The Mediatization of Black Nationalist Malcolm X:
A Critical Engagement with the Conditions that Enabled his Transformation to an All-American Hero Through the Analysis of the ‘Hate That Hate Produced’ and ‘Malcolm X’ the film

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Abstract

In the aftermath of the end of Cold War, the ideological restructuring that took place fundamentally affected the representation of one of the African American public figures of the 1970’s that was portrayed as deviant by the media and yet up that until that enjoyed time relative obscurity: Malcolm X. After the Spike Lee biopic, interest in his figure was rekindled albeit in an entirely new direction after the Watts Riots of 1992. Due to this shift, a cultural commodification of his figure undermined the subversiveness of his message and two decades later, there is still need for an extensive discussion to re-conceptualize the subtle reinforcement of hegemonic structures in the mediatization process and address the political context in the commodification of Malcolm X. In that vein, this article applies the notion of mediatization of the figure of Malcolm X on film and television as analyzed through the lens of cultural commodification.

Keywords: Malcolm X, media representations, Black Nationalism, cultural commodification, mediatization, Nation of Islam, Spike Lee, The Hate That Hate Produced
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Introduction

What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore-- And then run? (Hughes, 1951)

Over the course of the last decade, what many African Americans and civil rights activists in the 60’s considered a somewhat summer night’s dream, would end up deferred but overtime tangibly materialized: The belated yet much needed acceptance and integration of Malcolm X (henceforth MX) into the ‘pantheon of civil rights legends’ (Marable, 2006a, p. 147) that was institutionalized by the U.S. Government through the issuance of MX postage stamps in 1999 (Yousman, 2001) and the election of Barack Obama as the first African American President in the United States history.

Forty-five years after the assassination of MX and just one year after the inauguration of the first African-American to become president of the United States, issues of representation of these two emblematic figures in the media however, remain ever present. Whether or not the election of Barack Obama to the highest office in the United States, constitutes yet another form of ‘mere tokenism’ (Davies et al, 2009, p. 323) the fact remains that it was the media-savviness of his campaigning strategy that contributed to his landslide victory. Interestingly enough and despite the striking and self-evident differences between these two prominent African American personalities one of the aspects that has often gone unnoticed about MX is – like Barack Obama’s ‘willingness to engage new media’ (Dupuis & Boeckelman, 2008, p. 6) – his understanding and to a certain extend manipulation of the new media’s capacity to effectively disseminate his message; he knew how to fuel the media with newsworthy – mostly indignant
towards White America – powerful one liners for the newspaper headlines or three minute segments for television newscasts, long before the other civil rights movement leaders were able to make the most of the media (Steele, 1992; Doherty T. P., 2000).

In fact, even conservative critics like Shelby Steele have noted that MX ‘spoke in sound bites long before the term was invented’ (1992, p. 31). Because of the provocative tone of his statements, media started seeking out the smartly dressed representative of the Nation of Islam, a religion that combined fundamental Black Nationalist claims with Islam. He never let them down: his statements constituted newsworthy material that would make it to the media. MX was composed, ‘quick witted’ (which made him even more intimidating), almost always impeccably dressed (that in conjunction to his speaking skills made him even more telegenic and sought after as a speaker in panels) and quite polemical (Doherty T. P., 2000, p. 32).

The controversy around his name and his fiery speeches consistently increased newspaper circulation, proving once again the validity of the age-old journalistic adage: 'fear sells'. The fear that MX inspired during his lifetime was relevant to the broader socio-political context. Malcolm was suspected - to the point FBI was following him closely for 7 years (Carson, 1993) - of having socialist ties in a time the Cold War was still being waged and the Civil Rights movement was compromising the image of the U.S.A. as the bona fide leader of the Free World around the world.

Despite the media coverage he enjoyed though, prior to the release of the Spike Lee biopic that was inspired by his autobiography, the very mentioning of his name would be confound in the list of Civil Rights movement leaders and those political figures assassinated in the 60's (Dyson M. E., 1996a). Flashing forward 27 years after his death and a couple of months after the release
of 'X', Malcolm overnight reached 'demi-god' (Doherty T. P., 2000, p. 29) status especially for generation X of African Americans and Americans in general, that could only theoretically and from a distance relate to Civil Rights Movement figures of the 60s (Lee & Gates, 1992).

Having said that, just as impressively as MX entered the pantheon of iconic African Americans he surreptitiously became a brand name with all the consequences that it carries. In hindsight, commercialization led to a cultural commodification that did not merely help portray a more approachable Malcolm but also significantly undermine ‘his political militancy’ (hooks, 1994, p. 161).

This thesis will illustrate the process of contrastingly different signification a Black Nationalist Malcolm X actually had enjoyed in visual media during his lifetime in contradistinction to the glorified yet commodified icon that the 'Malcolm X' (henceforth X) (Lee, 1992) film generated, by examining the 1992 film and the 1959 ‘Hate that hate produced’ (henceforth HTTP) (Wallace, 1959).

Extending Manning Marable's aphorism that 'MX's life started after his death' (2006, p. 164), the issue of cultural commodification through his media representations in conjunction with the socio-political context will be addressed.

To fulfil this aim, chapter one will begin with a critical discussion of the relevant literature regarding Malcolm X, his life itinerary and why he was selected as a case study. Furthermore, the role of hip-hop music played in MX will lead us to explore the concept of cultural commodification. That will then lead us to the exploration of the main objective of this research, that is the exploration of the concept of ‘mediatization’ and its application to explain the transformation the figure of MX, the Black Nationalist, underwent.
The second chapter will provide a geopolitical overview of the time the ‘HTTP’ and ‘X’ were aired that will help contextualize why MX was perceived in such a contrastingly different way in the 90s compared to the 60s.

The third chapter will elaborate on the methodology and the reasons for which the media samples selected for analysis are suitable for the needs of this research. To perform a critical discourse analysis of ‘HTTP’ (Wallace, 1959) and ‘X’ (Lee, 1992) this thesis will rely on insights from the post-Marxist discourse theory and will employ the notion of cultural commodification as the main analytical lens through which the concept of mediatization will be conceptualized.

The analysis will have a two-fold outlook, a micro and a macro section, reflecting the view that critical discourse theory on a theoretical level ‘bridges the well-known “gap” between micro and macro approaches’ (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 354). The micro section, that is the section of the audiovisual analysis, will revolve around the interpretations of the above-mentioned media samples. The findings stemming from this analysis will then be outlined. Because of how the findings section is structured, the analysis section will provide a thorough exploration, critical engagement and interpretation of these findings by threading back the most significant points outlined in the previous chapters.

In the conclusion, chapter four, I will reiterate the main findings and arguments. In addition to that, I will re-evaluate the main theoretical aspects of this thesis in accordance with the above findings and suggest potential areas for future research. The appendix section at the very end will provide a visual aid that will facilitate the decoding of the text of these two media sources as well as the transcripts of ‘HTTP’ and ‘X’.
1. The Convenient Multivalence of Malcolm X as a Black Nationalist

In this chapter, I provide a brief historic overview of MX’s life, explore his significance as a case study as well as his association with Black Nationalism. Furthermore, I briefly explore the concept of Black Nationalism and how the audiovisual sampling and broader appropriation of his work in hip-hop reinforced that association. I also argue that it is not only his polysemy of his figure but also his effect on the discourse of Black Nationalism that renders him such an engaging study. At that point, I introduce bell hooks’ concept of cultural commodification that will constitute a broader theoretical framework through which the process of MX’s mediatization will be examined. Finally, I proceed by exploring the concept of mediatization through which I am able to explore how MX’s image was used in television and film.

‘Malcolm X has become a divided metaphor (my italics): for those who love him, he is a powerful lens of self-perception, a means of sharply focusing political and racial priorities; for those who loathe him, he is the distorted mirror that reflects violence and hatred’ (Dyson M. E., 1996a, pp. 232-33).

The term ‘divided metaphor’ could not have been more accurate in describing the ambiguity with which Malcolm X (henceforth MX) has been treated in the broader public sphere and as a number of scholars (Dyson M. E., 1993; Marable, 2006a; 2010) have pointed out, these opposites have helped blur rather than clarify his work and legacy.

Prior to the Spike Lee biopic, MX had been portrayed with a number of often contradictory qualities: the favorably disposed to socialist ideas revolutionary (Breitman G., 1967; Breitman, Porter, & Smith, 1976) and the leader that used his charisma to combine a Black Nationalist mindset with socialist underpinnings (Goldman, 1973). He had also been depicted as the enlightened, pious religious leader (Lomax L., 1963; Baker, 1984; DeCaro Jr, 1998) and the
advocator of self-defensive violence that actively opposed the omnipresent racism of White America (Wolfenstein, 1981; Perry, 1991). Given these often-contradictory and somewhat elusive characterizations of MX, it would be useful at this point, to explain the reasons for which he has been selected as a case study.

1.1 The Significance of Malcolm X as a Case Study and his Life

A Mythical Figure

Malcolm X is without a doubt one of the most prominent African Americans of all times (Asante, 2002, p. 33). To many African Americans, especially after the release of the Spike Lee film about his life, there seems to be a ‘messianic representation to his life’ (Saldana-Portillo, 1997, p. 289); he is often described a ‘demi-god’ (Doherty T., 2000), a ‘mythical hero’ (Donalson, 2003), a cultural hero’ (Asante, 1993) among many other similar characterizations that border on a ‘hagiographical’ construction of Malcolm X (Dyson M. E., 1993).

What made him so appealing to both White and Black America was his journey; for White Americans he signifies the ‘self-made man’ (Lee & Gates, 1992), an example of ‘upward mobility’ (Boyd, 1993) that embodies the ‘good ol’American way of demanding and getting his rights’ as it has been encapsulated in some of MX’s memorable aphorisms: ‘Nobody can give you freedom. Nobody can give you equality or justice or anything. If you’re a man, you take it’ (MX quoted in Breitman G., 1965, p. 111).

In contrast, for Black Americans it is the fascination by his mental emancipation, his escaping from the clichéd ghetto lifestyle on his own terms and for ‘telling off’ White Americans ‘without even blinking’ in a time that could only took place behind closed doors (Gates, 1993, p. 11). As Paul Gilroy argues, it’s the ‘openness of his narrative’ that not only makes him such a fascinating
case study and prompts us ‘to try to make sense of the apparent limitless post-modern plasticity of Malcolm X’ (1993, p. 13). That ‘limitless post-modern plasticity’, that I will argue is evident in the media representation of MX in television and film, will be conceptualized through the notion of ‘mediatization’. To understand however the complexities involved in his representations it is imperative to briefly engage with the facts about Malcolm X’s life in order to gain a better understanding of his constant transformations and how his past contributed to the formation of his subsequent worldview.

The Life of Malcolm X

Through the Autobiography of Malcolm X (X & Haley, 1965) that is according to Life magazine considered to be one of the most eminent nonfiction books of the last century (Gray, 1998) and Spike Lee’s film ‘X’ (1992), most aspects of his life are fairly well known, alas with variations that serve only the artistic purposes of two different narratives, a cinematic and a literary one. For more details about his turbulent life see (Appendix 1).

