Dramaturgy Research Packet
For
The CenterStage Production of:

Clybourne Park

By Bruce Norris
Directed by Derrick Sanders

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The Hansberry's House – 6140 S. Rhodes Avenue

ABOUT THE AUTHOR – BRUCE NORRIS

Bruce Norris in the Danger Zone
Why does the 'Clybourne Park' playwright put such a premium on the freedom to provoke?
An interview by Beatrice Basso
Introduced by Dan Rubin
TCG – *American Theatre* – September 2011
Source: http://www.tcg.org/publications/at/oct11/brucenorris.cfm

Since making his 1992 playwriting debut with The Actor Retires, playwright Bruce Norris has earned a reputation for unceremoniously prodding the uncomfortable truths that lie just beneath the surface of the self-aware, middle-class liberal. "There's nothing better than coming into a room and feeling that something dangerous is happening," he told London's Evening Standard last year upon winning the paper's best-play award for Clybourne Park—just one of a spate of prizes the play has captured on both sides of the Atlantic, topped by the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in the U.S. and the Olivier Award for best play in the U.K.

A bracing examination of racism in America viewed through the prism of property ownership, Clybourne Park has had successful runs in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Washington, D.C. (where it broke box-office records at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company), and London. And now it's high on the list of most-produced works in the 2011–12 season, with productions scheduled at Denver's Curious Theatre Company, Philadelphia's Arden Theatre, L.A.'s Center Theatre Group, Actor's Theatre of Charlotte in North Carolina, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Trinity Repertory Company of Providence, R.I., and Studio 180 in Toronto. The CTG production is expected to move from the Mark Taper Forum to Broadway in spring 2012.

Playwriting was a shift for Houston-born Norris, who was in the throes of a successful career as an actor when he decided to pen The Actor Retires. After graduating from Northwestern University in 1982 with a theatre degree, he worked at the major Chicago theatres before moving to New York City, where he appeared on Broadway in Biloxi Blues, An American Daughter and Wrong Mountain. He also performed Off-Broadway and regionally, and was, he says, "hired and fired from a number of television pilots." These experiences were fodder for his first play, a comedy about an actor who throws out his headshots, fires his agent and decides to make furniture for a living.

Today Norris is not building furniture (in fact, he originally planned to be a set designer before he discovered it involved "too much manual labor"), but over the past two decades he has built quite a body of work as a playwright known for his ability to make his audiences simultaneously laugh and squirm.

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Norris's 2005 hit, The Pain and the Itch, certainly had this effect at Steppenwolf, which has produced six of his premieres, including The Infidel (2000), Purple Heart (2002), We All Went Down to Amsterdam (2003), The Unmentionables (2006) and A Parallelogram. The Pain and the Itch, which landed Chicago's Joseph Jefferson Award for best new work, takes place over a Thanksgiving dinner amid post–9/11 paranoia in a suburban home. A self-professed liberal and well-balanced couple must deal with inexplicably half-gnawed avocadoes and the genital rash of the family's four-year-old daughter, while the husband's brother skewers the hypocrisy of their lives and his Eastern European female guest casually rattles off racist quips.

"I have no cogent manifesto," Norris told London's Observer in 2007 after The Pain and the Itch opened at the Royal Court Theatre. "I just have a whole bunch of psychological kinks. Like the desire to unmask the lies about the American family." Unlike Lorraine Hansberry—whose seminal 1959 drama A Raisin in the Sun served as the jumping-off point for Clybourne Park—Norris does not believe that theatre is a particularly good catalyst for change. "There is no political value in having sensitive feelings about the world. I don't think it generates political action. You go, you watch, you say, 'That's sad,' and then you go for a steak. The best you can hope for is to make people slightly uncomfortable. At least if you take the piss out of the audience, they feel they are being addressed," he argues.

This is also why he writes plays with white middle-class characters: "Why should I write something that is not germane to audiences' lives? Theatre has always been an expensive middle-class pursuit. It is a precious, pretentious thing for precious, pretentious people. You drive in your expensive car to the theatre, get it valet parked, and then watch a play about poor people. Why?"

Norris aims to expose the hypocrisies of bourgeois America without indicting or protecting anyone in the process. Whenever we are tempted to side with one of his characters over another, to align ourselves with a seemingly safe and sound modus operandi, or to condemn someone once and for all, Norris pulls the rug out from under that character (and us), and we're left to look for our next psychological alliance. Fundamentally, every one of Norris's characters is trying to do and say the right thing for themselves and their loved ones—but they fail because they are forced into unfamiliar interactions with unfamiliar people. Are our liberal ideals sustainable, he forces us to ask, outside the safety of the middle-class, suburban bubble?

On the first day of rehearsals for Clybourne Park last winter at San Francisco's American Conservatory Theater, Norris remarked that A Raisin in the Sun, which was part of school curricula in the 1970s, was one of the first plays (along with Our Town) that he became aware of as a young person. "That play has resonated all through my life, because I realized that the only character I could identify with was Karl—I was a whitey

in an all-white neighborhood in Houston, Texas." In Clybourne Park, Norris focuses his sharp lens on our past (1959 in Act 1) and present (2009 in Act 2) consciousness of race and neighborly relations.

In a phone interview a few weeks before rehearsals began in San Francisco, Clybourne Park production dramaturg Beatrice Basso asked Norris about his views on race relations in the United States and his need to provoke.

BEATRICE BASSO: Clybourne Park is so quintessentially American, yet it has done very well in London. Why do you think that is?

BRUCE NORRIS: The issues are pretty close. They've got a version of the same thing in London. There may be a different ethnic distribution of who's resentful towards whom, but the same thing happens again and again. In fact, one of the guys in the cast living in Brixton told me the story of that neighborhood and how it has changed over the years. It's the same thing, really.

BB: And yet the white-black divide is nowhere more pronounced than in the United States.

BN: Chicago is particularly distinct that way. The South Side of Chicago is a predominantly black area; the North Side of Chicago is white. And then you've got Indian and South Asian and other neighborhoods, but the white and black are pretty much divided along the north and south. You think, this is a function of discrimination or of people being priced out of the housing market or all sorts of conspiracy theories, and yet, at the same time, there's nothing keeping one of us white people from moving into Harlem or South Chicago or Oakland. Or the other way around. Even if prices in white neighborhoods are higher, how come there's not more movement? How come we don't voluntarily integrate? I think it has to do with discomfort—with feeling like you're the minority. It's uncomfortable to live in an area where you are that minority, no matter which way it works.

BB: People who are not from the U.S., and I am one of them, complain that there's so much political correctness about race here that it's impossible to make jokes about it; but then the longer we are here, the clearer it becomes that there are scars that are simply too deep to be made fun of.

BN: I was reading something recently about a person in Germany who made what he thought was a funny remark about Nazis, and of course that's not actually a very funny subject if you're German. There are certain topics like slavery and black-white relations in the United States that are not that funny, especially if you're a black person.

BB: Then to be politically correct is a necessary step in societal evolution?

BN: Yes, theoretically it's a step. So, now that we've all been very careful, you think that after some time goes by things will be normalized. We white people (because we are the oppressors) sit around going, "Is it time now? Has enough time elapsed? Can we now say 'nigger'?" But of course that never happens, so white people feel resentful because we realize the past is going to hang around our necks like millstones forever. There is no end. Even if we gave reparation payments, still it wouldn't be enough.

BB: And yet a lot has changed, in a relatively short number of years.

BN: Well, a lot of superficial changes have happened, to laws and to ways people have access to education and to public services, but what hasn't changed and what stubbornly refuses to change are our natures. We keep wanting to be around those we feel more comfortable with. If only legislation could change what we are actually like, but it can't.

BB: You're saying it's about our basic human makeup.

BN: I think that racism is just another version of the same thing that leads to wars of any kind. Either it's tribal solidarity or it's religious solidarity, or it's people who live within a certain geographic boundary and want to protect it. There are certain economic and cultural groups that we identify ourselves with, and we think others shouldn't be able to interfere.

BB: And yet we are so fascinated by the other.

BN: But it's a constantly changing category. So, for example, Steve and Lindsey [the white couple in Act 2 of Clybourne Park, who are about to purchase and renovate a home in a gentrifying neighborhood] imagine that they're very close to Kevin and Lena [the black couple who are fighting to preserve the neighborhood's history]. They think, "We're just the same: They are in our same age group, same professional level, they seem politically like-minded." They make all these assumptions, and yet from Kevin and Lena's point of view, there is no illusion that they are the same. The one person in the second act whom everyone agrees is not the same is Dan. The guy digs ditches for a living, so no one pays attention to him.

BB: We assign worth to certain values that we think identify us as belonging to a particular category of people, like a certain standard of "taste," which is a charged word in your play.

BN: Taste is an emblem of your group. And it's just a manifestation of the competition that's going on with all people all the time. We are all looking at each other going, "Am I above or below him, or her?" "Does she have an advantage over me, or do I have an advantage over her?" So if you're in any minority group and you look at all these white people walking around with all this privilege all the time, taking it for granted, you don't buy it when they say, "Oh, we're just like you," because, at any given moment, you know that even something as insignificant as taste—"I like this house better than that house, it's prettier"—identifies us as part of a group that looks at another group skeptically or critically.

BB: That is true of the destinations one chooses to go to on holiday, for example, or taste in food.

BN: It used to be that the elites in a city would demonstrate their expertise in food by shopping at expensive stores that sold food from far away—cheese from France, et cetera—but now the way you demonstrate how sophisticated you are is by only eating things from your local area. You have to be a "locavore." You have to keep up with these things, otherwise people will look down on you.

BB: What's sneaky is that when I shift my habits or taste, I perceive them as a genuine manifestation of who I am, but it makes sense that I'm actually subconsciously subjecting myself to a pervasive new trend telling me how to be au courant.

BN: And of course that's what's dividing red states versus blue states, too, because those of us who live in New York or San Francisco look down on the people who vote for Sarah Palin or eat frozen dinners or go to Outback Steakhouse. We think that's low-class. And they know we think that. So they don't like us because they think we are snobs. We are snobs. The only thing you can do is try not to be part of any group. Maybe.

BB: So you're suggesting a certain sort of independence?

BN: It's hard, because anyone who looks at you will put you in a group whether you think you're in a group or not. So just saying "I'm not part of any group" would immediately put you in a group.

BB: Yes, the group of "the iconoclasts."

BN: Exactly.

BB: It seems to me that in your writing you have a lot of freedom to provoke and to expose certain illusions. Do you have fun with that freedom?

BN: I guess. It's hard to say. That's like asking, "You have brown hair; do you like having brown hair?" It's all I've ever had. Except that now it's gray.

BB: Then what made you a provocateur?

BN: I have no idea. Probably my place in my family, the role I filled. I'm the one who liked to try to start arguments between my two siblings. I did that at Thanksgiving just recently. It's not a very nice way to behave, but there are more important things than being nice, I guess.

BB: So why the provocative revelation of the foibles of middle-class educated people?

BN: I get into these conversations a lot. People ask how come I don't write plays about, say, people in housing projects, and I say, "Well, because those are not the people who go to the theatre." You can say, "We should get them to the theatre," but in actual fact, people who buy subscriptions to theatres like ACT are usually wealthy people. They are almost always wealthy, liberal people. So why not write plays that are about those people, since those are the people who are in the audience? If you actually want to have a conversation with that audience, then you should address them directly. That's what I always think.

BB: Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company brought the play back to D.C. because of the impact it's had on that community, which stands as proof that the play, though set in Chicago, could work in any metropolitan reality.

BN: Pretty much every big city has some version of this. Even where I grew up in Houston, it's a similar thing. There is no actual Clybourne Park in Chicago. Or, to be strictly accurate, there is a playground called Clybourn [sic] Park on Clybourn Avenue, but there is no neighborhood called Clybourne Park. That is something Lorraine Hansberry made up. If you want to have an example of the kind of neighborhood we're talking about, it would be Wicker Park or Ukrainian Village in Chicago. More Wicker Park. Wicker Park is a neighborhood that was mostly Latino for about 25 years, and it's very close to where Cabrini-Green used to be. Cabrini-Green was a big, dangerous housing project, which is about three or four blocks from where Steppenwolf Theatre is now.

BB: Steppenwolf is a sort of alma mater of yours, having produced a number of your plays. Although you've lived in New York for quite a while now, you're still considered a "Chicago playwright," following a "Chicago aesthetic." What is that, anyway?

BN: At this point, I don't know. If you're talking about 15 or 20 years ago, it probably meant a kind of propulsive naturalism, a very macho style of acting and directing. The playwriting was a sort of terse, clipped dialogue like David Mamet's. Mamet is the

person everyone refers to as a "Chicago-style playwright," but there's no other Chicago-style playwriting. You might as well call it the Mamet style. But that's changed so much over the past 20 years because there are so many theatres in Chicago now and such a diversity of styles. I don't think there's any such thing as a Chicago style of writing anymore.

BB: But you still identify with that rawness in some way?

BN: Again, that's like asking, "What's it like to be different from you?" I became an adult in Chicago; I lived there for about 20 years. So I'm sure my taste in theatre was informed by what I saw at places like the Goodman and Steppenwolf and all those theatre companies.

BB: You acted here at ACT in Wrong Mountain in 1999.

BN: Yes, I did. When I was in my twenties, the thing I mostly wanted to be was an actor, but then I didn't really understand that the structure of theatre was such that an actor has virtually no power. I'm not saying that's bad, but it's like being a violinist in an orchestra—you don't have as much power as a conductor. That's how it should be, but I wanted to have more power because I was power-hungry, I think. And I wanted to be able to express what I thought, rather than be the vehicle for the expression of someone else's thoughts. I think that's why I wanted to be a writer instead of an actor.

BB: When you write, do you imagine yourself in some of the roles?

BN: Oh, in all of them. Every single one of them. I don't think I would know how to write a character if I couldn't imagine playing it. In my play The Unmentionables, one of my favorite characters was this black woman, a government figure, and I would amuse myself by trying to say out loud the things I wanted her to say. It's a process of improvising in your apartment—alone—and then writing it all down.

BB: So much of what you write makes one laugh or makes one cringe...

BN: Tim Sanford—who runs Playwrights Horizons in New York [where Clybourne Park premiered]—was referring to a critical theorist he's read, who says that tragedy is only possible in a community where everyone shares the same sense of themselves, where everyone has the same identity, and they're part of a shared community. In a modern society as fragmented and atomized as ours, that's not really possible. Interestingly, in Clybourne Park, the first part is a tragedy and the second part is a comedy, [because] the people in the first act all understand each other much more than the people do in the second act. In the second act, everybody makes assumptions.

BB: And everybody seems to self-edit much more...

BN: Absolutely. Everyone holds their tongue, because we live in a society where speech is much more dangerous than activity—than action. Look at the WikiLeaks thing. All we're talking about is that someone said out loud what we already knew or have been thinking, but now it's on the record. That's a terrible thing in our weirdly polite society. No one knows that they should be embarrassed in the first act; everyone knows they should be embarrassed in the second act. We're embarrassed about everything.

BB: Do you like to see people laugh, or cringe, in recognition?

BN: Cringing and laughing are two really good things. So if audiences do them at the same time, that's great. I always like it when the audience's response is really mixed up, when they don't know whether to laugh or to cringe.

BB: Having seen three productions of this play, do you find each very different from the next?

BN: They've all been surprisingly similar, actually, and that's gratifying when you work on a new play. I mean, every production is going to be necessarily different because of different actors and different everything, but I notice the similarities more than the differences. For example, all the people who have played Russ [the husband who owns the house being sold in the first act] tend to be the same sort of actor and seem to find many similar things in the character. In the second act, the people who play Kathy [the lawyer defending the house renovation] also tend to find similar things. In terms of new discoveries, I don't really know.

BB: Are you usually pretty involved in rehearsals, or are you the quiet playwright in the corner?

BN: Oh, you can't shut me up. I'm like a secondary director. That developed at Steppenwolf with a director named Anna Shapiro. I just got very comfortable shooting my mouth off in rehearsals. During a first production of a new play, that can be very helpful because there is no body of knowledge to draw upon. No one has any idea what the play is supposed to be. And I think it's useful not only for the cast but also for the playwright to have to articulate again and again what he meant. I feel there are a lot of playwrights now who have only a vague understanding of what they've written. They write in a kind of instinctive, fuzzy, poetic way, and they don't actually know what they want it to be. I'm very, very specific about what I think a story is supposed to be.

BB: I agree that there's some cultivation of the aloof writer these days—the writer who doesn't answer questions in rehearsals.

BN: And I think that's been helped by a sort of director movement, where the director becomes a kind of co-author of the play. I've actually gotten into trouble with that when a couple of directors decided that they wanted to add to or fix my play. I said to them, "That's not your job. It's not your place to add things to my play. You're not a collaborator in that sense." I know this sounds incredibly arrogant and antidemocratic, but the hierarchy in theatre is very clear. A person writes a play, and then the other people are there to execute that play.

BB: In the States it is. That's not true everywhere.

BN: I know, I know. Believe me, I'm well aware that in Europe, for example, the director can be a kind of auteur. But then my position is, "Get yourself a different play. Not my play."

BB: Do you prefer writing specifically for the theatre?

BN: I haven't written for anything else, so I don't know. I don't really want to write for film or TV, again because of power. I don't want to lose control. I don't want to share. I don't want to have some film director say, "I have a vision for your script." I was an actor, and I think theatre is where my instinct is. I don't actually even enjoy novels very much.

BB: Yet writing for the theatre is so much harder and more unforgiving than any other medium, I believe.

BN: I have a friend who writes both plays and novels, and I asked him what the difference is. He said that with a novel you just keep writing, you don't stop. With a play, you go, "Well, I have to take that out, I have to cut this, and I have to remove that." He said that playwriting is a process of subtraction, whereas novel writing is all about addition. You can write a 2,000-page novel and it's acceptable.

BB: Do you subtract a lot as you write?

BN: Oh, yes. I would say I throw out twice as much as I write on any given play. I always start with a lot of stuff, and I just take it away. With Clybourne Park I threw out an entire second act and rewrote it from scratch.

BB: With the same structure, though, with the jump from 1959 to the present?

BN: It was based in the present and some of the characters were the same, but it was just very different, and the end was terrible. So I threw it out and started over.

BB: Is there something new you're working on now?

BN: Yes, I've been commissioned to write three plays in the next three years.

BB: And you have ideas already?

BN: Yes.

BB: Secret ideas?

BN: Roughly speaking, I'm hoping to write about three things: sex, evolution and economics.

This interview first appeared in American Conservatory Theater's performance guide series, Words on Plays. Beatrice Basso is a dramaturg, translator and actress in the Bay Area and an artistic associate at ACT. Before moving west, she was the resident dramaturg and literary manager at Connecticut's Long Wharf Theatre. Dan Rubin is the publications manager at ACT.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR – BRUCE NORRIS

"I'm a Racist"
Bruce Norris's new play, Clybourne Park, once again goes for the jugular of p.c. liberals.
By Boris Kachka
New York Magazine – Published Feb 14, 2010
Source: http://nymag.com/arts/theater/features/63769/

(Photo: Aaron Epstein/Courtesy of Playwrights Horizons)

When a playwright—say, provocateur Bruce Norris—has to be dragged into an interview, and then only with his producer serving as chaperone, you expect some touchiness. You don't expect to be called a whore and told that director Franco Zeffirelli is a "douche bag." But you do begin to understand—if you've seen his plays—Norris's abiding fear of tape recorders. He means to offend, but he wants final cut.

In 2006, when The Pain and the Itch became the first of Norris's plays to be staged in New York, Playwrights Horizons' cultivated subscribers were treated to a cast of liberal hypocrites, a 4-year-old girl with a genital rash, and a seemingly sympathetic Serbian woman who turned out to be a racist. (Audiences "want to align themselves with someone in a play," Norris explains, "and one of the most fun things to do is deny them that option.") His second Horizons play, opening this week, is Clybourne Park, about white flight and gentrification, which features racist jokes, unspeakable contempt, and mental images that would make Mamet blush. It's also a subtle and well-crafted piece of theater.

Norris's provocations seem instinctual. "These things are so reflexive that I don't even examine them," he says. "When I'm at a dinner table with a bunch of people and we're

talking about what they saw on TV or how their baby is doing, I'm so incredibly bored. I want there to be an argument, and so I start one. It's incredibly easy to do."

Because The Pain and the Itch tilted against PBS-watching bobos while other local playwrights were preaching Bush hatred to the converted, many assumed Norris was a Republican. In fact, he went door-to-door for Kerry. "I see a lot of plays that help sustain the flattering illusion that we are a noble and uplifting generation," he says. In reality, "we're a destructive, incredibly corrosive force in the world, and we should stop reproducing. "

While Clybourne Park rips the p.c. mask off polite gentrifiers, Norris notes that his parents moved his family (including brother John, formerly of MTV) from their Houston neighborhood in part to avoid busing, and that "my primary exposure to anyone African-American up until I was 14 was our maid. There's no way to escape the fact that I'm a racist," he adds. "I'd like to imagine I was an android who had only pure thoughts, but I'm a human, and I'm an animal. And I think that's true for everyone."

There is one thing Norris is self-righteously earnest about. Last year he earned just $19,000. Yet, despite taking Hollywood's money for acting gigs like the role of a stuttering schoolteacher in The Sixth Sense, when I ask him why he doesn't write movies, he replies, "What are you, a whore?" Then adds: "I'm a very controlling, fascistic autocrat, and I wouldn't want someone to just wipe their ass with the script I've written." Tim Sanford, Playwrights Horizons' artistic director and Norris's interview chaperone, produced The Pain and the Itch more or less on a dare. Norris cornered Sanford at the West Bank Cafe and said, "I've figured out why you'll never do my plays. You believe in redemption." It was a dig at Horizons' aesthetic, and an irresistible come-on: "I don't want to be accused of being a gutless slave to redemption," Sanford says—and so he brought the play in from Chicago.

Clybourne Park is a fictitious Chicago neighborhood, and the city's Steppenwolf Theater Company puts up so much of his work that some friends still assume he lives there. Norris, now 49, did live in Chicago, without much enthusiasm, for nineteen years. But twelve years ago he moved to (very gentrified, very white) Brooklyn Heights, and much prefers New York, even if it's an awful place to produce. "A lot of writers I know, if it was possible to avoid having a production here, I think they would," he says. It's a "viper's nest" of critics ("consumer advocates") and competition, where "the need to commodify becomes really intense." Then he can't resist implicating himself one last time. "I'm contributing to the problem of New York's theater consciousness by living here," he says. "I think about moving back to Chicago."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR – BRUCE NORRIS

Uplifting Isn't His Style: Bruce Norris at Steppenwolf
By Artistic Apprentice Margot Bordelon
Steppenwolf Theatre Company Web Site – 2004-2005, Volume 5
Source: http://www.steppenwolf.org/watchlisten/program-articles/detail.aspx?id=79

"If you want some sort of climax, some moment in which great truths are spoken, well, check your ticket stubs because you have come to the wrong performance," proclaims Judge Garvey, the fallen man at the center of Bruce Norris's The Infidel. But it wasn't necessary for him to speak the truth behind what motivated his heinous crimes, because Norris had already implied it by showing the audience the gradual psychological breakdown of his main character. When The Infidel premiered at Steppenwolf Theatre in March of 2000, it received rave reviews. Richard Christiansen of the Chicago Tribune called it "a play that manages to be, all at once, a smart, clever, thoughtful and provocative work of theater," focusing on Norris's masterful unraveling of information. In all of his plays, Norris feeds the audience just enough clues about his characters and their circumstances to leave us hungry for more.

Born in 1960, Norris graduated from Northwestern in 1982 with a degree in theater and set out to be an actor. He worked on shows such as Master Harold…and the boys at Victory Gardens Theater, Black Snow at the Goodman and Closer at Steppenwolf. In New York he was seen on Broadway in Biloxi Blues, in many Off-Broadway productions, and in his words, was "hired and fired from a number of television pilots." It was these experiences that inspired him to write his first play, The Actor Retires, a venture that would change his role in American theater from working actor to respected playwright.

As an artist who has a significant acting career, Norris possesses an innate understanding of theatrical discourse. One need only look at how he peppers his plays with philosophical meditations on the asinine. In The Infidel, Garvey analyzes the television program Green Acres: "Here we have this man, this nearly tragic figure of Oliver Douglas, this man imprisoned not by walls, for he could leave the community of…Hooterville…at any moment, but rather trapped by his refusal to surrender his bucolic vision, his faith in the land itself…even though he is confronted time and again with reality." These ruminations are insightful beacuase they're funny and reflective of the way contemporary people communicate with each other, and are also very rich in subtext. What's more perplexing than realizing you relate your entire way of living to that of a sitcom character? Humor in Norris's plays serves dual purposes – it gives the audience the opportunity to experience a cathartic moment of laughter, only to realize that the object of their laughter is, in fact, tragic.

Based on the strength of The Infidel, Steppenwolf commissioned Norris to write a new play called Purple Heart. It was the story of Carla, a young alcoholic widow, who loses

her husband near the end of the Vietnam War. As her ability to communicate with her 13-year-old son, Thor, and her aging mother-in-law, Grace, quickly deteriorates, a stranger arrives: a man in uniform with a prosthetic hand. But he is no stranger. He and Carla have met before, three months earlier in a Veteran's hospital where he was recovering from his injury and she was being treated in the psychiatric ward – suicidal after her husband's death. Overcome by her beauty and the extremity of his situation, he rapes her while she is drugged, and, though she has no recollection of the incident, she is in fact pregnant with his child – which she then miscarries. This is painfully difficult material revealed with finesse. The emotional intensity of this revelation is matched by the dramatic chaos raging onstage at the same moment –a taxi cab honking its horn outside, Grace's hearing aid beeping in a high-pitched shriek, Thor's decision to display his homemade flame thrower. Norris's sense of rhythm is impeccable, as the truth is exposed through implication, overwhelmed by the ensuing onstage anarchy.

We All Went Down to Amsterdam explores the dangerous relationships between the people living and working in a home for the elderly. One patron, after attending the show, gave Norris some unsolicited advice, declaring "You know I saw your play and it was funny, but it was so depressing and next time I just have one rule for you, I want it to be uplifting." But "uplifting" isn't Norris's style. "I feel like there are people who want plays, like movies and TV, to tell them things they already know and to confirm the beliefs about themselves they already have. I find that kind of creepy." Norris's work is deeply ironic with a razor sharp edge – one of the reasons that Steppenwolf and Norris are such a compatible match. "Bruce's plays have a strong political and social sensibility to them and at the same time, they are very darkly funny," says Edward Sobel, Steppenwolf's Director of New Play Development and Dramaturg for Purple Heart and The Pain and the Itch.

With each new play, Norris's writing has gotten increasingly more sophisticated, and as Sobel states "he has continued to explore how best to detonate important information during the course of the story to yield the greatest dramatic payoff." It's difficult to peg Norris's plays into one genre. They could be described as black comedy, social satire or just simply, family dramas. What is clear, however, is that he creates great roles for actors, writes propellant-quick dialogue and tackles complex material with a unique comic dexterity. They may not ever be "uplifting," but they're guaranteed to be hilarious and provocative.

DRAMATIC CONTEXT – *A RAISIN IN THE SUN*

Lorraine Hansberry

Lorraine Hansberry (1930-1965): A Brief Biography
Source: http://www.csustan.edu/english/Reuben/pal/Chap8/hansberry.html

The granddaughter of a freed slave Lorraine Hansberry became a spokesperson for black Americans. Her writings reflected her fight for black civil rights, and her views against racism and sexual and statutory discrimination. Due to her short life her legacy left only a few works but all with dramatic effect on all, no matter race or color, who came in touch with them.

Lorraine Vivian Hansberry was born May 19, 1930 in Chicago, Illinois the youngest by seven years, of four children. Her father, Carl A. Hansberry, was a successful real estate broker, who later contributed large sums of money to NAACP and the Urban League. Her mother, Nannie Perry, was a schoolteacher who entered politics and became a ward committeewoman (Metzger 146). When Lorraine was eight her parents moved to a white neighborhood where the experiences of discrimination led to a civil rights suit that they won. Her family was violently attacked by neighbors. At an early age she learned to fight white supremacy and that Negroes were spit at, cursed and pummeled with insults and physical acts of violence. In protest to segregation her parents sent her to public schools rather than private ones. She attended Betsy Ross Elementary School then, in 1944, she was enrolled in Englewood High School. Both schools were predominantly white. Lorraine had to fight racism from the day she walked through the doors of Betsy Ross Elementary School (Nemiroff 20). She broke the family tradition of enrolling in Southern Negro Colleges and enrolled in the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where she majored in painting. She was soon to discover that her talent lay in writing not art. After two years she decided to leave the University of Wisconsin for New York City (Metzger 146).

In New York City, Lorraine worked for the Freedom, a progressive black newspaper, from 1950 to 1953. In a letter to a friend she described the paper as "the journal to Negro liberation." (Nemiroff 77) In 1953 she married Robert Nemiroff a Jewish songwriter. After marriage, she worked as a waitress and cashier writing in her spare time. In 1956 she quit working at her part time jobs and devoted all her time to her writing. This is the year she started writing The Crystal Stair a play about a struggling black family in Chicago. The play was later renamed *A Raisin in the Sun* taking its title from a line in Langston Hughes' poem (Metzger 146).

In 1959 *A Raisin in the Sun* opened at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre in New York City with a run of 530 performances. It was the first play produced on Broadway written by a black woman. Lorraine received the New York Critics' Circle award for which she was the youngest American, the first Black playwright and the fifth woman at the time to receive

it. She was also named "most promising playwright" of the season by Variety's poll of New York drama critics (http://artistsrep.org/artists/a_lorraine_hansberry 1). Lorraine finished the film version of *A Raisin in the Sun* in 1961 starring Sidney Poitier. The film received an award at the Cannes Festival (2). In writing A Raisin in the Sun Lorraine instilled her values of equality evident in an interview that she did after the play debuted...

An interviewer asked, "This is not really a Negro play; why, this could be about anybody! It's a play about people! What is your reaction? What do say?"

She answered "Well, I hadn't noticed the contradiction because I'd always been under the impression that Negroes are people. But actually it's an excellent question, because invariably that has been the point of reference Nemiroff." (113)

In 1963 Lorraine Hansberry became very active in the civil rights movement in the South. She was a field organizer for CORE. Along with several other celebrated people among them Harry Belefonte, Lena Horne, and James Baldwin they met with the then attorney general Robert Kennedy challenging his position on civil rights (221). In 1964, she wrote The Movement: Documentary of a Struggle for Equality. During this time period she was diagnosed with cancer and divorced her husband although they continued their literary collaboration (253). Her second play The Sign in Sidney Bustein's Window opened on Broadway the same year. It received modest success. Lorraine Hansberry died of cancer on January 12, 1964 at the age of 34. The Sign in Sidney Bustein's Window closed on Broadway the same day (http://artistsrep.org/artisits/a_lorraine_hansberry.html 3).

After her death, her ex-husband Robert Nemiroff adapted a collection of her work, correspondence, and interviews together in *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*. It opened Off-Broadway with an eight month run at the Cherry Lane. The same year *To Be Young, Gifted and Black: Lorraine Hansberry in Her Own Words* adapted by Robert Nemiroff was published (266). Even in death she continued her fight for equality and cultural differences. Through her thoughts and feelings she encouraged talented black youth with these words…Though it be a thrilling and marvelous thing to be merely young and gifted in such times, it is doubly so, doubly dynamic to be young, gifted and black (256).

Lorraine Hansberry Biography
Source: http://voices.cla.umn.edu/artistpages/hansberryLorraine.php

"I was born black and female," Lorraine Hansberry said. These twin identities would dominate her life and her work. Rejecting the limits placed on her race and her gender, she employed her writing and her life as a social activist to expand the meaning of what

it meant to be a black woman.

Her first play, A Raisin In the Sun, is based on her childhood experiences of desegregating a white neighborhood. It won the New York Drama Critic's Circle Award as Best Play of the Year. She was the youngest American, the fifth woman and the first black to win the award. Her success opened the floodgates for a generation of modern black actors and writers who were influenced and encouraged by her writing.

Hansberry was born in 1930, the youngest of four children of Carl and Nannie Hansberry, a respected and successful black family in Chicago, Illinois. Nannie was the college educated daughter of an African Methodist Episcopal minister, and Carl was a successful real estate businessman, an inventor and a politician who ran for congress in 1940. Both parents were activists challenging discriminating Jim Crow Laws. Because of their stature in the black community such important black leaders as Paul Robeson, W.E.B. DuBois, and Langston Hughes frequented the Hansberry home as Lorraine was growing up.

