ferguson-prosecutor-corruption/>.

After long time, people were on the streets again, just talking or shopping. Only seven ended up arrested, but the message continued. The police had to take away a white girl, who supported the officer Darren Wilson before a conflict would arise, as the angry black activists surrounded her. When a national pool was carried out, it was found out that the residents have completely different opinions. Among blacks, eighty percent claimed the shooting raises important issues about the race and eighteen percent said that the race is getting more attention than it deserves, compared to thirty-seven percent of whites in the first question and forty-seven in the other.²⁰³

The situation remained relaxed until the Friday morning. Tanks were off the streets for the crowd to feel safer. The group “Oath Keepers” appeared and offered a free security for the businesses and protection of the public. The residents felt more comfortable to have someone to help, but the media were trying to uncover, who these people are. The police threatened the Oath Keepers with arresting, if they continue in their activities without a license. Because the funeral of Brown was a question of days, protesters respected the family’s wish to be calm. The night from Friday to Saturday was in the sign of peaceful protests and no arrests. Main action of the day was a demonstration at 2:00 p.m., organized by the NAACP with approximately 400 supporters. During the press conference, in the evening, Barack Obama stated three White House aides would attend the funeral. The other day, nearly one hundred members of Brown’s family gathered for a private viewing at the Austin A. Layne Mortuary. Sunday’s St. Louis Peace Fest was an annual event, a day of festivities and promoting peace, but because this year was marked with death, the coordinator decided to make it about the race relations. The festival took place from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. with hundreds of visitors.²⁰⁴

Rioting and looting hit the ground after Brown’s death since his death caused nationwide protests, including children, young people as well as the senior citizens. The protesters were the representatives of America’s melting pot and the gesture “Hands Up, Don’t Shoot” became a significant symbol of the support against the police brutality.²⁰⁵

However, Michael Brown was only one of the many victims. Eric Garner was chokehold to a death by Daniel Pantaleo in July, on a New York Street, where he was

²⁰³ Suereth, *Ferguson: America’s Breaking Point*, 265-271.

²⁰⁴ RT, “Year of Protest: Ferguson Erupts into Rioting after White Officer Kills Unarmed Black Teen,” August 8, 2015, ed. August 10, 2015, accessed April 9, 2016, <https://www.rt.com/usa/311916-ferguson-timeline-aug-nov/>.

²⁰⁵ Dorothy Charles Banks, “*Ferguson, Missouri 2014 Started Many Decades Ago.*”

selling untaxed cigarettes. Such as Rodney King and Latasha Harlins are two main cases of the 1992' riot, so are Michael Brown and Eric Garner main cases of 2014' riot. In December 2014, Eric was choked because of the tight hold from the police officers and the chant "I can't breathe" became another symbol of the riots. The police officers were trying to arrest Garner, a married father of six children with two grandchildren, in front of Tompkinsville beauty supply store before 5:00 p.m., questioning him about selling untaxed cigarettes. He resisted to be handcuffed, screaming, "Every time you see me you want to mess with me. I'm tired of it. It stops today".²⁰⁶

Four of the police officers forcibly brought him down on the ground. Eric was repeating, "I can't breathe" all over again until he died. After the officers discovered, he was unconscious they called paramedics. Meanwhile an angry crowd gathered as in the case of Michael Brown and started recording with their smart phones. Exactly as Brown's family did not get any information, so Garner's wife found out not sooner than in the hospital, where she had to identify his body. Even though the coroner decided it was a homicide, the Grand Jury could not decide if to charge the police officer or not. The whole incident was again videotaped. The failure of the Juries in both cases of Brown and Garner caused a worldwide grievance engendered by decades, or more specifically the centuries of the injustice. The police officers appeared to believe they acted professionally, but one of them, Daniel Pantaleo, used a chokehold, which is prohibited since it is too dangerous and leads to the unintentional deaths. What should stop them from using it was the fact that Garner was obese and may have had a weak heart. Later on, it was discovered that Garner was an asthmatic. Internal Affairs officers started an investigation that night, finding out Garner was charged few times with pot possession and selling untaxed cigarettes.²⁰⁷

"They were choking him. He kept saying 'I can't breathe! Get off of me!' and I didn't hear any more talking after that, he died right there", said one of the witnesses Valencia Griffin. Except for Daniel Pantaleo, Justin Damico was also put on a desk duty the day after the incident. The Rev. Al Sharpton planned to host Garner's family at his National Action Network headquarters in Harlem on Saturday morning, expressing his view, "It's the most inhumane, insensitive display of disregard for the citizens you're

²⁰⁶ Ken Murray, Kerry Burke and Chelsia Rose Marcius, "Staten Island Man Dies after NYPD Cop Puts Him in Chokehold," *NY Daily News*, December 3, 2014, accessed July 11, 2016, <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/staten-island-man-dies-puts-choke-hold-article-1.1871486>.

²⁰⁷ Roger Parloff, "Two Deaths: The Crucial Difference between Eric Garner's Case and Michael Brown's," December 5, 2014, accessed July 11, 2016, <http://fortune.com/2014/12/05/two-deaths-the-crucial-difference-between-eric-garners-case-and-michael-browns/>.

supposed to protect that I've seen in a long time". Pantaleo was accused of a false arrest and violating police procedures in two lawsuits.²⁰⁸

Picture 6. Eric Garner, 43, Put in Chokehold by Daniel Pantaleo



Source: Picture from Dorothy Charles Banks, Ferguson, Missouri 2014 Started Many Decades Ago, <http://dcbanks.blogspot.cz/2014/12/ferguson-missouri-2014-started-many.html>.