As also shown in the Spike Lee biopic, one can discern five distinct time periods in MX’s life: the early life of Malcolm Little, Malcolm Little’s delinquent life, Malcolm Little’s prison conversion to Nation of Islam (henceforth NOI) ii, the fiery NOI minister and finally El Hajj Malik El Shabazz. The last period of his life represents the broadminded thinker that tried to create an institutional context through which the Black Nationalism could finally yield some tangible, political outcomes (Winn, 2001).

The MX’s life itinerary indicates a complex, restless, ever-evolving figure. However, according to Manning Marable’s (2010) most recent oeuvre and by far the most informed book about MX’s life, prior to the film his complexity was not conveyed by the mass media. MX kept
reinventing himself but until the time of his death, the way he was presented in the media was fairly a more static; his image was confined him to either that of the former swindler or the militant spokesperson of a Black Nationalist group (Gilroy, Spiking the Argument: Spike Lee and the Limis of Racial Community, 1993). Given Black Nationalism was considered ‘a critical component ‘to MX’s discourse it is important to critically engage with this concept MX has been traditionally associated with.

**Black Nationalism**

Numerous authors have acknowledged that prior to ‘X’, MX had been reduced to a radical that spearheaded the Black Nationalism movement (Draper, 1970; Pinkney, 1976; Hall R. L., 1978; T'Shaka, 1983; Van Deburg, 1992). After the film, he was once again reified as ‘a preacher par excellence of Black Nationalism’ that retrospectively had inspired other Black Nationalist groups as iconic and important to African-American imagery as the Black Panthers (Dyson M. E., 1993). His years as a spokesperson for NOI were very emblematic partly because of NOI’s success in performing the role of a ‘political religion’ and drawing parallels between Islam, ‘pan-Africanism and race pride’ (Turner, 1997, p. 129). That constitutes NOI as a unique for its time combination of variables. NOI can in fact be considered an aspect in the evolution of Black Nationalism that leads us to contemplate on its fundamental principles.

Karenga (1980, p. 15) argues that Black Nationalism is the belief system according to which African Americans should progressively emancipate themselves both on a mental and a material level to an extent that will facilitate the promotion of their interests as a people. A people that would over time manage to fulfill its inchoate and ultimately ‘unrealized’ political aspirations through claiming a territorial state for African Americans (Dyson M. E., 1996, p. 99).
Dyson regards Black Nationalism ‘as a response to the erosion of communal identity’ that can be partly attributed to the days of slavery and argues that one of the fundamental preconditions of Black Nationalism is the privileged emphasis given on the African heritage rather than its broader American identity (1996, p. 111). That is to say that Black Americans regarded themselves as Africans rather than Americans, and white Americans did not regard them as Americans at all. In Saidian terms (1978), Black Americans were the ‘other’ in contradistinction to which, historically speaking, White Americans defined themselves (hooks, 1992).

MX, before he was assassinated, tried to transform that somewhat vague belief system and political aspirations into an organized, institutional, collective fight that would address these issues through a more pragmatic political alliance of African Americans. According to Breitman, MX advocated a form of sensible Black Nationalism where African-Americans should build stronger cultural ties with ‘mother Africa’ but pursue their interests in America instead of chasing what he considered to be the chimera of a separate nation state (1965).

Although his ambitious plan did not come to fruition, his active political involvement with Black Nationalism can explain why up until the film about his life in the American collective consciousness he was branded in such a way that was not what he was branded as; according to Thomas Doherty he was widely remembered as ‘an angry black man’ (2000, p. 33) of the early period of his life. That image would be perpetuated by the portrayal of MX in popular culture in general and particularly hip-hop music.

Black Nationalist Malcolm X in Hip-Hop and Malcolm X, the product

As far as popular culture representations is concerned, MX had been directly associated with the picture of him holding an AK-47 while looking out the window or with the inflammatory
sound bites of ‘by any means necessary’ and ‘the bullet or the ballot’ (2000, p. 33). Both sound bites belonged to the MX’s speeches from his NOI years.

In the period from 1987 until 1992 when ‘Malcolm X’ the film was released, commercially successful and critically acclaimed hip hop artists like Public Enemy would go as far as using entire segments from MX’s speeches in their tracks, especially from his days as a Black Nationalist (Boyd, 1993; Marable, 2006a). As explained by hip-hop scholar and an expert on MX Michael Eric Dyson, hip-hop music had a ‘decisive influence in promoting the cultural rebirth of Malcolm X’, as most of African-American hip-hop artists and consumers of the late 80s and early 90s considered MX as a figure of ‘epic racial achievement’ (1996, p. 82).

That in its own turn created a ripe market for MX, not the public figure, but ‘the product’ this time (Doherty T., 2000, p. 35). Interestingly enough, that ripe generation X African-American market audience that in the ‘golden age of hip-hop’ was reintroduced to the legacy of MX was soon after expanded to a white American audience with a remarkable success. That success can be to a great extent attributed to the swell in popularity of hip-hop, among white American adolescents in suburbia that started taking place in the late 80s and early 90s (Spiegler, 1996; Sullivan, 2003).

According to Dyson, one of the main reasons it was proclaimed the ‘golden age of hip-hop’ was predominantly because of its ‘Afrocentric and black nationalist’ discourse (2007, p. 64). That is one of the reasons MX’s speeches were so extensively looped throughout entire albums of that period vii. This ‘sixties inspired hip hop nationalism’ (Decker, 1993, p. 53), arguably set the stage for a more widespread recognition of MX’s charisma in both White and Black America by ‘commodifying’ MX.
1.2 Commodification

The term commodification has its roots in Marxist political theory and denotes the procedure through which a person, object or resource that previously lacked an economic value is being inscribed one. As a result, that person, object or resource’s market value supersedes and exceeds its social value thus forming a mutation of non-commercial to strictly profit driven relationships. That prompts us to reflect on the Communist Manifesto and description of those mutations as transforming ‘personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom - free trade’ (Engels & Marx, 2008, p. 11).

As Ravin, a prominent commodification scholar, argues, the notion of commodification integrates the perspectives of cultural studies and economics (1996). Numerous scholars have explored the concept of commodification from both perspectives but it would be more appropriate to focus on both aspects of that theoretical framework; one that is pertinent to the African American experience in relation to the broader movement of Black Nationalism and one that covers the economics perspective. For the purposes of my analysis, I primarily employ bell hooks’ theory to explore MX’s cultural aspect of commodification and secondly Rosemary Coombe’s theory, that takes into consideration the economic aspects of MX’s commodification.

In the context of American racial and power politics, bell hooks sees herself as part of the African-American minority that has been by definition considered a marginalized group, with White Americans attaining the role of the dominant group. In her book, Black Looks: Race and Representation, she defines cultural commodification as the allegorical act of devouring and ingesting the ‘Other (1992, p. 25)’; that entails individuals or even entire movements that can be
appropriated to translate better into the dominant culture. She also explicitly argues that the broader movement of Black Nationalism had in the 90s fallen victim to a flagrant appropriation by ‘white cultural imperialism’:

‘Black Nationalism, with its emphasis on black separatism, is resurging as a response to the assumption that white cultural imperialism and white yearning to possess the Other are invading Black life, appropriating and violating black culture (hooks, 1992, p. 30).

Hooks states that marginalized groups fail to see through this ‘invasion’ that is disguised as ‘the promise of recognition and reconciliation’ that ultimately validates the all-inclusive nature of the American Dream by delivering tokens of ‘progressive political change’ even when it seemingly ‘invites a resurgence of essentialist cultural nationalism’ (1992, p. 31).

Cultural commodification however revolves around variables that are not so abstract but as tangible as economics, as previously explained. From the economics perspective, Coombe and Stoller argue that the Spike Lee docudrama about MX ‘consolidated forces promoting the cultural commodification (my italics) of his persona (Coombe & Stoller, 1994, p. 261); that of MX as the aforementioned ‘product’. They also brought forth the issue of who claimed ownership of the ‘X’ trademark and thus profited off the sales of items that bore the ‘X’ trademark. Betty Shabazz, MX’s widow, and Spike Lee’s production company, had to go through rigorous negotiations of ‘copyright, trademark, publicity rights and merchandizing rights’ to establish what their share of the action would be, out of the estimated tens of millions worth of revenue from the official merchandize bearing the trademarked X™ insignia (Coombe & Stoller, 1994).
As Rosemary Coombe argues, the corporate trademark changes the power dynamics, as it constitutes ‘a signifier that proliferates in the mass media communications technologies of postmodernism’ (1993, p. 420). Hence, as a ‘commercial trademark’, MX is in a state of constant ‘flux and constantly (my italics) undergoing new media mutations’ (Coombe, 1993, p. 427). These media mutations that MX’s commodification generated, along with MX’s broader representation in the media are being explored further down through the notion of mediatization.

1.2 Malcolm X and the Media

Mediatization

‘Mediatization’ points to societal changes in contemporary high modern societies and the role of media and mediated communication in these transformations’ (Lundby, 2009, p. 3)

As Lundby explains, the series of changes brought about by mediatization transform all aspects of social and cultural life in late modernity. The operations of society depend on mediated communications and I will also argue about the validity of the vice versa too; that is how mediated communications can depend on the operations of society. He also argues that the broader field of cultural industries, producers and consumers seems to be routinely ‘mediated’ more often than live. The findings of Auslander’s (1999) analysis of the transformation of the interrelation between live and mediated performances attest to that.

Therefore, given that MX became one of the most mediated African American figures of the 60s after ‘X’, I will seek to explore what was the role of mediatization not only in the perception of MX as a dangerous Black Nationalist in the 60s but also to the transformation of his representation in the 90s after ‘X’.
‘Mediatization’ occurs within plexuses of hegemonic, cultural and communicative structures (Martin-Barbero, 1993). Mediatization moulds society and culture as well as the dialectics that individual and institutional participants have to their environment and to each other. In fact, ‘institutions and technologies as well as the meaning delivered by them are mediated in the social process of reception and consumption’ (Silverstone, 2005, p. 189).

I will therefore seek to explore the dialectics between media as seen through the interconnected forces of consumption and, as explained in the methodology chapter, through the analytical lens of commodification. The meanings delivered by the media have transformed the social attitudes driven by the process of representations of MX, as received by the public. My aim is to also incorporate the historical context in my visual analysis of the transformation of the figure of MX as articulated in ‘HTHP’ and ’X’.

Mediatization is a quite broad conceptual framework that in the past has been used to explain the mediatization of politics, war, crisis and religion among others. Mazzoleni from a very generic point of view defines the ‘mediatization of society’ as a concept that reflects the increasing expansion of the sphere of influence of media (regarded as both cultural technology and an institution) that permeates all aspects of the social realm (2008a). Couldry (2008) counter argues that Mazzoleni’s claims are too generic and all encompassing and that as I will further down explain certain limitations are required.