Although they could afford good private schools, Lorraine was educated in the segregated public schools as her family worked within the system to change the laws governing segregation. After high school Hansberry briefly attended the University of Wisconsin at Madison before moving to New York for "an education of another kind. " She married Robert Nemiroff, a white Jewish intellectual who she met on a picket line protesting the exclusion of black athletes from university sports. She worked as editor for Paul Robeson's radical black newspaper Freedom until her husband's songwriting success allowed her to devote herself to her playwriting.

Hansberry used the success of A Raisin In the Sun as a platform to speak out for the American Civil Rights Movement and for the African struggle to free itself from white rule. She helped raise money, gave impassioned speeches and took part in panels and interviews to further these causes.

After her initial success she lived only six years and was able to complete only one more play, a movie and a television script which was too racially controversial to be aired. Her second play, The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window, was received with mixed reviews and kept open for 101 performances only by the contributions and support of the theatre community. It closed the night she died at 34 from cancer. After her death Nemiroff finished and produced her final work, Les Blancs, a play about African liberation.

Hansberry had begun to claim her identity as a lesbian in a 1957 letter to a lesbian periodical, The Ladder. This information and her 1964 divorce from Nemiroff was not widely known at the time of her death. In 1965 the Gay Liberation Movement did not

exist and a woman could not claim such an identity without major reprisals. It was not until the 1980s that feminist scholars began connecting her feminist vision with a lesbian identity.

Hansberry's work was a preview of the African-American spirit that engulfed the nation in the historic changes of the Civil Rights Movement. Her writing foresaw feminism, the Gay Liberation Movement and the demise of colonialism. She was a spearhead of the future, a woman who refused to be confined by the categories of race and gender.

A Raisin in the Sun - Synopsis and Information

Play Synopsis
Source: CenterStage Research for *A Raisin in the Sun*

Time: 1950s
Place: The Younger family apartment, Chicago's South Side
According to Lorraine Hansberry's stage directions at the beginning of the play, the action occurs sometime between the end of World War II and the 1950s. The play is set in an urban ghetto and deals with the problems encountered by a working-class black family as it tries to cope with the realities of life on Chicago's South Side. It reveals the devastating effects of poverty and oppression on the African American family.

As the play progresses, the frustration born of this poverty and oppression mounts. The anger and hostility that it spawns begins to erode the foundations of the family structure. This erosion begins early in the play, exhibiting itself in the strained relations between Walter Lee Younger and his wife Ruth as they argue over the disposition of money coming from insurance on Walter's deceased father. Walter Lee wants to use the money to buy a liquor store. He is convinced that such a business venture will be his ticket out of the ghetto. His marriage threatens to collapse under the constant bickering. Ruth, having just discovered that she is pregnant, contemplates abortion to avoid bringing new life into this hostile environment.

As the family anticipates the arrival of the insurance check, the tension grows and Walter becomes more agitated. He is resentful of his sister Beneatha, whose medical school expenses, he thinks, will consume money that he might otherwise use to finance the store. When the check finally arrives and he finds that Mama Younger has used part of the money to make a down payment on a new house and plans to use the rest for Beneatha's medical schooling, Walter explodes.

When Mama begins to understand the depth of damage to Walter Lee's feelings and manhood, she turns over the rest of the money to him to do as he pleases. She makes

one request, however: that he put aside the money for Beneatha's education. Still pursuing his dream, however, Walter gives Willie, one of his friends, the money to purchase the liquor store for him. Willie absconds with the money, dashing Walter Lee's hopes and dreams as well as those of the entire Younger family.

In an effort to recover his losses, Walter Lee decides to accept the money that has been offered earlier by their prospective white neighbors as a bribe to keep the Younger family out of an all-white neighborhood. In the last scene of the play, however, under the watchful eye of his son, Walter finds the courage to reject the offer. The family takes leave of its ghetto apartment and heads for its new home and anticipated better life. (edited from MASTERPLOTS)

SAMPLE DIALOGUE (toward the end, when Walter has apparently decided to accept being "bought out" of the white neighborhood:
Walter: Don't cry Mama. Understand. That white man is going to walk in that door able to write checks for more money than we ever had…
Mama Younger: Son—I come from five generations of people who was slaves and share croppers—but ain't nobody in my family never took no money from nobody that was a way of telling us we wasn't fit to walk the earth. We ain't never been that poor. We ain't never been that—dead inside.

Interviewer: The question, I'm sure is asked you many times—you may be tired of it—someone comes up to you and says: "This is not really a Negro play; why, this could be a play about anybody! It's a play about people!" What's your reaction? What do you say?

Lorraine Hansberry: Well I hadn't noticed the contradiction because I'd always been under the impression that Negroes ARE people. But actually it's an excellent question because I do know what people are trying to say. They're trying to say that it isn't a propaganda play. That it isn't something that hits you over the head; they are trying to say that they believe the characters in our play transcend category. However it is an unfortunate way to try and say it, because I believe that one of the most sound ideas in dramatic writing is that in order to create the universal you must pay very great attention to the specific. Universality, I think, emerges from truthful identity of what is. In other words, I have told people that not only is this a Negro family, specifically and definitely culturally, but it's not even a New York family or a Southern Negro family. It is specifically Southside Chicago… that kind of care, that kind of attention to detail. I would say it is definitely a Negro play before it is anything else.

DRAMATIC CONTEXT – *A RAISIN IN THE SUN*

Quotations – *A Raisin in the Sun*
Source: CenterStage Research for *A Raisin in the Sun*

A Raisin in the Sun was the first play written by a black woman to appear on Broadway. In 1959, it won the New York Drama Critics Circle Award as Best Play, over Williams' Sweet Bird of Youth and O'Neill's A Touch of the Poet. As Hansberry's executor and ex-husband wrote, "the play presaged the revolution in black and women's consciousness—and the revolutionary ferment in Africa—that exploded in the years following the playwright's death in 1965 to alter ineradicably the social fabric and consciousness of the nation."

"It is one of a handful of great American dramas… A Raisin in the Sun belongs in the inner circle, along with Death of a Salesman, Long Day's Journey into Night, and The Glass Menagerie"
--Washington Post

"The thing I tried to show was the many gradations even in one Negro family, the clash of the old and the new, but most all the unbelievable courage of the Negro people"
--Lorraine Hansberry

"I absolutely plead guilty to the charge of idealism. But simple idealism. You see, our people don't really have a choice. We must come out of the ghettos of America because the ghettos are killing us; not only our dreams, as Mama says, but our very bodies. It is not an abstraction to us that the average American Negro has a life expectancy of five to ten years less than the average white. You see, that is murder, and a Negro writer cannot be expected to share the placid view of the situation that might be the case with a white writer."
--Lorraine Hansberry

***A Raisin in the Sun* Character Information**
Source: CenterStage Research for *Raisin in the Sun*

LENA YOUNGER (MAMA)
Early sixties. She has lived in this apartment for forty years with her late husband, and now it is time to get out. With the insurance money she wants to buy a house with a yard where Travis can play, but she also does not want to deprive her children of their opportunity.
Dialogue: "Walter—what you ain't never understood is that I ain't got nothing, don't own nothing , ain't never really wanted nothing that wasn't for you. There ain't nothing as precious to me – there ain't nothing worth holding on to, money, dreams, nothing else – if it means – if it means it's going to destroy my boy."

DRAMATIC CONTEXT – *A RAISIN IN THE SUN*

WALTER LEE YOUNGER
Middle thirties. Lena's son. He works as a chauffeur for a wealthy white man, but he wants to open a liquor store with a portion of the insurance check. Walter Lee desperately needs this chance to prove himself as a man capable of providing for his family.
Dialogue: "You tired, ain't you? Tired of everything. Me, the boy, the way we live—this beat up hole—everything. Ain't you? So tired—moaning and groaning all the time but you wouldn't do nothing to help, would you? You couldn't be on my side that long for nothing, could you?"

BENEATHA YOUNGER
Twenty. Lena's college-age daughter. She's a passionate but somewhat naive revolutionary who searches for ways to express herself. She is dating the wealthy George Murchison, but she is smitten with Nigerian Joseph Asagai and his culture. She is determined to go to medical school.
Dialogue: "And you know, Biology is the greatest. Yesterday I dissected something that – looked just like you!"

RUTH YOUNGER
About thirty. Walter Lee's wife, expecting their second child. She works as a cook for a wealthy white woman and is disillusioned with the cramped apartment and Walter's simmering rage. She is willing to do whatever it takes to ensure a better future for her son and keep the family together.

TRAVIS YOUNGER
Ten or eleven. Walter and Lena's son. He represents the family's future, but his activities reflect their living conditions (chasing rats with the neighborhood boys, carrying groceries after school for money).

JOSEPH ASAGAI
Twenties. A Nigerian student who attends college with Beneatha. Well-educated and wise, he is in love with her and he wants to take her with him to Nigeria.
Dialogue: "Do you remember the first time we met at school--? You came up to me and you said, and I thought you were the most serious little thing I had ever seen – You said, 'Mr. Asagai – I want very much to talk with you. About Africa. You see, Mr. Asagai, I am looking for my identity!'""

GEORGE MURCHISON
Twenties. The son of a wealthy businessman. He thinks highly of himself and his elevated status, and promises to sweep Beneatha off her feet-- but only if she will leave her radical thoughts behind.

DRAMATIC CONTEXT – *A RAISIN IN THE SUN*

Dialogue: “Let’s face it, baby, your heritage is nothing but a bunch of raggedyassed spirituals and—some grass huts!”

BOBO
One of Walter Lee’s potential business partners, he shares Walter Lee’s hopes of opening the liquor store.

KARL LINDNER
A representative of the Clybourne Park Improvement Association, an organization that wants to bribe the Younger family into not moving into their all-white neighborhood.

Inspiration for a Title
Source: http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=640

The Title of Raisin in the Sun comes from a poem:

Harlem
By Langston Hughes

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

1959 – A Timeline

Jan 1: With news that Batista had fled, celebrations in Cuba start in the morning and gather momentum. People surge toward downtown Havana. They carry flags and sing their national anthem. Car caravans bedecked with flags, with the horns blowing, inch through the marchers. In the afternoon, crowds begin destroying things in casinos – considered play things of the rich.

Jan 3: Alaska becomes the 49th U.S. state.

Jan 8: Fidel Castro flows into Havana greeted by jubilant crowds. The Eisenhower administration recognizes Castro's new government.

Jan 25: In the United States, the first transcontinental jet service opens – from Los Angeles to New York, with Boeing 707s.

Feb 1: Voters in Switzerland turn down female suffrage.

Feb 18: Women in Nepal vote for the first time.

Mar – This month, Ho Chi Minh declares a "people's war" to unite all of Vietnam, including a rising in the southern half of Vietnam, to complete what was sought in the war against the French and denied by those who ignored the peace agreement made with the French in 1954.

Mar 12: China considers Tibet a part of China. In Lhasa, its military orders the Dalai Lama, age 24, to report to their military camp.

Mar 17: The Chinese fire two mortar shells at the Dalai Lama's palace. Six hours later, in the darkness of night, the Dalai Lama leaves his palace wearing a soldier's uniform, with a gun over his shoulder, and begins his trek out of Tibet.

Jun 3: Singapore, heretofore ruled by Britain, becomes a self-governing state within the Commonwealth of Nations.

Jun 16: The evangelist Billy Graham is in Moscow, but not to preach. He finds "moral purity" among the people of Moscow as well as a "great spiritual hunger" for God.

Jul 18: Khrushchev has recently abrogated the treaty with China by which the Soviet Union was to provide China with military technology. Today he publicly denounces China's communes, attributing their creation to people "who do not properly understand what communism is or how it is to be built."

Jul 24: In Moscow, Vice President Nixon boasts of advanced comforts available to U.S. citizens – the famous kitchen debate. Khrushchev is annoyed. He proposes a toast "to the elimination of all military bases on foreign lands." Nixon says, "I am for peace. We will drink to talking – as long as we are talking we are not fighting."

Jul 27: Singer Billie Holliday dies of liver failure at age 44.

Aug 1: Vice President Nixon speaks on Soviet television. He criticizes communism and warns against any attempt to spread Communist ideology beyond the borders of the Soviet Union.

Aug 21: Hawaii becomes the 50th U.S. state.

Sep 11: Congress passes a bill authorizing food stamps.

Sep 15: Khrushchev begins a 13-day visit in the United States. He and his wife are met coming off the Soviet airplane by President Eisenhower.

Oct 7: In Baghdad, a group of Baath party gunmen try to assassinate but only wound Iraq's ruler, General Abd al-Karim Qasim (Kassem). One of the gunmen, 22-year-old Saddam Hussein, is forced into hiding.

Oct 10: Pan American Airways begins offering regular jet-powered commercial flights around the world.

Oct 11: Chiang Kai-shek predicts an uprising that will produce victory for him in China in 1960.

Dec 1: Twelve countries, including the United States and the Soviet Union, sign a treaty that makes Antarctica a scientific preserve and bans military activity – the first arms control agreement since the beginning of the Cold War.

General Chicago Timeline
Source: http://www.chipublib.org/cplbooksmovies/cplarchive/timeline/index.php

This is a lovely general timeline of Chicago put together by the Chicago Public Library. Go to the web page to explore.

MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Chicago and Race Relations

Radical Cartography – Chicago
Source: http://www.radicalcartography.net/index.html?chicagodots

This resource is only viewed online. This is an interactive map of Chicago broken down by race/ethnicity, income, and neighborhood boundaries.

City of Chicago – African American History Tour
Source: http://webapps.cityofchicago.org/landmarksweb/web/tourdetails.htm?touId=27

This is a list and description of the destinations on the official Chicago African American History Tour. The Hansberry house is one of the stops. Go to web link to view.

Chicago: Destination for the Great Migration
Library of Congress
Source: http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/afam011.html

This is a great online exhibition on Chicago and the Great Migration. Go to web link to view.

Chicago and African Americans
By Christopher Manning
The Encyclopedia of Chicago
Source: http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/27.html

Beginning with John Baptiste Point DuSable's trading activities in the 1780s, blacks have had a long history in Chicago. Fugitive slaves and freedmen established the city's first black community in the 1840s, with the population nearing 1,000 by 1860. John Jones, a tailor, headed most black antislavery and antidiscrimination efforts within the city until his death in 1879. Chicago's white abolitionists were also active, but African Americans still suffered from segregation in various public venues, such as schools, public transportation, hotels, and restaurants. Moreover, black Chicagoans could neither vote nor testify against whites in court.

Finding their newly won liberties circumscribed by the overthrow of Reconstruction, small but growing numbers of black southerners made their way to Chicago, pushing the city's African American population from approximately 4,000 in 1870 to 15,000 in 1890.

MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Increasingly concentrated on the city's South Side, Chicago's black population developed a class structure composed of a large number of domestic workers and other manual laborers, along with a small but growing contingent of middle- and upper-class business and professional elites.

Formal segregation in Chicago slowly began to break down in the 1870s. The state extended the franchise to African Americans in 1870 and ended legally sanctioned school segregation in 1874. A state law against discrimination in public places followed in 1885, but it was rarely enforced and did nothing to address widespread employment discrimination. While not yet confined to the city's nascent ghettos, blacks generally found housing available only within emerging enclaves.

A new cadre of leaders emerged from the business and professional elite to address these issues. In 1878 prominent attorney Ferdinand L. Barnett established Chicago's first black newspaper, the Conservator, which championed racial solidarity and militant protest. Ida B. Wells possessed a history of militant activism long before she moved to Chicago and married Barnett in 1895. Once in Chicago, Wells continued her long-standing antilynching campaign, joined the women's suffrage, club, and settlement house movements, and played a key role in the conference establishing the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1900. Reverdy Ransom, who ministered to the city's black elite at Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, shared Wells's dedication to social causes and, with the help of white activists, established the Institutional Church and Settlement in 1900 to provide a range of social services to the black community.

Chicago Urban League, 1930-31

Steady southern migration raised Chicago's black population to 40,000 by 1910. Recognizing the power that could be derived from this growing community, black leaders began to develop independent black institutions for racial uplift. Between 1890 and 1916 black Chicagoans established Provident Hospital, the Wabash Avenue YMCA, several black newspapers, including the Chicago Defender, and local branches of the NAACP and Urban League. Chicago's black politicians, under the leadership of Ed Wright, Robert R. Jackson, and Oscar DePriest, began to wrest control from white politicians in the predominantly black Second Ward, initiating the development of the nation's most powerful black political organization.

The shift toward a self-help ideology was largely a matter of expedience, though. For during the early years of the twentieth century, Chicago's racial lines hardened. By 1910, 78 percent of black Chicagoans lived in a chain of

neighborhoods on the South Side of Chicago. This “Black Belt” was an area of aging, dilapidated housing that stretched 30 blocks along State Street and was rarely more than several blocks wide. Moreover, a pattern of education discrimination had reemerged, and blacks were still excluded from the civil service, industrial jobs, and most unions.

World War I destabilized this arrangement, as military production requirements overrode racial ideologies that had excluded blacks from industry. With the cessation of Southern and Eastern European immigration and the drafting of young white men into the military, Chicago lost a critical supply of industrial workers at a time of intense need. Industrial jobs previously closed to African Americans suddenly became available. The Chicago Defender quickly recognized the significance of this opening and became an important voice encouraging southern blacks to come north to take advantage of Chicago's industrial opportunities.

With at least 50,000 black southerners moving to Chicago between 1916 and 1920, the institutional foundation established before the war provided a base for community development. The old-line AME and Baptist churches experienced considerable growth, exemplified by Olivet Baptist Church, which, with 10,000 members in 1920, was the nation's largest black church. The migrants also added new elements to Chicago's religious culture by establishing Pentecostal and Spiritualist storefront churches that delivered more demonstrative worship services than their more sedate middle- and upper-class counterparts. Defender circulation mushroomed, black businesses prospered, and black political candidates won increased representation in the city council.

Guardsmen Questioning Man, 1919

The bulging pay envelopes and the vibrant community fulfilled migrants' expectations. But with these resources came racial tensions that were not part of migrants' visions of the “Promised Land.” Black and white workers tended to regard each other with suspicion, particularly over unionization, and with few exceptions (notably in meatpacking and garment factories) blacks found themselves generally excluded from the burgeoning labor movement. A general shortage of housing in Chicago made finding a home difficult for all Chicagoans, but the migrants were put into the particularly onerous position of moving into the overcrowded and overpriced Black Belt. Attempts to move into adjoining white neighborhoods sparked violent reactions. These tensions exploded in the summer of 1919, when five days of rioting left 23 black Chicagoans dead and 300 wounded.

MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Plantation Café

Despite the riot and a recession in 1924, blacks' fortunes rose in the 1920s. Between 1925 and 1929, black Chicagoans gained unprecedented access to city jobs, expanded their professional class, and won elective office in local and state government. These years also marked the peak of Chicago jazz, which had begun its development well before World War I. In the mid-1920s, at the height of the Jazz Age, blacks and whites walked the Stroll, a bright-light district on South State Street, where nightspots such as the Deluxe Cafe, the Dreamland Cafe, and the Royal Gardens headlined jazz greats like Louis Armstrong, Alberta Hunter, and Joseph "King" Oliver.

The Great Depression undercut many of these gains. By 1939 blacks constituted 40 percent of relief rolls, and half of all black families relied on some government aid for subsistence. Black Chicagoans tried to fight back. In the fall of 1929 the militant Chicago Whip foreshadowed later direct-action civil rights activism with its "Spend Your Money Where You Can Work Campaign," which targeted boycotts at chain stores that would serve but not hire blacks. The campaign registered some successes, pushing the number of black employees in stores in the black community to 25 percent and opening up approximately 100 white-collar jobs.

Ironically, the Depression also led to a flowering of Chicago literature and art. Between 1925 and 1950, Chicago's black literary output rivaled the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. Influenced by Robert E. Park and the Chicago School of Sociology, Chicago Black Renaissance artists like Richard Wright, Willard Motley, William Attaway, Frank Marshall Davis, and Margaret Walker turned from the Harlem Renaissance's retrospective focus on southern black folk culture to an emphasis on a "literary naturalism" that revealed the nuances of urban ghetto life. St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton exemplified the new intellectual style in their classic Black Metropolis, which remains the most detailed portrait of black Chicago in the 1930s and 1940s. Chicago painter Archibald Motley, Jr., offered new impressions of black life, with his exploration of natural and artificial light, in paintings of the South Side's vibrant nightlife. Finally, Gwendolyn Brooks' Pulitzer Prize–winning Annie Allen provided a poetic voice to the lives of everyday black Chicagoans with such works as "Beverly Hills, Chicago" and "The Children of the Poor." Migration from the South slowed during the 1930s but accelerated when World War II production created new jobs. In the 1950s, the expanding use of the mechanical cotton picker pushed another wave of black agricultural workers out of the South. Between 1940 and 1960, Chicago's black population grew from 278,000 to 813,000.

NAACP Conference, 1944

What awaited this second Great Migration of southern blacks? On the one hand, the South Side of Chicago was the "capital of black America." It was home to the nation's most powerful black politician, Democratic congressman William L. Dawson; the most prominent black man in America, boxing champion Joe Louis; and the most widely read black newspaper, the Chicago Defender. In the late 1930s the Congress of Industrial Organizations finally succeeded in overcoming racial discord in two of Chicago's major industries, steel and meatpacking, enabling some blacks to move further up the ranks to low-level management positions and contributing to a growing black working class able to count on a stable income. The migrants could spend their hard-earned wages in several shopping districts with well-provisioned department stores, movie theaters, and banks. At night they could go out and hear some of America's best rhythm and blues musicians. The Chicago blues scene dated back to the 1930s, but in 1948 Aristocrat records broke new ground and set the tone for rhythm and blues for the next 10 years with the release of Muddy Waters's "I Can't Be Satisfied." Throughout the 1950s Aristocrat, which became the famous Chess Records label, pumped out a steady supply of R&B hits with some of the nation's most popular artists, including Little Walter, Jimmy Rogers, and Howlin' Wolf.

On the other hand, conditions in Chicago provided these blues artists with much to sing about. Blacks still faced widespread employment discrimination. Stores in the Loop refused to hire African Americans as clerks. Black bus drivers, police officers, and firefighters were limited to positions serving their own community. Construction trades remained closed. Moreover, the second Great Migration made Chicago's already overcrowded slums even more dilapidated, as more and more people tried to fit into converted "kitchenette" and basement apartments in which heating and plumbing were poor, if functioning at all. Street crime in African American communities remained a low priority for Chicago's police, and violence, prostitution, and various other vices soared in black neighborhoods. When Elizabeth Wood, executive director of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), tried to ease the pressure in the overcrowded ghetto by proposing public housing sites in less congested areas elsewhere in the city in 1946, white residents reacted with intense and sustained violence. City politicians forced the CHA to

keep the status quo, setting the stage for the development of Chicago's infamous high-rise projects, such as Cabrini-Green and the Robert Taylor Homes.

In the 1960s, housing and educational issues sparked the Chicago Freedom Movement. Led by Al Raby, the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations (CCCO) sponsored a series of school boycotts and a court case to end black school overcrowding, which stemmed from widespread white opposition to school desegregation. Their efforts drew Martin Luther King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to Chicago in 1965. In conjunction with the CCCO, King led a series of protests against housing discrimination. The campaign resulted in a stalemate with Mayor Richard J. Daley and made little progress for open housing. Meanwhile, black women, who were rapidly becoming the primary heads of households in the city's steadily deteriorating high-rise projects, built a grassroots movement that resulted in greater tenant involvement in the governance of the city's public housing in the late 1960s.

Black Chicagoans in need of housing found little relief in the suburban housing market. With a few notable exceptions such as Aurora, Evanston, Oak Park, and Waukegan, blacks generally constituted less than 3 percent of the population in Chicago's northern and western suburbs by the end of the twentieth century. They found greater success in moving to southern suburbs, including Chicago Heights, Riverdale, and Harvey, where they migrated in large numbers in the 1950s and 1960s. These communities notably suffered from the decline of local industries in the final third of the twentieth century.

Reeling from the effects of deindustrialization in the 1970s, the Reagan administration's attacks on social welfare programs in the early 1980s, and decades of neglect from the Chicago political machine, black Chicagoans' political activism reignited in Harold Washington's 1983 mayoral campaign. With the support of Latinos and liberal whites, Washington's grassroots campaign defeated the remnants of the Daley machine, making Washington Chicago's first African American mayor. Washington faced intense opposition from a predominantly white city council, whose infamous “Council Wars” blocked most of his initiatives until a 1986 court order forced revisions in the gerrymandering that favored white city council candidates in a city where white voters seldom supported black or Latino candidates. The new city council passed some of Washington's reform agenda, but these initiatives were cut short by his premature death from a heart attack in 1987.

The 1990s saw both continuity and change for black Chicagoans. Racial issues still flared, with several cases of police brutality toward African Americans, controversy over inequitable promotions for African American police officers, and allegations of racial profiling in the affluent suburb of Highland Park. Mayor Richard M. Daley attempted to remedy the problems created by the housing projects built by his father in the 1960s with a $1.5 billion plan to remove the city's 51 high-rise projects and replace them with

"mixed income" housing. This policy, implemented in the opening years of the twenty-first century, has evoked a mixed reaction from community activists, who have argued that mixed income is but a "euphemism for removal of the poor."

Chicago and Civil Rights Movements
By James Ralph
The Encyclopedia of Chicago
Source: http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/293.html

Agitation for civil rights has been a regular feature of the Chicago scene, and African Americans have been the leading—though not the only—insurgents in this fight. It is difficult, however, to speak of a civil rights movement in Chicago before World War II. Unlike white immigrants, African Americans had to battle for legal recognition of their citizenship rights. Before the Civil War Illinois was a free state, but its laws prohibited the immigration of African Americans and voting by blacks. And even though Chicago was a center of antislavery activity, city schools and places of public accommodation were racially segregated.

Black Chicagoans resented these restrictions. In 1870 they gained the right to vote, in 1874 they hailed a state law forbidding segregated education, and a decade later they successfully urged the state legislature to endorse a sweeping civil rights measure which provided "that all persons ... shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of ... inns, restaurants, eating houses, barber shops, theatres, and public conveyances on land and water and all other public accommodations." After a legal challenge in 1896, the Illinois legislature more directly stated the scope of the Illinois Civil Rights Act of 1885.

NAACP Conference, 1944

City practices did not match the color-blind rhetoric, however. Beyond the Black Belt, black Chicagoans faced discriminatory treatment. Restaurants and hotels regularly turned away black patrons. Theaters often seated African Americans only in the balcony. And despite the 1885 civil rights law, it was difficult to obtain a conviction for discriminatory practices.

By the early twentieth century, race relations in Chicago had become more tense than they had been in over a generation. Out of this climate, which was part of a nationwide trend, emerged the Chicago branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Founded in 1910 by black and white racial progressives, the Chicago NAACP championed a vision of a just society, even if other groups eclipsed its efforts during the 1910s.

Roller Rink Demonstration, 1949

Black activism reached a new peak with the coming of the Great Depression. A black newspaper, the Chicago Whip, led a "Don't Spend Your Money Where You Can't Work" campaign. The Communist Party spurred agitation over employment rights and access to public accommodations. And local residents protested segregated schools.

It was a new organization, however, that specialized in nonviolent direct action. Founded in 1942 in Chicago by James Farmer and other followers of Gandhian tactics, the Congress of Racial Equality staged sit-ins and other protests against discriminatory Chicago restaurants and recreational centers. In the late 1940s activists of the United Packinghouse Workers union also targeted segregated eateries. By the early 1960s, most public accommodations in the city were open to African Americans.

Fight School Segregation, 1963

The broad range of insurgency in the 1930s and 1940s was impressive, but it represented less a cohesive movement than a series of distinct efforts to secure more opportunities for African Americans. In the early 1960s, however, unequal educational opportunities and the imperial style of school superintendent Benjamin Willis spurred black parents, especially on the far South Side, to protest public school policies. The emergence of local, grassroots movements laid the foundation for the great school boycotts of October 1963 and February 1964 in which 400,000 students missed school.

A new organization, the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations (CCCO), founded by the Chicago Urban League, the Chicago NAACP, and a number of other groups, sought to harness the emerging protest energies. By 1965, CCCO comprised 40 affiliates, including largely white groups like the Catholic Interracial Council and more militant black groups like Chicago CORE. During the summer of 1965, CCCO staged

almost daily marches against Willis and segregationist school policies. Never before had Chicago experienced such a dramatic and sustained demand for racial justice.

Washington's Oath of Office, 1983

CCCO's activism did not yield substantive results. In September 1965, it joined forces with Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference to launch the Chicago Freedom Movement, which sought to end slums and extend equal opportunities to all Chicagoans. The high point of the Chicago Freedom Movement was a two-month campaign in the summer of 1966 to end housing discrimination in metropolitan Chicago.

By mid-1967, however, the Chicago Freedom Movement was over, and CCCO was disintegrating. The Black Power impulse—which questioned interracial activism and nonviolent direct action—pulsated through black Chicago. As the rise of the Black Panther Party and the urban uprisings of 1966 and 1968 attested, a new protest universe had emerged. Only the regular mass meetings of Jesse Jackson's Operation Breadbasket, which later became Operation PUSH, and the deep commitment among African Americans to Harold Washington's mayoral campaigns in the 1980s carried on the movement qualities of the first half of the 1960s.

From a Transcript of a *This American Life* Episode on Cicero, IL (a Chicago Suburb)
Source: http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/179/transcript

"Ira Glass: Cicero is just different. For most of the twentieth century, there were direct links between town hall and the mob. Most of the twentieth century, town hall didn't hesitate to strong-arm anybody. If city officials decided they didn't like you, you obeyed, you suffered, or you got out of town. And then finally Cicero row that into a fight that it had trouble winning.

From WBEZ Chicago and Public Radio International, This American Life. I'm Ira Glass. Today on our program, Cicero, Illinois. The story of a town in a bubble and what happens when the bubble pops.

And let's say before we go any further that Cicero is just over the border on Chicago's west side. And although officially it is called a suburb, what it actually looks like is just another West Side Chicago neighborhood. Working class families, brick bungalow houses.

For decades, Cicero was this place that did not want outsiders moving in. That fought violently against blacks and other minorities coming from town. And then at some point, the outsiders came anyway.

In a sense, this story today is a kind of worst case scenario. You have a town connected to the mob, notoriously racist. So what happens when the town starts to go through the kind of demographic changes that are happening everywhere else, all over America? What happens when people of other races start to show up in large numbers? Well, what happened in Cicero wasn't just that the town opposed it, kicking and screaming and fighting every step of the way. Though they did. It's a lot more complicated than that.

Just a few weeks from now, the first week of April, 2001, the town will hold elections. The same Republican political machine that has run the town for decades faces a Hispanic challenger who the machine is likely to defeat, despite the fact that three-fourths of the town is now Hispanic. Today we explain how that is possible. Stay with us. I am joined in this very special edition of our program by Alex Kotlowitz, who will be co-hosting the hour. He is the author of the books There Are No Children Here and The Other Side of the River, and he's an occasional contributor to our program. Welcome, Alex."

"Alex Kotlowitz: In 1951, Cicero became notorious for something besides Al Capone when an African American family moved to town, a Chicago bus driver named Harvey Clark with his wife and kids. They kicked off a three day riot in which white mobs entered their apartment and destroyed it, pushing a piano through the wall. Police watched but did nothing. The governor had to call out the National Guard.

There were other incidents as well. By the '60s, the town was known as the Selma of the north. Of course, lots of towns and neighborhoods in the '50s and '60s tried to keep blacks out, but in Cicero, they succeeded.

Leo Satos: Blacks were allowed in Cicero between six in the morning and six at night. Working hours. After that, you know, you're not welcome anymore.

Alex Kotlowitz: Leo Satos and his brother Victor remember how in the '60s, they and their buddies would be hanging around on the street and police would come by and then send them on little missions.

Leo Satos: Oh, sure, many times. I mean, we were just sitting around [UNINTELLIGIBLE] at the tractors, and there's two officers come and say, oh, listen, you guys. There's a black person over-- well, they didn't refer to them as black then. But they'd say, yeah, on

56th and Roosevelt. And it's after six o'clock. And our job was to physically escort them out of town. You know? With rocks, bricks, stones, whatever. You know? And if we didn't, well, we'd end up in jail for illegal gathering or whatever.

Victor Satos: Loitering.

Leo Satos: Yeah. And that'd be the end of story.

Sophia Bannick: Talking about the black people. We've always had them.

Ira Glass: Again, here's Sophia Bannick, one of the Catholic ladies I met after mass.