Ferguson has become as much a political thing as racial. When comes to a question of whether the officer Wilson should have been indicted for Brown's death, the gap between the Republicans and the Democrats is as big as the gap between the African Americans and the whites. Except for the similarities in both cases, there are differences as well. Firstly, there is a video of the Garner's case, compared to the Brown's case, where the political debate is about what happened before his death and the usage of force. There is lot of interpretation compared to Garner's incident, where the video is more than clear. What is also important is the fact that many Americans do not believe the police. A recent Pew survey showed that only thirty percent of the Americans rate the job of the police as excellent or good. When asked, if the police treat racial and ethnic groups equally, nine percent of the whites rated it as excellent and twenty-five as poor. In the case of the African Americans, only three percent voted for excellent, while seventy have chosen poor. To the question of violence, the whites answered by nine

²⁰⁸ Annia Karni and Rocco Parascandol, "Two Cops Pulled off Streets, Staten Island DA Looking into Death of Dad of Six after NYPD Cop Put Him in Chokehold During Sidewalk Takedown," July 19, 2016, accessed July 11, 2016, <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/nyc-crime/staten-island-da-man-death-nypd-chokehold-article-1.1871946>.

percent, claiming the force is adequate, twenty-three that it is not, while no African American chose the adequate force, compared to fifty-seven, who chose poor.²⁰⁹

Another victim was John Crawford, a twenty-two-year-old black man, shot by Sean Williams on August 5 at a Walmart in Beavercreek Ohio after receiving a 911 call that falsely accused Crawford of endangering customers with a gun. The surveillance footage released showed Crawford picking up the toy gun from a shelf, occasionally swinging it, while speaking with his ex-girlfriend on the phone. Ronald T. Ritchie, the person who called 911, could be persecuted for making false alarms. He claimed, “He (Crawford) was just waving it at children, people, items, I couldn’t hear anything that he was saying”. Crawford’s family and attorneys stressed that under Ohio’s open-carry firearms laws and Walmart’s regulations, Crawford could have carry a rifle around the store. The Grand Jury however decided on September 24 that Sean Williams should not face criminal charges.²¹⁰

Together with a killing of Tamir Rice in Cleveland, these cases caused a nationwide discussion about racial differences in the criminal justice system and police usage of force. According to a supplementary homicide report from FBI from 2012, from all US population, thirteen percent of the blacks, sixty-three of the whites and seventeen of the Hispanics are killed by the police during the arrest. Considering all the victims, the numbers are thirty-one percent, fifty-two percent and twelve percent. The victims that did not attack the police officers during the arrests count as thirty-nine percent, forty-six and twelve. The last statistic gives the numbers when not attacking without rifle or the shotgun as forty-two percent, forty-four and again twelve percent.²¹¹

The youngest victim of the injustice is above-mentioned Tamir Rice, only a twelve-year-old boy shot by the Cleveland police, who similarly like Crawford, was waving around with a fake gun. The child died because of a 911 caller, who said Tamir is pointing with his gun at the people in a park on the Sunday, in November. He was sitting at the bench and when police drove toward him, he stood up and moved the gun

²⁰⁹ Aaron Blake, “Why Eric Garner Isn’t Ferguson – Politically Speaking,” *The Washington Post*, December 4, 2014, accessed July 11, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2014/12/04/why-eric-garner-isnt-ferguson-politically-speaking/>.

²¹⁰ Jon Swaine, “Video Shows John Crawford’s Girlfriend Aggressively Questioned after Ohio Police Shot Him Dead in Walmart,” *The Guardian*, December 14, 2014, accessed July 11, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2014/dec/14/john-crawford-girlfriend-questioned-walmart-police-shot-dead?CMP=share_btn_tw.

²¹¹ Tom McCarthy, “Police Killed More than Twice as Many People as Reported by US Government,” *The Guardian*, March 4, 2015, accessed July 13, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/mar/04/police-killed-people-fbi-data-justifiable-homicides>.

at his waist. Two officers shot him after less than two seconds after arriving at the scene and he fell, dying the following day. After five months, Tamir's mother held a news conference and demanded answers from the investigation. An Ohio prosecutor released an investigation report, which included reports of the witnesses, which however contradicted the officer's claim. Cleveland municipal court judge Ronald Adrine said he found probable cause to bring a murder charge against the officer Timothy Loehmann. A lawsuit against the City of Cleveland by Rice's family was settled for \$6 million. A group called "Cleveland 8" requested to look into the case. The group consisted of the clergymen and local activists. Loehmann claimed he commanded the boy several times to put his hands in the air, but the boy did not listen to him and reached for the gun instead, "He gave me no choice, he reached for the gun and there was nothing I could do". About fifty demonstrators gathered, screaming, "We need justice" and "leave us alone".²¹²