As Sonia Livingstone argues, this conceptual framework enables us to reconsider issues of media power (2009). According to Livingstone, media are viewed as both cultural technologies and social institutions that lead to social transformations and cultural changes. Hence, I will employ mediatization as a conceptual framework through which one could grasp the media and
societal changes of late modernity (Lundby, Introduction: 'Mediatization' as Key, 2009; Hjarvard, 2008a; 2008b; Krotz, 2009). It is also interesting to point out there has also been a heated debate about whether the term ‘mediatization’ or that of ‘mediation’ is more appropriate to use.

‘Mediation’ or ‘mediatization’?

Hjarvard (2008a; 2008b), Krotz (2009) and Lundby (2009), prefer the term mediatization while Livingstone (2009), Chouliaraki (2006) and Couldry (2008) are in favor of the term ‘mediation’ when describing the aforementioned processes. Nick Couldry in particular, is an avid supporter of using the term ‘mediation’ (2008). He recognizes that the use of the word mediatization, ascribed to it by Hjarvard and Krotz, as a lens through which broader transfigurations on a sociocultural level can be considered quite valid. He regards mediatization as ‘a useful attempt to concentrate our focus on a transformative logic’ that can be suggested of performing ‘something distinctive to (i.e. “mediatize”) particular processes, objects, and fields (Couldry, 2008, p. 376). There are however certain requirements that need to be met; the assertions of those who argue in favour of the label ‘mediatization’ need to be clearly defined and addressing ‘forms or formats’ (Lundby, Introduction: 'Mediatization' as Key, 2009, p. 13) that are suited for examining media representation.

Taking the above arguments into consideration, and for the purposes of this research I will be using the term ‘mediatization’ but after incorporating Couldry’s objections about the term in its use. I will elaborate on why the media samples I am examining are suitable to be examined, in the methodology chapter.
In addition, Jannson’s use of the notion of mediatization to explore marketing and consumer culture is quite relevant to my analysis as he mentions that ‘mediated cultural products’ have increasingly become ‘cultural referents’; as such they are instrumental to the ‘development and maintenance of cultural communities’ (2002, p. 432). In line with Jannson’s argument, Hjarvard analyzes mediatization from an ‘institutional perspective’ based on the ‘interplay between media and other social spheres or institutions’ (2008b, p. 213). He argues that society to an increasing degree is submitted to or dependent on the media and their logic. I will verify the validity of this concept and explore how this can be applied to interpret the effect of ‘X’ on a social level. Given consumerism is intimately connected with this media logic and constantly driven by the concept commodity, I will seek to explore this relation and its results as seen through the transformation of society and the dominant ideology concerning Black Nationalism in the 90’s and after the release of ‘X.’

Hjarvard also stresses the dual role of media that not only have been and still are ‘integrated into the operations of social institutions’, but they have also ‘acquired the status of social institutions in their own right (2008a, p. 126). Consequently, social interaction – within the respective institutions, between institutions and in society – materializes via the media. Thus, the dual role of the media in regards to the framing of events, ideas and individuals and their representations as part of social interaction will be also examined.

Hjarvard (2004) recognizes two forms of mediatization, a ‘direct’ and an ‘indirect’ one. Direct mediatization is when ‘a formerly non-mediated activity converts to a mediated form’; he brings the example of transformation of the banking experience where one has to be physically be in a bank and the transformation to online banking. The indirect one is ‘when the media and their symbolic world in terms of form, content or organization increasingly influence an existing
activity’ (Hjarvard, 2004, p. 32). In this case, the indirect form of mediatization is how the symbolic load of ‘X’ affected how African-Americans would be literally referred to from Black Americans to African Americans. Given the transformation of MX to a cultural product as a process of commodification, I will seek to explore how activities not directly related to MX, were influenced by the media and their content, as a result of societal change and cultural transformations in America.

The Media Representations of Malcolm X as a Black Nationalist in Television and Film

There is unfortunately no comprehensive analysis whatsoever of how Black Nationalist MX was portrayed on television and the numerous television appearances he had made. Just a small number of scholars (Doherty T. , 2000; Turner, 1997) have briefly touched on his television representations but are limited only to MX’s representation on ‘HTHP’; both Doherty and Turner briefly discuss the effect the ‘HTHP’ documentary had on how MX was portrayed as a militant black nationalist and the imprinting of that image in the American collective consciousness prior ‘X’.

Film scholar, Thomas Doherty (2000), briefly yet concisely provides a short visual deconstruction of the portrayal of MX in the ‘HTHP’ to argue how his monolithic portrayal contributed to the perpetuation of his figure associated with the indignant towards white Americans, NOI minister.

Turner, a scholar that explores the dialectics between Islam and the African American experience, in his same-titled book, argues that the ‘HTHP’ ‘set the tone of how the dangerous yet articulate Black Nationalist MX would be portrayed up until the Spike Lee film and that the film renewed interest’ in Black Nationalism (Turner, p.240).
In sharp contrast, MX’s representation on film as a proponent of Black Nationalism is often explored. Lee’s film is thought to have ‘a renewed interest in Malcolm X that swept through the black community and elevated him to the status of mass political/cultural icon’ (Bogle, 1996, p. 351). As McCrisken and Pepper argue, in their book *American History and Contemporary Hollywood Film: Hollywood Vs Black America?*, ‘X’ established and re-introduced ‘Malcolm as iconic Black Nationalist hero’ (2005, p. 175).

Gerald Powell identifies the fiery NOI minister’s – as already mentioned one of the main MX personalities portrayed in the film according to Winn (2001) – rhetoric in the film ‘as a source of agency and self esteem’ by producing a MX that is seen promulgating a doctrine of ethnic pride’ in the film (2004, p. 26). There were objections however coming from bell hooks about the depoliticized notion of Black Nationalism that the representation of MX perpetuates.

bell hooks, performed a harsh critique on Spike Lee’s film in regards to MX’s portrayal as a fervent exponent of Black Nationalism. She accused him of erasing any kind of political militancy in his representation where the critique of neocolonialism and capitalism were strikingly absent and held Spike Lee personally accountable for ‘underlying political conservatism’ (1994, p. 169). She essentially denounced him for erasing the political message of MX’s NOI days and for contributing in the commodification of his figure. After providing the existing literature on the theoretical axes of this analysis, it is also important to examine any research lacunas.

*Research gaps*

To conclude this chapter, I explore the research gaps and weaknesses of this literature review. Both the supporters and critics of the representation of MX as Black Nationalist in ‘X’ and those
who argue about his portrayal as such in the ‘HTTP’, provide limited visual analysis with the exception of Doherty. I expand Doherty’s visual analysis on the ‘HTTP’ and provide an engaging visual analysis that will be combined with that of ‘X.

This thesis aims to cover one major gap in the voluminous existing literature on MX. Despite the fact, MX has been described as ‘a star of the media’ (Turner, 1997, p. 175), and his transformation of his figure’s media representations from the 60s to the 90s, his media representations have not been thoroughly explored.

The other major gap this literature reveals is that one has applied the notion of mediatization to describe that radical change of the media representations of MX. I will explore the mediatization of MX throughout this research to conceptualize the transfigurations involved, to ‘emphasize missing links and to create theory’ (Krotz, 2009, p. 39).

The third major research gap also lies in the context of that transformation of the ‘mediatization’ of MX; although both the ‘HTTP’ and the film have been analysed as catalytic media events concerning MX’s representations, the role that the geopolitical context might have played in the portrayal has never really been explored. In the chapter that follows, I explore how the geopolitical context is possible have contributed in the mediatization of MX in the context of these two different decades.
2. The ‘Threatening Other’

The main axes of this overview will be the global, the local and the ‘glocal’ (Robertson, 1992) parameters – that in this case are the events that affected the interior of the U.S., events that affected the world and these events where the above categories overlap in the broader socio-political discourse – of the late 50s and early 90s as captured in the respective geopolitical economy sections. Out of these, I argue that fear is the aspect that permeates most aspects of the cultural/political discourse of the 60s and that in the 90s, right we can locate a subtle ideological restructuring targeted at soothing racial tensions in the country and projecting America’s image as a racially inclusive one abroad.

One has to dispense with the constituent subject, to get rid of the subject itself, that’s to say, to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework (Foucault, 1980, p. 115).

In order to delve deeper into how the Foucaultian ‘subject’ - in this case the icon of MX - was constructed in the 60s and the 90s respectively, it is imperative that we provide a brief overview of the critical geopolitical economy of the time the media samples of this analysis belong to. Given geopolitics is regarded as ‘that ideological process of constructing spatial, political and cultural boundaries to demarcate the domestic space as separate from the ‘threatening other’ (Dalby, 1990, p. 173), this overview will encapsulate some fundamental aspects of these interconnected boundaries.

2.1 Geopolitical Economy of the American Society in the Late 50s and Early 60s

‘The 50s were a materialistic, militaristic, frightened, conformist, conservative, stuffy, and trivial decade’ (Miller & Nowak, 1977, p. 12)
In this section, I will look into the parameters that Miller and Nowak consider the most defining parameters of the decade: materialism, militarism, fear, conformity and conservatism. By definition, most countries after the end of a war conflict, retreat into an inward-looking, more conservative modus vivendi. The U.S. was certainly not the exception to that rule after WWII. As C. Wright Mills points out, from the mid 50’s onwards there was a ‘conservative mood’ in the country (Mills, 1956). In fact, conservatism was so predominant in post WWII America that it led to the famous Manichean ‘morality of the 50s’. That morality stemmed from bipolar oppositions that were strikingly popular within the American discourse at the time\textsuperscript{xiii}.

In the late 50s, the Cold War Culture was being ingrained in the collective American psyche through the anxiety about a forthcoming nuclear attack from the Soviet Union and fears of Communists infiltrating the country\textsuperscript{xiv}. The nuclear anxiety and the so called ‘Red Scare’ that dominated the discourse of the 1950s from start to finish brings us to discuss the contour of the political discourse of that decade. That ominous anxiety contributed to the sustenance of a fear culture that permeated all aspects of American popular culture and made Americans think of everything around them as potentially fearful: fear that the neighbour might be a spy working for the Soviets and fear that there might be a nuclear attack that will wipe off entire states from the map.

The boundaries of the political and cultural/popular discourse in the 60s were quite fenced and excluded everyone that did not fit within the model and successful ‘middle-classless’ American citizen (law-abiding, heterosexual, patriotic, entrepreneurial, fervent ‘supporter of privately organized economy’ (Schiller, 1973, p. 10)\textsuperscript{v}. Conformity and uniformity were of quintessential importance and those who dared to defy these values were marginalized.
The different, the ‘threatening other’ (Dalby, 1990) was embodied in Communist Russia and anyone affiliated to political views that alluded to that was regarded a traitor. This was truly a period in the U.S. when in the U.S. you could be either pro-American or un-American. Mere suspicion of the latter could be devastating for a person’s career and witch-hunts of alleged Communist elements working in the country based on often-unsubstantiated claims in the era of McCarthyism were fairly commonplacexvi.