Leo Satos: Walking down 14th street. Remember, we had National Malibu. They all worked there. They used to go into our stores and ask the butcher to make them a ham sandwich or something. I have a friend who had a tavern. They used to go and have a drink and cash their checks there. And they walked up and down.

We thought nothing of it. In fact, we'd even say hello and everything else. We were never taught to avoid them or shun them or something.

Ira Glass: Do you think it would have been different if they had moved on the block, though?

Sophia Bannick: Well that, yeah, I think so. Yeah.

Ira Glass: In the summer of 1966, Martin Luther King Jr. came to Chicago after his successes in the south and he staged marches in Chicago neighborhoods, that weren't far from Cicero. But when he threatened to march in Cicero, county officials warned that it would be a "suicide mission." That was the phrase they used.

As recently as the 1980s, a federally monitored effort to desegregate Cicero failed to lure black families to town. Around that time, a run-in between a police sergeant and one of the few African Americans who had moved to Cicero resulted in 1980s-era mandatory human relations training for the entire Cicero police force.
Long-time civil rights activist Cal Williams helped organized the session.

Cal Williams: When we got there, most of the people who came in with blue T-shirts with the lettering "Cicero Police and Proud of It" across them. Except for the sergeant. And he had his own separate T-shirt. And it said, "Police Brutality-- The Fun Part of Police Work." And that was their message to us."

A blueprint for a new American dream
Will Jeanne Gang's inventive ideas for Cicero work in the real world?
February 13, 2012|Blair Kamin – Chicago Tribune
Source: http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/ct-met-jeanne-gang-cicero-0212-20120213,0,3287005.story

Cicero, infamous for its history of corruption, and Jeanne Gang, famous for her futuristic buildings, would seem an unlikely pair. But something unexpected has brought them together: America's foreclosure crisis.

On a recent morning, Gang drove her gray Toyota Prius past the town's sturdy but overcrowded brick bungalows and envisioned something different: a high-rise resembling a Rubik's Cube, its profile constantly shifting as affordable units for living and working are plugged into its superstructure, each tailored to the needs of residents.

A concept rather than a blueprint, her plan will be prominently featured in an exhibition, "Foreclosed: Rehousing the American Dream," that opens Wednesday at New York's Museum of Modern Art and is sure to be provocative.

The Chicago architect, who won acclaim in 2009 for the undulating silhouette of her Aqua tower and last year was awarded a MacArthur "genius" grant, leads one of five teams that were asked by the museum and Columbia University's Center for the Study of American Architecture to formulate new housing prototypes in response to the national foreclosure epidemic. The other teams focused on sites outside New York, Los Angeles, Tampa, Fla., and Portland, Ore.

While there are ample reasons to be skeptical about Gang's design for Cicero, it should help kick-start a much-needed debate about alternatives to the standard single-family house on a grassy lot. Our homes should fit the realities of how we live, not some preordained myth of the American dream. But making the right fit among form, function and finance is no simple matter, as a close look at Gang's design reveals.

There is no small irony in Gang being assigned to Cicero. The gritty suburb, which sits on Chicago's western flank, is routinely bypassed by tourists heading to nearby Oak Park and its cache of Prairie Style homes by Frank Lloyd Wright. Cicero wants desperately for the world to forget its sordid legacy of mob ties, which stretch from Al Capone in the 1920s to the more recent exploits of former Town PresidentBetty Loren-Maltese, who was convicted in 2002 for helping steal $12 million from a municipal insurance fund. The town turns out to be an ideal venue for clarifying the scope and impact of the foreclosure crisis.

The poster child for the crisis is the exurban home in the unfinished subdivision, yet the crisis has hit equally hard at older, close-in suburbs like Cicero. According to the Woodstock Institute, the town had 1,066 new foreclosures in 2010, an increase of 8.6 percent over the previous year. While foreclosures declined slightly in the first half of 2011, no one in Cicero expects the problem to go away anytime soon.

The town, Gang notes, is an "arrival city," where immigrants proceed directly instead of settling first in Chicago. The official 2010 census population is 84,000, but town officials say it's probably closer to 100,000 to 110,000 because of undocumented residents. The super mercados and taquerias that line Cicero's commercial streets hint at its shift from a haven for Eastern European immigrants to those from Mexico.

Many of the town's families are crammed into bungalows, doubling and tripling up as they struggle to pay mortgages taken on during the boom years. They have converted basements and attics into bedrooms or, in a further attempt to make ends meet, transformed garages into makeshift workspaces for car repairs and other odd jobs. Technically, such arrangements violate the thrust of the town's zoning code, which calls for a strict separation of homes and businesses.

Gang calls the situation a "housing mismatch," and she correctly diagnoses Cicero's response to the foreclosure crisis as inadequate. While the town has used subsidies from the federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program to rehab and sell foreclosed homes, only about 10 homes have been fixed up, town officials acknowledge. As Gang points out, Cicero's deeper problem is industrial decline, as exemplified by the fate of the long-gone Hawthorne Works plant, where the Western Electric manufacturing arm of AT&T once employed as many as 45,000 people.

The lone remnant of the plant, a marvelous castlelike tower with a peaked roof, rises incongruously behind the Hawthorne Works shopping center.

To remedy the town's underperforming economy and overcrowded bungalows, Gang proposes what she calls a "born-again factory." In essence, a shuttered factory would be given a new identity as a place where people would both live and work.

Toxin-absorbing trees would be planted to help decontaminate the site. Concrete cores would rise from the shell of the former factory, housing stairwells, elevators and utility stacks. Reclaimed steel trusses would span the cores, framing communal spaces such as a day care center.

Individual dwelling units would be mounted above and below the trusses, with different sizes meeting the needs of different families. Some units would have their own kitchens, while others would share communal cooking areas. Workspaces would be located in the

apartments if they entailed simple tasks like crafts, but would be in a separate ground-level space if they involved noisy machines or noxious chemicals.

All residents would have access to rooftop gardens and street-level gardens that would fan out from the high-rise. A garage would provide space for cars.

Gang gives this reformulation of the bungalow's uses a catchy title — the "bungalow shuffle."

The building's financial architecture would be equally unusual. A private trust known as a limited equity cooperative would own the land beneath the former factory and the shared amenities. Residents would own their units but not the land. If they wanted to leave, they would sell their units back to the trust, whose charge would be to provide affordable housing, not make a profit.

The aim is to shield residents from what Gang calls "the casino effect," those wild swings in home values that, along with rising unemployment, have left millions of Americans unable to pay their mortgage.

Factor in mixed-use zoning that would allow alleys to become vibrant marketplaces lined by cottage industries that residents would run out of garages, and — presto! — you have a vision fit for displaying on the walls of a prestigious museum.
Whether it would work is a different matter.

Cicero officials offered Gang several factory locations, but the one she settled on — at 31st Street and Central Avenue — is still operating, making her concept seem even less grounded in reality. Among the occupants is a firm that makes gears for wind towers. While Gang promotes her vision as eco-friendly, the site is about a mile from the CTA's Pink Line station in Cicero — a distance that would discourage people from using transit instead of driving.

"I was a little surprised" by Gang's site, said Craig Pesek, a Cicero project manager, though he added that her plan was "something we would take a good hard look at." Irrespective of the high-rise's location, its proposed height — more than 10 stories, as pictured in a booklet about the plan — raises concerns that would go beyond Cicero's need to buy a firetruck to reach that high. The town's tallest current building is nine stories.

As anyone familiar with the tragic history of public housing in Chicago knows, high-rise housing has often proved ill-suited to the needs of low-income families, especially large families. A mother on the 10th floor can't look out her kitchen window and keep a close

eye on her child playing in the backyard. Unsupervised children often play in elevators, causing them to break down.

To be sure, as Gang argues, she is proposing one or two high-rises, not an entire housing project. Yet even some of the community leaders she consulted during her research expressed doubts about the design and the way it echoes the shipping containers and lifts in nearby rail yards.

"People would look at this more as an apartment than their own home," said Cristine Pope, director of the Interfaith Leadership Project, a church-based community organization in Cicero. While some buyers might like the affordability of the units and their modern conveniences, she added, others "would say, 'I don't want to live in it. It looks like a factory.'"

The point is: Who is this design for? The conceit of an ever-changing building that morphs like a Rubik's Cube might advance Gang's reputation for innovative high-rise design, but is such a plan really feasible? And would it truly advance the cause of better housing? Gang's research included talking to Cicero residents, but she designed her plan for them, not with them.

Perhaps the design would appeal to the children of immigrants, eager to shed their parents' ways. To young men forced to live dormitory style in the basements of bungalows, the high-rise's expansive views and shared kitchens would be a breath of fresh air compared with their current homes.

But the failures of high-rise public housing teach harsh lessons: Architectural experiments often bring unintended consequences. At Cabrini-Green, earnest architects left out conventional hallways in favor of perimeter breezeways that were called "streets in the sky." The architects never foresaw that children could throw other children off of those breezeways. That forced the Chicago Housing Authority to fence in the breezeways with chain-link, making residents feel caged in.

It's hard to imagine anything so tragic unfolding as a result of Gang's new plan, which would not, after all, be a public housing development. Her concept for Cicero is a vivid demonstration of her ability to join the diverse strands of ecology, finance, form and function into inventive new prototypes. Whether this experiment would serve its intended users remains an open question.

How Black Gentrifiers Have Affected the Perception of Chicago's Changing Neighborhoods
Emily Badger
The Atlantic Cities – Dec 31, 2012
Source: http://www.theatlanticcities.com/neighborhoods/2012/12/how-black-gentrifiers-have-affected-perception-chicagos-changing-neighborhoods/4233/

Flickr/Laurie Chipps

The neighborhood of Bronzeville on the South Side of Chicago has been gentrifying now for more than a decade. Formerly boarded-up beautiful brick homes along Martin Luther King Jr. Drive have come to life. New construction has gone up on land where high-rise public housing projects were spectacularly imploded starting in the 1990s. Median incomes and property values have soared.

Gentrification, though, means something different in Bronzeville than it does in other neighborhoods. In most U.S. cities the word has generally come to imply the gradual taking of a place from one group (usually poor people, usually minorities) by another (usually middle- or upper-class whites). But in Bronzeville, a historically black **MAJOR**

neighborhood – once Chicago's version of Harlem, the city's "Black Metropolis" – the gentrifiers are black, too.

Some of them have been there for years, ascending the income ladder as the black middle-class nationwide has dramatically expanded. Then there is the sense that others are "returning" 30 or 40 years after the black middle-class left Bronzville. Either way, there seems to be space enough in the neighborhood amid the vacant lots. Bronzeville's historic "blackness" appears to overwhelm any sense of its identity as a neighborhood on the way up.

"The idea of gentrification as necessitating displacement – that understanding changed in this particular neighborhood," says Matthew Anderson, who teaches at Montana State University in Billings and grew up not far from Bronzeville. "Gentrification became a positive word."

Non-white gentrification is still a relatively new phenomenon in American cities, and an even newer one in the academic literature on urban neighborhoods. Some of Bronzeville's experience stretches our conception of the word. Anderson's research in the area raises some curious questions about what happens in a community when the gentrifiers aren't white – and what this means for a neighborhood's public perception.

Community leaders in Bronzeville want middle-class outsiders to come in, at least to consume the redeveloped neighborhood as a quasi-tourist destination on par with the city's Chinatown or Greektown, as a mecca for black history and culture. Bronzeville was the final destination in Chicago for many southern blacks on the Great Migration in the 1920s and '30s. The neighborhood claims close connections to Richard Wright, Louis Armstrong, Muddy Waters and Buddy Guy. For a while, local residents were hoping to recast Bronzeville as a historic "Blues District." The rest of the city, though, has largely declined to come by. Why is that?

Anderson and colleague Carolina Sternberg published a study, in the journal Urban Affairs Review, comparing Bronzeville to another gentrifying neighborhood on Chicago's near southwest side. Pilsen has been a historic point of entry for immigrants into Chicago, most recently for Mexican migrants over the past half-century. Like Bronzeville, community activists in Pilsen have managed to keep the neighborhood's historic identity intact. Pilsen is both gentrifying and becoming a draw for residents across the city in search of Mexican food and culture. It has successfully turned itself, as Anderson and Sternberg put it, into a site for "ethnic consumption."

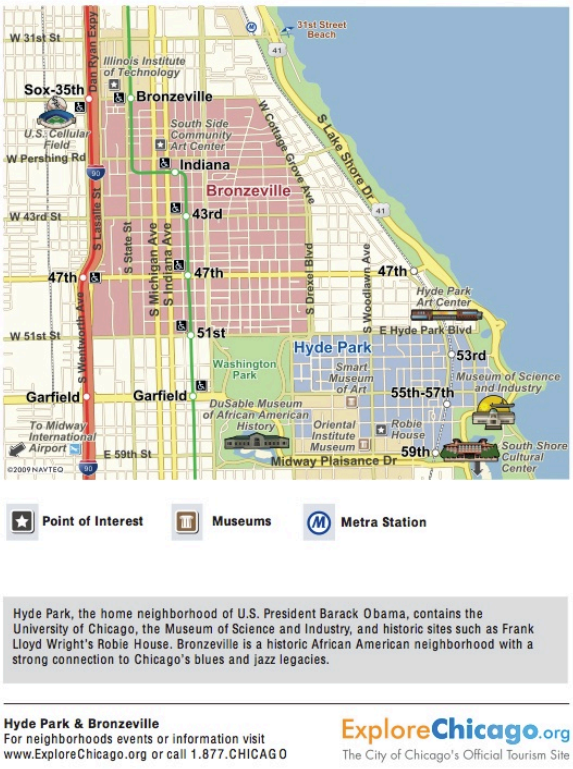
In this way, Pilsen has pulled off what Bronzeville hasn't. And the reasons for this reveal something peculiar about the way the rest of the city views non-white gentrification. In the local media, Pilsen is now celebrated as a colorful, lively place where the sidewalks

smell like Mexican baked goods and everything sounds like Latin music. Past stereotypes of low-income Latinos living there have been replaced, Anderson and Sternberg write, by "a new racialized subject: the hardworking, professional, and civically reliable Mexican citizen."

Their culture seems somehow more marketable. As a former Bronzeville resident put it to the researchers:

Mexicans, I feel, to folks I know, seem more festive . . . the culture I would say is perceived as more fun and mainstream . . . you think of good food before anything else… If anything, they get flak for stealing our jobs . . . but people are still gonna love drinking margaritas and eating burritos.

The city seems less willing or able to change its perception of Bronzeville. In Anderson's interviews with white middle-class Chicago residents, it sounds almost as if they can't distinguish between poor and middle-class blacks living there. It's as if gentrification can't happen without an influx of white residents, and so it must not be happening there. How can the neighborhood's prospects have really changed if its demographics haven't? Bronzeville's historic "blackness" – to borrow a term from the academics – appears to overwhelm any sense of its identity as a neighborhood on the way up.



"That perception of urban black neighborhoods that have been poor and violent and ghetto-ridden, that has just been very difficult to crack, particularly in Chicago," Anderson says. "That image of the Robert Taylor Homes when you're driving down the Dan Ryan [Expressway], it's still so embedded in people's minds. I don't think we're far enough removed from that image."

Bronzeville's gentrification is almost invisible outside of the neighborhood. Literally, this is how tourist maps of the city often treat the area, glazing over the long patch of land between the South Loop and Hyde Park, where the University of Chicago and Museum of Science and Industry are located. One of the white, middle-class residents interviewed by Anderson put it this way:

I don't even really know where this place [Bronzeville] is, I mean, I know it's between downtown and Hyde Park, but it's just like empty space in my mind, I never even think about it.

Those who did have a mental image invariably offered a negative one:
When you think of Blacks in Chicago the first thing that comes to mind is poverty . . . kids getting killed by other kids.

Developers who have gone into Bronzeville have explicitly marketed housing there to blacks, both because the community wanted to keep its historic identity and because there were doubts whites would have moved in. But the hope was that even if whites did not arrive with moving trucks, they would come down to hear the Blues.

Instead, the neighborhood hasn't been able to shake the perception of its previous poverty, which is still visible on some lots. "From the outside looking in, you still see that history there," Anderson says. "People can't get away from that, even despite the fact that it has changed drastically. They still see those spaces of neglect. Those are still reminders, signifiers of the past."

Gentrification in Bronzeville not only has a different meaning; it has a different set of limits. The neighborhood needs more sit-down restaurants, but outside of the immediate community, who will patronize them? How would things change if whites did move in? Or what would happen if middle-class blacks gentrified a part of town that wasn't associated in the city's memory with housing projects and gang violence?

Bronzeville is an entirely unique neighborhood (the particular redevelopment there is further colored by the irony that locals want to return to the heyday of a "Black Metropolis" that was created through forced segregation). But many of these questions will crop up elsewhere. Some cities, Anderson adds, simply don't have a sizable pool of potential non-white gentrifiers. But others – New York, Atlanta, Washington – do. How

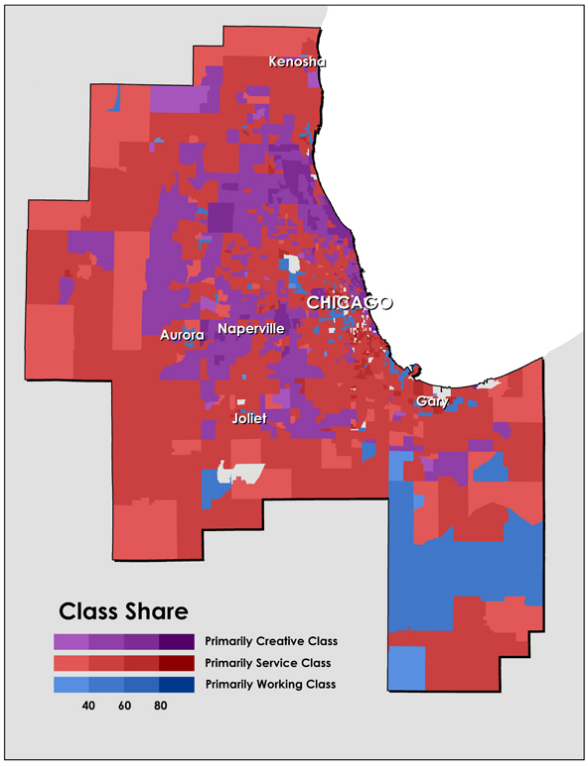
will neighborhoods there change what we mean by the word, as the very act of gentrification diversifies?

Top image: Bronzeville rowhouses (Flickr user Laurie Chipps via Creative Commons)

Emily Badger is a staff writer at The Atlantic Cities. Her work has previously appeared in Pacific Standard, GOOD, The Christian Science Monitor, and The New York Times. She lives in the Washington, D.C. area.

Class-Divided Cities: Chicago Edition
Richard Florida
The Atlantic Cities – Feb 04, 2013
Source: http://www.theatlanticcities.com/neighborhoods/2013/02/class-divided-cities-chicago-edition/4306/

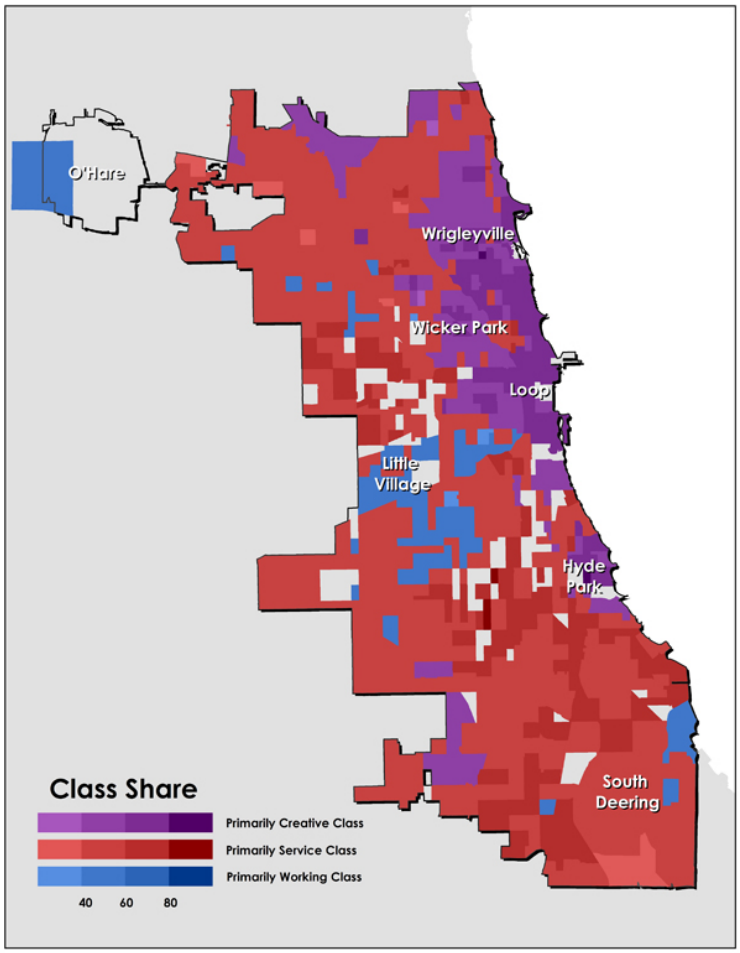
This is the third post in a series exploring the class divides across America's largest cities and metros. It examines the residential locations of today's three major classes: the shrinking middle of blue-collar workers; the rising ranks of the knowledge, professional, and creative class; and the even larger and faster-growing ranks of lower-paid, service workers, using detailed data from the American Community Survey. For a detailed description of methodology, see the first post in the series, on New York.



MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

The map above charts the geography of class for the entire metro area of Chicago. The creative class lives in the areas that are shaded in purple, the red areas are primarily service class, and the blue are working class. The areas with the darkest shades have the highest concentrations of that class. Each colored space on the map is a Census tract, a small area within city or county that can be even smaller than a neighborhood.

The creative class includes people who work in science and technology, business and management, arts, culture, media, and entertainment, law, and healthcare professions. All told its ranks make up 35.1 percent of the metro's workers, slightly higher than the national average. These are high-skilled, highly-educated, and high-paying positions where workers average $75,033 per year in wages and salaries. There are 729 tracts (34.5 percent of the city's total) that are more than 40 percent creative class workers, 407 (19.3 percent) with more than 50 percent, 67 (3.2 percent) with more than two-thirds, and nine tracts (0.43 percent) where the creative class makes up more than three-quarters of all residents.



In the city proper, the purple areas with the highest creative class concentrations radiate north and south from the city center, up and down the lake shore from the Loop south to the Hyde Park area surrounding the University of Chicago, and then north including Wicker Park and Wrigleyville, which have slightly smaller concentrations. (These concentrations are highlighted right. Click for a larger image.)

In the wider metro, the areas of highest creative class concentration continue to hug the lake shore but also include suburban Oak Park to the west and Evanston, home of Northwestern University, to the north. There is a also a band of purple to the west running north and south of Naperville.

The next two maps are interactive: Click on a tract to see its percentages for each of the three major classes.

The map below charts class geography for the city proper.
The city of Chicago. (MPI's Zara Matheson)
(Go to web link to see map)

The second interactive map (immediately below) charts the class geography for the entire Chicago metro area. Click on a tract for information on the percentage breakdown of the three major classes.
The Chicago metro area. (MPI's Zara Matheson)
(Go to web link to see map)

The table below lists the top 10 creative class locations (Census tracts) in the metro area. Six of these are in the city proper, including two each in Hyde Park and Streeterville and one each in Lake View and Lincoln Park, as well as one each in suburban Oak Park, Evanston, Glencoe, and Burr Ridge.

Harvard sociologist Robert Sampson notes the continuity and overlap between these creative class clusters and his own map of Chicago's "bohemian index" and internet use in his book, Great American City. Pointing to the strong creative class clusters in Hyde Park, the Loop, and North Side, he notes in an email to me that "what is interesting is that bohemians (actors, dancers, writers, etc.) are not necessarily high income. The creative class high earners like to be near the bohemians but perhaps not equal feelings the reverse way as reflected in the ongoing debate over gentrification." He also notes the difference between the creative class concentrations in the Loop and Lincoln Park, which are more business professional, and Hyde Park, which is more academic as it surrounds the University of Chicago.

Top 10 Creative Class Locations in the Chicago Metro	
Neighborhood (Census Tract #)	Creative Class Share
Hyde Park, Chicago (4112)	81.0%
Lake View, Chicago (623)	80.0%
Hyde Park, Chicago (4111)	79.8%
Oak Park, Illinois (8124)	79.5%
Streeterville, Chicago (814.02)	78.8%
Glencoe, Illinois (8001)	77.2%
Evanston, Illinois (8099)	75.7%
Streeterville, Chicago (814.03)	75.7%
Burr Ridge, Illinois (8459.01)	75.3%
Lincoln Park, Chicago (714)	74.2%
Metro Average	35.1%

The service class entails low-wage, low-skill workers who work in routine service jobs such as food service and preparation, retail sales, and clerical and administrative positions. This is the largest class of workers in Chicago, making up 43.4 percent of the region's workers, and some of the fastest-growing job categories of all. Service workers in the metro average $30,946 in wages and salaries — 41 percent of the average of creative class workers. There are 491 tracts (23.2 percent of the city's total) where this class is more than half, 37 (1.75 percent) where it is more than two-thirds, and two tracts (0.09 percent) where it is more than three-quarters.

In the city proper, the service class is settled at the periphery of creative class neighborhoods out to the city's outer rim. As the table below shows, nine of the 10 tracts with the highest percentage of service workers are in the city proper, and four of them are located in Englewood, a three-mile square neighborhood in the southwest that has a poverty rate of more than 40 percent, over twice the city's rate overall. In our email conversation regarding this post, Sampson notes this is "ominous for the future given the stagnation of wages in this sector, as the poor get poorer." This is in line with our earlier dialogue here on Cities where he pointed out that "the stigmatization heaped on poor neighborhoods and the grinding poverty of its residents are corrosive, leading to … 'moral cynicism' and alienation from key institutions, setting up a cycle of decline. Those with the means move out, leading to further cynicism and an intensified 'poverty

trap' in the neighborhoods left behind." In the broader metro, the service class surrounds the two major creative class clusters.

Top 10 Service Class Locations in the Chicago Metro	
Neighborhood (Census Tract #)	Service Class Share
Englewood, Chicago (8349)	86.3%
Englewood, Chicago (6805)	83.5%
Austin, Chicago (2515)	74.9%
DeKalb, Illinois (22)	74.5%
Riverdale, Chicago (5401.02)	74.2%
Fuller Park, Chicago (8355)	73.3%
South Chicago, Chicago (4603.02)	72.8%
Englewood, Chicago (6713)	72.6%
Washington Park, Chicago (4008)	72.5%
Englewood, Chicago (6716)	72.4%
Metro Average	43.4%

Sadly, few solidly working class neighborhoods remain in Chicago, the city that poet Carl Sandburg memorably celebrated as the "City of the Big Shoulders." In the city, there are several specks of blue west of the Loop and one to the south.

Members of the working class are employed in factory jobs as well as transportation and construction. It comprises 21.4 percent of the region's workers, who average $40,295 per year in wages and salaries. There are just 37 tracts (1.8 percent of the city's total) where the working class makes up more than half of all workers living in the area. But there are 401 tracts (18.9 percent) where it is less than 10 percent of residents, and 149 (7.1 percent) where the working class is less than five percent.

Seven of the 10 tracts with the largest working class concentrations are in the city proper, including four in Little Village, two in New City, and one in Brighton Park. Sampson writes to me that many of these tracts are highly immigrant, mainly Latino enclaves. South Deering on the far south side remains a bastion of blue collar workers, even 30 years after the closing of Wisconsin Steel, as does South Lawndale (a part of the formerly Eastern European enclave of Little Village, which has in recent years become a

bastion for Mexican immigrants), despite the closings of the big Western Electric and International Harvester plants that used to employ so many. In the greater metro area, Joliet and Cicero as well as Gary across the border in Indiana have significant working class concentrations.

Top 10 Working Class Locations in the Chicago Metro	
Neighborhood (Census Tract #)	Working Class Share
Little Village, Chicago (3017.01)	66.9%
Gary, Indiana (411)	59.6%
Brighton Park, Chicago (5808)	59.5%
New City, Chicago (6104)	59.2%
Cicero, Illinois (8133.02)	58.9%
Little Village, Chicago (8408)	58.0%
Joliet, Illinois (8813.01)	58.0%
New City, Chicago (6103)	57.9%
Little Village, Chicago (8407)	56.5%
Little Village, Chicago (3018.03)	55.6%
Metro Average	21.4%

My next post in this series will look at Washington, D.C., one of the country's fastest-growing and most affluent metros.

All maps by MPI's Zara Matheson.

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MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Chicago – Neighborhoods and Housing

[Dramaturg's Note: This topic and the one above are obviously linked, and the research materials flow between both topics.]

A Timeline of Moments in Chicago Housing History
Chicago and Its Suburbs
Words by Ashley Weger / Compiled by Ashley Weger with Chuck Lee
Source: http://areachicago.org/chicago-and-its-suburbs/

1868: Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux begin planning on Riverside, a model for middle class suburb building.

1880s
George Pullman begins building his company-owned town on the city's South Side;
1889: Joseph Sears begins building Kenilworth, Chicago's most wealthy suburb, established with a simple mantra: "Large lots, high standards of construction, no alleys, and sales to Caucasians only."

1890s
1896: Plessy v. Ferguson decision upholds a state's right to enact laws racially segregating social life, including housing.

1900s
1909: Burnham's Plan for the City published; On November 8, 1909, a mob of angry white citizens in Anna, Illinois, drive out the town's 40 black families, becoming all-white overnight. Residents of Anna still joke that the town's name is an acronym: Ain't No Niggers Allowed.

1910s
1910: the Urban League formed; 1917: the NAACP wins its first Supreme Court ruling, that states could not racially segregate housing districts of a city; the Chicago Real Estate Board adopts block-by-block racial segregation policies; 1919: famous citywide race riot starts at 29th St. Beach.

1920s
1921: the Chicago Real Estate Board votes unanimously to expel any member who rents or sells property on a "white" block to Black residents; 1925: Burgess model published, including zones designated as ghettos, slums, and "the Black Belt." 1927: The city of Chicago adopts racially restrictive housing covenants, which will, at their height, cover 80% of the city.

MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

1930s
1934: the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) begins to subsidize mortgages and insure private mortgages, often requiring new owners to add racially restrictive covenants to their deeds. The policy promotes the single family detached dwelling as the prevailing mode of housing—setting the stage for suburban sprawl.

1940s
From 1945 to 1947, 167 black households in white neighborhoods in Chicago are bombed, killing four people, permanently disabling eight, and injuring dozens more; the GI Bill provides loans for veterans, encouraging home ownership outside of urban settings; 1947: Taft-Hartley Act is approved, further disempowering the urban working class; Blighted Areas Redevelopment Act gives South Loop businesses Eminent Domain powers and funding for "urban renewal," which comes to be known colloquially as "Negro Removal"; 1948: U.S. Supreme Court strikes down racially restrictive covenants (Shelley v. Kramer); income tax law is changed to favor a single wage earner per family as women are pushed to leave jobs to make room for returning veterans; 1949: the Public Housing Administration decides racial segregation in public housing projects will be left up to local authorities; antiblack riots in Park Manor and Englewood Park. With the end of WWII, wartime manufacturing and propaganda (marketing) industries are redirected to mobilize mass middle-class consumer spending.

1950s
By the 1950s, federal money insures half of the mortgages in the country, but only in segregated white neighborhoods. More Americans live in the suburbs than not. The elements of homogeneous suburban culture and sprawl (television, automobiles, tract houses) are in place. In urban neighborhoods, realtors' tactics such as "blockbusting" promote white flight. 1951: City Council approves Duffy-Lancaster proposal to build public housing only in already overpopulated black neighborhoods. Race riots occur across the city, as far west as Cicero and south to Englewood; 1952: Ground broken on Lake Meadows homes, product of South Loop urban renewal; 1953: Urban Community Conservation Act, backed by the University of Chicago, is passed, extending eminent domain rights to neighborhoods that are merely threatened with economic decline; 1958: City Council approves Hyde Park urban renewal plan.

1960s
1962: the Robert Taylor Homes open. Planned for 11,000 residents, they would come to house 27,000; 1963: Betty Friedan (born in Peoria, IL) publishes The Feminine Mystique, identifying "the problem that has no name," middle-class suburban women's discontent with oppressive gender norms; 1965: Lawndale Housing Riots; 1966: Housing Summit between Martin Luther King and segregationist Mayor Richard J. Daley results in few concrete changes; 1968: Federal Fair Housing Act; Oak Park begins reversing past discrimination and issues the first fair housing ordinance in the state of Illinois; 1969:

Gautreaux v. Chicago Housing Authority, initiated in 1966, is decided in favor of the plaintiffs, determining that the CHA selected housing sites on a racial basis (in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment); 99.5% of public housing units in Chicago are situated in black neighborhoods.