Other misfortune happened, when the New York City police officer Peter Liang fired into a darkened housing project stairwell on November 20, since the bullet had ricocheted off a wall into a man's chest and killed him. The victim, Akai Gurley, entered the stairwell in the Louis H. Pink Houses, a housing project in East NY in Brooklyn. The officer was charged in Gurley's death after the Grand Jury's accusation. Meanwhile, the attorney Kenneth P. Thompson gave an account of what happened that day. At that time the decision about Eric Garner shocked the inhabitants, the Grand Jury found no reason to charge the officer, who used the chokehold. With the death of Gurley, the public again started protesting against the police force. The police claimed this case had nothing to do with Ferguson rioting, but it definitely became the part of the national push for a justice reform.²¹³

On April 19, 2016, Peter Liang was ordered to serve five years' probation and to complete 800 hours of the community service for manslaughter and official misconduct. Liang's conviction was the first one of N. Y. P. D. officers for an on-duty death since 2005. It also launched the largest Asian American protests in recent memory as the supporters accused the prosecutors of scapegoating Liang. Before the verdict, the opposing groups of protesters gathered, they thought the shooting represented an

²¹² Richard Luscombe, "Tamir Rice Report: Witnesses Contradict Officer on Warning to Boy Shot Dead," *The Guardian*, June 13, 2015, accessed July 11, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jun/13/tamir-rice-prosecutors-report-witnesses-contradict-police-officer>.

²¹³ J. David Goodman and Vivian Yee, "Officer Charged in Akai Gurley Case Debated Reporting Gunshot, Officials Say," *NY Times*, February 11, 2015, accessed July 11, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/12/nyregion/akai-gurley-shooting-death-arraignment.html>.

unsettling trend of the police targeting African Americans. Meanwhile, the prosecutors accused Liang of the deadly negligence since after the shooting he did not call an ambulance or performed CPR.²¹⁴

4.3 History of the City

Missouri had entered the Union in 1821 as a part of the Missouri Compromise as a slave state. Pro-slavery Tennesseans, Virginians, Kentuckians, who called their home a ‘Little Dixie’, were joined by anti-slavery Germans, dividing the state into the ethnic patterns. Missouri was not overwhelmingly urban or rural, progressive or reactionary, East or West, North or South. St. Louis set the tone for the state. In the 1850s, St. Louis was the first Midwestern city to crack the list of the nation’s ten largest cities and twenty years later, it became the nation’s fourth largest city. With its perfect location just of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, it positioned the city to exploit the steamboat revolution. Soon, Chicago business and political leaders came with a plan, a railway, which would connect the East and the West Coasts. Fierce steamboat industry opposition prevented construction of Mississippi River Bridge. Even when the James B. Eads Bridge was built in 1874, the steamboat industry managed to restrict the river traffic. Chicago went up to eclipse St. Louis. The bridge delay was one of the most consequential policy decisions that St. Louis would face and they felt the impact over a century later. It was for the first time, St. Louis sabotaged its future.²¹⁵

The weird geographical position of Missouri was best visible during the Civil War. Some thought, because it is a rare slave state, it was able to escape the humiliation of the Reconstruction thus becoming a state that avoided directly confronting the legacies of its slaveholding past. Missouri shifted to a Jim Crow state. In 1876, the St. Louis City, which until then resided within County, voted to break away. It was because of the money. There were much more people in the central city than elsewhere and they did not like the expenses necessary to service areas with also rare tax revenues, extracted from the outlying areas and the high cost to service them. The Missouri Supreme Court ruled in 1877 that voters had approved splitting. Nevertheless, the city began to decline because of its weak Western boundary. The city slipped to the sixth largest city by the 1920s. The whites began to move into the County, where every

²¹⁴ Matt Hanse and Matt Pearce, “No Prison Time for Ex-NYPD Officer Peter Liang in Fatal Shooting of Akai Gurley,” *LA Times*, April 19, 2016, accessed July 11, 2016, <http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-liang-sentencing-20160419-story.html>.

²¹⁵ Jeff Smith, *Ferguson in Black and White*, (Amazon Digital Services LLC, 2014), 126-50.

neighborhood wanted to preserve its own identity and those who did not fit were drawn out of a town.²¹⁶

4.4 Fragmentation, Race, and Class

City began to regret the decision, thinking about the reverse situation. State constitutional amendment put a plan to recombine the two entities on the 1926 ballot. However, the county residents rejected a proposal, opposed by seventy-four percent of city voters and seventy-nine percent of county voters. In the past twenty-five years, the broader political shifts had great effects on this region, contributing to its enduring fragmentation and economic struggles. St. Louis City was badly damaged, which since 1970 has lost almost as much of its population as Detroit. St. Louis County contains ninety municipalities, most of them with their own city hall and the police force. Because of the white forces, the blacks were being arrested in the numbers that exceeded the limits, for example in the last year eighty-six percent of stops, ninety-two percent of searches and ninety-three percent of arrests were the blacks.²¹⁷

The St. Louis has long been one of the nation's most segregated areas, where a high wall between the blacks and the whites remains. Until 1940, the blacks were not allowed to live in most suburban St. Louis County towns. As the whites began to flee the city for the county between 1950 and 1960, they were preventing the blacks from moving in. In the city, poverty and unrest appeared. The whites were however followed by the blacks ten years later as they were attracted to older suburbs like the one in Ferguson in the Northern part, but their moving in caused the whites to move out. Another ten years later, the town consisted of eighty-five percent of the whites and fourteen percent of the blacks. However, in 2010, the situation was the other way around with only twenty-nine percent of the whites and overwhelming eighty-five percent of the blacks.²¹⁸

²¹⁶ Smith, *Ferguson in Black and White*, 187-194.