Anything that was different to the political norms of the time was dubbed un-American and anything un-American to allude to the infamous McCarthy committee’s name would be treated as a ‘contagious disease’ (Morgan, 2003, p. 584) that had to be removed before it could infect the rest of the country. The American success-centered, materialistic way of life where success and financial prosperity constitute the ‘sovereign American values’ (Mills, 1956) was deemed more important than civil liberties; the latter were routinely infringed upon to locate, surgically remove or contain those who could potentially act as a carcinoma to the social tissue of America even whey were prominent Americans of the entertainment industryxvii.

In the time period after World War II until the 60s, in the U.S. rigorous spying on and vehement prosecution of people that were suspected of having any kind of socialist ties was the norm and the majority of white middle class detaching itself to strictly ‘one class’ suburban enclaves, far away from the toil of inner-city suburbs that were inundated with immigrants, coloured people and other ethnic groups (Rubinowitz & Rosenbaum, 2002). The geographical distance of white and black America (in the North and in the South) was often indicative of the internalized values of racial politics in the country that was yet to abolish Jim Crow lawsxviii. These boundaries would be however crossed once racial riots started occurring in the country some years later than the time period examinedxix.
The racial politics and the scars from that racial divide ran deep in the country’s history; the ‘threatening other’ that in at the time was primarily embodied by the Communists was not a novel concept; African American – that in the 60s was more common to call Negroes – had been one of the groups that white Americans had feared in the past. In the 60s, Black Nationalism was the most conspicuous articulation of a potentially fearful black supremacy movement; one that could trigger an uprising of the Negro community south of the Dixieline where racist discriminations were both rampant and institutionalized.

Up until 1959, images of racial abuse of African-Americans and their plight in the South did not invade the privacy of suburban Americans through television but these boundaries were also soon to be crossed with the television assuming a dominant role in the life of American suburbia at the time. As Martin Luther King concisely remarked ‘television brought out in the open and to the light what African Americans constantly experience behind the veil’ (Martin Luther King quoted in Jenkins & Tryman, 2002, p. 8).

One of the most iconic examples of the awakening that TV coverage provided as to the raw violence inflicted upon African-Americans, was the heavily televised Birmingham Bridge incident\textsuperscript{xx}. Four decades later, footage of an act of overt racial violence perpetrated by police officers, would once again stir riots in the country.

\textbf{2.2 Geopolitical Economy of the American Society in the Early 90s}

In late April and early May of 1992, racial violence had once again imploded in the country in the form of riots in South Central Los Angeles after the acquittal of the four policemen who were caught on camera using unjustifiably excessive force to contain motorist Rodney King. The riots escalated and images of entire neighbourhoods on fire could be paralleled to the Watts riots -
again in South Central Los Angeles – in the mid 60s and would graphically remind Americans and the rest of the world of the unresolved racial tensions in the country\textsuperscript{xxi}

One year after 1991 and the official dissolution of the U.S.S.R. – U.S.’s archrival in the global geopolitical arena for nearly four decades – the ‘\textit{Wolfowitz doctrine}'\textsuperscript{xxii} came to reassess and rearticulate the new strategic objectives for the \textit{Pax Americana}. The U.S. would assume the role of a ‘lone superpower’ that would not be restricted by traditional alliances with Germany and Japan in order to maintain its political, military and economic supremacy (Rupert & Solomon, 2006; Scoblic, 2008).

The first Gulf War is an example of how the ‘\textit{New World order}’ dogma of the George Bush Sr. administration materialized and reified that dominance\textsuperscript{xxiii}. In that war we can an example of how all three aspects of U.S. supremacy were reinscribed. On a political level, the U.S. through the U.N. managed to extract the consent of most countries around the world to intervene for Kuwait, a strategic U.S. ally in the region. On a military level, the heavily televised swift victory over the Iraqi forces not only managed to shake off the ‘Vietnam Syndrome, once and for all’ (George Bush Sr. quoted in (Herring, 1991) but also served as an example of how far-reaching and effective the American war machine could be\textsuperscript{xxiv}.

What is more, the early 90s would mark an era when not only geopolitical rivalries but also the accompanying ideological constructs that derived from these structures were reworked. The end of the 80’s saw the slow demise of the U.S.S.R. and the end of the Cold War that marked the beginning of an unchallenged \textit{Pax Americana}, a sort of global political constellation where the U.S. constituted ‘the ‘imperial sun’ around which the ‘political universe of less powerful states would revolve’ (Gill, 2003, p. 58). This hegemonic globalization was facilitated by the spread of
‘neo-liberalism as a set of principle rules undivided across the globe’ that established one of the most effective and eminent ideologies in the history of mankind and at the same time seamlessly initiated an ideological restructuring (Anderson, 2000, p. 17).

In the early 90s, the market dynamics became a global force to be reckoned with, leading to the emergence of what Stephen Gill calls ‘market civilization’ (2003, p. 117). This neo-liberalist influenced, ‘market civilization’ is a conflicting trend or series of transfiguring procedures that on the one hand, involve ‘cultural, ideological and mythic forms’ that help perpetuate a certain tenet of capitalist advancement and on the other hand incorporate ‘exclusionary and hierarchical patterns of social relations’ that help promote an ‘ahistorical, economistic and materialistic’ weltanschauung (Gill, 2003, pp. 117-8).

The early 90’s constituted a period of flux when ideological restructuring in view of the absence of the ‘threatening other’ (Dalby, 1990) embodied in the USSR potentially facilitated the perpetuation of the exploitation of MX by means of his ‘commodification’, as explained in the previous chapter (Yousman, 2001, p. 15). The lack of the Saidian ‘other’ (1978) outside the borders can be interpreted as leading to the handling of the traditionally turbulent ‘other’ within the country: African-Americans. In that context, the ‘commodification’ of an iconic African American that was traditionally considered a Black Nationalist serves as a more insidious example of the hegemonic power structures employing market forces. The following chapter is dedicated to the process through which this will be explored.
3. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I elaborate on my method, which is critical discourse analysis as seen through the prism of post-Marxist theory. Following that, I introduce phenomenology as the philosophical tradition utilized to interpret visual experience. I proceed to examine the visual material that I will be using for my analysis and I conclude by elaborating on the timeframe and limitations of my research.

3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

For the purposes of my research, I employ critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA). In undertaking this analytical task, I draw on theoretical insights from the neo-Gramscian, ‘post-Marxist’ corpus of literature to investigate the discursive articulations of hegemonic structures (Laclau & Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy - Towards a Radical Democratic Politics, 2001). Neo-Gramscian, post-Marxist discourse theory, as conceived and applied by Laclau and Mouffe, is not a mere methodological tool to examine abstract notions but as James Martin argues, displays ‘a growing sensitivity’ to how historically anchored, unforeseeably formulated and recurrently ideologically biased conceptual frameworks can be (Martin, 2002, p. 202).

It is precisely CDA’s emphasis on the socio-political context that is most useful in unravelling how that concept of hegemony was articulated in the years of X’s lifetime and in the time after ‘X’ (1992). CDA is the kind of analytical research that engages with the way power relations are being ‘enacted, reproduced, and resisted’ by media texts in the socio-political context (van Dijk T. , Critical Discourse Analysis, 2001, p. 352), a post-modernist approach often used in the deconstruction of texts and broader discourses to unpick the ideological undercurrents and motivating forces at play in examining media representations. At the same time, CDA

The main lens through which this analysis will be conceptualized is the notion of ‘cultural commodification’. Consequently, this research aspires to specify how the notions of cultural appropriation into the dominant American can be applied to interpret the ‘HTTP’ and ‘X’.

Given the often too broad and inclusive definition of discourse (Wodak, 2009), the need to elucidate the use of the term in the analysis that follows is imperative. Discourse can be defined as the inextricably linked to social forces, subtly and to a certain extent imperceptibly imposed, often absorbed unquestioned and immersed in values, patterns of signification. These patterns of signification help mould the fine matter from which the very identity of subjects and broader issues is being construed (Howarth, 2000; Laclau & Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy - Towards a Radical Democratic Politics, 2001). Post-Marxist discourse theory provides an engaging account of the hegemonic structures that marginalize certain identities and how these structures are affected by the changes in the socio-political agenda.

Shifts in power balance are linked to hierarchical rearrangements of dominant and marginalized identities (Fraser, 1997). Chantal Mouffe asserts that any form of consensus can be to some extent seen as stemming from hegemonical processes, whereby meaning is in the process of constant negotiation that is filtered through the institutionalized practices of cultural domination and exclusion. CDA not only elucidates the connections between discourse and practices that permeate the broader socio-political arena (Fairclough, 1995) but also reveals that
their function is intertwined and interconnected with intricate ‘mental processes’ in a fluid manner (van Dijk T. A., 1997, p. 6).

By articulating the direct connection between the broader political agenda, that has been addressed in the previous chapter, and the shift in media representations rather than just vaguely referring to them, this essay aims to address the lack of analyses that draw the correlations between ’discourse and action’ with ‘cognition and society’ respectively (van Dijk T. , 2001, p. 363). It therefore allows the critical exploration of the reconfiguration between power and economic relations that takes place in media representations, the reconfiguration for which we talked about in the first chapter. That reconfiguration will be seen within a broader phenomenological framework.

**Phenomenology**

The field of phenomenology could be on a first level defined as the analysis of the patterns of experience, or awareness. The entire discipline can be attributed to Edmund Husserl (2001) and its verbatim exegesis is the examination of phenomena; how things appear or what is our perception of these things that leads us to consider how meaning gets to be ascribed to our experiences.

According to Husserl, our experience is ‘intended’ or represented towards objects via an appropriate connoting set of conditions that help us filter our experiences through certain beliefs, notions and images; this is what Husserl calls ‘intentionality’. Therefore these filters of meaning or connoting set of conditions include cultural context, linguistic aspects, socio-political circumstance that provide the contextual framework through which we interpret experiences.
Hence, phenomenology prompts us to consider these connoting conditions that ascribe meaning to intentionality.

There are of course a number of different methods and approaches proposed by different advocates of phenomenology. I find the hermeneutic method proposed by Heidegger (1962) the most suitable for my research; that of decoding an experience by correlating it to apposite contextual elements, with emphasis paid on sociolinguistic parameters.

Phenomenology constitutes the broader conceptual framework through which we can interpret visual experiences like the viewing of a documentary or a film about MX. The broader socio-political aspects were briefly examined in the previous chapter and in the analysis chapter I will perform a textual analysis where emphasis will be paid to the narration and the imagery.

The micro level of analysis refers to that of ‘agency and interaction’ while the macro level corresponds to the broader systemic structures that apt to the realm of the social (Giddens, Duneier, & Applebaum, 2007).