1970s

In 1970, nearly 7% of towns in Illinois are sundown towns, meaning Blacks are formally or informally excluded. 1973: Chicago 21 plan initiates attempts at luring affluent whites back to the center city. 1976: 100 Black and white demonstrators march for open housing in a Chicago neighborhood. A crowd of 1000 white counterprotesters lined the streets jeering, "go home, niggers" while assaulting the demonstrators with rocks, bricks, and bottles. 1979: Wicker Park receives national historic designation, beginning gentrification there.

1980s

In the 1980s, 8 of 10 Cook County municipalities with the most Section 8 tenants were in the south suburbs. During the 1980s City of Chicago loses 91,000 jobs; the region as a whole gains 424,000. 86 percent of all Black households and 77 percent of all Hispanic households lived in municipalities that had either lost jobs or gained no jobs over the decade. 1987: Frustrated with lack of action on Gautreaux, U.S. District Court judge puts CHA into receivership to force construction of scattered-site public housing. 1989: Tent City is founded along the Fox River in Aurora, outside a homeless shelter.

1990s

By the 1990s, the U.S. has 747 cars per 1000 people. In 1990-6, legal Mexican immigrants are the largest single group in 13 of 30 suburban Chicago regions, while legal arrivals from India are the largest group in 11 of 30. Nearly 150,000 whites leave inner ring Cook County suburbs. 1990: U.S. Justice Department's Civil Rights Division files housing discrimination lawsuit against Cicero, claiming the city sought to prevent Latinos from moving into the suburb; 1996: 80% of suburbs with reported hate crimes have higher rates than Chicago. Ricardo Arroyo, a 15-year-old Waukegan boy, suffers repeated blows to the back and stomach, as well as an onslaught of ethnic slurs, as he lies dying following a car accident. South suburban Matteson launches "affirmative marketing" campaign in apparent pursuit of white families at the expense of minorities; 1998: Federal Housing Authority seizes control of the CHA, beginning demolition of housing projects.

2000s

Zoning laws in suburbs like Oak Brook prohibit developers from building multifamily housing; 2007: Northwest suburb of Carpentersville (40% Latino/a population) passes English-only law; 2008: Rev. James Meeks leads 1000 CPS students to boycott the first day of class, instead attempting to register in affluent North Shore schools New Trier

and Sunset Ridge. More than $6000 more is spent per pupil on North Shore students than in Chicago Public Schools.

The South Side of Chicago
Housing – A Short History
Source: http://southside.uchicago.edu/History/Housing.html

Built on the flat, prairie shores of Lake Michigan, Chicago has expanded mostly unchecked by the sort of natural terrain features that hem in many American cities. Even the lakeshore has been filled in over time. The result is an urban geography shaped less by nature than by man—a landscape sculpted, at least in part, by a series of historical (and ongoing) struggles for space and territory among Chicago's diverse citizens.

Chicago neighborhoods have often been identified by their ethnic composition. In the city's early history, recent immigrant groups and longer-settled ethnic communities scrambled for space. University of Chicago sociologists studying the city in the 1920s divided Chicago into seventy-five community areas, most of which roughly approximated social borders dividing the city. Inspired by the often-tense rivalries these scholars observed in the city around them, they theorized that competition between groups for scarce urban resources—mostly land—drove urban development in a predictable, natural manner. Although the borders were increasingly fuzzy and rule-breaking exceptions were common, Chicago's ethnic quilt was more or less stable by the turn of the century: Germans lived on the North Side, Irish on the South and Northwest Sides, Jews on the West Side and in Hyde Park, Bohemians and Poles on the Near Southwest Side and Near Northwest Side and a very small number of blacks in the South Side Black Belt. Despite this ethnic segmentation, scholars postulated that eventual assimilation would eventually result.

But observing the situation in 1945, University of Chicago-trained sociologists St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton noted that assimilation had been less likely for the city's black community. While most ethnic enclaves tended to eventually break up, Drake and Cayton argued that "with the passage of the time the Negro are becomes increasingly more concentrated."

The Great Migration of African Americans from the rural South to the urban North strained Chicago's urban fabric in new ways. Attracted by the promise of more equitable political rights, the possibility of earning an industrial wage and the excitement of urban life, black Southerners came north in droves. The Great Migration eventually brought over half a million blacks to Chicago.

MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Initially, the combination of sporadic anti-integration violence and the legal mechanism of racial restrictive covenants confined black Chicagoans to a small and increasingly overcrowded strip on the Near South Side known as the Black Belt. Although blacks contested the borders of their segregated community, territorial gains were incremental and orderly expansion, let alone integration, was constrained by the racial assumptions of surrounding communities, political leaders and financial institutions—including the University of Chicago, which funded the legal defense of restrictive covenants. Finally in 1948, with the Black Belt straining under unprecedented demographic pressure, the Supreme Court in Shelley v. Kraemer declared the enforcement of racial restrictive covenants unconstitutional under the Fourteenth Amendment.

Even with restrictive covenants gone, however, white Chicagoans used a variety of extra-legal mechanisms to restrain the expansion of black settlement. Most dramatically, white residents of integrating communities sometimes used violence to intimidate new black neighbors bold enough to break the residential color line. Meanwhile, powerful institutions and politicians looking to placate their white constituents used state and federal funds and the machinery of public policy to maintain a segregated Chicago. Most simply, many white Chicagoans spoke with their feet, leaving their increasingly black neighborhoods and moving to the city's outskirts and surrounding suburbs.

At an institutional level, urban renewal programs—pioneered by the University of Chicago in Hyde park—capitalized on the expansive eminent domain powers contained in a set of bills passed first by the Illinois legislature and later by the federal government in the 1940s and 1950s, to slow the pace of neighborhood change. Such efforts displaced many new black residents and raised the socioeconomic profile of certain neighborhoods even as they foisted the costs of renewal onto other, less politically connected communities. Meanwhile, large public works projects—especially the strategic placement of highways and enormous, multi-story public housing developments—hardened racial borders and constrained residential opportunities for many black Chicagoans.

Beginning in the 1960s, activists attempted to expose and contest the inequities of life in Chicago—with notable, if limited, success. In the summer 1966, Martin Luther King led supporters in a series of open-housing marches through hostile, exclusively white communities on the city's Southwest Side and Northwest Sides, eventually securing a vague and ultimately meaningless promise from city leaders to promote open-housing efforts. In the same year, public housing residents charged that projects built in exclusively black neighborhoods perpetuated segregation. The case, Gautreaux v. Chicago Housing Authority, resulted in a federal judicial order to build new public housing units in non-black neighborhoods.

MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Today, the legacies of racial segregation still plague Chicago. Though formal and informal barriers have seemingly disappeared, blacks have become more concentrated in all-black communities and some communities remain mostly, though not exclusively, white—even as young and professional neighborhoods have integrated. The Chicago Housing Authority's ambitious Plan for Transformation, approved in 2000, led to the demolition of large, segregated public housing projects and proposed to replace them with scatter-site, mixed-income developments. But with the Plan already behind schedule, housing activists remain skeptical of its eventual success. Meanwhile, renewed interest in urban life among professionals of all races has brought significant development to many of Chicago's neighborhoods. Whether this development—and the elevation of land values and rents it brings with it—will improve the quality of life for neighborhood residents or displace ("gentrify") poor communities remains an open question.

Income inequality, as seen from space
May 24, 2012 by Tim De Chant
Source: http://persquaremile.com/2012/05/24/income-inequality-seen-from-space/

Last week, I wrote about how urban trees—or the lack thereof—can reveal income inequality. After writing that article, I was curious, could I actually see income inequality from space? It turned out to be easier than I expected.

Below are satellite images from Google Earth that show two neighborhoods from a selection of cities around the world. In case it isn't obvious, the first image is the less well-off neighborhood, the second the wealthier one.

Chicago – Woodlawn

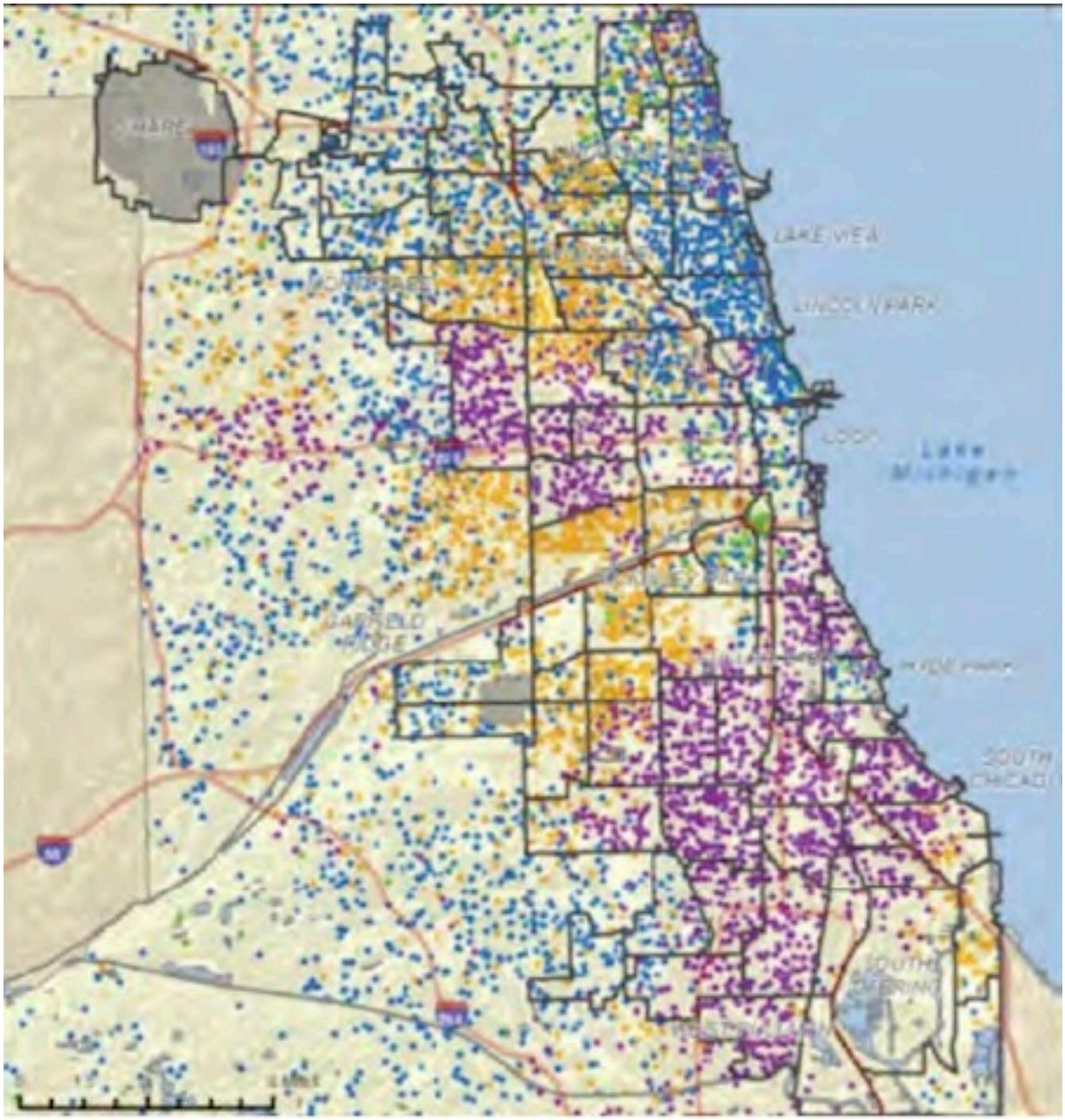
MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Chicago – Hyde Park

Living in Some Parts of Chicago Can Take More Than a Decade Off Your Life
Emily Badger
The Atlantic Cites – Aug 01, 2012
Source: http://www.theatlanticcities.com/neighborhoods/2012/08/living-some-parts-chicago-can-take-more-decade-your-life/2781/

Chicago has remained one of the most segregated cities in America, as this map from a new report on the intersection of place, race and health in the Second City indicates. On it, each blue dot represents 500 whites (as captured in the America Community Survey between 2005-2009), while each purple dot the same number of blacks. Yellow represents the city's Hispanics and green the Asian population (that green concentration right in the middle of the city is Chinatown).

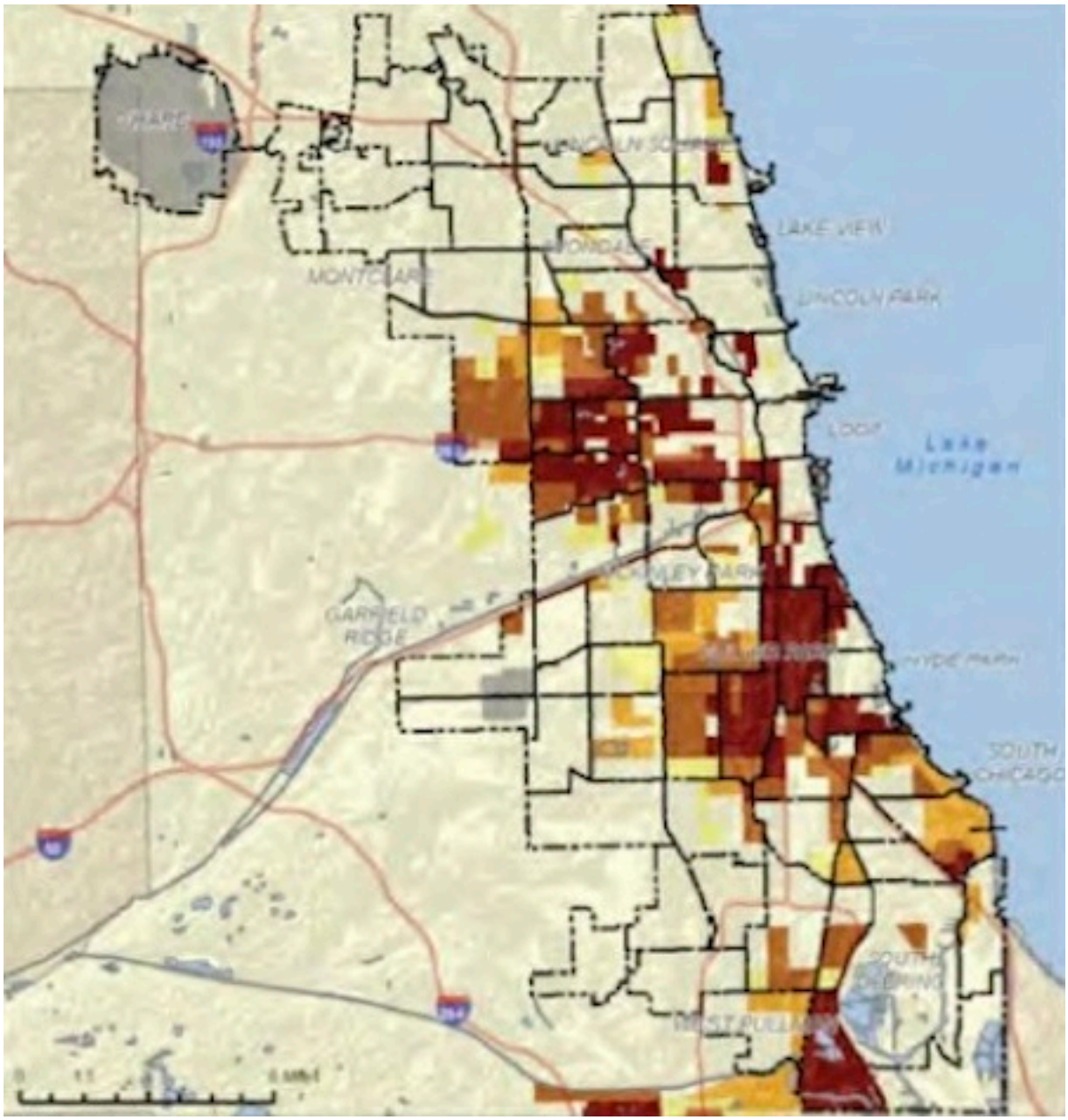
MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*



The map, produced by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, is most noteworthy for the pattern it establishes that repeats itself throughout a number of other indicators about life in Chicago.

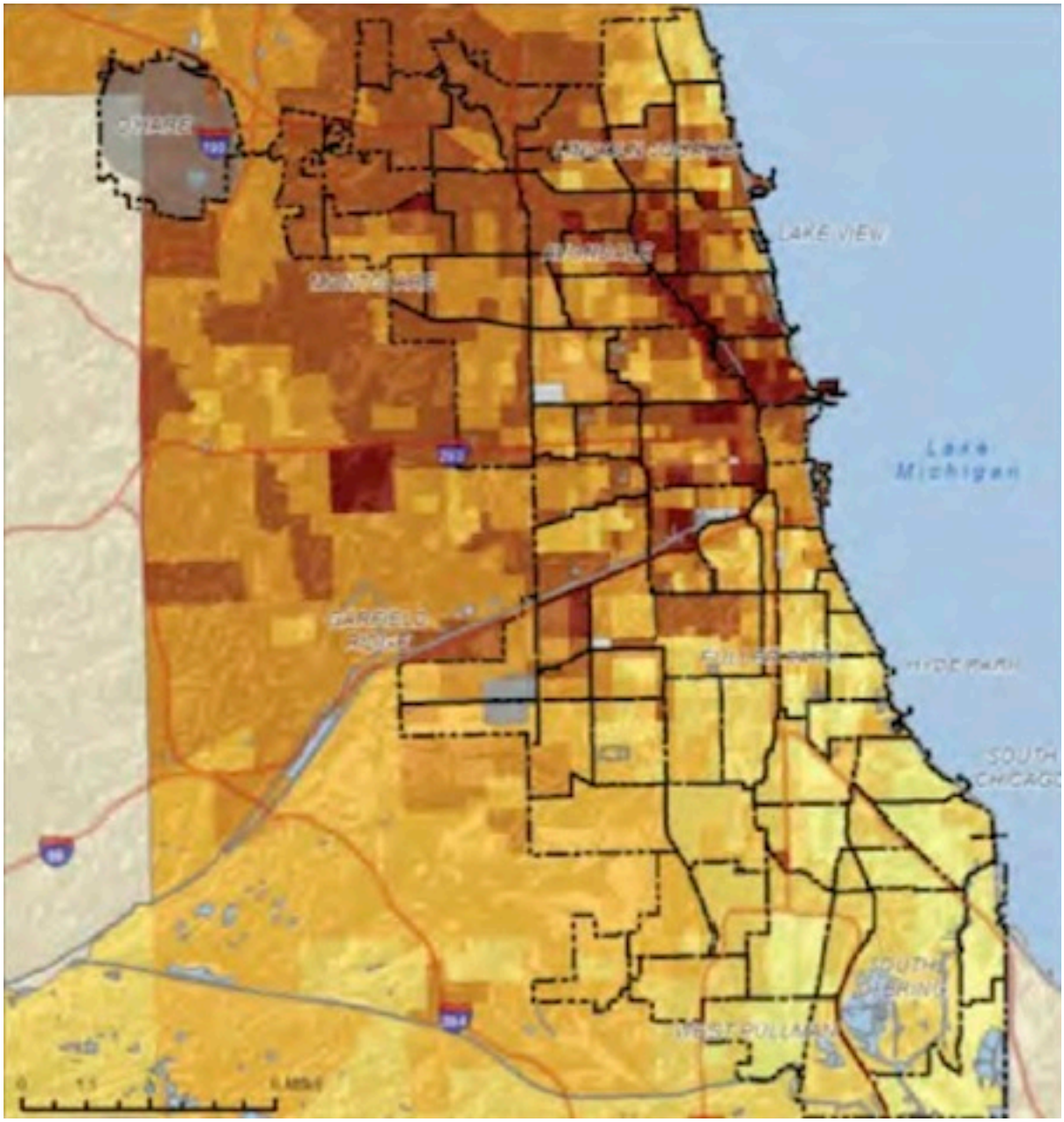
MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Below is another map of the census tracts with persistent poverty over the last 40 years (with the darkest shades experiencing the most long-running poverty):



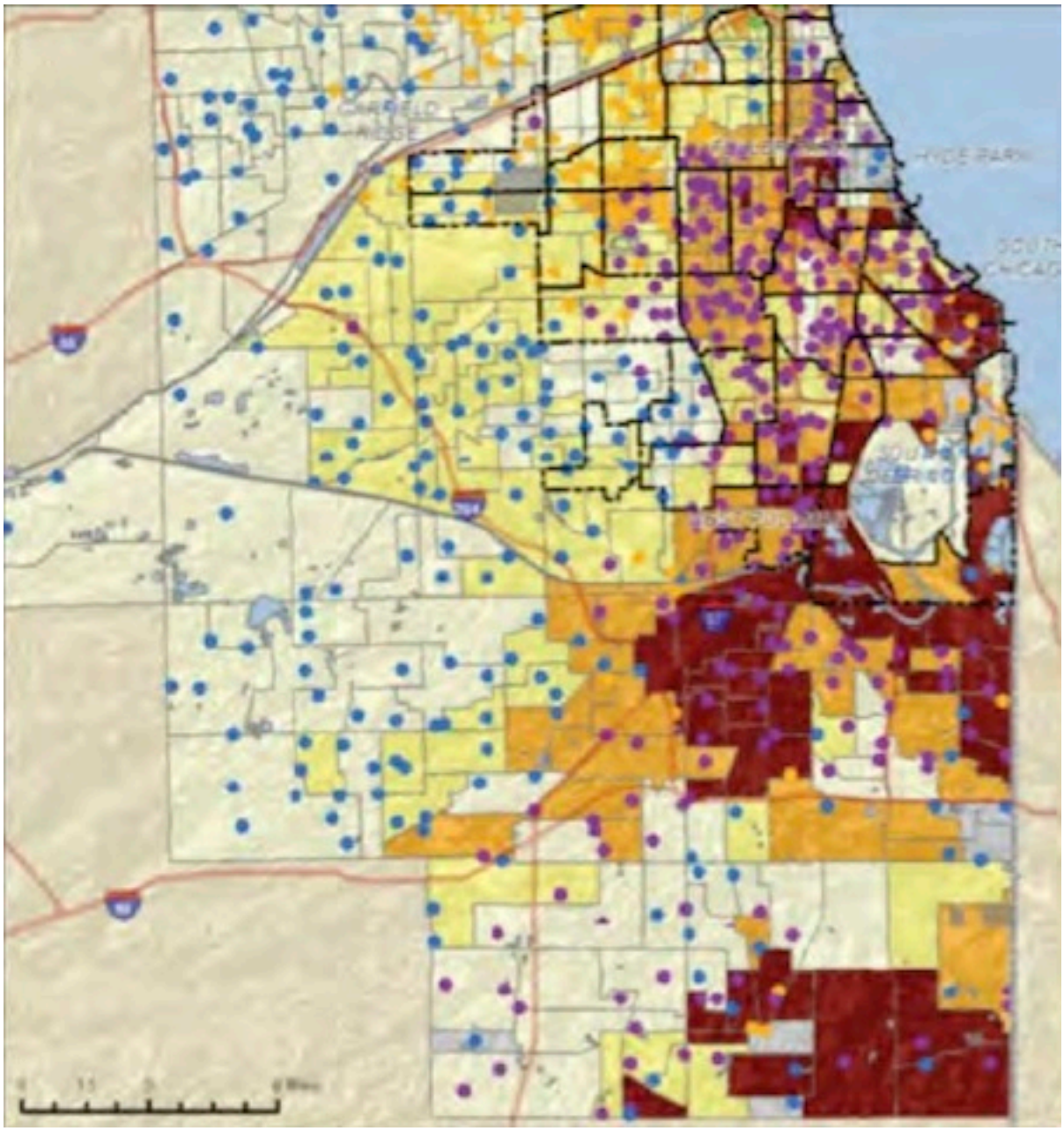
Here, the dark areas represent the highest access to chain supermarkets or large independent grocery stores with at least five cash registers. Nearly all of the neighborhoods with the lowest access are located on the city's South Side, south of Interstate 55 in the city, in an area that is almost exclusively populated by minorities.

MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

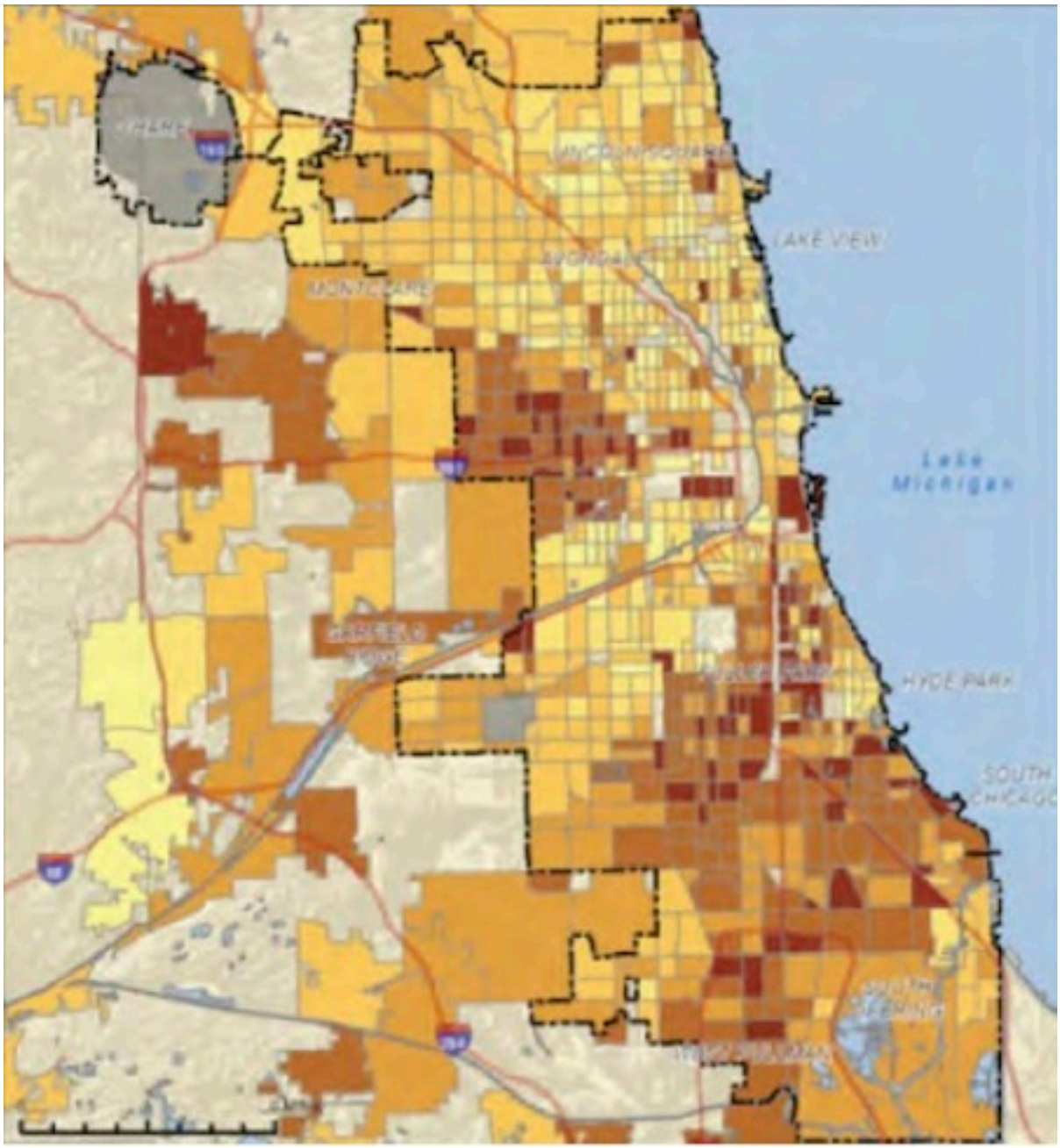


MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Zooming in on that southern half of the city, we see in dark brown the census tracts with both the lowest educational attainment and the lowest access to food.



Lastly, this is a map of life expectancy in Chicago, with the darkest areas covering residents not expected to live past 70.



Add up and compare all these maps, and a couple of alarming conclusions emerge from the new report, Place Matters for Health in Cook County. Researchers with the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, in conjunction with the Center on Human Needs at Virginia Commonwealth University, have found that people living in Chicago

neighborhoods with a median income higher than $53,000 a year have a life expectancy almost 14 years longer than Chicagoans who live in communities with a median income below $25,000.

And because of the city's historic segregation, this also means those people with shorter life expectancies – a proxy for poor health outcomes – are invariably minorities. This research reinforces an idea we've written about previously: that where you live may be the most important determinant of your health.

"Place really is the fundamental [issue]," says Brian Smedley, director of the Health Policy Institute at the Center for Political and Economic Studies. "Residential segregation is really the fundamental driver of many of the health inequalities that we see."

Life expectancy in Cook County varies by as much as 33 years, depending on your census tract. And, as the report's authors chide: "It is unacceptable in the world's wealthiest society that a person's life can be cut short by more than a decade simply because of where one lives and factors over which he or she has no control."

The researchers also frame this problem in another way: Chicagoans with the worst access to chain supermarkets and large independent grocery stores (in the bottom quintile) have an average life expectancy that's 11 years shorter than Chicagoans with the best access to food (in the top quintile).

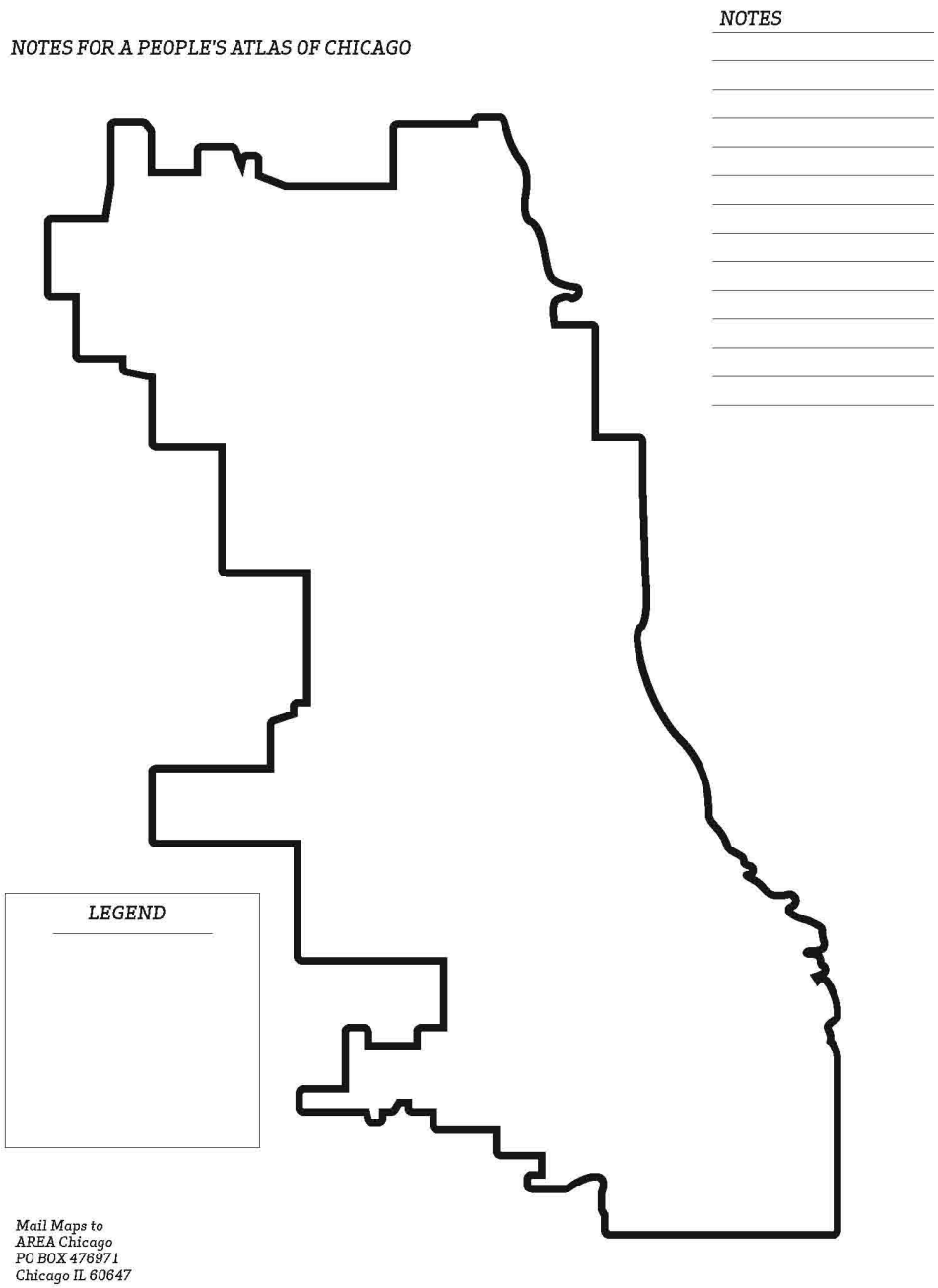
This doesn't mean that when grocery stores disappear, people die prematurely. Rather, the patterns on these maps reveal that numerous forces are all intersecting in the same parts of the city: Neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty are also the neighborhoods with the lowest educational attainment and the least access to pharmacies and food, and they're also the neighborhoods where the city's minorities tend to be segregated, and where the health outcomes tend to be the worst. The correlations are just too strong to ignore. As the report warns: "These place-based patterns are neither arbitrary nor benign."