²¹⁷ Jeff Smith, "In Ferguson, Black Town, White Power," *The New Yorker*, August 17, 2014, accessed July 8, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/18/opinion/in-ferguson-black-town-white-power.html>.

²¹⁸ The Editorial Board, "The Death of Michael Brown: Racial History behind the Ferguson Protests," *The New York Times*, August 12, 2014, accessed July 8, 2016. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/13/opinion/racial-history-behind-the-ferguson-protests.html?_r=0.

4.5 The Riot in the Mainstream

The race riot of 2014, even though not as widely visible in the poems and the songs as L.A. riots of 1965 and 1992, is however also written about. New writers are trying to pursue their opinions and feelings about the revolt, such as a feminist Aya de Leon, who published her poem “How Do I love Thee?” as an informal imitation of Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s Sonnet 43.

“How do I love thee?”

By Aya de Leon

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
 I love thee with the blooming red rose of police bullets to thy firstborn sons.
 Like a coy and unsigned suitor’s note leaving thee to wonder exactly who sent these flowers.
 I love thee in the full knighthood of riot gear body armor that exposes only my amorous motives.
 I love thee with the sharp cracking kiss of a baton on your tender temple, wrist, shoulder...
 I love thee with the seductive siren perfume of tear gas.
 I love thee with the steady, rumbling march of tanks on residential city streets.
 I love thee with the warm, heavy-armed embrace of curfew and martial law.
 I love thee with the sly lover’s denial in public, all the better to heighten my passion in night’s clandestine shadows.
 And when thou would protest against my love with smoke and gas-choked breath,
 I shall but love thee better after death.²¹⁹

“How do I love thee?”

By Elizabeth Barrett Browning

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
 I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
 My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
 For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
 I love thee to the level of everyday's
 Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
 I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
 I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
 I love thee with the passion put to use
 In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
 I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
 With my lost saints – I love thee with the breath,

²¹⁹ “Poems for Ferguson: Vanessa Huang and Aya de Leon,” *The Feminist Wire*, August 22, 2014, accessed July 10, 2016, <http://www.thefeministwire.com/2014/08/poems-ferguson-vanessa-huang-aya-de-leon/>.

Smiles, tears, of all my life! – and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.²²⁰

Aya de Leon adopted the structure from Elizabeth Browning, especially the first and final sentence, which she left completely unchanged. She even uses the same pattern, “I love thee ...” but completes it with different thoughts, which are suitable for the twenty-first century, compared to Browning, who lived in the nineteenth century Romantic period. While Elizabeth Browning declares her love for her beloved one, Aya de Leon uses the poem to show her devotion to the city, but does not keep the celebratory mood as Browning did. On the other hand, she portrays her love for Ferguson sarcastically. Sarcastically, because love is connected with feelings that sometimes cannot be properly defined, is abstract, as Browning measures her love by the depth, breadth and height her soul can reach, for the ends of Being, by sun and candle light, by passion, old grief, with the breath, smiles and tears. Aya de Leon compares her love to the bullets; the police officers are firing into the sons. She uses a metaphor of red rose to indicate the blood and compares a tear gas to a seductive perfume. Leon refers to the Romantic period in the case of a coy unsigned suitor’s note to the fact that victims in Ferguson usually did not know their attackers. She even refers to ancient knighthood, which reveals her amorous motives. Leon draws a comparison between a sweet kiss from her knight to the tough touch of baton. Her love is rumbling as the tanks in the streets are. Towards the end, Leon makes clear her love is not reciprocated, but she does not mind being chased away with the gas or the smoke, since her love will continue after her death.

“Mother’s Milk and Mace: A Poem for Ferguson.”

By Drew Gibson

With calves clenched and spine straight, her eyes flit
From sidewalk to sidewalk—her vision marred
by the kaleidoscopic flutterings of her helmet
as police lights ping-pong off her visored eyes.
She stands there, licking her wind-battered lips
free from the dribs and drabs of salinated snot
leaking from her face. Vice like, her fingertips
Clutch onto the little trash can shield bought
accidentally by those assembled before her.

²²⁰ “How Do I love Thee?” *Poem Hunter*, accessed August 14, 2016,
<http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/how-do-i-love-thee/>.

“You are unlawfully assembled,” a tinny voice tells the crowd from atop some armored leviathan. “Disperse, or you will be arrested.” The woman holds her truncheon hard, Bracing herself—waiting for that moment when she must strap on the mask hanging by her side and drink deep from the stale ferment of her recycled breath, watching their eyes and throats suffocate in the alien air.

With a few weak whistles the flares shoot up, arching over the disobedient masses like neon ticker-tape before hell erupts. Mortars filled with lachrymatory gasses hurtle forward and explode, vomiting plumes of ravenous smoke at the protestors. Doubled over, they stumble through the burning in their lungs, trapped in a haze of horrors When the rubber bullets come streaming in.

Throwing on her mask, the woman turns around and trudges carefully through the chemical mist, Unable to see her feet touch the ground, tightly grasping her gun in front of her chest. She drifts away from the road, away from the smog and the screams until she finds herself standing in a parking lot—alone. With numb hands and a flushed face she thrusts her rifle out and begins walking when she hears it.