At the core of this Heideggerian phenomenology lays a need to provide an interpretation of the phenomena, which is what is what we experience with our senses. I will employ this Husserlian-inspired branch of hermeneutics proposed by Heidegger to explore the phenomenological aspects of the following case studies through the lens of ‘cultural commodification’, that was explained in the first chapter.
3.2. ‘The Hate that Hate Produced’ and ‘Malcolm X’

Scholars like Stuart Hall have highlighted the impact that media can have in the construction of meanings and values within the discourse of a society in general (1979; Dahlgren, 1988). According to Silverstone (2005), The concept of mediatization, in particular, can only apply to late modern, media saturated societies and one can categorically claim that the U.S. is definitely one of them.

As mentioned in the introduction, this research is analysing two samples: the ‘HTHP’ (Wallace, 1959) documentary and the ‘X’ (Lee, Malcolm X, 1992). In relation to Lundby’s objections about the suitability of the ‘forms and formats’ (2009, p. 13), I specifically chose these two samples because they both initiated trends in how MX would be represented, in two different decades. They might be coming from different media formats, a news documentary and a film, but they both constituted ‘cultural referents’ that were pivotal in the ‘development and maintenance of cultural communities’ of their time (Jansson, 2002, p. 433).

The ‘HTHP’ was first aired on Mike Wallace’s News Beat show on WNTA-TV’s from the 13th to the 17th of July in 1959 as a five-part report that ‘sent shock waves throughout America’xxvi, while the Lee film was shown in film theatres around the world in 1993(Turner, 1997, p. 197). As mentioned in the introduction, I chose the first case study because it marks the major media exposure of MX to mainstream American television audiences that would set the tone of how he would be portrayed in the U.S. media in the years until his death.

In contradistinction, the ‘X’ was selected because it signalled a new era for Malcolm X, the all-American cultural icon that more broadly speaking marked the era of commodification for
MX. The film was first shown in the East and West Coast of U.S. on the 19\textsuperscript{th} of November of 1992. Although it was not a blockbuster, it was critically acclaimed albeit among controversy, as examined in the first chapter. The film generated a sort of ‘cultural rebirth’ (Dyson M. E., 1996, p. 133), that made his figure more popular and accessible to White and Black Americans alike (for altogether different reasons), as also mentioned in the first chapter.

I argue that these two case studies can be regarded as significant ’critical discourse moments’ (Gibson, 1992). Critical discourse moments are ‘periods that that involve specific happenings’ that may dispute the ‘established discursive positions’ (Carvalho, 2008, p. 166). Often when dealing with critical discourse moments, questions arise: is there a change in how an issue is treated, and if there is what is the perspective that seems to be arising?

The analysis of these discourse moments will ‘allow for the identification of discursive turns and/or continued lines of argumentation at particularly important times in the social construction’ or in this case reconstruction of an icon (Carvalho, 2008, p. 173). In this case, the icon of MX is examined in the 60s and 90s because of the juncture in which they are located; these samples aired on times that, as examined in the geopolitical overview, the American melting pot was boiling from the inside and racial tensions were on the rise. What is more, in the 90s as bell hooks points out Black Nationalism icons and rhetoric from the 60s, as highlighted in the literature review, get commodified. In fact, these similarities urged Gilroy to speak of a joke among the African American community ‘that the 1990s and the 1960s turned upside down’ (Gilroy, 1993, p. 184). Although there seem to be similarities between them, in the 90s the discourse of the Black Nationalism of the 60s becomes oddly enough depoliticized.
At this point I would also like to point out Lisa Gitelman’s emphasis on the specificity of media’s social, historical and cultural juncture in unravelling a palimpsest of equally specific ‘experiences of meaning’ (2008, p. 8). In order to unearth that palimpsest and render the analysis of these discourse moments constructive and compelling, it is important to elaborate on the segments I chose for the purposes of this analysis and the rationale behind this selection.

This analysis constitutes an exploratory study of the nature of phenomenology within the discourse of commodification as seen through the lens of hyperreality that allows us to explore a fairly broad range of meaningful aspects that can often go unnoticed: the narrative, visual structures, colours and editing. Out of the five-part HTTP, I chose the first four and thirty two seconds long segment of the second part that is directly dedicated to the figure of MX, the Black Nationalist NOI priest.

That is why the sample I chose from the documentary was the four minutes and thirty two seconds long segment from the second part where was MX was directly presented to the audiences through visual material like pictures and videos. In that sequence, I explore how the narrative, visual structures and editing help convey a certain meaning about MX.

My sample for the film is the opening and closing sequences that I consider significant because of the value-laden imagery; their ambiguity and I will try to determine whether there is a form of narrative cycle achieved through them. The first sequence lasts two minutes and thirty six seconds while the second one lasts for four minutes and thirty one seconds and given they are both essentially collages of images, one can draw some interesting assumptions about how a viewer could possibly interpret them.
Timeframe and Limitations

The time-gap between ‘HTTP’ and ‘Malcolm X’, that constitute my main focus of research covers a period of 44 years. This research does not aspire to cover the process of mediatization over these years, as that would require a variety of ‘empirical data to get a deeper understanding of occurring (long-term) processes of change’ (Hepp, 2009, p. 141).

In regards to these critical discourse moments, two interconnected questions suggest themselves:

What were the socio-political implications of reducing a black Nationalism Malcolm X in the media to a marginalized threat to American society in the 60’s and are the mediated communications incorporated by the society, as Hjarvard argues (2008a)?

What changed on a socio-political level in the early 90s after the release of ‘X’ that allowed for the cultural commodification of Malcolm X, the icon and are ‘cultural referents’ capable of transforming society (Jansson, 2002)?

At this point, it is necessary to acknowledge the organic limitations of this analytical endeavour. Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory is known to be “short on specific methodical guidelines and illustrative examples” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 8) so this analysis can be seen as an effort to supplement discourse theory with specific theories about a phenomenon as complex and studied as cultural appropriation. What is more, some critics find that CDA has to an extent been absorbed by the same power relations it is supposed to be criticizing in the first place and that CDA has become a ‘brand’ pertaining in this power structure, with all the
implications that this fact carries (Billig, 2003). Another limiting factor of CDA is that it often assumes a role of self-fulfilling prophecy as its proponents tend to focus on the aspects of the research that conveniently fit their starting argument, which is why counterarguments on their points they are trying to make should be also concluded as often as possible.

Finally, the conclusions reached by the findings of this research can apply only to these two ‘critical discourse moments’ and cannot be applied to the 44-year period in between them. However, limited as this research may be by the lack of interviews of people that were associated with MX in the 60s and journalists and anchormen that had talked about or hosted MX in TV panels it is important to understand that it provides a novel method of analysis of the mediatization of Malcolm X.

4. The Leap from Mediatized Dissensus to Commodification

Micro Analysis

As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, the analysis will consist of two parts: the micro and the macro section. The former will deal with the ‘deconstruction’ of the imagery of the ‘HTHP’ and the ‘X’ film, while the latter will be threading these findings to the broader socio-cultural context.

The ‘Hate That Hate Produced’

Given this documentary is not directly dedicated to MX, it is important to note that he is represented mainly through his involvement with the NOI. Given MX is characterized through that association it is significant to explore how NOI is introduced to the American television viewers in the first place.
The narrator, Wallace introduces the topic of the documentary as ‘a study of the rise of black racism, of a call for black supremacy of a small but growing segment of the American Negro’ population (Appendix 3). He introduces NOI to the television audience by first showing an audio segment of what he identifies as the ‘trial’, with visual material of orderly, well-dressed African American men and women that sit in different places according to their gender and repeated travelling shots of what seems to be a packed stadium (Appendix 4). The ‘trial’, is an ’indictment’, a ‘trial’ of white man’s ‘sins against the black man’ for which he is found ‘guilty’ and sentenced to ‘death’ (Appendix 5).

A sense of urgency is conveyed about the speed with which this movement is expanding: ‘their doctrine is being spread in fifty cities across the nation. Let no one underestimate the Muslims’. Apart from the exaggerated amount of NOI members (quoting the NOI that claimed they had a membership of a quarter of a million) it is highly important to point out that in the second sentence, every word was uttered in a staccato, word after word, fashion and to place even more emphasis he started walking towards the studio’s screen (Appendix 5).

The NOI members are predominantly presented as alien to the American lifestyle or American values for that matter. This is more graphically illustrated by the frame in which two hijab-wearing Negro adolescent women stand right in front of the NOI flag ‘in sharp contrast to American dress’ (Appendix 5) alluding to a supersession of the American flag by that of the NOI.

As Wallace when explicitly mentions, the aforementioned teenagers go to schools where ‘they learn to hate the white man’, one can discern the sign ‘University of Islam’ appearing in the background (Appendix 5). Following the sketching of NOI, MX is presented as their charismatic,
‘leader and ambassador at large’ for this un-American NOI movement that preaches a ‘gospel of hate’, automatically rendering MX as an apostle of that racial hate (Appendix 5). The idea of MX as second in command in the organization is enforced by the two pictures in which he is standing or sitting right next to Elijah Mohammad that is ‘shaking hands’ with prominent figures of the African American community in the country, that ‘regardless of their personal beliefs, respectfully listen’ when ‘leaders of the Black supremacy movement ‘speak’ (Appendix 6).

MX is being shown ‘proudly displaying five of the biggest Negro newspapers’ in mainly East Coast and just one in L.A., that a couple of seconds before Wallace said, disseminate ‘a gospel of hate’ (Appendix 6). Interestingly enough, one could easily associate that picture with that of a convict with his/hers number on, especially when considering that he’s being introduced to the viewers as a man that ‘by his own admission’ was a former ‘procurer and peddler’ that had been served time in prison for his illegal activities. As Doherty aptly points out, that could be done so as ‘perhaps to plant the idea that his role of minister is less a new life than a new con’ (2000, p. 33). This documentary offers a fragmented yet defining coverage of MX during his lifetime as an anti-American, apostle of hate, of inverted racism. MX’s imagery in HTTP comes in sharp contrast to that of the film’s closing sequence but fairly similar in scope to how he was presented in the opening sequence.

‘Malcolm X’

In the analysis of this cinematic text, I am exploring some of the imagery and audio samples involved in this film right at the beginning and the end of the film. Spike Lee incorporates the film’s opening credits with the collage of image at the beginning of ‘X’
As soon as the film credits start rolling, in the background one can barely hear MX uttering the most important prayer of Islam: ‘in the name of Allah, the merciful, all praises due to Allah’ etc. Shortly after that we see an American flag that is succeeded by a segment of he Rodney King beating. Throughout that introductory segment one can hear parts of the ‘trial’ previously examined in the ‘HTHP’ where he shuns the American Dream and calls it ‘American nightmare’ (Appendix 8).