These communities, Smedley says, have experienced long-running patterns of disinvestment (by grocery chains, by employers, by banks, by cities), and health inequalities appear to be one result of it.

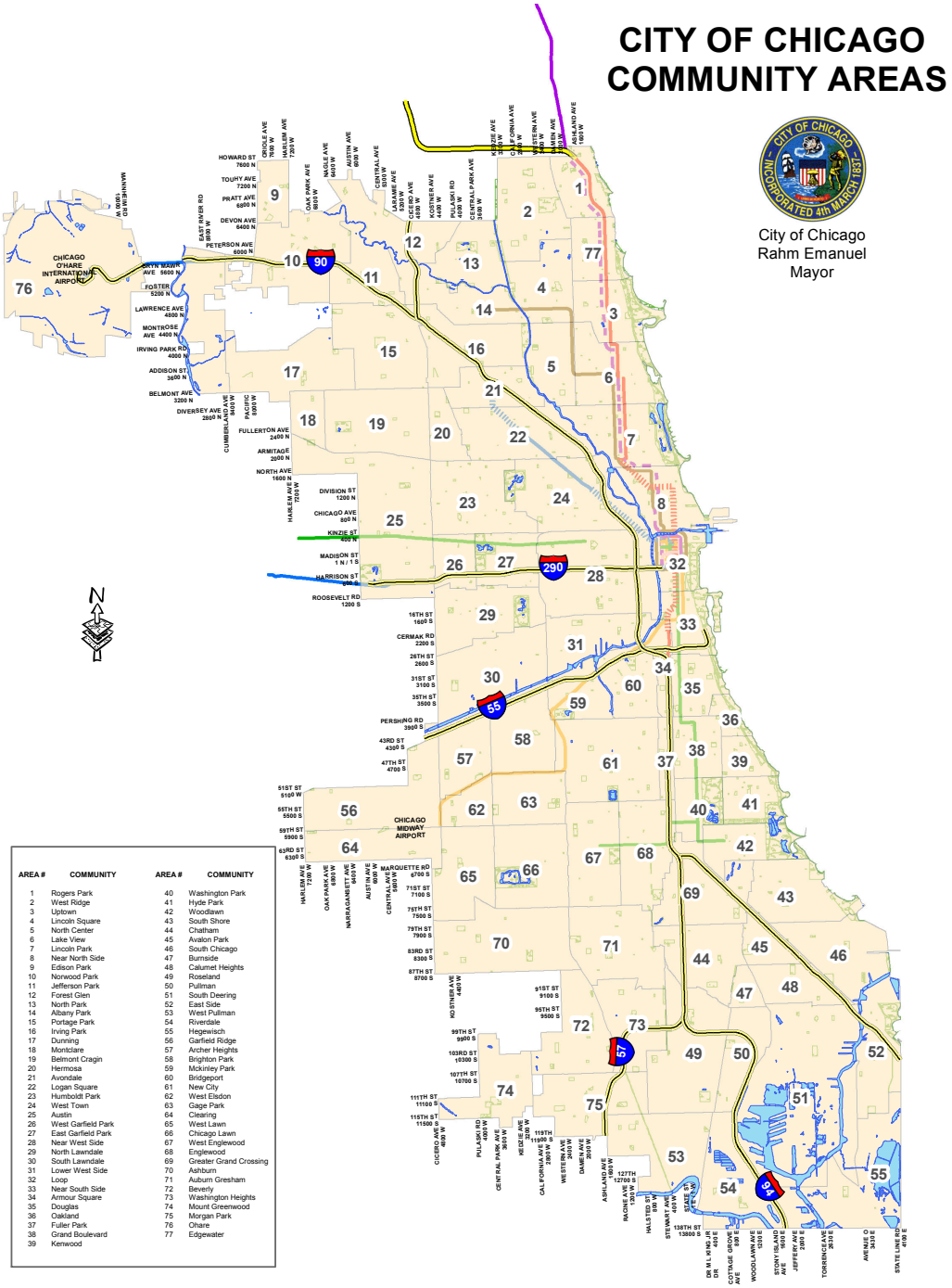
Emily Badger is a staff writer at The Atlantic Cities. Her work has previously appeared in Pacific Standard, GOOD, The Christian Science Monitor, and The New York Times. She lives in the Washington, D.C. area.

Blank Chicago Neighborhood Map
Source: http://www.jot.org/blog/2011/11/07/every-person-is-a-cartographer/

You can use this map to draw your own version of Chicago. Get your own blank version at the web link above.

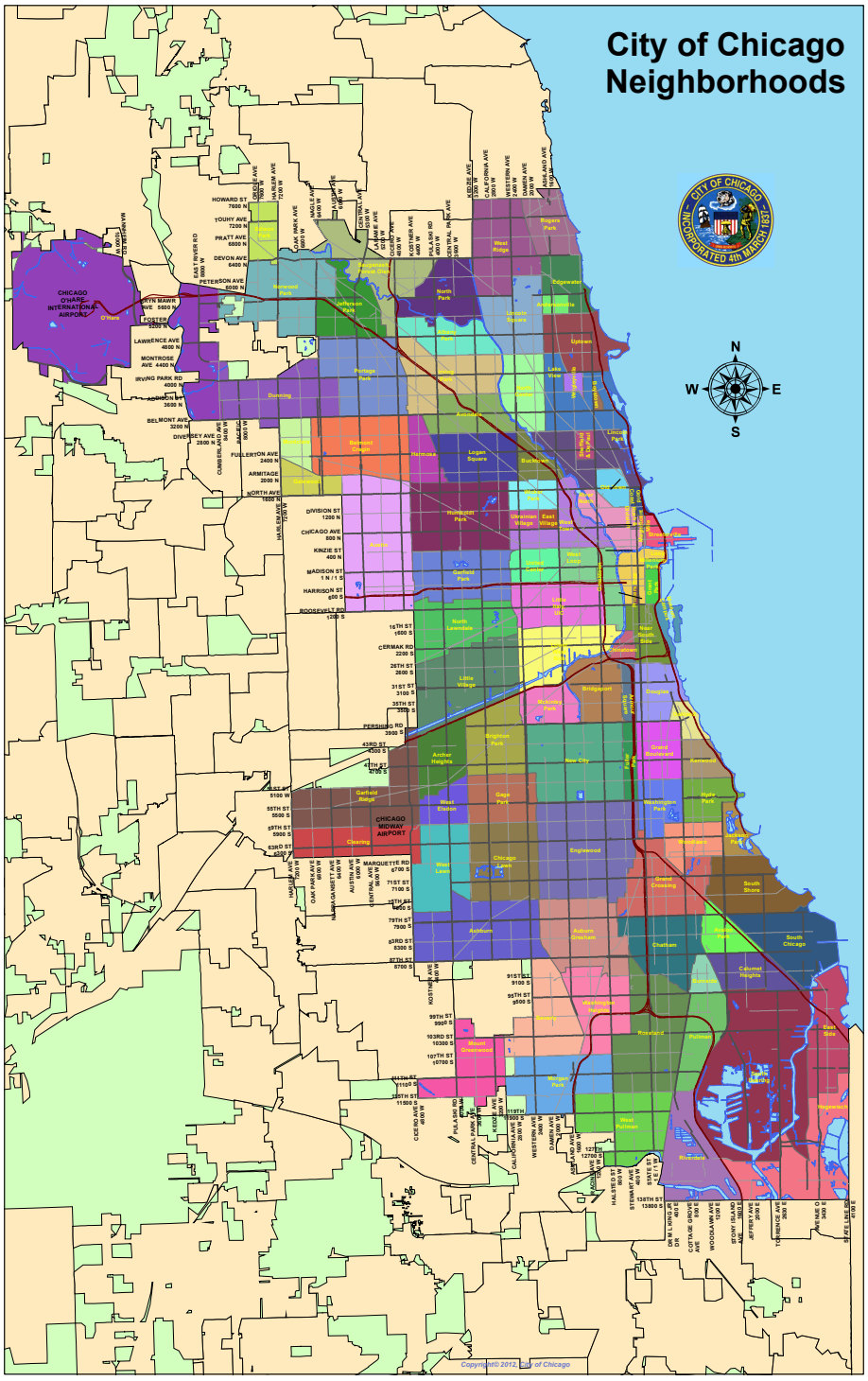


Chicago Community Area Map
Source: https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/doit/supp_info/citywide_maps.html



MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Chicago Neighborhood Map
Source: https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/doit/supp_info/citywide_maps.html



The Hansberry House & The Legal Battle Over Housing

Lorraine Hansberry House
Source: http://webapps.cityofchicago.org/landmarksweb/web/landmarkdetails.htm?lanId=13024

Address: 6140 S. Rhodes Ave.
Year Built: 1909
Architect: Albert G. Ferree
Date Designated a Chicago Landmark: February 10, 2010

For its associations with the Chicago Black Renaissance literary movement and iconic 20th-century African American playwright Lorraine Hansberry, the Lorraine Hansberry House possesses exceptional historic and cultural significance. Although subject to a racially-discriminatory housing covenant, this building was purchased in 1937 by African-American real estate developer Carl Hansberry. Despite threats, Hansberry moved his family into the building and waged a three-year-long battle culminating in a U.S. Supreme Court decision that was an important victory in the effort to outlaw racially-restrictive housing covenants. Hansberry's daughter, pioneering playwright Lorraine Hansberry, drew inspiration from this traumatic experience when writing A Raisin in the Sun. This groundbreaking play was the first drama by an African-American woman to be produced on Broadway.

The Hansberry's Legal Battle
From the City of Chicago's Hansberry Landmark Report
Source: https://www.cityofchicago.org/dam/city/depts/zlup/Historic_Preservation/Publications/Lorraine_Hansberry_House_Landmark_Report.pdf

In 1937 when Hansberry was just seven years old, her parents purchased a small apartment building at 6140 S. Rhodes Avenue in the Washington Park subdivision. Because the property was subject to a racially restrictive real estate covenant, it was purchased by the Hansberrys through their attorney, Jay B. Crook. Covenants like this emerged in response to the influx of African-Americans to Chicago between World War I and World War II, when many white property owners became increasingly agitated by what they saw as an invasion of black residents. As a result, many white property owners joined organizations like the Woodlawn Property Owners' Association and signed covenants that barred them from renting or selling their properties to African-Americans.

"Three-flat" apartment buildings like the one purchased by the Hansberrys at 6140 S. Rhodes Avenue began to be developed in more densely populated urban neighborhoods beginning in the 1890s. Built in 1909, the small apartment building at 6140 S. Rhodes Avenue was typical of Chicago "three-flats," with three apartments arranged around a common central entrance and stair hall. This three-story dark brown brick building is accented with stone trim and features simplified Classical-style details. A projecting bay and front porch distinguish the building's front façade.

The Hansberrys moved into the building at 6140 S. Rhodes Avenue in May 1937. On June 3, 1937, Anna Lee, a property owner in the neighborhood and member of the Woodlawn Property Owners Association,filed suit for an injunction against the Hansberrys, claiming that their occupancy of the property violated a restrictive covenant attached to it. Lee also sought to restrain the Hansberry's from renting apartments in the building to black tenants. On July 3, 1937, a temporary injunction was issued by Judge Michael Fineberg that granted all of the reliefs that Anna Lee was seeking and upheld the legality of the covenants, thus effectively sanctioning discrimination in Chicago's segregated neighborhoods. In his ruling Judge Fineberg stated, "I don't go where I am not wanted," and further ruled that the Hansberrys had no interest in the property despite the fact that Carl Hansberry held the title to the property.

Despite threats, protests, and violent attacks, Carl Hansberry with the assistance of the Chicago branch of the NAACP appealed the judge's decision. The family continued to reside in the building while the injunction was appealed. In October 1937, the Appellate court upheld Judge Fineberg's ruling and the injunction was allowed to stand. Under threats of being evicted from the property, the Hansberry family vacated their home in June 1938. The case came to trial on April 15, 1938, in the Circuit Court of Cook County,

before Judge Bristol. While the trial lasted only 10 days, the judge reserved his ruling until late in the summer of 1938 when he announced his decision in favor of Anna Lee. The case progressed through the legal system, and in December 1939 the Illinois Supreme Court affirmed the decision of the Circuit Court in a 7 to 5 ruling. Early in 1940, petitions were filed with the United States Supreme Court and several months later the Supreme Court, granted Hansberry's petition to review the case. On October 24 and 25, 1940, the case was argued before the Supreme Court. Earl B. Dickerson (1891-1986), a successful attorney, entrepreneur, businessman, president of the Supreme Liberty Life Insurance Company, and later Alderman of the 2nd Ward, represented Carl Hansberry. Dubbed "the Dean of Chicago's Black lawyers," Dickerson was the first black graduate from the University of Chicago Law School.

On November 12, 1940, the United States Supreme Court handed down its decision in favor of Hansberry and unanimously ruled to reverse the decision of the lower courts. Although the constitutionality of restrictive covenants was not acted upon at that time, the ruling of the Supreme Court declared that this particular covenant was deficient because it failed to secure the necessary supporting signatures in the neighborhood to render it valid. The Chicago Defender published the entire text of the Hansberry v. Lee decision on November 23, 1940, and the African-American community in Chicago became encouraged that judgments rendered in lower courts which sustained restrictive covenants on the basis of earlier litigation would be nullified.

Despite the favorable ruling, discriminatory real estate practices in Chicago continued much as before, however, from a legal standpoint Hansberry v. Lee was seen locally as an important battle in the war to outlaw racial covenants in housing. The Chicago branch of the NAACP meanwhile continued its struggle against all racially restrictive covenants as part of a national effort. (Restrictive covenants would be determined to be unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court in 1948 in Shelley v. Kraemer.) Carl Hansberry's outrage over continued housing discrimination in Chicago despite the extraordinary financial sacrifices, traumatic physical attacks, and complex litigation that his family endured, prompted him to move to Mexico in 1946.

In protest to segregation, her parents sent Lorraine Hansberry to public schools rather than private ones. She attended Betsy Ross Elementary School, then in 1944 she was enrolled in Englewood High School. Recalling her personal experience, Hansberry's memoirs detailed the "substandard quality" of the educational system that was provided for African-American children in Chicago and the violence that she encountered during race riots while attending the predominately white Englewood High School. She broke the family tradition of enrolling in African-American colleges and enrolled in the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where she majored in painting. She was soon to discover that her talent lay in writing, not art. After two years she decided to leave the University of Wisconsin for New York City.

Transcript of Hansberry v. Lee
Source: https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/311/32/case.html

The entire transcript of the Hansberry v. Lee decision is available at the above web link.

Restrictive Covenants

Chicago and Restrictive Covenants
By Arnold R. Hirsch
The Encyclopedia of Chicago
Source: http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1067.html

Restrictive covenants can limit a variety of options for homeowners, from landscaping to structural modifications to circumstances of sale or rental. Racially restrictive covenants, in particular, are contractual agreements among property owners that prohibit the purchase, lease, or occupation of their premises by a particular group of people, usually African Americans. Rare in Chicago before the 1920s, their widespread use followed the Great Migration of southern blacks, the wave of housing-related racial violence which plagued the city between 1917 and 1921, and the U. S. Supreme Court's 1917 declaration that residential segregation ordinances were unconstitutional. The high court's subsequent dismissal of Corrigan v. Buckley in 1926 tacitly upheld these private, restrictive agreements and paved the way for their proliferation.

Racial Restrictive Covenants (Map)

The Chicago Real Estate Board (CREB) campaigned to blanket the city with such covenants and even provided a model contract, with a standard covenant drafted by Nathan William MacChesney, a member of the Chicago Plan Commission. In the fall of 1927, the CREB dispatched speakers across the city to promote the racial restrictions. Seen as the peaceful and progressive alternative to the violence that had earlier traumatized the city, restrictive covenants, within a year, according to the Hyde Park Herald, stretched “like a marvelous delicately woven chain of armor” from “the northern gates of Hyde Park at 35th and Drexel Boulevard to Woodlawn, Park Manor, South Shore, Windsor Park, and all the far-flung white communities of the South Side.” Two decades later, in the 85 square miles reserved for residential use in Chicago south of North Avenue, fewer than 10 were occupied by blacks, while 38, mainly in middle-class areas surrounding the Black Belt, were encumbered by these paper barriers. Even Al Capone's mother, Theresa, signed up to guarantee the “respectability” of the family home. White suburbanites

could rest assured as developers in Skokie, Park Ridge, and Evanston wrote racial restrictions into the deeds on 1926–27 subdivisions. Restrictive covenants defined the white search for status and produced a “chilling effect” on potential black homeseekers.

In the end, Depression-era and wartime housing shortages probably did more to freeze Chicago's residential patterns than did the covenants. When challenged in 1938 by playwright Lorraine Hansberry's father, Carl, those covering the Washington Park Subdivision were ruled invalid (in Lee v. Hansberry, 1940). During World War II, some local judges ruled against others on principled, as well as technical, grounds. Association with them soon became a political liability. Democrats defeated George B. McKibbin in the 1943 mayoralty after alleging that the Republican had signed just such a document; and in 1946, Richard J. Daley posed as the progressive, anti-covenant candidate in his race for sheriff. By 1947, the business and civic leaders framing the city's redevelopment program readily acquiesced in their prohibition. When the U.S. Supreme Court finally declared restrictive covenants unenforceable in Shelley v. Kraemer (1948), that decision did not so much dissolve an “iron ring” confining the city's black neighborhoods as much as it simply dissipated the legal clouds shadowing property already falling into black hands as a booming postwar housing market fostered mobility and racial succession.

Racial Restrictive Covenants on Chicago’s South Side in 1947
Based on a Map by Robert Weaver
The Encyclopedia of Chicago
Source: http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1761.html

Go to web link to view interactive map.
From 1916 until 1948, racially restrictive covenants were used to keep Chicago's neighborhoods white. In language suggested by the Chicago Real Estate Board, legally binding covenants attached to parcels of land varying in size from city block to large subdivision prohibited African Americans from using, occupying, buying, leasing, or receiving property in those areas. This map stems from one used in a lawsuit (Tovey v. Levy, 1948) that was brought to enforce covenants. It shows that in 1947 covenants covered large parts of the city and, in combination with zones of nonresidential use, almost wholly surrounded the African American residential districts of the period, cutting off corridors of extension. Many of the neighborhoods encumbered with racially restrictive covenants were subsequently settled by African Americans once the covenants had been declared unconstitutional.
Source: Newberry Library

MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Urban Development & Gentrification

[Dramaturg's Note: There is an enormous amount of information on gentrification. I have studied the concept since 2001 and can supply more information on it if it is helpful. Below are brief summaries of the topic.]

Gentrification in Brief
By Neil Smith
Source: http://www.enoughroomforspace.org/project_pages/view/198

[Dramaturg's Note: Neil Smith is one of the grandfathers of Gentrification Studies. He is also British – hence some of the funky spellings. This is a brief essay from him, as opposed to one of his longer academic articles or books, which I can supply you if requested.]

Gentrification occurs in urban areas where prior disinvestment in the urban infrastructure creates neighbourhoods that can be profitably redeveloped. In its earliest form, gentrification affected decaying working class neighbourhoods close to urban centres where middle and upper middle class people colonized or re-colonized the area, leading to the displacement and eviction of existing residents. The central mechanism behind gentrification can be thought of as a "rent gap." When neighbourhoods experience disinvestment, the ground rent that can be extracted from the area declines, which means lower land prices. As this disinvestment continues, the gap between the actual ground rent in the area and the ground rent that could be extracted were the area to undergo reinvestment becomes wide enough to allow that reinvestment to take place. This rent gap may arise largely through the operation of markets, most notably in the United States, but state policies can also be central in encouraging disinvestment and reinvestment associated with gentrification. But only wealthier people are able to afford the costs of this renewed investment. Integral with these economic shifts are social and cultural shifts that change the kinds of shops, facilities and public spaces in a neighbourhood. Early examples of gentrification might include the Islington area of London or Greenwich Village in Manhattan but by the 1970s there were many recorded cases of gentrification in Europe, North America and Australia. In Berlin, early examples of gentrification were recorded in Schöneberg and Kreuzberg, among other neighbourhoods, but the fall of the Berlin Wall released a huge stock of housing that had undergone considerable disinvestment, leading to a widespread gentrification of Prenzlauer Berg and Mitte.

Since the 1970s, gentrification has shifted from a marginal, fragmented process in the housing market to a large-scale, systematic and deliberate urban development policy. Gentrification has deepened as a comprehensive city-building strategy encompassing not just the residential market, but recreation, retail, employment, and the cultural

economy. It has also spread geographically to Latin American and Asian cities with Shanghai and Beijing, for example, displacing hundreds of thousands of poor and working class residents. As a generalised urban strategy, gentrification weaves together the interests of city managers, developers and landlords, but also corporate employers and cultural and educational institutions which depend on a professional workforce. It is also the paradoxical but logical outcome of environmentalist demands for more dense living, pitting gentrifiers' thirst for first-class housing against working-class demands for parks and community gardens. But these large-scale strategies are also integrated with much more local initiatives, and city managers around the world have become enamoured of the idea of the "creative city." As a matter of citywide strategy, they attempt to attract a so-called creative class of artists, intellectuals, entertainers, designers, high-tech engineers to specific gentrifying neighbourhoods. This strategy was probably pioneered in New York's Lower East Side where in the early 1980s landlords who were unable to rent commercial properties offered them at cheap rents to artists, giving them 5-year leases. After 5 years, with no rent control on commercial properties and with the neighbourhood now gentrifying rapidly, landlords began to demand 400%, 600% even 1,000% rent increases to renew leases. The artists had done their work as the shock troops of gentrification and were themselves displaced. This more localized strategy is especially popular in places where perhaps there are more stringent rent controls or greater state regulation of the property market generally. The gentrification of Berlin has been more fragmented and slower than in London or New York, for example.

Students, artists, and many other parts of the populace are part of the process of "cracking" neighbourhoods that many other professionals may be unwilling to colonise. The question whether a particular neighbourhood will or will not gentrify depends on the depth of the rent gap and the particulars of local policy, but it also depends on many other local issues, neighbourhood characteristics and so on. If the rent gap is deep enough, I don't think any neighbourhood is "too bad" for gentrification, but at the same time there is no guarantee that a particular neighbourhood will in fact be gentrified. Consider Harlem in New York City. In the 1960s and 1970s, Harlem was an international symbol of urban decline, a "bad neighbourhood." Not least, this was the product of racism as Harlem in 1980 was 97% African American. More than 20 years ago I interviewed an African American state bureaucrat in charge of trying to gentrify Harlem and as he put it: "If Harlem is going to be gentrified, whitey is really going to have to get his shit together." Today, Harlem is gentrifying intensely, and has been after a hiatus in the late 1980s. African American professionals, students, lawyers, gays, white yuppies are all moving in, and property prices are sky rocketing. Columbia University is planning a huge university development in the area. If Harlem can be gentrified, I don't think any neighbourhood is immune. Or we could point to the early gentrification along the edges of Dharavi, the huge slum in Mumbai that is currently being dismantled.

Neighbourhoods gentrify in different ways, however. Some are cataclysmic, especially when there is centralised state sponsorship or large-scale institutional involvement, but others may gentrify slowly. Some become highly exclusive and exclusionary whereas others may remain more mixed hipster 'hoods for a comparatively long time. The different fortunes of these areas depend on many things such as patterns of building ownership, state regulations, class structure and cohesiveness, community opposition, entrepreneurial initiatives. What ties all of these experiences together is the class shift in the neighbourhood and the greater or lesser degree of displacement (direct or indirect) that ensues.

In the Lower East Side in the 1980s one of the anti-gentrification slogans was: "Die Yuppie Scum." I still have a T-shirt given me by a friend with this slogan. It was an effective slogan for scaring off yuppies, and indeed the gentrification of the area stalled until the city evicted homeless people and protestors from Tompkins Square Park. But "Die Yuppie Scum" isn't a very good analysis of gentrification. Even yuppies have very limited choices in the housing market, albeit far more choices than the poor. By contrast, the owners of capital intent on gentrifying and developing a neighbourhood have a lot more "consumer choice" about which neighbourhoods they want to consume, for the purposes of gentrification, and the kind of housing and other facilities they produce for the rest of us to consume. There is a huge asymmetry between the power of multi-millionaire capitalist corporations in the market and the "power" of someone trying to rent a flat on an average city income. So while the question of consumption and the availability of consumers is by no means irrelevant, it is secondary to the far greater power of capital.

To the extent that gentrification has itself become a global urban strategy, anti-gentrification struggles have to work within this context. Local strategies are vital and have to highlight displacement, eviction, and the loss of services and jobs in neighbourhoods leaving the existing working class stranded. But such struggles also need to have the global situation in their sights. Gentrification has become a strategy within globalisation itself; the effort to create a global city is the effort to attract capital and tourists and gentrification is a central means for doing so. Some neighbourhood activists – in North America I am thinking about people inspired by Jane Jacobs – have tried to rally small-scale gentrifiers to fight large-scale urban redevelopment, but this is itself a gentrification strategy aimed at providing neighbourhoods for the so-called creative class. The same can be said about "regeneration strategies," endorsed as a central plank of urban policy by the European Union. In Britain especially, but elsewhere in the EU, "regeneration" has become little more than a gentrified word for gentrification. A kinder, gentler eviction is still an eviction.

Instead, I think we need to start to think in terms of tenant collectives and neighbourhood councils. These would both take over increasing responsibility for

organising neighbourhood housing and at the same time build the power locally to force state anti-gentrification legislation – rent control, anti-eviction legislation, increased public housing, and so forth. But in addition to such local organising, anti-gentrification organisers should be working with global social justice movements. Housing is a question of social justice, and gentrification is part of a wider global capital accumulation. Many gentrification projects today are designed, built and financed by international capital that makes decisions at a planetary rather than local scale. The case of the Beijing Olympics is only the most obvious. There, in preparation for that sports event which is also a bonanza for Chinese capitalists and the state, several hundred thousand poor and working class people have been summarily displaced from older neighbourhoods in the city facing massive redevelopment. This connection between anti-gentrification struggles and world social justice movement activists can be extremely threatening. The recent desperate invocation of Section 129a of the German legal code, initiating "terrorism" charges against seven people, including several gentrification researchers, demonstrates exactly how threatening these connections can be. Class politics is equated with terrorism. Our response should be to intensify the connections among activists at different scales while refusing the state's hysterical equation of class opposition with terrorism. Anti-gentrification struggles are part of that work.

Gentrification in Chicago
By Larry Bennett
The Encyclopedia of Chicago
Source: http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/511.html

Gentrification refers to trends in neighborhood development that tend to attract more affluent residents, and in many instances concentrated, upscale commercial investment.

Much of the city's gentrification has clustered in the North Side neighborhoods of Lincoln Park and Lake View, areas that have retained a large stock of older housing, adjoin Lake Michigan and its parallel chain of municipal parks, and permit short commuting via mass transit to the downtown Loop. In the late 1950s the city of Chicago initiated a major urban renewal project in Lincoln Park, which resulted in considerable housing demolition in the southeastern portion of the neighborhood, especially along North Avenue. Within a few years, however, plans for further clearance met resistance from homeowners and renovators seeking to retain the area's historic ambience. Old Town was Chicago's first neighborhood to experience gentrification, as thousands of middle-class house-seekers bought and restored old single-family dwellings, two- and three-flat buildings, and coach houses.

MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Since the 1970s gentrification has spread to Wicker Park and Logan Square on the city's near Northwest Side, to River North, the Near West Side, and the South Loop in central Chicago, and to the Gap in the Douglas Community Area on the South Side. Much of the residential upgrading in these areas has been initiated by large-scale developers. In Wicker Park, the Near West Side, and River North, the conversion of industrial buildings to residential and commercial uses has been commonplace.

Greener Pastures: A Woodlawn developer transforms the neighborhood's vacant lots into affordable new homes
Chicago Weekly – January 22, 2009
By Katie Buitrago
Source: http://chicagoweekly.net/2009/01/22/greener-pastures-a-woodlawn-developer- transforms-the-neighborhoods-vacant-lots-into-affordable-new-homes/

Enter Woodlawn: Get off the Cottage Grove bus at Marquette Road. Turn east and cross the street. Keep trudging through knee-deep snow for as long as you can stand it; if

there are no cars coming, it might be easier to walk in the less-snowy street. Use your judgment. Look around and you'll see some abandoned lots, a package of beef jerky peeking through the frost, sad-looking brownstones sighing under the weight of winter. But if you look closer, some color starts to peek out of the snowy grayness: some of the brownstones don't look so sad, and they have bright signs in their front yards advertising amenities like high-grade soy insulation, hardwood floors, and energy-efficient construction (call for details).

"This whole area was completely vacant when I started ten years ago," says Benjamin van Horne, president and CEO of Greenline Development, of the 6600 block of South Ingleside. Now, the block is full of activity: the owners of the houses on the block are standing amidst the swirling snow, trying to figure out how to dig out the cars that line the street. A green column on the northwest corner announces the presence of the 6600 S. Ingleside Block Club. Van Horne tells me a story about an incident last year, when he was living on the block in his construction trailer: "There were some drug dealers who thought they were going to start dealing openly on the block. The neighbors know each other and we all got on the phone with each other and we all called over and over again. We got the apartment building on the corner to put in really bright [outdoor] lights, and they're not dealing drugs on the street anymore." Where there was once empty, overgrown city-owned land, 6600 S. Ingleside now houses a thriving community of people invested in the future of their block—and the neighborhood as well.

Greenline Development, founded in 1999 by van Horne, played no small part in bringing this change to Woodlawn's landscape. The company was spurred by his interest in affordable housing, which developed after witnessing how decaying housing stock in his home of St. Louis affected the community. He bought his first building at 66th and Maryland for $35,000, which he charged on his credit card. Fortunately for him, the gamble paid off.

According to its website, Greenline is "a progressive housing development company, combining strong social goals with profit-seeking ventures." All of Greenline's properties are in Woodlawn; they plan on adding eleven condominium buildings to the neighborhood, six of which are already built. The condos are affordable—all the ones for sale currently cost from $159,000 to $184,900—with the added benefit of $20,000 in down payment assistance from the City of Chicago. Even in a depressed housing market, many buyers are finding this too good a deal to pass up. "Woodlawn has always had basic features that make it attractive," says van Horne. "Its lakefront location, public transportation access, proximity to the University [of Chicago] as a stabilizing element, the large parks surrounding the neighborhood, and there are some strong institutions that have stuck out the hard times and have continued to survive…What makes me so attached [to Woodlawn] are the people I've met here."

Over the past decade, it seems that more and more people are realizing the charms of the neighborhood. In the past ten years, the median sale price for a standalone single-family home in Woodlawn has gone up by 243 percent, according to a 2006 report from the Chicago Department of Planning and Development; in the past five years alone, it has gone up by 365 percent. For attached single-family homes, like condominiums or apartments, the equivalent percentages are 225 percent and 53 percent. This is a much more dramatic increase than in neighborhoods that analysts had high hopes for, like Kenwood and the Near South Side.