It comes from behind a dumpster. Rustling faintly and totally hidden from sight If not for the pair of Jordan, poking their bleached white tongues out into the light the woman begins slowly circle around until she is able to aim her gun just above the person's navel. “Put your hands where I can see 'em!” she screams. Nothing, “I said put your goddamn hands up!”

Eventually, a pair of hands come trembling upwards—hands attached to the brittle wrists and spindly arms of a young black man; or is it a young black boy—she can't tell at first, but it soon becomes clear that he can only give the illusion of manhood. “Move out from behind the dumpster slowly” she says. “Any sudden movements and I could be forced to open fire. Do you understand?”

As she finishes barking out her orders
 He inches his way out from his hiding place,
 his hands held up, shaking like a conifer
 in a stiff breeze. Tears are streaming down his face
 as he bumbles out, "I don't want to die."
 She stays strong, keeping her gun fixed on him.
 "Don't move!" she yells, before starting to cry.
 Her sobs stay soft and shuddering even as the rims
 Of her gas mask's goggles dampen and brine.²²¹

Drew Gibson felt deep inside he should write a poem about Ferguson to remember the lives of Michael Brown, Tamir Rice and many others. He came up with "Mother's Milk and Mace: A Poem for Ferguson". In the poem, Gibson describes the riot through the eyes of a female police officer, most likely the mother of the title, considering the end of the poem, where her maternal instincts come back to life with tears running over her face, when pointing the gun at a small boy. She stands in the streets, wearing a helmet with shield and observes the riot. Then, she tells the crowd they are unlawfully gathered and they should go away otherwise they are going to end up in a prison. The woman is holding her truncheon and is prepared to fight. She watches the flares shooting up with neon color and compares the riot to a hell. The officer is trying to get away and finds out she is alone in a parking lot, when hearing some noise. She is aiming her gun at a young black boy, commanding him to put his hands above his head or she is going to shoot. The little boy, with tears all over his face, begs her not to kill him. She orders him not to move with tears coming down.

²²¹ Drew Gibson, "Mother's Milk and Mace: A Poem for Ferguson," *Virally Suppressed*, November 29, 2014 accessed July 11, 2016, <https://virallysuppressed.com/2014/11/29/mothers-milk-mace-a-poem-for-ferguson/>.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the thesis was to find out the underlying causes of the riots in America as well as similarities or differences among the three main race riots in Los Angeles in 1965, 1992 and Ferguson in 2014.

As the first chapter outlined, the race riots in America began as soon as in the seventeenth century, when African Americans faced an abuse, used in a slave trade as a cheap labor. At that time, slaves had no rights or education and were dependent on their masters, who provided them with food and shelter. However, slaves started a revolt against the unbearable conditions with the first main revolt known as Nat Turner's Rebellion. America experienced a whole range of significant events, whose goals were to improve African Americans' lives, starting with Civil War, followed by Abolitionist movement and Reconstruction era. The greatest number of the race riots occurred during and after World War I. Nothing however changed the situation for better. The period of 1919, known as Red Summer, is characterized as the point, from which the bloody massacres started to appear, and took its victims, black as well as white.

The fundamental causes of seven main riots mentioned in the first chapter are of several kinds. They took place usually during hot months, included black minority and the police, a rumor played a great role and usually a white resident started it. There appeared to prevail some extraordinary social condition with other economic factors such as competition for jobs, inadequate housing options for African Americans, inconsistent law-enforcement and last but not least, the racial discrimination. African Americans were advised by known people and organizations to fight back, but they fought unsuccessfully, since the white state forces fought much stronger. Maybe the biggest difference between these early race riots and the ones that followed is that earlier the police officers helped African Americans, while later they were withdrawn. The situation became better for a while, thanks to the organization Atlanta Civic League and the formation of NAACP.

The period of 1960 was in the sign of Civil Rights Movement and Civil Rights Act. African Americans started to fight for their rights and freedom with Malcolm X and Martin Luther King as their leaders. Martin Luther King appeared as an influential public figure, a speaker of the oppressed ones, who was unfortunately killed before a completion of his great speech. The basic cause of the racial riots before 1965 was the great migration of African Americans, during which they moved into the white

neighborhood and took the jobs. Whites, fearing blacks' conditions become as prosperous as theirs, tried to arrange an order, which led to a riot in Detroit in 1967.

On the other hand, this period was beneficial for African Americans from the point they started to settle down and set up their first businesses in L.A. One of the successful slaves, Biddy Mason, buys a property in Watts, leading others to follow.

The race riots of 1965 and 1992 were very similar to each other, but also very different. Similar in the two cases, they took place in similar areas and the main goal was to attract an attention of the authorities. Nevertheless, they differed in the perspective of the participants, since in 1965 the participants were African Americans and Jews, compared to 1992, when the participants were Koreans together with Latinos. The following conflict expanded more, because it was bigger with more arrests and the issues curfew. People felt more sympathetic to the events in the riots, not like in 1965, which people quickly forgot. The former revolt was seen as a black protest, but the later one was seen as the protest only in the eyes of African Americans, since other minorities considered it a crime. The reason for the unrest in 1965 was arresting a black boy, charged with drinking alcohol while driving. The conflict aroused, after his brother run for all the people from black neighborhoods, these gathered and started rioting.