There is a succession of shots that revolve mainly around the American flag and the Rodney King beating. Every time the viewer sees the flames engulf the flag it is followed by a shot of the Rodney King beating until the flame is totally engulfed in flames to become an X-shaped American flag, to convey the racial tensions in the country (Appendix 8). That could allude to films that engage with the violent treatment of African American by white Supremacists in the American south; a relevant example of that is the still frame of a slightly slanted cross in flames from ‘Mississippi Burning’ (Parker, 1988)(Appendix 9).

Unlike the politically controversial pastiche of sound bites and images of the opening sequence of the film, the closing sequence takes an entirely different direction. After the scene of MX’s assassinations follows a bricolage of archive pictures of Malcolm X from different periods of his admittedly diverse life itinerary that celebrates MX as an a cultural icon.

It starts with Martin Luther King commenting that Malcolm X’s assassination is a sign of a society whose members ‘haven't learned to disagree without being violently disagreeable’ (Appendix 10). A series of photos follow that portray him as the leader of NOI in front of both the NOI male members that wear a tie and a suit while the female ones are wearing the
traditional Muslim white attires (Appendix 10). One can draw some parallels with how MX was portrayed in the ‘HTTP’ (Appendix 4).

Afterwards, pictures of African Americans queuing up for MX’s funeral start appearing as one can hear Ossie Davis referring to MX as an ‘unconquered still’, ‘young champion’ whose memory many came to honour (Appendix 11). What is of utmost importance is not however the photos of MX’s personal moments or the ones he is on the streets selling newspapers (Appendix 11). It is the ones that show other icons that have been inspired by Black Nationalism like Angela Davis, Reverend Al Sharpton and the founder of Black Panthers Bobby Seale among others (Appendix 12). MX however is not merely presented as a key figure of Black Nationalists but as a cultural export to the rest of the world.

MX’s figure crosses the boundaries of America as he becomes an inspirational icon for young coloured people in South Africa’s Soweto where Africans are holding pictures of him and as shown at the end of film when Nelson Mandela talks to young students about MX (appendix 13).

Finally, in this post-modern pastiche of still frames and archive video, the controversial, quasi-sacrilegious image of an American flag blazing in the sign of the X closes with an X; the difference is that by the time the end credits start rolling a form of cultural commodification replaces his legacy. MX’s figure becomes a T-shirt stamp and smooth around the edges black and white trademark devoid of any controversy he had been associated with as a Black Nationalist of the 60s (Appendix 14).

While the above findings shed some light to the way MX was portrayed in these two different critical discourse moments, it is of vital importance that we further explore these findings, placing them within the geopolitical climate of the late 50s and the hyperreality of the early 90s.
as outlined in the geopolitical overview and the methodology section, chapter two and three respectively. In its own turn, that will lead us to answer the major questions discussed in detail in the methodology chapter.

Macro analysis

4.1 Black Nationalist Malcolm X as Anti-American in the 60s

Due to the descriptive nature of the findings, and in order to explore the socio-political implications of reducing Malcolm X in the media to a marginalized threat to American society of the time we have to contextualize why the version of Black Nationalism expressed by the NOI was deemed as anti-American.

As mentioned in the geopolitical section of the thesis, not even stardom could protect dissident Americans from the asphyxiating homogeneity, the all invasive fear culture and political orthodoxy of the late 50s and early 60s, if they were found to be engaging in any activities that could be considered un-American; let alone prominent African Americans that were directly challenging the American hegemony.

The broader fear culture that permeates the late 50s is indicated by the choice of exaggerated statistics used by Wallace, to convey that the conversion of African-Americans has already reached epidemic proportions. As explained in the geopolitics chapter, and as shown in the above analysis Black Nationalists – just like communists –were presented to be spreading like an infectious disease. The unsubstantiated and over the top claim, that NOI had a membership of two hundred and fifty thousand people, in the segment, is a great example of that tactic.
There is also a sense of urgency conveyed by the choice of vocabulary used by Wallace to convey the speed with which the NOI is spreading across the country: the ‘rise of black racism’ and ‘a small but growing segment of the Negro population’ (Appendix 3).

It is also of utmost importance to pinpoint the use of motifs that would strike a chord with the American audiences of the time: the picture of the teenage girls in front of the Nation of Islam flag is bound to have stirred reactions as the star-spangled banner, is undoubtedly the quintessential symbol of the American national identity.

NOI and subsequently MX appear in the ‘HTHP’ to not only transgress the sanctity of American symbols but also teach young Negroes ‘to hate the white man’ that renders the movement outside the American discourse if not diametrically opposed to it. The way these images were communicated through the documentary editing, substantiate the socio-political situation of the time, as shown in the geopolitics section, to present MX as un-American.

Through the analysis of the ‘HTPT’ we can conclude that, as Hjarvard argues, media in the context of the 60s had indeed ‘become integrated into the operations of social institutions’ and in fact mirrored the social stratifications (2008a, p. 129). MX embodied a political activism that – as elaborated in the geopolitical section of this thesis – in the context of the ‘McCarthyite repression of dissident speech’ in the late 50s was far from tolerable for the norms of the American society of the time (Dyson M. E., 1996a, p. 39). His iconic involvement with resurgent and somewhat superficial political activism, four decades later would be much needed to assuage the racial tensions in the country, after the Watts riots of 1992.
4.2 Malcolm X as a Commodified Trademark and ‘The Trojan Horse of Inclusion’

One cannot help but notice the causticity and irreverence of MX towards the American Dream as shown in the ‘Trial’ segment that reflects the political defiance of his NOI days, at the beginning of the film. The handheld camera segments of the beating of Rodney King that sparked the Los Angeles riots also set the tone for the opening sequence as the climax of MX’s speech about the hypocrisy coincide with the escalating police brutality in the Rodney King incident, that ends with the X-shaped, American flag swallowed by flames. The fact that segments of the ‘Trial’ appear on both the ‘HTHP’ and ‘X’, prompts us to reflect upon certain recurring motifs.

The fact that both Wallace and Spike Lee chose to show a segment of the ‘Trial’ indicates of how deeply associated MX had been with his NOI, Black Nationalist period of his life. Another common motif in the ‘X’ and the ‘HTHP’ is also the use of the flag. Spike Lee uses the burning flag to convey the racial tensions in the country just like Wallace used the NOI flag to convey just how anti-American an organization it was in the 60s.

Furthermore, the X symbol marks the start of a narrative cycle of one of the most powerful and meaningful symbols employed in the film: the X. What starts as a controversial as the X-shaped flag ends in an entirely different direction. Just like the film starts with a collage of images and the X symbol and ends with a collage and the X symbol, there seems to be a narrative cycle that allows us to think of the film as a rendering process whose beginning and end can mark the transformation of MX.
The X symbol at the very end of the film becomes a ‘commercial trademark’ that as Coombe argues undergoes ‘new media mutations’ (1993, p. 427). It is the constancy and unpredictability of these media mutations that lead us to reflect upon Laclau and Mouffe; according to them, society is a complex discursive entity that cannot be reduced to a dissectible machine whose internal functions and equilibrium cannot be clearly defined and calculated (1985).

The X symbol does not come full circle but on the contrary assumes a new meaning. As shown in the analysis, MX is reduced to a mere T-shirt stamp that can be infinitely reproduced while in the process MX’s widely disputed legacy becomes flattened to form that stamp mould from which all these T-shirts will be produced. After ‘X’ MX was no longer an enemy of America or an ‘apostle of hate’ as conveyed in the ‘HTHP’, he became a full-fledged American icon, whose rough edges were smoothened to be appropriated into another product for mass consumption.

What bell hooks identifies as ‘appropriation and invasion of Black culture’ veiled as ‘the promise of recognition and reconciliation’ is evident in the scene where key Black Nationalist figures parade one after the other to convey a certain unity of Black Nationalism (Appendix 12). The discourse of ‘recognition and recognition’ in a way becomes the Trojan horse for the cultural appropriation of African-American culture What is omitted in the 90s, is the lack of political struggles that would use that figure to promote the agenda of a more politically active African Americans rather than sit idly by and witness the appropriation of even the most militant aspects of the Black Nationalist tradition.

This appropriation can be attributed to a combination of drastic changes on a geopolitical, socio-political, interracial and especially economic level in the American society that facilitated the commodification of MX’s persona for mainstream audiences. As the end of the 80’s saw the
collapse of the U.S.S.R. and the end of the Cold War that marked the beginning of an unchallenged *Pax Americana*, the market dynamics had become a global force inextricably linked to the American ideological hegemonic structures. The first years after of the 90’s constituted a period of flux when ideological restructuring in view of the absence of the ‘Other’ embodied in the USSR was inevitable. In the aftermath of the Watts Riots, and through the film about one of Black Nationalism’s most iconic figures, ‘white cultural imperialism’ managed almost effortlessly to absorb the entire Black Nationalism movement as bell hook argued, and as I argue, absorb the racial tensions the Rodney King incident brought about.

The analysis of ‘X’ validates Lundby’s assumption that mediated communication has the capacity to ‘transform’ the broader sociocultural realm (Lundby, Introduction: 'Mediatization' as Key, 2009). A relevant example would be the use of the term African-American. The ‘X’ was instrumental in promoting the term African-American, especially through the segment of Ossie Davis’ eulogy seen in the film (Appendix 11) as a politically correct term. Interestingly enough, African American as a term started being used in all U.S. Government transactions just in 1997, just five years after the release of ‘X’. But that is only one small example of the changes that this film brought about Malcolm X and African-Americans in the American collective consciousness.

In the U.S. context of the late 50s, the image of MX associated with militant, Black Nationalism in a way constituted the ominous Saidian ‘them’ that evolved into a commodified figure of ‘us’ that most Americans could not only consume but also identify with. MX dared to stir the at the time stagnating waters of American racial politics and paid the price for his political outspokenness that briefly bordered – especially in the last year of his life – on organized political activism (Appendix 1). The enabling conditions examined throughout this thesis have been the socio-political context through which MX the anti-American, black
nationalist was examined, and the cultural commodification of MX into a corporate trademark. As this analysis indicated, it was quite a leap for MX’s figure in the 90s to become widely considered as an ‘American hero’ when less than forty years he was considered the charismatic leader of an ‘anti-American’, ‘black supremacy movement’ (Essien-Udom & Essien-Udom, 1995, p. 73).

4. Conclusion

‘Those who do not have power over the story that dominates their lives, power to retell it, rethink it, deconstruct it, joke about it, and change it as times change, truly are powerless’ (Salman Rushdie quoted in Hassumani, 2002, p. 104)

The ‘semiotic democracy’ that Rushdie is arguing for, may be a bit utopian but the concept of mediatization provides an insightful input on how ‘the power over the story changes’ in relation to MX continues to function ‘as a signifier for opposing ideological purposes’ (Yousman, 2001, p. 1). In the 60s, MX was - to use a famous Socratic allegory - the fly that annoyed the big horse that hears to the name America and buzzed annoyingly to remind that horse of its past and present failings concerning racist treatment of African Americans. In the 90s, through the commodification that was facilitated by the extensive sampling of his speeches in hip music, MX’s figure became a corporate trademark and a banner for the iconicity of a progressive and racially inclusive American Dream.