A lot has changed since 2006, which is the year that many economists agree that the U.S. housing market began to "correct" itself—in other words, when the housing bubble started to burst. According to city-data.com, housing prices generally continued to increase in Woodlawn until 2008, when the median sale price plummeted by about twenty-five percent by the end of the year. Prices were also falling in the Near South neighborhoods, but rose dramatically in the fourth quarter—right around the election of Kenwood's own Barack Obama. Real estate analysts call this the "Obama effect": Obama's ascendancy has garnered a lot of attention for Kenwood and the Near South Side. "Even before Obama won the election, the resurgence of new residential development was under way on the South Side, and now we expect demand to increase during the Obama administration," said Andy Schcolnik, president of the Southside Builders Association, to the Chicago Sun-Times on January 18, 2009. The effect doesn't seem to have reached Woodlawn yet, which is farther from the newly-elected President's home. Even in areas on the South Side where home prices are going up or staying stable, relatively few houses are being sold. While Greenline is staying afloat—though not with the same easy success it was enjoying a few years ago—many other developers are being foreclosed on or going out of business.

Van Horne doesn't believe that the housing bust will send Woodlawn back in time to an era of neglect and underdevelopment; as he puts it, Woodlawn has "turned a corner." "There are hundreds of people of means who have invested heavily in the neighborhood, either buying condos or two-flat houses, who are not going to let their investments decline in value unnecessarily," he predicts. "There are a lot of people who have lived in Woodlawn for decades who are fine citizens and who are just waiting for Woodlawn to turn around. They, in combination with the new people who are moving in—some of whom are old people who grew up here—I don't think they're going to let Woodlawn slide back."

"Turning a corner" can be a euphemism for "gentrification" or "displacement," especially with the UofC looking to expand south of the Midway Plaisance and several seminaries setting up shop in Woodlawn. Would this concern deter a developer with a social conscience from building condos, instead of rental property, in the neighborhood? Greenline Development includes "development without displacement"

as the first of its four core values on its website, alongside "creating new home ownership opportunities whenever possible; positively influencing the creation of mixed-income, stable communities; and the highest quality of products, design, management, and relationships." Van Horne stresses the importance of keeping current residents in their homes: he only builds on vacant lots or develops empty buildings (as opposed to buying out a currently-inhabited building and booting the renters in order to make condos). And Greenline's relatively affordable condos open up homeownership to people who might not have been able to afford homes before. "I cannot deny that the city down payment assistance has made most of these deals possible," van Horne admits. "People probably would not have been able to find financing without it, whereas a year or a year and a half ago, people would have been able to find 100 percent financing." Ultimately, while he says that property taxes in Woodlawn have gone up to "a frightening degree," van Horne believes that the root of the gentrification problem lies beyond the ability of developers to fix; the responsibility lies in the hands of city planners and tax officials to change the tax structure.

Van Horne shows me around the Hathaway, one of his buildings on 6600 S. Ingleside. The model apartment is small, but clean, evidently well-built, and shiny new. It's decorated in neutral Ikea chic, which nicely sets off the stainless steel appliances and the warm tones of the blonde wood floors and cabinetry. One can easily imagine a young couple with a baby building a home here, or a stylish bachelorette pad for the demographic that van Horne says are his most frequent customers: "young, single professional black women with some kind of roots on the South Side." A common misconception of Greenline Development is that it was named after the El line that connects the neighborhoods in which it operates, but van Horne says the moniker originates from a less friendly past: "I wanted to build in areas that were once redlined." Redlining was the practice of marking a red line on a map that indicated a neighborhood where a bank would not invest, denying mortgages and credit wholesale to residents. A neighborhood generally got redlined because too many African-Americans moved in for the bank's comfort, resulting in low homeownership rates in black inner-city neighborhoods. Despite a miserable housing market that could keep homeownership out of reach, that red line is starting to turn green in Woodlawn.

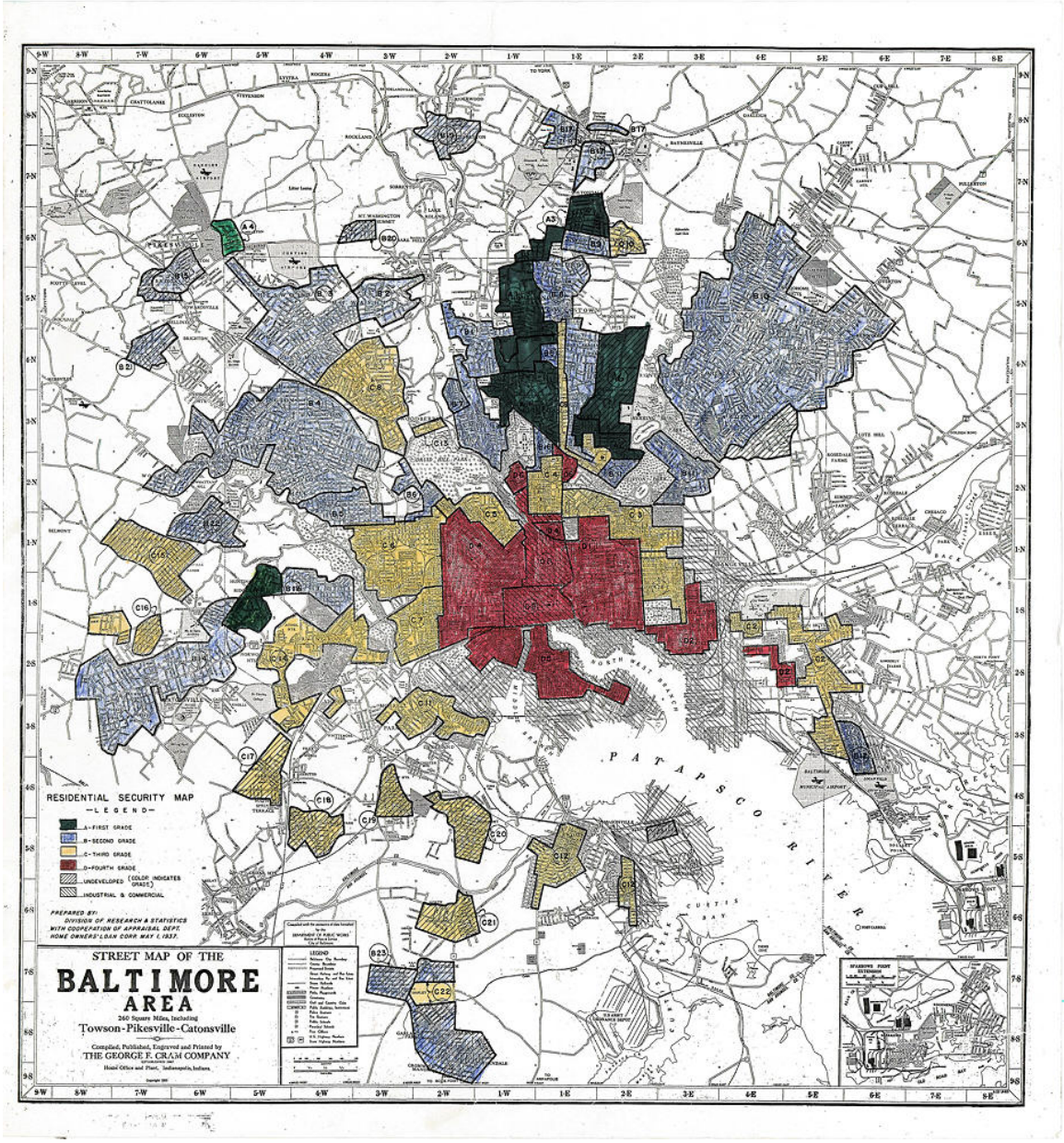
Real Estate Speculator Cartoon
Source: http://dig.lib.niu.edu/ISHS/ishs-2001spring/ishs-2001spring070.pdf

The Garfieldian, September 10, 1959.

MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Translating to Baltimore

Baltimore Redline Map
Source: http://www.anteropietila.com/books.html#map



During the Depression of the 1930s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration bailed out more than one million homeowners who were in danger of losing their homes. It also prepared real estate risk maps for 239 U.S. cities, with the aim of preventing the exposure of lenders to bad loans in the future. Neighborhoods in those

cities were assessed according to the age and condition of housing stock but also on the basis of their residents' race, ethnicity, religion, economic status and homogeneity. This hand-colored 1937 Baltimore map, prepared by the government's Home Owners Loan Corporation, redlined much of the center city (largely African American or Jewish). Since regular mortgages were nearly impossible to get, homes there could be sold only through speculators. Surrounding areas were given a yellow designation, meaning that the government recommended the issuance of mortgages there only with caution and at strict terms.

The top grade, colored green, was given only to a dozen or so neighborhoods. Even in the depth of the Depression, mortgage money was available there for qualified buyers at liberal terms. Interestingly, Roland Park was not given that grade, because federal officials thought that its houses, the oldest about 40 years of at the time, had outlived their usefulness. By contrast, the same development company's more recent Guilford, Homeland and Northwood all were given the top grade. They were white, mostly Protestant and upper middle class and so new that houses were still being built there. Blacks were prohibited by deeds, Jews through a stringently enforced company policy. Not In My Neighborhood discusses redlining in detail and documents how it reflected the federal government's adoption of eugenics, a white-supremacist ideology that contributed to National Socialism in Germany and apartheid in South Africa. The book also shows how the yellow areas became the target of blockbusters who scared white homeowners into selling low and then flipped the properties to blacks at exploitative prices.

The sub-prime mortgage craze was a logical extension of redlining and blockbusting.

Jewish Museum examines the exodus to the suburbs
Exhibit says residents wanted the style that neighborhoods presented
Jacques Kelly
Baltimore Sun – 5:40 PM EST, February 15, 2013
Source: http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-kelly-column-pikesville-20130215,0,5382888.column

As a child in the mid-1950s, I asked my mother why we didn't live in a modern house built of new, salmon-toned brick like my schoolmates. We lived in a traditional city neighborhood, in a three-story 1915 rowhouse. We had only a small backyard that lacked a barbecue area or swing set.

A new exhibition staged by the Jewish Museum of Maryland and presented at downtown's Enoch Pratt Free Library examines this same point, and many others. "Jews on the Move: Baltimore and the Suburban Exodus, 1945-1968" demonstrates how

thousands of families called up Davidson movers and took off for ranchers and split levels in greater Northwest Baltimore.

Like the Jewish families on the other side of the Jones Falls, many Baltimoreans were pulling up stakes and moving on. The show addresses race, and racial change, but it mostly examines why the suburbs were so strong a pull.

"It's a national story, with a local twist," the shows says on its nicely laid-out panels. I read with interest the basic tale that people wanted to catch the energy and style that the suburban neighborhoods presented. "After chaotic years of depression and war, Americans wanted to settle down," the show states.

An anonymous woman is quoted as saying: "We had to leave my in-law's. ... We had a baby and I felt it was time to go."

Television promoted a lifestyle that was definitely not about rowhouses and corner drugstores and delicatessens — and mothers-in-law or aunts living under the same roof. Sociologists defined this new way as the nuclear family.

"Baltimore's Jewish families settled en masse in a single section of the metro area — northwest," the show states. "Today four of five Jews remain concentrated in greater Northwest Baltimore. ... Jewish developers filled the rolling hills of the Northwest suburbs with ranch houses, split levels, split foyers, and colonials."

Real estate brokers Fiola Blum and Mal Sherman, and many others, sold the houses often built by Joseph Meyerhoff, Edward Myerberg, Harry Sampson, Melvyn Goldman, Sam Gorn and Ellwood Sinsky.

Johns Hopkins University students, enrolled in a Program in Museums and Society, paged through old copies of the Jewish Times for the exhibit.

The exhibit also has a section called "Jewish Geography," subdivisions with names like Caves Park, Eden Roc and Ranchleigh.

"The suburban exodus was virtually complete by 1968. By then, 80 percent of Jews lived in greater Northwest from Upper Park Heights deep into Baltimore County. That ratio has remained remarkably stable," according to the show.

"Pikesville, not Randallstown, has become the center of Jewish Baltimore, home to one-third of the metro area's Jews."

MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

The exhibit uses photographs to show couples posed in old city backyards, with their wooden back porches and occasional fire escapes or on the 1920s front porches seen all over the lower Park Heights neighborhood. Contrasted with this are photos of people rather carefully standing at 1950s outdoor metal barbecue grills or parking cars at the old Mandell Ballow shop in a Reisterstown Road strip center.

Rabbi Israel Goldman, of the Chizuk Amuno congregation, said prophetically at the time: "Our people are moving from the overcrowded cities to the spacious suburbs."

John Waters v. The Wire
Baltimore goes to the Movies
by Mark Alice Durant
Source: http://saint-lucy.com/essays/john-waters-v-the-wire/

Fra Carnavale, The Ideal City, c. 1480-84

An image of the ideal city is housed deep inside the palazzo-style fortress of the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, tucked within granite and marble halls, protected by climate control, surveillance cameras and legions of guards. The painting, a long horizontal of pale blue and muted earth tones hangs at shoulder height and seems to lord over the assortment of other Italian Renaissance treasures collected in the 19th and early 20th centuries by the railroad barons Henry Walters and his father William. The painting is inspired by Leon Battista Alberti's theories on architecture and is attributed to Bartolomeo di Giovanni Corradini (Fra Carnavale). The Ideal City (c. 1480-84) is not a real place of course but an aristocratic dream of a city, a 15th century pastiche of architectural references that together represent order, elegance and power.
The scene is bathed in gentle morning light; four Corinthian columns bracket the fountain and hold up the personifications of Justice, Moderation, Liberality and Courage. With its restored Roman Coliseum, Florentine Baptistry, sober palaces and triumphal arch, this is a city that preserves its antiquities while providing contemplative spaces for its citizens. Human activity, what little there is of it, consists of a few simple gestures: an

itinerant peddler, satchel upon his shoulder passes in the foreground, a group of men stroll in apparent conversation, a handmaiden enveloped in a blue robe dips her urn into the central fountain while another servant draped in diaphanous umber approaches. Through the Triumphal Arch, itself a reference to Emperor Constantine, the distant gate of the walled city is visible and beyond the gate, the horizon sealed off by the misty blue Tuscan hills.

If you exit the Walters Art Museum via the east portal you will alight upon Charles Street. Look north to your left and the original monument to George Washington looms over the elegant and ordered neighborhood of Mount Vernon. Echoes of Rome's Trajan Column can be discerned in the monument's neo-classical design as it rises above the stately residences and elegant parks accented with bronze statuary of allegorical scenes and political figures. If this was your only impression of Baltimore, if you did not travel a couple blocks east or west, had never read the newspaper, watched a John Waters film or become addicted to HBOs The Wire you could almost believe the ideal city, that 500 year-old hallucinatory utopia of civic order had somehow manifested itself here in Baltimore.

The opening sequences of John Waters' 1998 film Pecker depict back and forth shots of the film's eponymous photographer, played by Edward Furlong, and the Washington Monument. Pierced by several lightning rods, Washington appears like an abstract voodoo doll or a post-colonial Saint Sebastian. Pecker squints through his cheap 35mm camera snapping photos of the monument before he sprints to hop on a bus headed for the neighborhood of Hampden. Pecker hangs out the window of the bus taking pictures of the animated street life as it heads north on Charles Street. He exits the bus on 36th Street or 'The Avenue' as it is known locally, to begin his shift flipping burgers.

Before I moved to Baltimore in the summer of 2001, I spent one weekend driving all over the city looking at neighborhoods (neighborhoods declared relatively safe that is), where I could possibly live. I cruised the streets of Patterson Park, Bolton Hill, Mount Vernon, Federal Hill, Canton, Fells Point, Locust Point, Pigtown, Brewer's Hill, Charles Village, Waverly, Remington, Lauraville, and Hamilton until bleary eyed and confused I pulled the rented car over on 36th Street in Hampden and sat on the stairs of a shop called Oh Said Rose! While scanning the mix of storefronts and rowhouses across the street, a skinny white kid with corn rows doing his best Eminem routine strutted by while an elderly woman in curlers walking her mangy miniature poodle snuffed out a cigarette in front of a second hand clothing store called Fat Elvis. I realized that I must have stumbled into John Waters territory and that I would make this place my home.

How did John Waters come to own Baltimore? Or to be more precise, how is it that an independent filmmaker could so dominate the image of Baltimore in the popular imagination to the extent that any mention of the city immediately conjures the image

of the elegant and eccentric filmmaker with the slightly creepy pencil moustache? Born and raised in and around Baltimore, Waters briefly attended film school at NYU. By his own account he was less interested in analyzing Battleship Potemkin than trawling porn houses for his cinematic inspirations, and after being thrown out for smoking marijuana, he returned to his hometown. Yet this rejection did not deflate his ambitions. Instead he embraced the provincial perversity of Baltimore and formed a loose confederation of actors and assistants called the Dreamlanders. Waters' first film was a 17-minute, 8mm short Hag in a Black Leather Jacket (1966). Working within a budget of $30, Hag featured a rooftop interracial marriage presided over by a Klansman. Several productions followed but it was 1972s Pink Flamingos that forever inserted John Waters and his muse Divine (Glenn Milstead) in the cultural landscape.

Over the course of almost four decades, Pink Flamingos has transformed from cult artifact to legendary spectacle. Virtually anyone with a passing knowledge of film history can evoke the encounter between a poodle's poop and Divine's dental work. But Pink Flamingos is more deeply perverse than that little culinary outrage and so unique that it is impossible to distill into a few descriptive associations. But lets try just for the fun of it. Pink Flamingos is Pasolini engorging on crab cakes, it is Un Chien Andalou on a date with the Honeymooners, it is the Viennese Actionists performing in the sleaziest strip club, it is a Manson Family picnic, it is a home movie by Hieronymus Bosch if he grew up in a trailer park on the outskirts of Baltimore in the 1950s.

In terms of cinematic representation, whether it is Waters' band of eccentrics, the violent complexity of David Simon's The Wire, or the nostalgia of Barry Levinson, Baltimore is less of an image space than a situational or attitudinal space. Baltimore is conventionally pictured as gritty, authentic and populated by a seemingly vast assortment of exceptional characters. Lacking dramatic visual anchors such as New York's Empire State Building or Statue of Liberty, Chicago's lakefront and architectural showroom, San Francisco's precious Victorian homes or Golden Gate Bridge, Washington D.C.'s monuments or even L.A.'s infinite sea of lights or smog shrouded Hollywood sign, Baltimore offers a far more modest spectacle.

For John Waters what Baltimore lacks in architectural or natural wonder it more than compensates with vivid personalities, kitschy décor and a raggedly porous border between the city and its rural periphery. Burnouts from the 1950's, white trash hippies, doughy drag queens, inbred hillbillies, rhinestone studded killers, clueless housewives and Manson Family copycats, a virtual orgy of stereotypes crash into each other within the hideous interiors of row homes and the littered alleys of a city way past its prime. Like Diane Arbus with a sense of humor, Waters is entirely skeptical of all the utopian nonsense that trickled down from the 1960s counter culture. If it is possible to set aside all of the theatrical outrageousness of Waters' early films, one can find an almost documentary authenticity in his portrayal of a social and moral system in complete

disarray. Without directly addressing race riots, economic collapse, white flight and the now obviously empty promises of LBJ's the Great Society, the Trash Trilogy (Pink Flamingos, Female Trouble and Desperate Living) and Pink Flamingos in particular, presents a contemporary image of the 1970s – a vision of corruption, depravity and chaos; Baltimore as antithesis of the Ideal City.

It wasn't always so, John Quincy Adams bequeathed the title 'Monumental City' upon Baltimore in the 1820s in recognition of its impressive public statuary and careful city planning. Throughout the 19th century Baltimore played a hugely significant role in American history and culture, the Star Spangled Banner, for example, honors the heroic defense of Fort McHenry in Baltimore's Harbor in 1814. But for all of its post-colonial glory, Baltimore has had more than its share of civic ugliness. John Q. Adams' compliment had barely enough time to stick before the term 'Mobtown' was applied in reaction to the enthusiastic frenzy Baltimore's citizenry could be whipped into at the slightest provocation.

Baltimore is the southernmost northern city and the northernmost southern city; where it is said, the graciousness of the north meets the efficiency of the south. And although Maryland was officially neutral during the Civil War in many ways the north/south rivalry is still being fought in the cultural subconscious of the city. As if to concretely embody this historical and cultural schizophrenia, Baltimore is a city with dueling Civil War monuments – an imposing pedestal proffering triumphal Union soldiers accompanied by righteous angels occupies the same park with a double equestrian statue featuring Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson as they ride off together toward military glory. And if that wasn't enough; it would be a leisurely 10 minute stroll between the heartbreakingly emotive statue of Billie Holiday on Pennsylvania Avenue to the base of the Washington Monument to view the somber and respectful bronze figure of Roger Taney, the Supreme Court Chief Justice and author of the 1857 Dred Scott decision that determined that African Americans were in every way inferior to the white race and therefore could never be considered citizens of the United States.

For 30 years John Waters ruled the image of Baltimore in the popular imagination, but with nostalgic romps like Hairspray the film and then the Broadway musical, Waters, like an unusual but loveable bachelor uncle, incrementally gained acceptance into the mainstream. Meanwhile a new representation began to insert itself in the collective consciousness; The Wire, which ran on HBO for five seasons and 60 episodes between 2002 and 2008. This is a city branded by opposing visions of excess. Whose Baltimore am I living in? Is it the kitschy depravity of John Waters or the violent streets of The Wire? The answer is of course, both and neither.

Simon considers Baltimore a main character in the series; while most cop shows utilize sound stages and sets, The Wire features virtually all of Baltimore from its old money

neighborhoods like Guilford to the third world conditions on the east and west sides, from the scruffy but still elegant interiors of city hall to the degraded classrooms of its schools. For those years while The Wire was in production it was almost a fact of daily life to encounter detours while driving, to observe blocks of boarded up tenements glowing brightly with expensive lighting equipment, and to cross paths with one of the actors who call Baltimore home.

Simon describes The Wire as one long story about how people live together in an American city. Through its characters and plot lines, each season examined how various institutions, the police, drug trade, education and politics, inevitably engulf and compromise the individuals engaged with those power structures. Simon has also stated that he understands the crime story as an essential genre to understanding contemporary American culture, every bit as foundational as the Western was to earlier generations of Americans. It is difficult to cite another example in film or television of a narrative of such scope and ambition. Why Baltimore and not, say, Chicago, Philadelphia or Detroit? Most importantly is the simple fact that Simon was a reporter for the Baltimore Sun for 12 years and his writing partner, Ed Burns, worked as a detective on the Baltimore Police Department and later as a public school teacher.

The image of Baltimore is now so wrapped in the reverence for The Wire that it is hard to disassociate oneself from the connection. Everyone in Baltimore has their Wire encounter stories and I have a few of my own. While driving downtown one afternoon, I caught a quick glimpse of a scene underway with the actor Aidan Gillen who played Baltimore's Mayor Tommy Carcetti. And while Simon has never owned up to the remarkable resemblance, Gillen is a miniature version of the actual mayor at the time, Martin O'Malley. An instant later I saw the mayor himself speaking to reporters in the shadow of City Hall. Like a skip in the time / space continuum, it momentarily felt as if somehow the moment had repeated itself in a slightly different iteration.

Another and perhaps more revealing encounter speaks to the power of narrative to seep into our inner lives. At the end of the school day I was waiting outside a Baltimore High School where my wife teaches. A woman pulled up, practically leaping out of her vehicle and looked toward the school's front door. She seemed familiar and unknown to me simultaneously, as if I knew her but had forgotten how. I felt a twinge that can only come from an unresolved emotional bond and it crossed my mind that we must have been intimate long ago and in some other city. I was left squirming in this perceptual no man's land for an uncomfortably long few minutes. Should I approach her to say hello in hopes that our connection will be revealed? Will I embarrass us both and possibly my wife? As if a veil had been pulled from my eyes I realized the woman in question was Sonja Sohn, the actress who played Detective Kima George for the entire run of the series. Evidently her daughter was a student at the school. The uncanny

experience of not being able to distinguish my own memories from something I watched on DVD was funny and unsettling.

Baltimore has become an enduring metaphor and muse for Waters and Simon, yet ironically Baltimore is a decidedly unselfconscious place. Despite its obvious dysfunction, the city as a social entity seems not to compare itself to other municipalities; it is unabashedly itself. There is no competition with other American cities such as the rivalries between New York and Boston or Los Angeles and San Francisco. It is not mildly apologetic, like Chicago or Seattle, for not being the center of the universe. And despite the awkward campaigns to attract business to Baltimore utilizing short-lived slogans like 'Charm City', 'The City That Reads' or the crazily stupid 'The Greatest City in America' you will not find people in Baltimore indulging the provincial braggadocio you might find in Houston (or anywhere in Texas for that matter). And despite the fact that many people from Washington D.C. have moved to Baltimore for its relatively cheap housing stock and easy commute, the political capital of the world seems to make no impression on the concerns of Baltimore and its citizens.

As if in a vision from an alternate cinematic universe, the image of the Ideal City returns in Isaac Julian's short film Baltimore (2003). Julian, who might be described an artist who uses film rather than a traditional filmmaker, and is therefore less shackled to conventional notions of plot and character development. He is also black and British, which provides an informed outsider's perspective on issue of race and representation in America. His image of Baltimore is not a site of manic outrageousness or unrelenting crime and poverty, but a place of almost mythological solitude, a spare proscenium of urbane elegance and urban grit.

The film opens with a shot of Baltimore's generic downtown skyline, although we are cued toward otherworldly expectations by the softly muffled pinging of sonar and a whirling dark cloud formation hovering over the city. Julien's film places two iconic figures, Melvin Van Peebles the revered blaxploitation director of Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song (1971) and an Angela Davis / Foxy Brown look-a-like played by Vanessa Myrie, in a kind of futuristic existential drama. These two opposing characters pursue and surveille one another as they oscillate back and forth between two distinct cultural institutions, the Walters Art Museum and the Great Blacks in Wax Museum, which is housed in an old firehouse on the city's embattled east side.

It is a truism that Baltimore is small city if you are white and a big city if you are black. The attendance figures for the Great Blacks in Wax museum seem to prove the point. Originating in a small storefront space in 1983 with a half dozen wax figures, the Great Blacks and Wax Museum has become an essential, if still somewhat humble, cultural organization. But the humility of its environment belies the impact of the impact and intensity of its exhibits which include revered historical figures such as

MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks and Marcus Garvey alongside more obscure personalities such as Mary Elizabeth Lange, founder of the oldest order of Roman Catholic nuns. Exhibits devoted to the Middle Passage and to lynching make the museum a more vivid and disturbing experience that if were simply a hall of heroes.

Via this institutional juxtaposition, by playing the Walters and the Great Blacks in Wax Museum as opposing versions of history, Julien suggests a struggle between narratives and representations. The Walters' palatial interiors and marble statuary emanate a cold cyan-hued glow while the crowded and homespun galleries of the Great Black in Wax Museum peak out from vignetted frames as if illuminated by a prowler's flashlight. As if to confront, assess or quietly contradict the European version of history on display at the Walters, a full contingent of waxen figures are magically transported from the dingy halls of Great Blacks in Wax Museum to the antiseptic galleries of the Walters.

As the camera dollies through the galleries, Julien frames Zora Neale Hurston as she contemplates the image of an astonished and emaciated elderly man in Jusepe De Ribera's canvas St. Paul the Hermit. And as if documenting a fantasy cocktail party of notable African Americans, the camera then pans across the room to momentarily rest on the faces of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., and a dramatically costumed Billie Holiday who seems about to break into song while standing in front of Panini's View of the Colosseum. Meanwhile Melvin Van Peebles studies Fra Carnavale's Ideal City while slowly removing the ever-present cigar from his mouth. Is that a skeptical frown on his face as he turns away from that Renaissance dream?

Toward the end of the film, Van Peebles and our Angela / Foxy proxy stroll the streets of the eastside as they enter and exit the Great Blacks in Wax Museum. Refreshingly, Julian does not fetishize the unavoidable surfeit of boarded up housing or focus on street corner drug traffic. Instead he allows his characters to walk purposefully, apparently without fear, accompanied by their own internal dialogue and private motivations. This duo seems to exist outside of history, as observers, flaneurs and silent commentators. With freedom animating their strides, Van Peebles walks the streets like a bemused and cynical angel, while Angela / Foxy loses her afro-wig to reveal a head shorn. Without her nostalgic halo of hair and wrapped in an ankle length black coat against the Baltimore winter, she moves away from the camera emphatically toward the future. Unlike John Waters' exaggerated and unglued characterizations or the atmosphere of futility that permeates David Simon's Baltimore, Julien's Baltimore remains enigmatic and free of cliché and/or hopelessness. This is a Baltimore I would like to live in for a change.

Concepts of "Home"

Defining a 'Meaningful' Space
Charles R. Wolfe
The Atlantic Cities – Jan 16, 2012
Source: http://www.theatlanticcities.com/neighborhoods/2012/01/defining-meaningful-space/960/

How should we define meaningful urban places? Who should set the stage? Both are key questions in managing cities of the future. The answers are not new. Harvard Professor John Stilgoe argues for personal observation of the built environment. The title of his most noted book, Outside Lies Magic (1998), sets the tone for self-inquiry. Similarly, journalist-turned-urban authority Grady Clay explains how the "undisclosed evidence" of the form and patterns of cities awaits personal discovery. In Close-Up: How to Read the American City (1973), Clay wrote:

And where are we? Grasping at straws, clutching yesterday's program, swamped by today's expert view, clawing at the newest opinion polls, but neglecting that limitless, timeless, boundless wealth of visible evidence that merely waits in a potentially organizable state for us to take a hard look, to make the next move.

MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Last August, from Italy, I recalled places for people-watching, where "we sit on the edges of the public realm and look in the mirror." I cast such places as indicative of safe public environments, including active streets, corners and squares.

But what about more direct observation of place, akin to the teaching of Stilgoe and Clay? This post includes three images of human interaction with urban places. In two cases, history surrounds, and in one case, an intersecting natural environment provides both modification and contrast. What can we learn from these images? Five thoughts:

- Humans both occupy and look within and without bounded vantage points.
- Nature, including light, color and climate complement human interest in and perception of the built environment.
- Place observers may expect a result, or a revelation, as part of an evolving story.
- Cities should help such observation by people.
- The stories behind the observers in each image could inform goals and objectives for a city's future.

In simpler terms, without vantage points, we dishonor individual needs. The images show people observing place in a way that is intrinsic to who we are. Clay would likely agree:

Experts may help assemble data, specialists may organize it, professionals may offer theories to explain it. But none of these can substitute for each person's own leap into the dark, jumping in to draw his or her own conclusions.

The spontaneous involvement of the people in the images above shows a path to meaningful urban places. Every city-dweller has a story, a "leap in the dark", conscious or not. The best place making may result where developers, designers, decision makers and pundits let astute, everyday users have their say.

This post originally appeared on MyUrbanist. All images composed by the author.

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Why the Places We Live Make Us Happy
Kaid Benfield
The Atlantic – Feb 02, 2012
Source: http://www.theatlanticcities.com/arts-and-lifestyle/2012/02/why-places-we-live-make-us-happy/1122/

Reuters

I am fascinated by the relationship between our cities and our mental and emotional well-being. The relationship of urban form to physical health is finally getting some of the attention it deserves, but how the shape of our communities and neighborhoods affects mental health and the much more elusive concept of happiness remains under-explored.

New research, however, provides some intriguing clues. In particular, a fascinating study authored by a team from West Virginia University and the University of South Carolina Upstate, and published last year in Urban Affairs Review, examined detailed polling data on happiness and city characteristics from ten international cities.

In an article titled "Understanding the Pursuit of Happiness in Ten Major Cities," the authors concluded that good urbanism contributes positively to happiness:
We find that the design and conditions of cities are associated with the happiness of residents in 10 urban areas. Cities that provide easy access to convenient public transportation and to cultural and leisure amenities promote happiness. Cities that are

affordable and serve as good places to raise children also have happier residents. We suggest that such places foster the types of social connections that can improve happiness and ultimately enhance the attractiveness of living in the city.

As I noted last June, in the U.S., "the pursuit of Happiness" is listed in the first sentence of our Declaration of Independence, right along life and liberty as an inalienable right of all people. That's a lofty dose of respect from the founders of our republic. Shouldn't it get the same respect from those of us in the business of pursuing environmental quality?

Trust me: it doesn't.

There are a lot of reasons why this is so, but surely one of them is that happiness is viewed by just about everyone outside the mental health field as highly subjective. And it is certainly difficult to measure. The effect of environmental factors on happiness is more difficult still, notwithstanding some intriguing efforts in the country of Bhutan and the cities of Victoria, Seattle, and Bogata. The concept of "healing cities," which I profiled recently, also appears to be on the case, taking a holistic view of health that includes "physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual needs."