The third chapter presents the main reason of 1992' riot the beating of Rodney King, which spread nationwide, since the whole incident was monitored and showed on the news. The four police officers took King out of his car and beat him in the middle of the road, since they considered him under the drugs. These four were however found innocent by the Grand Jury and it was this verdict that caused the following revolts. People set into the streets, looting, burning buildings, shooting, taking the justice into their hands. The number of victims increased, including Reginald Denny, Fidel Lopez and Latasha Harlins. The last case represents a first incident, which ended in a death and a murderer was a Korean woman. Apart from the president George Bush, Rodney King delivers his famous speech. The King's beating was the last straw, which completed other factors, such as recession, unemployment and racial tensions. The revolting led to the re-evaluation of the Grand Jury's decision that eventually sent the main police officer into the prison.

The Ferguson Race Riot in 2014 started as the previous two, with a black man attacked by the police. However, in this case, the police officer shoots at the victim Michael Brown, who eventually dies. In the L.A. riots, the reasons for attacking the black youth was the accusation of drinking alcohol and taking drugs, but in this case,

Brown was charged for stealing in Ferguson Market and for attacking the police officer. The statements of victims differed and were later found insincere.

Other victims, apart from Michael Brown, were Eric Garner, who was chokehold to the death by a police officer. John Crawford, shot to the death on an accusation of endangering customers in a shop with a gun. Tamir Rice, the youngest victim, only twelve-year-old boy shot by the police officers because of holding a fake gun in a park. Akai Gurley, shot by accident by a Korean police officer. The Grand Jury failed to accuse the police officers in Brown's and Garner's case. Considering Tamir Rice's case, his family got compensation. Nevertheless, the punishment was fairer in the Akai Gurley's case than in others. The main officer was charged with probation and community service. Perhaps it is connected with the fact that he was Korean.

Considering the literary part of the thesis, the analyzed novels play an important role in both African-American and ethnic traditions, since considering the latest conflicts, more people, whether ordinary residents, or an American president, are trying to learn about the issue and create their own opinions. The readership rises, since readers enjoy genre of detective mysteries as in Walter Mosley's *Little Scarlet*, or enjoy non-fiction, offering the real portrait of L.A. ghetto as in Ryan Gattis' *All Involved*. Not only journalists, but also educated scholars and students are becoming more and more interested in the topic, trying to expand on the issue, comparing the contemporary situation not only to American history, but its mythology as well. More young talented artists appear, trying to take a stand, trying to leave a message through their poems and songs. Rappers, feminists, ordinary men and women, this new generation feel the urge to express their views, to remember the victims, to help the survivors, to help themselves.

To conclude the thesis, the conflicts between the African Americans and whites are continuing since the seventeenth century and will hardly ever end. The situation did not improve after 1965 nor 1992 and according to the statistics, the twenty-first century is even worse than it was before. Blacks feel insecure, afraid of being arrested or shot. They hardly get an employment in a white world. Although several organizations try to support them in their studies, the amount of African Americans finishing the high school is extremely low. The guns sales tripled since everyone is afraid to walk the streets unarmed. The youth finds an understanding in the ghettos and divide themselves between the Crips and Bloods. The L. A. P. D. did not learn a lesson they still lead the war against the African Americans, do not realizing their behavior led to a finding that

still less and less inhabitants of America trust the police department, which is the exact opposite, compared to the twentieth century, when the authorities were the only hope for the inhabitants. Some may still hope the situation gets better, but after so many years of violence, it is more than clear that an improvement is not going to happen, because someone would have to learn the lesson.

RESUMÉ

Cílem této diplomové práce bylo najít hlavní příčiny rasových nepokojů v Americe spolu s podobnostmi ale i rozdíly mezi třemi hlavními nepokoji v Los Angeles v letech 1965, 1992 a Fergusonu v roce 2014.

Jak první kapitola popisuje, rasové nepokoje v Americe začaly již v 17. století, kdy byli Afro-Američani zneužíváni jako levná pracovní síla. S žádnými právy, ani vzděláním, byli zcela závislí na svých pánech, kteří jim poskytovali jídlo a střechu nad hlavou. Otroci se samozřejmě po čase začali bránit a bojovat proti neúnosným podmínkám. První taková hlavní revolta je známá jako Nat Turner's Rebellion. Amerika zažila celé množství důležitých rasových událostí, které měly za úkol zlepšit životy Afro-Američanů počínaje Občanskou válkou, zrušením otroctví a érou rekonstrukce. Rasové nepokoje se v nejvyšším počtu objevily během a po 1. světové válce. Situace ale nepřinesla žádné pozitivní změny. Rok 1919, známý jako Red Summer, se proto vyznačuje jako bod, kdy se začínají objevovat krvavé konflikty, které si začínají brát své oběti, ať už bělochy či černochoy.

Hlavní příčiny sedmi důležitých rasových nepokojů zmíněných v první kapitole jsou různorodé. Obvykle se konaly během horkých měsíců, zahrnovaly Afro-Američany a policii, velkou roli zde hrály zvěsti a většinou to byl běloch, kdo začal dělat výtržnosti. Vždy se objevila nějaká nečekaná sociální okolnost spolu s ekonomickými faktory jako boje o práci, nedostačující bytové možnosti, proměnlivé prosazování zákona a v nespolední řadě rasová diskriminace. Známé osobnosti i neziskové organizace se snažili Afro-Američany v jejich boji podporovat, ale neúspěšně, jelikož státní síly bojovali silněji. Snad největším rozdílem mezi dřívějšími rasovými nepokoji a těmi, které následovaly je, že v těch dřívějších, policisté Afro-Američanům pomáhali, zatímco v pozdějších byli policisté z měst staženi. Situace se ale na chvíli zlepšila díky organizaci Atlanta Civic League a založení NAACP.