Mediatization, as a meta-process, aims to understand the process through which power over one’s story can be lost in a matrix of power and ideology struggles and theorize on how historically anchored the transformation of the dominant media representations can be.
Two major findings of this thesis have to with the dialectics of mediated communications and the social modus operandi. In the 60’s, as analysed in the ‘HTHP’, and in accordance with whose argument that mediated communications rely on existing social stratifications and framing discourses to portray MX as the ‘threatening Other’ (Dalby, 1990). In the 90s on the other hand, the operations of society are affected by mediated communications as indicated by the very fact that just a couple of years after the emphasis placed by Spike Lee in branding MX as an ‘Afro-American’ (Appendix 11), the very notion of Black Nationalism becomes part of the American Discourse.

In the 90s, the country was in the process of rearticulating its hegemonic role in the post-Cold War era and the racial turmoil of Watts was tainting her image to the rest of the world. In that respect, the geopolitical reification of ‘Pax Americana’ would be affected if the American ideological hegemony was somewhat compromised; the 1992 Watts riots graphically challenged the inclusive nature of the American Dream. What is more, these hegemonic forces in collaboration with market forces (Anderson, 2000), found in MX the perfect figure to co-opt by transforming him into a trademark devoid of political controversy.

As shown in the findings, MX’s figure inadvertently managed to help the same hegemonic structures he castigated while he was alive make a profit out of his dissenting figure and extend a symbolic gesture to the African American community. That way, the African-American community that was in turmoil over the Rodney King incident was able to be appeased, the rest of the world’s concerns of disorder put to rest and at the same time conveyed that the American Dream and by extension American society was no longer racially exclusive and has come a long way from the 60s.
That came in sharp contrast to the broader sociological context of the 60s within which anyone suspected of ‘subversiveness’ was instantly branded as un-American. As shown in the analysis, any individual or organization that was suspected of being ‘un-American’, incurred an outright condemnation by the media; let alone the distressing image of hijab-clad adolescent African American girls being photographed in front of the NOI flag and that of MX performing the ‘Trial’ in front of packed stadiums (Appendix 4).

The media samples analysed as a component of this research aimed to examine the validity of the concept of commodification of MX and to further conceptualize the mediatization of MX as examined in segments of the ‘HTTP’ and ‘X, in relation to the ‘enabling condition’ of geopolitics (Lundby, 2008, p. 365). As Krotz argues, it is crucial to explore the ‘relations between changes to culture and society resulting from mediatization’ in order to come up with a theoretical framework of the social aspects of the media (2009, p. 37).

The mediatization of a controversial MX as shown in the analysis into an all-American hero can be useful on a number of levels, politics notwithstanding; Obama and his cross-platform strategy to approach broader audiences in the U.S. elections of 2010 reveals the extent to which the mediatization of the political arena can be embedded in political practices (Bennett & Entman, 2001; Silverstone, 2007). Obama can be seen as a fitting example of a political elite that as Mazzoleni argues, makes use of the way media work to cement their influence in the political field (2008).

Future empirical research should advance the notion of mediatization in relation to consumerism and to what Jansson calls ‘mediated cultural products’ (2002). Another suggestion
for future research is an exploration of the process of the mediation of the figure of MX across different media platforms: MX constitutes a fascinating example of media convergence; his figure has managed to transcend all kinds of media: books, radio, television, documentary, Internet to mention but a few and his diversified mediated persona still eludes an exploration of all its different aspects. To rephrase Rushdie, it is the understanding of how the story over how a person changes through the concept of mediatization that enables us to reconceptualize the ever-shifting and contested terrain of media representations.
References


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bell hooks is the pen name of Gloria Jean Watkins. Her pen name is a combination of her mother’s and maternal grandmother’s middle names and she used their names to signify how important they had been to her emancipation as a woman and it is deliberately spelled with minuscule characters to highlight what is of importance in her work; that is the content of her work and not her as an author (hooks, 1989). In compliance with her wishes, throughout my thesis I will be using the lower-case spelling of her name.

NOI is an Islamic religious organization with a very interesting theology for the African Americans. According to its teachings, Black people were the original inhabitants of this Earth. They were its true salt of the Earth, and use Biblical quotes to substantiate these claims. But an evil Black scientist called Yakub through methods of genetic manipulation to isolate the genes that produce white men and women that would rule the Earth for 6,000 years. Once that reign would be over the Mother Plane, a UFO resembling spaceship, will bombard White People and will bring an end to their reign (Goldman, 1974)

For a comprehensive analysis of Black Nationalism (Essien-Udom & Essien-Udom, 1995)

For a thorough historical analysis of the early stages of black nationalism, see (Moses, 1988)

An interesting and at the same tangible example that combines both these elements is Boogie Down Productions’ ‘By Any Means Necessary’ (Boogie, 1988), one of the most critically acclaimed and politically conscious record of the golden era of hip hop whose cover portrays the band’s front man carrying an Uzi in an identical way Malcolm X was carrying an AK-47 in his legendary picture taken inside his house, looking out the window (c.f. Appendix 2).

A great example of that would be Public Enemy’s ‘It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back’ as Manning Marable has pointed out (2006a, p. 141) a record that actually opens with a Malcolm X sample.

For the economics perspective (c.f. Ravin, 1996), for the cultural studies perspective (c.f. Appadurai, 1986)

In a similar note, Margaret Jane Ravin argues that those who are subjected to commodification tend to be embedded as a subordinate social stratum (1996).

Interestingly enough, the concept of the mediatization was first employed by Kent Asp to conceptualize the media’s effect on the field of political communication in Sweden (1986) and later on by Mazzoleni and Schultz (1999) to explore how the forces of the media environment in Brazil, Italy and England significantly influence political practices

For more on the mediatization of war (c.f. McQuail, 2006)

Simon Cottle is a key author for the concept of ‘mediatization’. For a more general understanding of ‘mediatized conflict’ (c.f. Cottle, Mediatized Conflict, 2006). Cottle also developed the concept the ‘mediatization of public crisis’ (2005) and the mediatization of humanitarian crisis (c.f. Cottle, 2008)

Hjarvard (2008b) has conducted empirical research on how the notion of mediatization can be employed in relation to religion.

These oppositions dictated that the Russians were the ever-plotting bad guys that conspired to abolish the American dream and Americans the leaders of the free world had a moral obligation to preserve the
American way of life. For a broader introduction to the notion or (preferably myth) of the American Dream – that works as the American ideological backbone – spanning from the day the Puritans reached the shores of New England until the beginning of the 21st century, one has to read Cullen’s analysis (2003).

xiv The period from 1956-62 is considered one where the conflict between the superpowers materialized in different parts of the world and uneasy concessions from both sides. I’m referring to the signing of the Warsaw Pact in 1956 that solidified the U.S.S.R.’s sphere of influence over Eastern European countries, the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1959 and the Berlin Crisis of 1961 (Karabell, 1999).

xv Middle-classlessness is a term introduced in the American cultural studies by Robert Seguin according which, the U.S. is ‘a providentially blessed nation that has escaped the burdens of history and social division, whose citizens enjoy a birthright of Lockean liberalism and . . . readily achievable upward mobility’ (2001, p. 2).

xvi Ted Morgan brings forth the example of hundreds of American citizens that had nothing to do with Communism but because someone accused them of having Socialist ties, their phones were tapped and their privacy was compromised sometimes for years (Morgan, 2003).

xvii I am referring to the notorious black listing of Hollywood writers, coming mainly from the Screen Writers Guild and independent writers that were either affiliated or suspected of having ties to Communist organizations. That included screenwriters Donald Trumbo, John Howard Lawson and Hollywood actor Hayden Sterling among others in the infamous Hollywood Ten trials. It is interesting to note that most of the above mentioned that were not imprisoned, ended up fleeing to Mexico as they could not find employment anywhere in the country even under a different alias (Gladchuk, 2006).

xviii Jim Crow – a derogatory expression associated with African Americans – laws were state laws enacted in the South of the U.S. that made racial segregation in school, hospitals, buses and the army mandatory. These laws were voted right after Reconstruction and most of them were overruled by 1965 (Woodward & McFeely, 2001).

xix I’m referring to the Watts riots that took place in South-western Los Angeles from August 11th to August 16th of 1965 after an incident of police brutality (Abu-Lughod, 2007).

xx In that incident, Eugene (aka Bull) O’Connor, the Commissioner of Public Safety, did not refrain from using fire hoses to stop a peaceful march led by under-age high school students and police German shepherd dogs to contain and arrest adult demonstrators.

xxi Guy Debord offered a compelling analysis of the Watts riots of 1965, that he regarded as a political act of desperation, ‘a human protest against a dehumanized life’ (Debord, 1966, p. 7)

xxii The Wolfowitz doctrine is essentially the main principle articulated in the document drafted for Paul Wolfowitz in 1992 known as Defence Planning Guidance that served as Secretary Defence at the time that foresaw the positioning of the U.S. in the post-Cold War era as such that would be ‘beyond challenge’ (Rupert & Solomon, 2006, p. 122).

xxiii ‘New World Order’ is the actual phrasing used by George Bush Sr., to encapsulate the basic principles of the international relations dogma the U.S. followed in the aftermath of the 1st Gulf War.
The ‘Vietnam Syndrome’ was the shock that followed the military humiliation of the U.S. in Vietnam, that sank deep into the collective American consciousness, as a defeat on a military level (Simons, 1998), sparked unprecedented dissent within the U.S. on a political level (McNamara, 1995) and on a cultural level left the country ‘crippled psychologically’ as President Nixon would himself later admit and as Daniel Bell argues, it may have helped mark the end of ‘American exceptionalism’ (Bell, 1975). The ‘Vietnam Syndrome’ also haunted every government official in the decades to follow, due to the ‘uncensored’ coverage of the war, that as Hallin suggests in it own turn weakened the political will to continue that war (Hallin, 1986).

Two of the most prominent contemporary philosophers that have articulated a divergent version that that of Husserl and Heidegger’s are Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1996) and Jean Paul Sartre (1956).

It is also interesting to note that to the collective African American consciousness it left such an indelible mark that in the 90s two songs were written with a title that directly alluded to it: The former was composed by activist, film producer and hip-hop artist Sister Souljah with the same-titled song that was shot as a video clip that got banned by MTV due to what was perceived to be inciting racial violence in the country from her only album of her career ‘360 Degrees of Power’ (1992). Sister Souljah’s track was preceded by the politically minded hip hop artist Paris titled ‘The Hate that Hate made’ from his critically acclaimed ‘The Devil made me do it’ album (Paris, 1988). It is equally important to note that Paris is a hip-hop artist that has often been dubbed a black nationalism militant.