The new academic study, kindly forwarded to me by Kevin Leyden, one of its authors, attempts to approach the subject with scientific rigor. Leyden and his colleagues believe that city attributes do indeed make a difference and that, as a result, "happiness and its pursuit ... is a subject that should be of concern to scholars of urban places and urban policy."

Of course, city aspects are not alone in influencing happiness, and neither Leyden nor I would claim otherwise. Leyden cities a "Big Seven" group of factors recognized by prior research as most substantially affecting adult happiness: wealth and income (especially as perceived in relation to that of others); family relationships; work; community and friends; health; personal freedom and personal values.

The researchers drew from an extensive quality of life survey undertaken by Gallup in 2007 for the government of South Korea. Approximately 1,000 people were surveyed from each of ten cities: New York, London, Paris, Stockholm, Toronto, Milan, Berlin, Seoul, Beijing and Tokyo. Respondents self-reported their overall degree of happiness (measured on a scale of 1 to 5) along with their degree of agreement with a range of statements designed to tease out additional factors.

Leyden's team examined the findings, looking for statistically significant correlations. They found confirmation of the Big Seven factors, but also variations that could not be explained by the Big Seven. Examining additional findings from prior research along with

data from the Gallup study, they concluded that a feeling of connectedness was a key factor in predicting happiness, and posit that the extent to which urban design fosters – rather than inhibits – that feeling may be an important additional determinant of happiness:

Do connections with place affect happiness? Does the design of the city and its neighborhoods and the way those places are maintained have an effect on happiness?

We hypothesize that the way cities and city neighborhoods are designed and maintained can have a significant impact on the happiness of city residents. The key reasons, we suggest, are that places can facilitate human social connections and relationships and because people are often connected to quality places that are cultural and distinctive. City neighborhoods are an important environment that can facilitate social connections and connection with place itself.

But not all neighborhoods are the same. Some are designed and built to foster or enable connections. Other are built to discourage them (e.g., a gated model) or devolve to become places that are antisocial because of crime or other negative behaviors. Increasingly, researchers and practitioners have become aware that some neighborhood designs appear better suited for social connectedness than others.

The Gallup study examined a number of questions directly related to the built environment, including the convenience of public transportation, the ease of access to shops, the presence of parks and sports facilities, the ease of access to cultural and entertainment facilities and the presence of libraries. All were found to correlate significantly with happiness, with convenient public transportation and easy access to cultural and leisure facilities showing the strongest correlation.

The statistical analysis also included questions related to urban environmental quality apart from cities' built form, and produced additional significant correlations:

The more respondents felt their city was beautiful (aesthetics), felt it was clean (aesthetics and safety), and felt safe walking at night (safety), the more likely they were to report being happy. Similarly, the more they felt that publicly provided water was safe, and their city was a good place to rear and care for children, the more likely they were to be happy.

Among these, the perception of living in a beautiful city had the strongest correlation with happiness. Curiously, though, the researchers found that the perception of "clean streets, sidewalks, and public spaces" actually had a somewhat negative association with happiness. Happy people apparently find their urban environments both beautiful and messy. (Well, the survey did include New York.)

MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Statistics geeks will find much to pore over in this intriguing and meticulously reported study. I find that it provides empirical strength to those of us who believe that "the environment" is concerned not just with traditional pollution or land conservation (both of which remain important) but also with what and where we build; and not just with parts per billion of this or that but also with the quality of human relationships and well-being. I believe the authors of the Declaration of Independence would agree.

This post originally appeared on the NRDC's Switchboard blog.

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FEBRUARY 2008
EULA BISS
NO-MAN'S-LAND: FEAR, RACISM, AND THE HISTORICALLY TROUBLING ATTITUDE OF AMERICAN PIONEERS
Source: http://www.believermag.com/issues/200802/?read=article_biss

ON THE PRAIRIE
"What is it about water that always affects a person?" Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote in her 1894 diary. "I never see a great river or lake but I think how I would like to see a world made and watch it through all its changes."

Forty years later, she would reflect that she had "seen the whole frontier, the woods, the Indian country of the great plains, the frontier towns, the building of the railroads in wild unsettled country, homesteading and farmers coming in to take possession." She realized, she said, that she "had seen and lived it all…."

It was a world made and unmade. And it was not without some ambivalence, not without some sense of loss, that the writer watched the Indians, as many as she could

see in either direction, ride out of the Kansas of her imagination. Her fictional self, the Laura of Little House on the Prairie, sobbed as they left.

Like my sister, like my cousin, like so many other girls, I was captivated, in my childhood, by that Laura. I was given a bonnet, and I wore it earnestly for quite some time. But when I return to Little House on the Prairie now as an adult, I find that it is not the book I thought it was. It is not the gauzy frontier fantasy I made of it as a child. It is not a naïve celebration of the American pioneer. It is the document of a woman interrogating her legacy. It is, as the scholar Ann Romines has called it, "one of our most disturbing and ambitious narratives about failures and experiments of acculturation in the American West."

In that place and time where one world was ending and another was beginning, in that borderland between conflicting claims, the fictional Laura, the child of the frontier, struggles through her story. She hides, she cowers, she rages, she cries. She asks, "Will the government make these Indians go west?" and she asks, "Won't it make the Indians mad to have to—" but then she is cut off and told to go to sleep. She falls ill and wakes from a fever to find a black doctor attending her. She picks up beads at an abandoned Indian camp and strings them for her sister. The real Laura grows up riding back and forth in covered wagons across the Middle West, passing through immigrant towns and towns where she notes in her diary seeing "a great many colored people." She marries a farmer named Almanzo and settles, finally, in the Ozarks.

Laura Ingalls Wilder loved the land enough to know exactly what had been stolen to make her world. "If I had been the Indians," she wrote in her 1894 diary, as she looked out over a river and some bluffs in South Dakota, "I would have scalped more white folks before I ever would have left it."

ON THE BORDER

Shortly after we married, my husband and I moved to a part of Chicago that was once known as "No-Man's-Land." At the turn of the century, when Chicago had already burned and been rebuilt again, this was still a sandy forest of birch and oak trees. It was the barely populated place between the city of Chicago and the city of Evanston, the place just north of the boundary that once designated Indian Territory, a place where the streets were unpaved and unlit.

Now this neighborhood is called Rogers Park, and the city blocks of Chicago, all paved and lit, run directly into the city blocks of Evanston, with only a cemetery to mark the boundary between the two municipalities. The Chicago trains end here, and the tracks turn back in a giant loop around the gravel yard where idle trains are docked. Seven blocks to the east of the train station is the shore of Lake Michigan, which rolls and

crashes past the horizon, reminding us, with its winds and spray, that we are on the edge of something vast.

There are a dozen empty storefronts on Howard Street between the lake and the train station—a closed Chinese restaurant, a closed dry cleaner, a closed thrift shop, a closed hot dog place. There is an open Jamaican restaurant, a Caribbean American bakery, a liquor store, a shoe store, and several little grocery markets. Women push baby carriages here, little boys eat bags of chips in front of the markets, and men smoke outside the train station while the trains rattle the air.

We moved to Chicago because I was hired to teach at the university in Evanston, which is within walking distance of Rogers Park. Walking to campus along the lakeshore for the first time, I passed the cemetery, and then a block of brick apartment buildings much like the ones on my block, and then I began to pass houses with gables and turrets and stone walls and copper gutters and huge bay windows and manicured lawns and circular drives. I passed beaches where sailboats were pulled up on the sand, where canoes and kayaks were stacked; I passed fountains, I passed parks with willow trees, I passed through one block that was gated at both ends. I passed signs that read PRIVATE ROAD, NO ACCESS, POLICE ENFORCED.

Evanston was still an officially segregated city in 1958 when Martin Luther King Jr. spoke there about the Greek concept of agapē, love for all humanity. On my first visit to Evanston, after my job interview, I experienced a moment of panic during which I stood with the big cool stone buildings of the university and its lawns and trees behind me while I called my sister to tell her that I was afraid this might not be the life for me. I was afraid, I told her, that if I became a professor I would be forever cloistered here, forever insulated from the rest of the world. My sister, who is herself training to be a professor, was not moved. There are, she reminded me, worse fates.

Of the seventy-seven official “community areas” of Chicago, twenty-four are populated by more than 90 percent of one race, and only twelve have no racial majority. Rogers Park is one of those few. It is celebrated as the most diverse neighborhood in a hypersegregated city. By the time I moved to Rogers Park, quite a few people had already warned me about the place. Two of them were my colleagues at the university, who both made mention of gangs. Others were near strangers, like my sister’s roommate’s mother, who asked her daughter to call me on the day I was packing my moving truck to share her suspicion that I might be moving somewhere dangerous. And then there was my mother, who grew up in a western suburb of Chicago but has, for almost twenty years now, lived in an old farmhouse in rural New York. She told me that she had heard from someone that the neighborhood I was moving to might not be safe, that there were gangs there. “Ma,” I said to her, “what do you know about gangs?” And she said, “I know enough—I know that they’re out there.” Which is about as much as I

know, and about as much as most white folks who talk about gangs seem to know, which is to say, nothing.

IN THE IMAGINATION

Gangs are real, but they are also conceptual. The word gang is frequently used to avoid using the word black in a way that might be offensive. For instance, by pairing it with a suggestion of fear.

My cousin recently traveled to South Africa, where someone with her background would typically be considered neither white nor black, but colored, a distinct racial group in South Africa. Her skin is light enough so that she was most often taken to be white, which was something she was prepared for, having traveled in other parts of Africa. But she was not prepared for what it meant to be white in South Africa, which was to be reminded, at every possible opportunity, that she was not safe, and that she must be afraid. And she was not prepared for how seductive that fear would become, how omnipresent it would be, so that she spent most of her time there in taxis, and in hotels, and in "safe" places where she was surrounded by white people. When she returned home she told me, "I realized this is what white people do to each other—they cultivate each other's fear. It's very violent."

We are afraid, my husband suggests, because we have guilty consciences. We secretly suspect that we might have more than we deserve. We know that white folks have reaped some ill-gotten gains in this country. And so, privately, quietly, as a result of our own complicated guilt, we believe that we deserve to be hated, to be hurt, and to be killed.

But, for the most part, we are not. Most victims of violent crimes are not white. This is particularly true for "hate" crimes. We are far more likely to be hurt by the food we eat, the cars we drive, or the bicycles we ride than by the people we live among. This may be lost on us in part because we are surrounded by a lot of noise that suggests otherwise. Within the past month, for example, the Chicago Tribune reported an "unprovoked stabbing spree," a "one-man crime wave," a boy who was beaten in a park, and a bartender who was beaten behind her bar, the story being, again and again, that none of us are safe in this city.

IN THE CITY

In the spring of 2006, the New York Times published an analysis of all the murders that had been committed in New York City during the previous three years—a total of 1,662 murders. The article revealed one trend: people who were murdered tended to be murdered by other people like them. Most of the killers were men and boys (a disturbing 93 percent—a number that, if we weren't so accustomed to thinking of men as "naturally" violent, might strike us as the symptom of an alarming mass pathology),

and most killed other men and boys. The majority of children were killed by a parent, and in more than half of all the cases, the victim and the killer knew each other. In over three fourths of the killings, the killer and the victim were of the same race, and less than 13 percent of the victims were white or Asian.

Even as it made this point, the article undid its own message by detailing a series of stranger-murders. There was the serial murderer who shot shopkeepers, the KFC customer who stabbed a cashier, the man who offered a ride to a group of strangers and was then murdered for his car. These are the murders we find most compelling, of course, because these are the murders that allow us to be afraid of the people we want to be afraid of.

In a similar layering of popular fantasy with true information, the article went on to mention specific precincts in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Harlem where murders were concentrated, and then quoted Andrew Karmen, an expert in victimology, who explained, "The problem of crime and violence is rooted in neighborhood conditions—high rates of poverty, family disruption, failing schools, lack of recreational opportunities, active recruitment by street gangs, drug markets. People forced to reside under those conditions are at a greater risk of getting caught up in violence, as victims or as perpetrators." In other words, particular neighborhoods are not as dangerous as the conditions within those neighborhoods. It's a fine line, but an important one, because if you don't live in those conditions, you aren't very likely to get killed. Not driving through, not walking through, not even renting an apartment.

I worked, during my first year in New York, in some of the city's most notorious neighborhoods: in Bed-Stuy, in East New York, in East Harlem, in Washington Heights. That was before I knew the language of the city, and the codes, so I had no sense that these places were considered dangerous. I was hired by the Parks Department to inspect community gardens, and I traveled all over the city, on train and on bus and on foot, wearing khaki shorts and hiking boots, carrying a clipboard and a Polaroid camera.

I did not understand then that those city blocks on which most of the lots were empty or full of the rubble of collapsed buildings would be read, by many New Yorkers, as an indication of danger. I understood that these places were poverty stricken, and ripe with ambient desperation, but I did not suspect that they were any more dangerous than anywhere else in the city. I was accustomed to the semirural poverty and postindustrial decay of upstate New York. There, by the highways, yards were piled with broken plastic and rusting metal, tarps were tacked on in place of walls, roof beams were slowly rotting through. And in the small cities, in Troy and Watervliet, in Schenectady and Niskayuna, in Amsterdam and in parts of Albany, old brick buildings crumbled, brownstones stood vacant, and factories with huge windows waited to be gutted and razed.

MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Beyond the rumor that the old hot-dog factory was haunted, I don't remember any mythology of danger clinging to the urban landscape of upstate New York. And the only true horror story I had ever heard about New York City before I moved there was the story of my grandmother's brother, a farm boy who had gone to the city and died of gangrene after cutting his bare foot on some dirty glass. "Please," my grandmother begged me with tears in her eyes before I moved to New York, "always wear your shoes."

And I did. But by the time I learned what I was really supposed to be afraid of in New York, I knew better—which isn't to say that there was nothing to be afraid of, because, as all of us know, there are always dangers, everywhere.

But even now, at a much more wary and guarded age, what I feel when I am told that my neighborhood is dangerous is not fear but anger at the extent to which so many of us have agreed to live within a delusion—namely that we will be spared the dangers that others suffer only if we move within certain very restricted spheres, and that insularity is a fair price to pay for safety.

Fear is isolating for those that fear. And I have come to believe that fear is a cruelty to those who are feared. I once met a man of pro-football-size proportions who saw something in my body language when I shook his hand that inspired him to tell me he was pained by the way small women looked at him when he passed them on the street—pained by the fear in their eyes, pained by the way they drew away—and as he told me this he actually began to cry.

One evening not long after we moved to Rogers Park, my husband and I met a group of black boys riding their bikes on the sidewalk across the street from our apartment building. The boys were weaving down the sidewalk, yelling for the sake of hearing their own voices, and drinking from forty-ounce bottles of beer. As we stepped off the sidewalk and began crossing the street toward our apartment, one boy yelled, "Don't be afraid of us!" I looked back over my shoulder as I stepped into the street and the boy passed on his bike so that I saw him looking back at me also, and then he yelled again, directly at me, "Don't be afraid of us!"

I wanted to yell back, "Don't worry, we aren't!" but I was, in fact, afraid to engage the boys, afraid to draw attention to my husband and myself, afraid of how my claim not to be afraid might be misunderstood as bravado begging a challenge, so I simply let my eyes meet the boy's eyes before I turned, disturbed, toward the tall iron gate in front of my apartment building, a gate that gives the appearance of being locked but is in fact always open.

MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

IN THE WATER

My love of swimming in open water, in lakes and oceans, is tempered only by my fear of what I cannot see beneath those waters. My mind imagines into the depths a nightmare landscape of grabbing hands and spinning metal blades and dark sucking voids into which I will be pulled and not return. As a charm against my terror of the unseen I have, for many years now, always entered the water silently repeating to myself this command: Trust the water. And for some time after an incident in which one of my feet brushed the other and I swam for shore frantically in a gasping panic, breathing water in the process and choking painfully, I added: Don't be afraid of your own feet.

I am accustomed to being warned away from the water, to being told that it is too cold, too deep, too rocky, that the current is too strong and the waves are too powerful. Until recently, what I learned from these warnings was only that I could safely defy them all. But then I was humbled by a rough beach in Northern California where I was slammed to the bottom by the surf and dragged to shore so forcefully that sand was embedded in the skin of my palms and my knees. That beach happened to have had a sign that read how to survive this beach, which made me laugh when I first arrived, the first item in the numbered list being do not go within 500 feet of the water.

It is only since I have discovered that some warnings are legitimate that my fears of open water have become powerful enough to fight my confidence in my own strength. I tend to stay closer to shore now, and I am always vigilant, although for what, exactly, I do not know. It is difficult to know what to be afraid of and how cautious to be when there are so many imagined dangers in the world, so many killer sharks, and so many creatures from the Black Lagoon.

Now that we share a bookshelf, I am in possession of my husband's dog-eared, underlined copy of Barry Glassner's The Culture of Fear. Every society is threatened by a nearly infinite number of dangers, Glassner writes, but societies differ in what they choose to fear. Americans, interestingly, tend to be most preoccupied with those dangers that are among the least likely to cause us harm, while we ignore the problems that are hurting the greatest number of people. We suffer from a national confusion between true threats and imagined threats.

And our imagined threats, Glassner argues, very often serve to mask true threats. Quite a bit of noise, for example, is made about the minuscule risk that our children might be molested by strange pedophiles, while in reality most children who are sexually molested are molested by close relatives in their own homes. The greatest risk factor for these children is not the proximity of a pedophile or a pervert but the poverty in which they tend to live. And the sensationalism around our "war" on illegal drugs has obscured the fact that legal drugs, the kind of drugs that are advertised on television, are more widely abused and cause more deaths than illegal drugs. Worse than this, we allow our

misplaced, illogical fears to stigmatize our own people. “Fear Mongers,” Glassner writes, “project onto black men precisely what slavery, poverty, educational deprivation, and discrimination have ensured that they do not have—great power and influence.” Although I do not pretend to understand the full complexity of local economies, I suspect that fear is one of the reasons that I can afford to live where I live, in an apartment across the street from a beach, with a view of the lake and space enough for both my husband and me to have rooms in which to write. “Our lake home,” we sometimes call it, with a wink to the fact that this apartment is far better than we ever believed two writers with student loan debt and one income could hope for. As one Chicago real estate magazine puts it: “For decades, a low rate of owner occupancy, a lack of commercial development… and problems with crime have kept prices lower in East Rogers Park than in many North Side neighborhoods.” And so my feelings about fear are somewhat ambivalent, because fear is why I can afford to swim every day now.

One of the paradoxes of our time is that the War on Terror has served mainly to reinforce a collective belief that maintaining the right amount of fear and suspicion will earn one safety. Fear is promoted by the government as a kind of policy. Fear is accepted, even among the best-educated people in this country, even among the professors with whom I work, as a kind of intelligence. And inspiring fear in others is often seen as neighborly and kindly, instead of being regarded as what my cousin recognized it for—a violence.

On my first day in Rogers Park, my downstairs neighbors, a family of European immigrants whom I met on my way out to swim, warned me that a boy had drowned by the breakwater not too long ago. I was in my bathing suit when they told me this, holding a towel. And, they told me, another neighbor walking his dog on the beach had recently found a human arm. It was part of the body of a boy who had been killed in gang warfare, and then cut up with a tree saw. The torso was found later, they told me, farther up the shore, but the head was never found.

I went for my swim, avoiding the breakwater and pressing back a new terror of heads with open mouths at the bottom of the lake. When I retold the neighbors’ story to my husband later, he laughed. “A tree saw?” he asked, still laughing.

ON THE FRONTIER

When the Irish immigrant Phillip Rogers built a log cabin nine miles north of the Chicago courthouse in 1834, there were still some small Indian villages there. He built his home on the wooded ridges along the north shore after noticing that this is where the Native Americans wintered.

Rogers built just south of the Northern Indian Boundary Line, which was the result of an 1816 treaty designating safe passage for whites within a twenty-mile-wide tract of land

that ran from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River, a treaty that was rendered meaningless by the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which dictated that all of the land east of the Mississippi would be open to white settlement. The Northern Indian Boundary Line, which was originally an Indian trail, would eventually become Rogers Avenue. And my apartment building would be built on the north corner of Rogers Avenue, just within the former Indian Territory.

During my first weeks in Rogers Park, I was surprised by how often I heard the word pioneer. I heard it first from the white owner of an antiques shop with signs in the windows that read WARNING, YOU ARE BEING WATCHED AND RECORDED. When I stopped off in his shop, he welcomed me to the neighborhood warmly and delivered an introductory speech dense with code. This was a "pioneering neighborhood," he told me, and it needed "more people like you." He and other "people like us" were gradually "lifting it up."

And then there was the neighbor across the street, a white man whom my husband met while I was swimming. He told my husband that he had lived here for twenty years, and asked how we liked it. "Oh, we love it," my husband said. "We've been enjoying Clark Street." The tone of the conversation shifted with the mention of Clark Street, our closest shopping street, which is lined with taquerias and Mexican groceries. "Well," the man said, in obvious disapproval, "we're pioneers here."

The word pioneer betrays a disturbing willingness to repeat the worst mistake of the pioneers of the American West—the mistake of considering an inhabited place uninhabited. To imagine oneself as a pioneer in a place as densely populated as Chicago is either to deny the existence of your neighbors or to cast them as natives who must be displaced. Either way, it is a hostile fantasy.

My landlord, who grew up in this apartment building, the building his grandfather built, is a tattooed Harley-riding man who fought in Vietnam and has a string of plastic skulls decorating the entrance to his apartment. When I ask him about the history of this neighborhood he speaks so evasively that I don't learn anything except that he once felt much safer here than he does now. "We never used to have any of this," he says, gesturing toward the back gate and the newly bricked wall that now protects the courtyard of this building from the alley. "We never even used to lock our doors even—I used to come home from school and let myself in without a key."

For some time, the front door of the little house that Laura's pa built on the prairie was covered with only a quilt, but when Pa built a door, he designed it so that the latch-string could be pulled in at night and no one could enter the house from outside. Pa padlocked the stable as soon as it was built, and then, after some Indians stopped by and asked Ma to give them her cornmeal, Pa padlocked the cupboards in the kitchen.

These padlocks now strike me as quite remarkable, considering that Pa did not even have nails with which to construct the little house, but used wooden pegs instead.

In one scene of Little House, the house is ringed by howling wolves; in another, a roaring prairie fire sweeps around the house; in another a panther screams an eerie scream and the girls are kept inside. And then there are the Indians. The Indians who ride by silently, the Indians who occasionally come to the door of the house and demand food or tobacco, the Indians who are rumored—falsely, as Pa reveals—to have started the prairie fire to drive out the settlers. Toward the end of the book, the Indians hold a "jamboree," singing and chanting all night so that the family cannot sleep. Pa stays up late making bullets, and Laura wakes to see Pa sitting on a chair by the door with his gun across his knees.

This is our inheritance, those of us who imagine ourselves as pioneers. We don't seem to have retained the frugality of the original pioneers, or their resourcefulness, but we have inherited a ring of wolves around a door covered only by a quilt. And we have inherited padlocks on our pantries. That we carry with us a residue of the pioneer experience is my best explanation for the fact that my white neighbors seem to feel besieged in this neighborhood. Because that feeling cannot be explained by anything else that I know to be true about our lives here.

The adult characters in Little House, all of them except for Pa, are fond of saying, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian." And for this reason some people don't want their children reading the book. It may be true that Little House is not, after all, a children's book, but it is a book that does not fail to interrogate racism. And although Laura is guilty of fearing the Indians, she is among the chief interrogators:

"Why don't you like Indians, Ma?" Laura asked, and she caught a drip of molasses with her tongue.

"I just don't like them; and don't lick your fingers, Laura," said Ma.

"This is Indian country, isn't it?" Laura said. "What did we come to their country for, if you don't like them?"

With the benefit of sixty years of hindsight, Laura Ingalls Wilder knew, by the time she wrote Little House, that the pioneers who had so feared Native Americans had been afraid of a people whom they were in the process of nearly exterminating. And so as a writer she took care, for instance, to point out that the ribs of the Indians were showing, a reminder that they came, frighteningly, into the house for food not because they were thieves but because they were starving. They were starving because the pioneers were killing all their game. If anyone had a claim on fear, on terror, in the American frontier, it

was obviously the Indians, who could not legally own or buy the land they lived on, and so were gradually being driven out of their lives.

Near the very end of Little House, after the nights of whooping and chanting that had been terrifying the Ingalls family, and after many repetitions of the phrase "the only good Indian is a dead Indian," Pa meets an Indian in the woods, the first Indian he has met who speaks English, and he learns from him that the tall Indian who recently came into the house and ate some food and smoked silently with Pa has saved their lives. Several tribes came together for a conference and decided to kill the settlers, but this tall Indian refused, thus destroying a federation of tribes and saving the settlers. On reporting the news to his family, Pa declares, "That's one good Indian."

This turn of events has the advantage of offering a lesson and also of being a fairly accurate account of what took place in Kansas in 1869. Because Laura Ingalls Wilder was actually only a toddler during the time her family lived in Kansas, she did quite a bit of research for Little House, traveling back to Kansas with her daughter and writing to historians, in the process discovering the story of the tall Indian, Soldat du Chene. And so Wilder, the writer and the researcher, knows that the land the Ingalls have made their home on in Little House is part of the Osage Diminished Reserve. It is unclear whether Pa knows this, but it is clear that he knows he is in Indian Territory. He goes into Indian Territory on speculation, because he has heard that the government is about to open it up to settlers. At the end of the book, he gets word from his neighbors that the government has decided to uphold its treaty with the Indians, and soldiers will be coming to move the settlers off the land.

"If some blasted politicians in Washington hadn't sent out word it would be all right to settle here, I'd never have been three miles over the line into Indian Territory," Pa admits, in a rare moment of anger and frustration. "But I'll not wait for the soldiers to take us out. We're going now!"

The Ingalls family did indeed leave their home in Kansas under these circumstances. But the possibility the book suggests, by ending where it does, is that the settlers left Indian Territory to the Indians. "It's a great country, Caroline," Pa says, as they ride off in their covered wagon. "But there will be wild Indians and wolves here for many a long day." This is how it could have been, Laura Ingalls Wilder seems to be proposing. The government could have enforced a fair policy. The settlers could have left and stayed away. But, as it happened, the government revoked its treaty with the Plains tribes within what one historian estimates was a few weeks after the Ingalls family abandoned their house in Kansas.

Laura Ingalls Wilder does not tell us this. She tells us, instead, that Pa digs up the potatoes he just planted and they eat them for dinner. The next day they get back into

their covered wagon, leaving the plow in the field and leaving their new glass windows, leaving their house and their stable, and leaving the crop they have just planted. This is the end of the book, and this, I believe, is the moral of the story.

ON THE LAKE

Leaving my apartment one morning, I found a piece of paper on the sidewalk that read, "Help! We have no hot water." This message was printed in pink ink above an address that I recognized as nearby, but farther inland from the lake. The paper was carried by the wind to the water's edge, I imagined, as a reminder of the everyday inconveniences, the absent landlords and the delayed buses and the check-cashing fees, of the world beyond.

"Everyone who lives in a neighborhood belongs to it, is part of it," Geoff Dyer writes in Out of Sheer Rage. "The only way to opt out of a neighborhood is to move out…." But this does not seem to hold true of the thin sliver of Rogers Park bordering the lake, which many of our white neighbors drive in and out of without ever touching the rest of the neighborhood. They do not walk down Howard to the train station, do not visit the corner store for milk or beer, do not buy vegetables in the little markets, do not, as one neighbor admitted to me, even park farther inland than one block from the lake, no matter how long it takes to find a spot.

Between my apartment building and the lake there is a small park with a stony beach and some cracked tennis courts where people like to let their dogs run loose. In the winter, the only people in the park are people with dogs, people who stand in the tennis courts holding bags of shit while their dogs run around in circles and sniff each other. In the summer, the park fills with people. Spanish-speaking families make picnics on the grass and Indian families have games of cricket and fathers dip their babies in the lake and groups of black teenagers sit on the benches and young men play volleyball in great clouds of dust until dusk. "The warm weather," my landlord observed to me not long after I moved in, "brings out the riffraff."

When my landlord said this, I was standing on the sidewalk in front of our building in my bathing suit, still dripping from the lake, and a boy leaving the park asked if I had a quarter. I laughed and told the boy that I don't typically carry change in my bathing suit, but he remained blank-faced, as uninterested as a toll collector. His request, I suspect, had very little to do with any money I may have had, or any money he may have needed. The exchange was intended to be, like so many of my exchanges with my neighbors, a ritual offering. When I walk from my apartment to the train I am asked for money by all variety of people—old men and young boys and women with babies. Their manner of request is always different, but they are always black and I am always white. Sometimes I give money and sometimes I do not, but I do not feel good about it either way, and the transaction never fails to be complicated. I do not know whether my neighbors believe,

like I do, that I am paying paltry reparations, but I understand that the quarters and dollars I am asked for are a kind of tax on my presence here. A tax that, although I resent it, is more than fair.

One day in the late summer after we moved to Rogers Park, my husband came home from the fruit market with a bag of tomatoes and a large watermelon he had carried the half mile from the market to our house, stopping once to let some children feel how heavy it was. He was flushed from the sun and as he split the melon, still warm, my husband mused, "I hope more white people don't move here." My husband isn't prone to sentimentality of any kind, or to worrying about white people, so I asked him why and he said, "Because kids were playing basketball by the school, and they had cheerleaders cheering them on, and black men say hello to me on the street, and I love our little fruit market, and I don't want this place to change."

But this place probably will change, if only because this is not a city where integrated neighborhoods last very long. And we are the people for whom the new coffee shop has opened. And the pet grooming store. "You know your neighborhood is gentrifying," my sister observes, "when the pet grooming store arrives." Gentrification is a word that agitates my husband. It bothers him because he thinks that the people who tend to use the word negatively, white artists and academics, people like me, are exactly the people who benefit from the process of gentrification. "I think you should define the word gentrification," my husband tells me now. I ask him what he would say it means and he pauses for a long moment. "It means that an area is generally improved," he says finally, "but in such a way that everything worthwhile about it is destroyed."

My dictionary defines gentrification as meaning "to renovate or improve (esp. a house or district) so that it conforms to middle-class taste." There is definitely the sense among the middle-class people in this neighborhood that they are improving the place. New condos fly banners that read luxury! The coffee shop and pet grooming store have been billed as a "revitalization." And if some people lose their neighborhood in the process, there is bound to be someone like Mrs. Scott of Little House who will say, "Land knows, they'd never do anything with this country themselves. All they do is roam around over it like wild animals. Treaties or no treaties, the land belongs to folk that'll farm it. That's only common sense and justice."

Meanwhile, when I walk home from the train station at night, I watch unmarked cars pull up in front of black teenagers who are patted down quickly and wordlessly. Some of the teenagers, my husband observes, carry their IDs in clear cases hanging from their belts for easy access. One evening, I watch the police interrogate two boys who have set a large bottle of Tide down on the sidewalk next to them, and I cannot forget this detail, the bottle of Tide, and the mundane tasks of living that it evokes. I consider going to one

of the monthly beat meetings the police hold for each neighborhood and making some kind of complaint, but month after month I do not go.

Walking down Clark Street, I pass a poster on an empty storefront inviting entrepreneurs to start businesses in Rogers Park, "Chicago's most diverse neighborhood."

It takes me some time, standing in front of this poster, to understand why the word diverse strikes me as so false in this context, so disingenuous. It is not because this neighborhood is not full of many different kinds of people, but because that word implies some easy version of this difficult reality, some version that is not full of sparks and averted eyes and police cars. But still, I'd like to believe in the promise of that word. Not the sun-shininess of it, or the quota-making politics of it, but the real complexity of it.

ON THE COAST

There are three of us here on the beach, with Lake Michigan stretching out in front of us. We are strangers, but we have the kind of intimacy that can exist between people who are lying on the same deserted beach. Aisha, a young black woman, sits on one side of me, and Andre, a middle-aged Polish immigrant, sits on the other.

We bury our feet in the sand and talk of the places we have lived. Aisha is from Chicago, and she has never, in her twenty-one years, lived anywhere else. Andre left Poland when he was seventeen, looking for more opportunities. Now, he says, he isn't entirely sure that he didn't make a mistake. We all fall silent after this confession.

This beach is a kind of no-man's-land. To the south are the last city blocks of Chicago, where the beaches are free but rocky and plagued with chunks of concrete. To the north are the first city blocks of Evanston, where the beaches are expansive and sandy but require a fee of seven dollars. To the west, beyond the wall of rocks directly behind us, is the cemetery that separates Chicago from Evanston, and a sign that forbids entry to this stretch of beach. To the east is an endless prairie of water.