Šedesátá léta 19. století byly ve znamení hnutí za občanská práva a také vydání stejnojmenného zákona. Afro-Američané začali bojovat za svá práva a svobodu spolu s Malcolmem X a Martinem Lutherem Kingem, které považovali za své vůdce. Martin Luther King se objevuje jako vlivná veřejná postava, mluvčí utlačovaných. Bohužel je ale zabit před tím, než stihne dokončit svůj důležitý projev. Základní příčinou rasových nepokojů před rokem 1965 byla velká migrace Afro-Američanů, během které došlo ke stěhování do bílých čtvrtí a obsazování pracovních míst. Běloši se obávali, že se životní

standards menšiny vyrovnají těm jejím a snažili se zavést pořádky, což ale vedlo k revoltě v Detroitu v roce 1967.

Pominou-li se výše zmíněné nepokoje, je nutné poznamenat, že se tohle období na druhou stranu stalo pro Afro-Američany velmi prospěšným, jelikož se začali usazovat a otevírat své první obchody v Los Angeles. Biddy Mason, jeden z těch úspěšnějších, kupuje majetek ve čtvrti Watts, což vede k tomu, že její ostatní začínají následovat a budují komunitu tvořenou nejen jejich obchody, ale i kostely, školami a jazzovými bary.

Rasové nepokoje v letech 1965 a 1992 si byly velmi podobné, ale také se vyznačovaly svými rozdíly. Podobaly se místem konání a hlavním cílem, kterým bylo upoutat pozornost veřejných orgánů. Lišily se ve struktuře účastníků, jelikož v roce 1965, účastníky byli Afro-Američané a židé, kdežto v roce 1992 to byli Korejci spolu s Hispánci. Pozdější konflikt se více rozšířil, jelikož byl větší, více lidí bylo zatčeno a zákaz vycházení byl uvalen. Lidé více soucítily s událostmi z roku 1992, kdežto ten dřívější zapomenuli rychleji. Nepokoj v roce 1965 byl považován za protest Afro-Američanů, kdežto v roce 1992 byl takto viděn pouze z jejich pohledu, ostatní menšiny jej považovaly spíše za zločin.

Důvodem pro nepokoj v roce 1965 bylo zatknutí černého hochy spolu s jeho bratrem a matkou. Zatčený hoch byl zastaven policií a obviněn z požití alkoholu, mezitím jeho bratr přivedl lidi z celého okolí, kteří začali bouřit. Třetí kapitola uvádí jako hlavní důvod nepokoje v roce 1992 zbití Rodneyho Kinga. Tento případ se rozšířil do celého světa, jelikož byl celý incident zdokumentován a uveřejněn ve zprávách. Čtyři policisté vyvedli Kinga z jeho auta a zbili jej uprostřed cesty, protože ho podezřívali z užití drog. Velká porota ale shledala obviněné policisty nevinnými a bylo to právě tohle rozhodnutí, které způsobilo následující revoltu. Lidé se vydali do ulic, rabovali, zapalovali domy i auta, stříleli, jednoduše vzali spravedlnost do svých rukou. Počet obětí se postupně zvyšoval, kromě Rodneyho Kinga byli dalšími oběťmi Reginald Denny, Fidel Lopez a Latasha Harlins. Poslední případ představuje první konflikt, který končí smrtí a kde vrahem není běloch, ale Korejka. Kromě prezidenta George Bushe, Rodney King pronesl svou teď už populární řeč. Jeho případ byl tou obávanou poslední kapkou, která se přidala k dalším, jakými byly recese, nezaměstnanost a rasové rozpory. Revoly vedly k tomu, že velká porota přehodnotila svůj verdikt a poslala hlavního policistu do vězení.

Rasový nepokoj ve Fergusonu v roce 2014 začal jako předešlé dva, a to napadením černého muže policií. V tomto případě ale, policista střílí na Michaela Browna, který na

místě zraněním podlehne. V revoltách v letech 1965 a 1992 byl důvod pro napadení Afro-Američanů požití alkoholu nebo drog, ale v tomto případě, bylo důvodem obvinění z krádeže v místním obchodě Ferguson Market a napadením policisty. Výpovědi svědků se liší a později je také zjištěno, že je většina nepravdivá.

Ostatními oběťmi kromě Michaela Browna jsou Eric Garner, který byl udušen k smrti policistou. John Crawford, který byl zastřelen po obvinění z ohrožování zákazníků zbraní. Tamir Rice, nejmladší z obětí, teprve dvanáctiletý kluk zastřelen policisty kvůli držení falešné zbraně v parku. Akai Gurley, zastřelen omylem Korejským policistou.

Velká porota selhala, neobvinila totiž podezřelé policisty v případech smrti Browna a Garnera. V případě Tamira Rice, jeho rodina obdržela vysoké odškodnění. Avšak případ Akai Gurleyho se od těch předešlých liší svým verdiktem. Hlavní policista byl obviněn, dostal podmíněný trest a veřejně prospěšné práce. Verdikt má možná co dočinění s faktem, že je policista Korejec a ne běloch jako v ostatních případech.