Muhammad Ali’s case in the mid-60s offers a great example of that; he was stripped of his right to fight in any kind of professional boxing bout in America because of his public refusal to fight in Vietnam and his alleged agitating comment ‘no Vietcong ever called me Nigger’ in 1966 (Hauser, 1991). Mohammad Ali not only was a cause célèbre for NOI and a prominent Black Nationalist, he was also a boxing superstar and a prominent African American figure of the 60s. He had been converted to NOI by MX himself, changed his name from Cassius Clay to signify his rebirth as free man and had a political phraseology and orientation that was too engaging to digest for the inherently ‘classless, middleclass’ American society (Campbell & Kean, 1997). The difference however between MX and Muhammad Ali was that after his confrontation with the establishment and his return to the boxing rings, Muhammad Ali would henceforth limit his eloquence to emphasizing his superb boxing skills, refraining from making any statements that would in any way, shape or form constitute a divergent political commentary.
Appendix 1

Malcolm X’s Life

Malcolm X was born Malcolm Little on May 19, 1925, in Omaha, Nebraska. His upbringing was tumultuous; his father, Earl Little was an ordained Baptist minister and an outspoken supporter of Garveyism, a form of Black Nationalism that dictated that all African-American should return to Africa (Perry, 1991, p. 2). Arguably, his tumultuous family environment and upbringing played a major role in his introduction to the Black Nationalism ideology as well as the systemic inequalities reserved for its colored citizens.

Being a restless spirit, he wandered around doing menial jobs for a couple of years until he finally settled in Harlem, New York where he dabbled in a number of illegal activities (X & Haley, 1965; Perry, 1991). A year after his return to Boston, in 1946, his hustler days came to an abrupt end as he was arrested for larceny and breaking and entering. He was convicted and ended up serving a total of six years in prison (Carson, 1993, p. 99).

While he was incarcerated and following his brother’s advice he became acquainted with the teachings of the Nation of Islam (henceforth NOI), a form of militant black nationalism centered around the religious tenets of Islam with an emphasis on the superiority of black people towards white people. He converted to the NOI branch of Islam and after his release went on to become a very active member within the organization. MX undoubtedly helped expand their presence by opening numerous NOI affiliated mosques around the U.S. and cement their influence in the African-American community (Lomax, 1963).

The NOI’s activities and rhetoric became known to mainstream America for the first time through a documentary, called the ‘Hate That Hate Produced’. Interestingly enough, MX’s – albeit brief – appearance in the HTTP turned him into a household name in debates, radio and television panels. In the years to follow that appearance, his increasing popularity and political fervor inadvertently overshadowed Elijah Mohammad, the religious leader of the NOI that precipitated a clash that ended with MX breaking away from NOI (Turner, 1997).

In the year that followed that break, in 1964, MX traveled extensively around the world to participate in debates and meet with prominent African leaders and in the process, he underwent a radical both political and religious evolution. He embraced orthodox Sunni Islam and returned as El-Hajj Malik Al Shabazz that no longer preached distrust of people based on the color of their skin, as he preached in his NOI days.

He did not manage however to fulfill his ambitious plan to extend channels of cooperation with other prominent black activists the likes of Martin Luther King, James Farmer so as to form a broader alliance of black activist associations that would serve the interests of African-Americans on the political arena. MX’s formal political organization, the Organization of Afro American Unity, that he had created to pursue some of the most manageable claims in the Black Nationalist agenda through a more politically expedient strategy, was not able to outlive its magnetic leader (Sales, 1994). Finally, as MX had prophetically predicted, was assassinated.
before he could see his autobiography published (X & Haley, 1965). He was shot dead in the Audubon Ballroom in Upper Manhattan on the 21st of February 1965 (Perry, 1991, pp. 366-7).

Appendix 2

*By All Means Necessary*, 1988, Boogie Down Productions, Album cover referencing an iconic Malcolm X Photo seen in the right

One of most Malcolm X’s most emblematic pictures in the media was one of him holding an AK-47
Appendix 3

Still frame from the documentary the Hate That Hate Produced along with its transcribed introduction

‘Tonight we begin to a five part-series which we call the ‘Hate that Hate Produced’; a study of the rise of Black racism, of a call for Black supremacy among a growing segment of American Negroes. While city officials, state agencies and sober-minded Negroes stand idly by, a group of Negro Dissenters are taking to street corner step ladders, church pulpits, sports arenas and ballroom platforms across the nation to preach the gospel of hate that would set off a federal investigation if it were to be preached by Southern Whites. What are they saying?
Appendix 4

Still frames from the documentary the Hate That Hate Produced
along with the transcript of this part of the documentary

‘I charge the white man with being the greatest liar on earth. I charge the white man for being with the greatest drunkard on earth. I charge the white man with being the greatest...on earth. Yet the Bible forbids it. I charge the white man the greatest gambler on earth. I charge the white man, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, with being the greatest ... on earth. I charge the white man with being the greatest adulterer on earth. I charge the white man with the greatest robber on earth, I charge the white man with being the greatest deceiver on earth. I charge the white man
with being the greatest troublemaker on earth. So therefore ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I ask you to bring back a verdict of guilty as charged.’

Appendix 5

Still frames from the documentary the Hate That Hate Produced along with the transcript of this part of the documentary

The indictment you’ve just heard is being told over and over again all over in fifty cities across the country. This charge comes at the climax of a morality play called ‘the Trial’. The plot, indeed the message of the play, is that the white man has been put on trial for his sins against the black man. He has been found guilty. The sentence is death. The morality play is sponsored, produced by a Negro religious group who call them selves the Muslims. They use a good deal of the paraphernalia of the traditional religion of Islam but they are fervently disavowed by orthodox Muslims. Negro American Muslims are the most powerful of the black supremacist group. They claim a quarter of a million Negroes and our search indicates that for every so-called card carrying black supremacist there are perhaps ten fellow travelers. Their doctrine is being spread in 50 cities across the nation. Let no one underestimate the Muslims. They have
their own parochial schools like this one in Chicago where Muslim children are taught to hate the white man. Even the clothes they wear are in sharp contrast to American dress like these two Negro children going to school.

Appendix 6

Still frames from the documentary the Hate That Hate Produced along with the transcript of this part of the documentary

‘Their gospel of hate is carried in many Negro newspapers. Here you see their minister Malcolm X proudly displaying five of the biggest Negro papers in America. Papers published in Los Angeles, New York, Pittsburgh, Detroit and Newark and Negro politicians regardless of their private beliefs, respectfully listen when the leaders of the black supremacy movement speak. Here you see Borough President Hulan Jack shaking hands with Elijah Mohammad, who is the leader of the Muslims and here you see NAACP Director Roy Wilkins. Four or five times a year Muslims assemble in one of America’s major cities to listen to their leader, Elijah Mohammad. Here you see them arrive at Washington’s Uline arena for a meeting held only five weeks ago.
Every devout Muslim attends these rallies, for some time and at just such a rally, as this, the Muslims expect that Elijah will sound the death knell of the white man.

Appendix 7

Still frame from the documentary the Hate That Hate Produced along with the transcript of this part of the documentary

‘But of more interest to New Yorkers is Minister Malcolm X, the Muslims’ New York Minister, who you will shortly see. This is a remarkable man, a man who by his own admission to News Beat was once a procurer and a dope peddler. He served time for robbery in the Massachusetts State Penitentiary. Now he is a changed man. He will not smoke or drink. He will not even eat in a restaurant that houses a tavern. He told News Beat that his life changed when the Muslim faith taught him no longer to be ashamed of being a black man’. 
Appendix 8
Still frames from the opening sequence of *Malcolm X* (1992) and the that involved the burning of the American flag and the Rodney King beating.

Malcolm X in the opening of *Malcolm X* (1992)

‘I'm here to tell you that I charge the white man. I charge the white man with being the greatest murderer on earth. I charge the white man with being the greatest kidnapper on earth. There's no place in this world that man can go and say he created peace and harmony. Everywhere he's gone, he's created havoc. Everywhere he's gone, he's created destruction. So I charge him with being the greatest kidnapper on this earth! I charge him with being the greatest murderer on this earth! I charge him with being the greatest robber and enslaver on this earth! I charge the white man with being the greatest swine-eater and drunkard on this earth! He can't deny the charges. You can't deny the charges! We're the living proof of those charges! You and I are the proof. You're not an American. You are the victim of America! You didn't have a choice coming here. He didn't say: "Black man, black woman, come over and help me build America." He said, "Nigger, get in the boat. I'm taking you over there to help me build America." Being born here does not make you an American. You and I are not American. You're one of the million black victims of America. You and I, we've never seen democracy. There's no democracy in the fields of Georgia. No democracy down there. We didn't see any democracy in Harlem, Brooklyn, Detroit, and Chicago. Ain't no democracy there. We've never seen democracy. All we've seen is hypocrisy. We don't see any American dream. We've experienced only the *American nightmare*. 

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Appendix 9
Still frame from the burning of a cross in *Mississippi Burning* (1988)

Appendix 10
Martin Luther King:

‘The assassination of Malcolm X was an unfortunate tragedy. And it reveals that there are still numerous people in our nation who have degenerated to the point of expressing dissent through murder and we haven't learned to disagree without being violently disagreeable’.

Appendix 11
Here at this final hour, in this quiet place, Harlem has come to bid farewell to one of its brightest hopes extinguished now and gone from us forever. It is not in the memory of man that this beleaguered, unfortunate but nonetheless proud community found a braver, more gallant young champion who lies before us unconquered still. I say the word again as he would want me to: Afro-American. Afro-American. Malcolm had stopped being ‘Negro’ years ago. It had become too small, too puny, too weak a word for him. Malcolm was bigger than that. Malcolm had become an Afro-American. And he wanted so desperately that we, that all his people would become Afro-Americans too. There are those who still consider it their duty as friends of the Negro people, to tell us to revile him. To flee, even from the presence of his memory, to save ourselves, by writing him out of the history of our turbulent times. And we will smile. They will say that he is of hate, a fanatic, a racist, who can only bring evil to the cause for which you struggle. And we will answer and say unto them:
Did you ever talk to Brother Malcolm?
Did you ever touch him or have him smile at you?
Did you ever really listen to him?
For if you did, you would know him. And if you knew him, you would know why we must honor him.'
'Malcolm was our manhood, our living, black manhood. This was his meaning to his people. And in honoring him, we honor the best in ourselves. However much we may have differed with him or with each other about him and his value as a man, let his going from us serve only to bring us together now consigning these mortal remains to earth, the common mother of all, secure in the knowledge that what we place in the ground is no more now a man but a seed Malcolm X which after the winter of our discontent will come forth again to meet us. And we shall know him then for what he was and is: A prince. Our own black shining prince who didn't hesitate to die because he loved us so'.
Appendix 13

Transcript of Nelson Mandela’s part cited in the ending of Malcolm X (1992)

“As Brother Malcolm said: ‘We declare our right, on this earth to be a man, to be a human being, to be given the rights of a human being, to be respected as a human being, in this society, on this earth, in this day which we intend to bring into existence...by any means necessary!’”
Final frames before the end of *Malcolm X* (1992) film
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