Vzhledem k tomu, že tato diplomová práce není pouze historicko-kulturní, ale i literární, je nutné podotknout výsledky analýzy. Romány *All Involved* i *Little Scarlet* hrají velmi důležitou roli v obou tradicích, Afro-Americké i etnické. Vezmou-li se v úvahu nedávné nepokoje, tak více lidí, ať už běžní obyvatelé nebo Americký prezident, všichni se snaží dozvědět se co nejvíc o této problematice a přijít se svými vlastními názory. Počet čtenářů roste, jelikož si užívají žánru detektivních záhad jako v románě *Little Scarlet* od Waltera Mosleyho, nebo nachází zálibu v literatuře faktu, která nabízí skutečný pohled na ghetta v Los Angeles jako v románu *All Involved* od Ryana Gattise. Nejen žurnalisti, ale i vzdělaní učenci spolu se studenty se začínají stále více zajímat o tohle téma. Snaží se ho rozšířit, například porovnávají současnou situaci s Americkou historií ale i mytologií. Více mladých a talentovaných umělců se začíná objevovat na literární scéně. Ti se snaží zaujmout svůj postoj k dané problematice, snaží se zanechat zprávu skrz své básně a písně. Rapový zpěváci, feministky, obyčejní muži i ženy, tato nová generace cítí potřebu vyjádřit své názory, zavzpomínat na oběti, pomoci přeživším, pomoci sami sobě.

Ráda bych zakončila svou diplomovou práci několika větami. Konflikty mezi Afro-Američany a bělochy trvají od 17. století a těžko někdy skončí. Situace se nezlepšila ani po roce 1965 ani po roce 1992 a podle statistik je dokonce 21. století ještě horší než ty předešlé. Černoši se cítí nejistí, mají strach, že skončí ve věznicích nebo zastřeleni. Stěží najdou nějaké zaměstnání ve světě bílých. I když se několik organizací snažilo tuto

menšinu podporovat v jejich studiích, počet těch, kteří střední školu úspěšně ukončí je velmi nízký. Rasové nepokoje mají také špatný dopad na ekonomiku státu, například prodej zbraní se za posledních několik let ztrojnásobil, jelikož se lidé obávají chodit po ulicích neozbrojeni. Mládež nacházejí pochopení v ghettech, kde se rozdělují na dva tábory, Crips a Bloods. Policie v Los Angeles se ani po těch dlouhých letech nepoučila ze svých chyb a stále vede válku proti Afro-Američanům, bez uvážení, že jejich chování způsobilo, že stále méně obyvatel Ameriky jim důvěřuje. V porovnání s 20. stoletím je tohle obrovská změna, úplný opak, jelikož dříve to byla policie, kdo představoval naději pro obyvatelstvo v době krize. Někteří stále doufají, že se situacelepší, ale po tolika letech násilí, je více než jasné, že ke zlepšení jen tak nedojde, jelikož to by se někdo musel poučit.

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ANOTACE

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Abstrakt:

Cílem této diplomové práce je najít souvislosti, případně rozdíly mezi třemi hlavními rasovými nepokoji, které se udály v Los Angeles a Fergusonu v letech 1965, 1992 a 2014. Každá z těchto revolt je dopodrobna popisována v kapitole druhé, třetí a čtvrté. Úvodní kapitola se snaží nejen proniknout do problematiky nepřátelství mezi Afro-Američany a policií, ale nabízí také pohled do historie rasových nepokojů v Americe před rokem 1965 se zaměřením na sedm nejzávažnějších revolt. Tato kapitola se mimo jiné věnuje otázce otroctví a práv menšin, jelikož tyto problémy pojí celou práci a většinou je to právě nepřijetí ze strany většiny, co tyto nepokoje vyvolá. V první a druhé kapitole je také analýza určitého literárního díla, která upevňuje tuto práci, jelikož se děj odehrává vždy během daných rasových nepokojů. Závěr kapitoly nabízí pohled na kulturní scénu s písněmi a básněmi, které se těmito odboji zabývají, nebo jsou věnovány jejich obětem.

Klíčová slova: rasové nepokoje, otroctví, rasismus, násilí, nezaměstnanost, ghetto, policie, Rodney King, demonstrace, nespravedlnost, velká porota

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Abstract

The aim of the thesis is to find similarities, alternatively differences among the three main race riots, which took place in Los Angeles and Ferguson in 1965, 1992 and 2014. Every of these revolts is described in a great detail in the second, third and fourth chapter. The introductory chapter tries not only to penetrate into the issues of an animosity between the African Americans and the police, but furthermore offers a view into the history of the race riots in America before 1965 with a concentration on the seven most serious revolts. Besides other things, this chapter engages in the issue of slavery and the rights of the minorities, since these issues connect the whole thesis and it is usually the non-acceptance from the majority that causes the unrests. In second and third chapter, there is also an analysis of a certain literary work, which consolidates this thesis, as the plot takes place during the race riots. In the conclusion, the chapters offer a view on the cultural scene with songs and poems that deal with these revolts or are dedicated to their victims.

Key words: race riots, slavery, racism, violence, unemployment, ghetto, police, Rodney King, demonstrations, injustice, the Grand Jury.