When I mention that yesterday a lifeguard from Evanston came down in a boat while I was swimming and informed me that it was illegal to be here and that I had to leave because this land belongs to Evanston, Aisha rolls her eyes and says, gesturing back toward the cemetery, "This land belongs to the dead people." Andre, the immigrant, the pioneer, looks out across the water and says, "This land belongs to God."

Eula Biss is the author of The Balloonists. She teaches nonfiction writing at Northwestern University and is coeditor of Essay Press. "No-Man's-Land" will be included in a collection of her essays forthcoming from Graywolf Press in 2009.

Soldiers / Depression / Suicide

War & Military Mental Health
The US Psychiatric Response in the 20th Century
By Hans Pols, PhD and Stephanie Oak, BMed, FRANZCP
Source: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2089086/

[Dramaturg's Note: This is a very long article that chronicles mental health and U.S. soldiers over several wars in the 20th and century. The excerpts below are most closely related to our script, but please go to the web link for the entire article.]

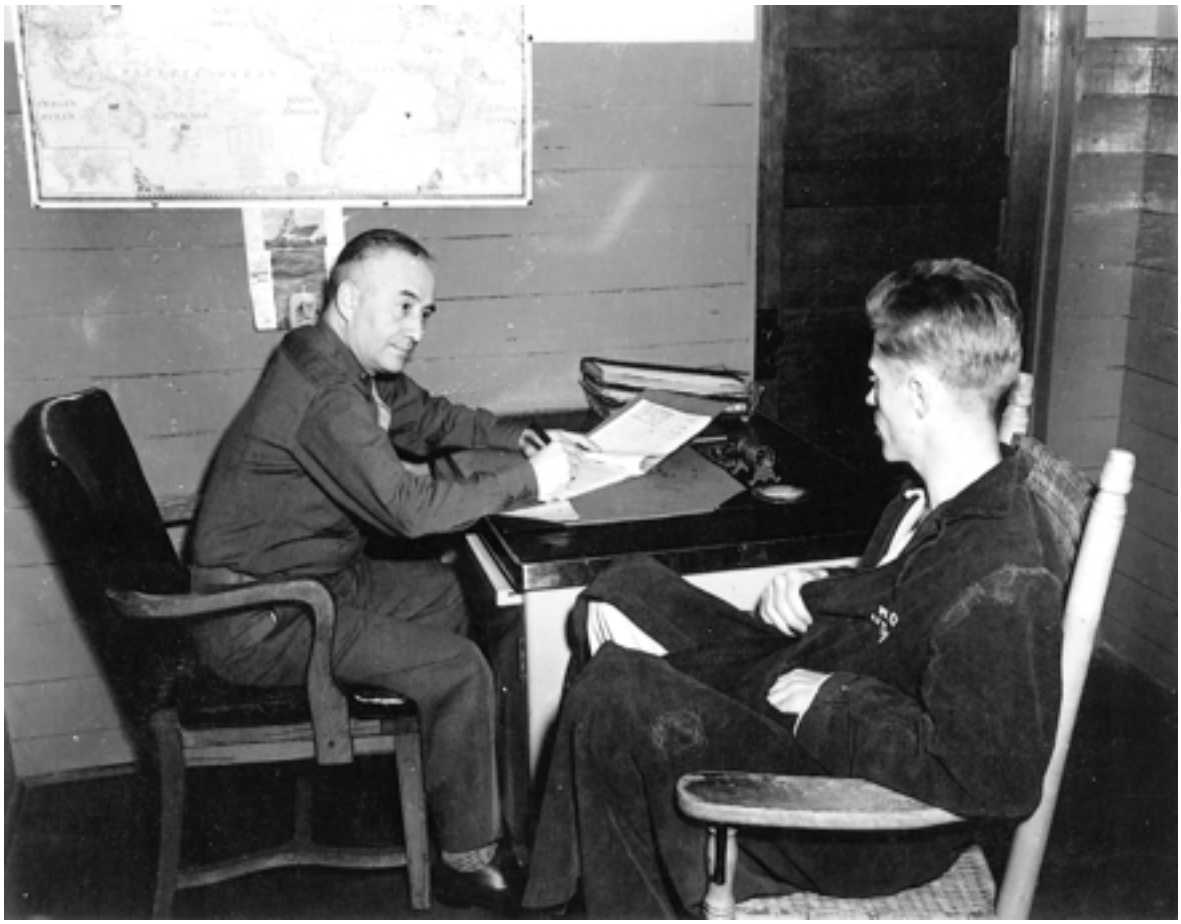
Early Intervention in Korea and Vietnam
In the initial phase of the Korean War, military officials reported very high rates of neuropsychiatric casualties (250 per 1000 per year).41 Because of the nature of the conflict, characterized by quickly shifting front lines and widely dispersed battle fields, it was difficult to implement programs of forward psychiatry. After the determined implementation of these programs, however, more than 80% of neuropsychiatric victims returned to battle. From the inception of the Vietnam War, extensive and well-equipped psychiatric services were available to treat mentally distressed soldiers. During that conflict, the incidence of combat stress was reported to be very low (less than 5% of all medical cases). On the recommendation of military psychiatrists during World War II, Vietnam War soldiers had a tour of duty limited to 1 year and frequent periods of rest and relaxation. Military psychiatrists believed that both factors decreased the incidence of mental breakdown.

Since the Vietnam War, mental health teams have become an integral part of the fighting forces. On the basis of the experience of military psychiatrists of previous wars, the US armed forces have implemented extensive strategies to target combat stress, in line with the belief that all service personnel are potential stress casualties. "Combat stress control teams" staffed by specialist mental health professionals are responsible for prevention, triage, and short-term treatment with the purpose of retaining manpower and maintaining operational efficiency. These teams provide a range of services, including conducting surveys of the interpersonal climate within units, educating unit command, providing briefings on suicide prevention and reintegration advice for returning home, and providing informal support to soldiers. Critical incident stress debriefing (specialist intervention as soon as possible after potentially traumatic events) has also been enthusiastically incorporated by modern stress control teams, which are deployed after natural disasters or terrorist action. Unfortunately, research has not adequately supported approaches with a focus on frontline intervention. Recent critical reviews have shown that critical incident stress debriefing does not decrease the development of symptoms and that, in some cases, it exacerbates them.

MAJOR THEMES IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Treatment After World War II

After World War II, most psychiatrists considered aiding returning soldiers to integrate into society primarily a job for families and the local community. The benefits of the GI Bill of Rights (the Servicemen's Readjustment Act), which included funding for higher education and easier access to mortgages, aided many veterans. In addition, the booming postwar economy provided full employment. As psychiatrists later theorized explicitly, the development of psychiatric problems after wars could be counteracted by the presence of an understanding and supportive community, a perceived appreciation of the service that had been rendered, and above all, employment and the perception of social support.



A soldier relieves tensions during a psychiatric interview.
Source. US National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

In 1945, Gen Omar N. Bradley, who was greatly respected among soldiers and veterans, was appointed as the head of the Veterans Administration. Bradley hired Paul Hawley, the chief surgeon of the European Theater of Operations, to direct the Division of Medicine. Hawley hired more than 4000 physicians and initiated an extensive hospital-

building program. Under the policies of Hawley and Bradley, new Veterans Administration hospitals were established in affiliation with medical schools, guaranteeing that the best medical services would be provided to veterans. The Veterans Administration system also encouraged clinical psychologists to become psychotherapists and provided a large number of training positions. In June 1947, a little less than half a million patients with neuropsychiatric disabilities received pensions from the Veterans Administration, and approximately 50000 of these were treated in Veterans Administration hospitals. Many of these suffered from chronic conditions that did not respond well to treatment.

Korean War Educator – Post-Traumatic Stress
Source: http://www.koreanwar-educator.org/topics/health_issues/p_health_issues_ptsd.htm

[Dramaturg's Note: This is also a very long article. I recommend the whole read, accessed at the web page above. The excerpt below details symptoms and signs of PTSD, specific to a study of Vietnam Veterans.]

The Symptoms Of PTSD:

Chronic and/or Delayed Depression
The vast majority of the Vietnam combat veterans I have interviewed are depressed. Many have been continually depressed since their experiences in Vietnam. They have the classic symptoms (DSM III, 1980) of sleep disturbance, psychomotor retardation, feelings of worthlessness, difficulty in concentrating, etc. Many of these veterans have weapons in their possession, and they are no strangers to death. In treatment, it is especially important to find out if the veteran keeps a weapon in close proximity, because the possibility of suicide is always present.

When recalling various combat episodes during an interview, the veteran with a post-traumatic stress disorder almost invariably cries. He usually has had one or more episodes in which one of his buddies was killed. When asked how he handled these death when in Vietnam, he will often answer, "in the shortest amount of time possible" (Howard, 1975). Due to circumstances of war, extended grieving on the battlefield is very unproductive and could become a liability. Hence, grief was handled as quickly as possible, allowing little or no time for the grieving process. Many men reported feeling numb when this happened. When asked how they are now dealing with the deaths of their buddies in Vietnam, they invariable answer that they are not. They feel depressed; "How can I tell my wife, she'd never understand?" they ask. "How can anyone who hasn't been there understand?" (Howard, 1975).

Accompanying the depression is a very well developed sense of helplessness about one's condition. Vietnam-style combat held no final resolution of conflict for anyone. Regardless of how one might respond, the overall outcome seemed to be just an endless production of casualties with no perceivable goals attained. Regardless of how well one worked, sweated, bled and even died, the outcome was the same. Our GIs gained no ground; they were constantly rocketed or mortared. They found little support from their "friends and neighbors" back home, the people in whose name so many were drafted into military service. They felt helpless. They returned to the United States, trying to put together some positive resolution of this episode in their lives, but the atmosphere at home was hopeless. They were still helpless. Why even bother anymore? Many veterans report becoming extremely isolated when they are especially depressed. Substance abuse is often exaggerated during depressive periods. Self medication was an easily learned coping response in Vietnam; alcohol appears to be the drug of choice. Isolation

Combat veterans have few friends. Many veterans who witnessed traumatic experiences complain of feeling like old men in young men's bodies. They feel isolated and distant from their peers. The veterans feel that most of their non-veteran peers would rather not hear what the combat experience was like; therefore, they feel rejected. Much of what many of these veterans had done during the war would seem like horrible crimes to their civilian peers. But, in the reality faced by Vietnam combatants, such actions were frequently the only means of survival.

Many veterans find it difficult to forget the lack of positive support they received from the American public during the war. This was especially brought home to them on the return from the combat zone to the United States. Many were met by screaming crowds and the media calling them "depraved fiends" and "psychopathic killers" (DeFazio, 1978). Many personally confronted hostility from friends and family, as well as strangers. After their return home, some veterans found that the only defense was to search for a safe place. These veterans found themselves crisscrossing the continent, always searching for that place where they might feel accepted. Many veterans cling to the hope that they can move away from their problems. It is not unusual to interview a veteran who, either alone or with his family, has effectively isolated himself from others by repeatedly moving from one geographical location to another. The stress on his family is immense.

The fantasy of living the life of a hermit plays a central role in many veterans' daydreams. Many admit to extended periods of isolation in the mountains, on the road, or just behind a closed door in the city. Some veterans have actually taken a weapon and attempted to live off the land.

It is not rare to find a combat veteran who has not had a social contact with a woman for years -- other than with a prostitute, which is an accepted military procedure in the

combat setting. If the veteran does marry, his wife will often complain about the isolation he imposes on the marital situation. The veteran will often stay in the house and avoid any interactions with others. He also resents any interactions that his spouse may initiate. Many times, the wife is the source of financial stability.

Rage

The veterans' rage is frightening to them and to others around them. For no apparent reason, many will strike out at whomever is near. Frequently, this includes their wives and children. Some of these veterans can be quite violent. This behavior generally frightens the veterans, apparently leading many to question their sanity; they are horrified at their behavior. However, regardless of their afterthoughts, the rage reactions occur with frightening frequency.

Often veterans will recount episodes in which they became inebriated and had fantasies that they were surrounded or confronted by enemy Vietnamese. This can prove to be an especially frightening situation when others confront the veteran forcibly. For many combat veterans, it is once again a life-and- death struggle, a fight for survival.

Some veterans have been able to sublimate their rage, breaking inanimate objects or putting fists through walls. Many of them display bruises and cuts on their hands. Often, when these veterans feel the rage emerging, they will immediately leave the scene before somebody or something gets hurt; subsequently, they drive about aimlessly. Quite often, their behavior behind the wheel reflects their mood. A number of veterans have described to me the verbal catharsis they've achieved in explosions of expletives directed at any other drivers who may wrong them.

There are many reasons for the rage. Military training equated rage with masculine identity in the performance of military duty (Eisenhart, 1975). Whether one was in combat or not, the military experience stirred up more resentment and rage than most had ever felt (Egendorf, 1975). Finally, when combat in Vietnam was experienced, the combatants were often left with wild, violent impulses and no one upon whom to level them. The nature of guerrilla warfare -- with its use of such tactics as booby trap land mines and surprise ambushes with the enemy's quick retreat -- left the combatants feeling like time bombs; the veterans wanted to fight back, but their antagonists had long since disappeared. Often they unleashed their rage at indiscriminate targets for want of more suitable targets (Shatan, 1978).

On return from Vietnam, the rage that had been tapped in combat was displaced against those in authority. It was directed against those the veterans felt were responsible for getting them involved in the war in the first place -- and against those who would not support the veterans while they were in Vietnam or when they returned home (Howard, 1975). Fantasies of retaliation against political leaders, the military

services, the Veterans Administration and antiwar protesters were present in the minds of many of these Vietnam combat veterans. These fantasies are still alive and generalized to many in the present era.

Along with the rage at authority figures from the Vietnam era, these veterans today often feel a generalized mistrust of anyone in authority and the "system" in the present era. Many combat veterans with stress disorders have a long history of constantly changing their jobs. It is not unusual to interview a veteran who has had 30 to 40 jobs during the past 10 years. One veteran I interview had nearly 80 jobs in a 10-year span. The rationale quite often given by the veterans is that they became bored or the work was beneath them. However, after I made some extended searched into their work backgrounds, it became apparent that they felt deep mistrust for their employers and coworkers; they felt used and exploited; at times, such was the case. Many have had some uncomfortable confrontations with their employers and job peers, and many have been fired or have resigned on their own.

Avoidance of Feelings: Alienation

The spouses of many of the veterans I have interviewed complain that the men are cold, uncaring individuals. Indeed the veterans themselves will recount episodes in which they did not feel anything when they witnessed the death of a buddy in combat or the more recent death of a close family relative. They are often somewhat troubled by these responses to tragedy; but, on the whole, they would rather deal with tragedy in their own detached way. What becomes especially problematic for these veterans, however, is an inability to experience the joys of life. They often describe themselves as being emotionally dead (Shatan, 1973).

The evolution of this emotional deadness began for Vietnam veterans when they first entered military boot camp (Shatan, 1973). There they learned that the Vietnamese were not to be labeled as people but as "gooks, dinks, slopes, zipperheads and slants." When the veterans finally arrived in the battle zone, it was much easier to kill a "gook" or "dink" than another human being. This dehumanization gradually generalized to the whole Vietnam experience. The American combatants themselves became "grunts," the Viet Cong became "Victor Charlie," and both groups were either "KIA" (killed in action) or "WIA" (wounded in action). Often, many "slopes" would get "zapped" (killed) by a "Cobra" (gunship), and the "grunts" would retreat by "Shithook" (evacuation by a Chinook helicopter); the jungle would be sown by "Puff the Magic Dragon" (a C-47 gunship with rapid-firing mini-gattling guns).

The pseudonyms served to blunt the anguish and the horror of the reality of combat (DeFazio, 1978). In conjunction with this almost surreal aspect of the fighting, psychic numbing furthered the coping and survival ability of the combatants by effectively knocking the aspect of feelings out of their cognitive abilities (Lifton, 1976). This defense

mechanism of survivors of traumatic experiences dulls an individual's awareness of the death and destruction about him. It is a dynamic survival mechanism, helping one to pass through a period of trauma without becoming caught up in its tendrils. Psychic numbing only becomes nonproductive when the period of trauma is passed, and the individual is still numb to the affect around him.

Many veterans find it extremely uncomfortable to feel love and compassion for others. To do this, they would have to thaw their numb reactions to the death and horror that surrounded them in Vietnam. Some veterans I've interview actually believe that if they once again allow themselves to feel, they may never stop crying or may completely lose control of themselves; what they mean by this is unknown to them. Therefore, many of these veterans go through life with an impaired capacity to love and care for others. they have no feeling of direction or purpose in life. They are not sure why they even exist.

Survival Guilt

When others have died and some have not, the survivors often ask, "How is it that I survived when others more worthy than I did not?" (Lifton, 1973). Survival guilt is an especially guilt- invoking symptom. It is not based on anything hypothetical. Rather, it is based on the harshest of realities, the actual death of comrades and the struggle of the survivor to live. Often the survivor has had to compromise himself or the life of someone else in order to live. The guilt that such an act invokes or guilt over simply surviving may eventually end in self-destructive behavior by the survivor.

Many veterans, who have survived when comrades were lost in surprise ambushes, protracted battles or even normal battlefield attrition, exhibit self-destructive behavior. It is common for them to recount the combat death of someone they held in esteem; and, invariably, the questions comes up, "Why wasn't it me?" It is not unusual for these men to set themselves up for hopeless physical fights with insurmountable odds. "I don't know why, but I always pick the biggest guy," said the veteran in the transcript at the beginning of this chapter. Shatan (1973) notes that some of these men become involved in repeated single-car accidents. This writer interviewed one surviving veteran, whose company suffered over 80% casualties in one ambush. The veteran had had three single-car accidents during the previous week, two the day before he came in for the interview. He was wondering if he were trying to kill himself.

I have also found that those veterans who suffer the most painful survival guilt are primarily those who served as corpsmen or medics. These unfortunate veterans were trained for a few months to render first aid on the actual field of battle. The services they individually performed were heroic. With a bare amount of medical knowledge and large amounts of courage and determination, they saved countless lives. However, many of the men they tried to save died. Many of these casualties were beyond all

medical help, yet many corpsmen and medics suffer extremely painful memories to this day, blaming their "incompetence" for these deaths. Listening to these veterans describe their anguish and torment... seeing the heroin tracks up and down their arms or the bones that have been broken in numerous barroom fights... is, in itself, a very painful experience.

Another less destructive trend that I have noticed exists among a small number of Vietnam combat veterans who have become compulsive blood donors. One very isolated and alienated individual I interviewed actually drives some 80 miles round-trip once every other month to make his donation. His military history reveals that he was one of 13 men out of a 60-man platoon who survived the battle of Hue. He was the only survivor who was not wounded. this veteran and similar vets talk openly about their guilt, and they find some relief today in giving their blood that others may live.

Anxiety Reactions

Many Vietnam veterans describe themselves as very vigilant human beings; their autonomic senses are tuned to anything out of the ordinary. A loud discharge will cause many of them to start. A few will actually take such evasive action as falling to their knees or to the ground. Many veterans become very uncomfortable when people walk closely behind them. One veteran described his discomfort when people drive directly behind him. He would pull off the road, letting others pass, when they got within a few car lengths of him.

Some veterans are uncomfortable when standing out in the open. Many are uneasy when sitting with others behind them, often opting to sit up against something solid, such as a wall. The bigger the object is, the better. Many combat veterans are most comfortable when sitting in the corner in a room, where they can see everyone about them. Needless to say, all of these behaviors are learned survival techniques. If a veteran feels continuously threatened, it is difficult for him to give such behavior up.

A large number of veterans possess weapons. This also is a learned survival technique. Many still sleep with weapons in easy reach. The uneasy feeling of being caught asleep is apparently very difficult to master once having left the combat zone.

Sleep Disturbance and Nightmares

Few veterans struggling with post-traumatic stress disorders find the hours immediately before sleep very comfortable. In fact, many will stay awake as long as possible. They will often have a drink or smoke some cannabis to dull any uncomfortable cognition that may enter during this vulnerable time period. Many report that they have nothing to occupy their minds at the end of the day's activities, and their thoughts wander. For many of them, it is a trip back to the battle zone. Very often they will watch TV late into the mornings.

Finally, with sleep, many veterans report having dreams about being shot at or being pursued and left with an empty weapon,, unable to run anymore. Recurrent dreams of specific traumatic episodes are frequently reported. It is not unusual for a veteran to reexperience, night after night, the death of a close friend or a death that he caused as a combatant. Dreams of everyday, common experiences in Vietnam are also frequently reported. For many, just the fear that they might actually be back in Vietnam is very disquieting.

Some veterans report being unable to remember their specific dreams, yet they feel dread about them. Wives and partners report that the men sleep fitfully, and some call out in agitation. A very few actually grab their partners and attempt to do them harm before they have fully awakened. Finally, maintaining sleep has proven to be a problem for many of these veterans. They report waking up often during the night for no apparent reason. Many rise quite early in the morning, still feeling very tired.

Intrusive Thoughts
Traumatic memories of the battlefield and other less affect- laden combat experiences often play a role in the daytime cognitions of combat veterans. Frequently, these veterans report replaying especially problematic combat experiences over and over again. Many search for possible alternative outcomes to what actually happened in Vietnam. Many castigate themselves for what they might have done to change the situation, suffering subsequent guilt feelings today because they were unable to do so in combat. The vast majority report that these thoughts are very uncomfortable, yet they are unable to put them to rest.

Many of the obsessive episodes are triggered by common, everyday experiences that remind the veteran of the war zone: helicopters flying overhead, the smell of urine (corpses have no muscle tone, and the bladder evacuates at the moment of death), the smell of diesel fuel (the commodes and latrines contained diesel fuel and were burned when filled with human excrement), green tree lines (these were searched for any irregularity which often meant the presence of enemy movement), the sound of popcorn popping (the sound is very close to that of small arms gunfire in the distance), any loud discharge, a rainy day (it rains for months during the monsoons in Vietnam) and finally the sight of Vietnamese refugees.

A few combat veterans find the memories invoked by some of these and other stimuli so uncomfortable that they will actually go out of their way to avoid them. When exposed to one of the above or similar stimuli, a very small number of combat veterans undergo a short period of time in a dissociative-like state in which they actually re-experience past events in Vietnam. These flashbacks can last anywhere from a few seconds to a few hours. One veteran described an episode to me in which he had seen some armed men and felt he was back in Vietnam. The armed men were police officers.

Not having a weapon to protect himself and others, he grabbed a passerby and forcefully sheltered this person in his home to protect him from what he felt were the "gooks." He was medicated and hospitalized for a week.

Such experiences among Vietnam veterans are rare, but not as uncommon as many may believe. Many veterans report flashback episodes that last only a few seconds. For many, the sound of a helicopter flying overhead is a cue to forget reality for a few seconds and remember Vietnam, re-experiencing feelings they had there. It is especially troublesome for those veterans who are still "numb" and specifically attempting to avoid these feelings. For others, it is just a constant reminder of their time in Vietnam, something they will never forget.

Clybourne Park References

Chafing dish – Act I, p. 8
A dish with a cover used for keeping food warm on a buffet. Chafing dishes are usually made of silver, and used for entertaining and large parties, and thus are generally associated with the upper class.

Neapolitan – Act I, p. 8
Ice cream that is part chocolate, part vanilla, part strawberry. Presumed to have originated in Naples and introduced in the U.S. in the 1870s.

Mongoloid – Act I, p. 10
An outdated term formerly used by anthropologists to refer to traits associated with various east and central Asian populations (ie. Mongols). Also, an offensive term for someone affected with Down Syndrome.

Ulan Bator – Act I, p. 11
It is, indeed, the capital and largest city in Mongolia.

Lewis and Coker's – Act I, p. 11
A grocery store chain.

Rotary – Act I, p. 11
An international service group, divided into clubs by city, municipality or town. Members are known as rotarians and meet on a weekly basis over a meal — which serves as a social event as well as a planning/organizational meeting.

Spinet piano – Act I, p. 13
A small piano. These were manufactured starting in the 1930s to make pianos smaller and cheaper during the Great Depression.

Truss – Act I, p. 16
A surgical appliance used for hernia patients to provide support to the herniated area. Usually a pad held in position by a belt. Not terribly effective.

Hinterland – Act I, p. 17
A region remote from urban or metropolitan areas.

Sominex Act I, p. 21
An over-the-counter anti-histamine, often used as a non-prescription sleep aid.

PROTOCOL FOR *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Absconded – Act I, p. 25
To leave hurriedly or secretly, generally to avoid detection.

Usurp – Act I, p. 26
To take a position of power illegally or by force.

Red Chinese – Act I, p. 29
Refers to communist China. As a communist power during the Cold War, China was seen as a threat to the American way of life. Because of China's support of North Korea in the Korean War (1950-1953), Sino-American relations were especially tense during the 1950s.

Ad infinitum – Act I, p. 31
Literally "to infinity." Forever.

Lutefisk – Act I, p. 32
A gelatinous Nordic dish made of whitefish and lye. Often eaten in the Midwest US on celebratory occasions by those of Nordic descent.

Receivership – Act I, p. 34
When the (tangible or intangible) property of one person is placed in the custody of another person for security and management.

Indemnify – Act I, p. 34
To compensate for loss or damage (especially of property).

Acrimonious – Act I, p. 38
Angry, bitter.

Ubangi – Act I, p. 39
A woman of the Sara tribe in the Central African Republic. Known for having their lips pierced and stretched around a flat wooden disk.

Crape myrtle – Act I, p. 42
One of several species of flowering evergreen trees, generally with pink or red flowers.
Crape myrtles are generally very hardy and resistant to drought once grown, but as they require a lot of sunlight are most often found in the South, and may have trouble staying alive in colder climates.

PROTOCOL FOR *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Frontage – Act II, p. 43
The length of a plot of land or a building, measured along the road onto which the front of the building faces.

Easement – Act II, p. 44
The right of a landowner to use the property of another without possessing it (eg., to cross over it in order to reach his own property).

Sagrada Familia – Act II, p. 47
The Basilica i Temple Espiatori de la Sagrada Familia, or the Church of the Holy Family. An incomplete church in Barcelona designed by Antoni Gaudi (1852-1926). Known as "the most personal interpretation of Gothic architecture since the Middle Ages." Reception to the building is polarized, with many people finding its strange design whimsical and spiritual, and others finding it hideous and in bad taste.
As of 2010, was halfway complete and is expected to be completed in 2026.

Paella – Act II, p. 47
A Valencian rice dish, usually including white rice, vegetables, meat, and seasonings like saffron.

Rabat – Act II, p. 49
The capital and third largest city of Morocco.

Blarney – Act II, p. 51
A town in Ireland, just northwest of Cork. Home to Blarney Castle and the Blarney Stone. Also can mean deceptive or misleading talk, nonsense, or to flatter or wheedle.
Fun fact: it is said that kissing the Blarney Stone will give one the "Gift of the Gab," or skill at flattery and persuasion. Realistically, local boys will often pee on the stone.

Conduit line – Act II, p. 52
A line for carrying electric current in a channel underground.

Koi Pond – Act II, p. 55
Small ponds, often part of a landscape, built to hold small koi fish.

Rosemont – Act II, p. 61
A village in Cook County located northwest of Chicago and immediately beside it. It is sandwiched between Chicago and O'Hare International Airport.

Risible – Act II, p. 63
Laughable, funny.

PROTOCOL FOR *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Asperger's Syndrome – Act II, p. 65
A disorder on the autism spectrum. Characterized by significant difficulties in social interaction and a restricted or repetitive pattern of interests and behaviors.

Asinine – Act II, p. 73
Stupid or foolish.

De Tocqueville – Act II, p. 74
Well known 19th century French political philosopher who wrote heavily on the government of America. Representative of the classical liberal political tradition.
In re: "The history of America is the history of private property" — Tocqueville agreed with many other political philosophers on the idea that the balance of private property determined the balance of power. He noted that "in no other country in the world is the love of property keener or more alert than in the United States," and that common men of America seemed to show an unusual level of dignity and hard work that allowed for more equitable property holdings than in Europe, etc. However, he also believed that equitable property holdings did not ensure the rule of the best men, and often did the opposite.

Myopia – Act II, p. 77
Shortsightedness. The inability to see or focus distant objects.

Egregious – Act II, p. 80
Extraordinarily bad; flagrant.

Ingratiate – Act II, p. 82
To flatter or otherwise deliberately bring oneself into favor.

Tertiary – Act II, p. 82
Third.

Transistor radio – Act II, p. 83
A small portable radio receiver, popular from its invention in 1954 until the inventions of boomboxes, etc. in the 1970s.

OTHER PRODUCTIONS – REVIEWS & CRITICISM

Clybourne Park

Bruce Norris condemns use of blackface for 'Clybourne Park'
October 17, 2012|By David Ng
The LA Times
Source: http://articles.latimes.com/2012/oct/17/entertainment/la-et-cm-bruce-norris-condemns-blackface-production-of-clybourne-park-20121017

Bruce Norris, the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright of "Clybourne Park," has published a letter condemning a production of the drama that had been planned for a theater company in Berlin. The writer said he withdrew rights to the production after learning that the staging would feature a white actor wearing makeup for the role of an African American character.

The German-language production had been planned for earlier this year at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin.

This week, Norris sent a lengthy letter to members of the Dramatists Guild in which he outlined the events leading up to the cancellation of the production. In the letter, he condemned the still-current use of blackface in German theater, advising other playwrights to "to boycott productions of your own work by German theatres that continue this asinine tradition."

Norris wrote that leaders of the Deutches Theater informed him that one of the female African American characters in the play would be performed by a white actress.

He wrote that "after much evasion, justification and rationalizing of their reasons, they finally informed me that the color of the actress's skin would ultimately be irrelevant, since they intended to 'experiment with makeup.' At this point, I retracted the rights to the production."

A petition has been started to halt the use of blackface in German theaters.

"Clybourne Park" has been produced at Playwrights Horizons in New York, the Mark Taper Forum in L.A. and on Broadway at the Walter Kerr Theatre. The play is a sequel of sorts to Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun" and deals with issues of race and gentrification.

It won the Tony Award for best play earlier this year.

Perspective: The divergence of 'Clybourne Park,' 'A Raisin in the Sun'
Bruce Norris' play revisits 'Raisin's' neighborhood, but the state of African Americans is unfortunately left out of the conversation.
By Erin Aubry Kaplan, Special to the Los Angeles Times
February 5, 2012
Source: http://articles.latimes.com/2012/feb/05/entertainment/la-ca-raisin-clybourne-20120205

In the program for "Clybourne Park," Bruce Norris' Pulitzer Prize-winning drama at the Mark Taper Forum, Center Theatre Group artistic director Michael Ritchie lauds the play and "A Raisin in the Sun," the 1959 classic that inspired it and is running in revival across town at the Kirk Douglas.

Ritchie goes on to say that they have equally potent things to say about race in America and that both shows offer people "a lens through which they can talk about race." He concludes by hoping that "we as a community can use [the plays] as a stepping-off point for further reflection and conversation."

I certainly hope Ritchie is right. But his talk about generating more talk sharply reminded me that when it comes to race matters these days, conversation tends to be as far as we get. In the 50 years that separate these shows, the hydra-headed issues of racial injustice — starting with where we live — have gone from being catalysts for action and confrontation to being all about words. In life and in art, we have steadily moved from mining racial anger to simply managing it.

Where the dramatic urgency of "Raisin" and the first act of "Clybourne" is driven by blacks and whites fighting to do the right (or wrong) thing in 1959, by 2009 the crises of action have been replaced by a comedy of manners. The issue is no longer what we should do but what we should say and how we should say it; those potent racial issues Ritchie mentions in his welcome to the Taper audience have become a battle of intellect and posture, not a battle for the country's soul.

This is no criticism of "Clybourne Park," which brilliantly exposes the earnest but erroneous belief among many whites — notably liberals — that talking about racial equality is somehow proof that we have achieved it. Norris' play makes that point in two contrasting acts. The first act picks up exactly where "Raisin" left off, albeit in the tidy living room of a home in the all-white Clybourne Park neighborhood, the home that a middle-aged couple unwittingly sold to the Youngers, much to the consternation of their neighbors. The second act is set in the same living room 50 years later, but this time it's whites who are seeking to move into (and remake) a chiefly black community that struggles as much as the original white one hummed along.

That whites fail to recognize the implications of what's happened between then and now is a reality that deserves full theatrical treatment. But I have to say, it's a reality that distresses me as an African American in 2012.

America long ago retired its Negro problem and now limits its social responsibility to maintaining civility and a sophisticated kind of tolerance toward blacks and black issues. Such is the extent of the integration that the Youngers believed in so deeply but couldn't really imagine in 1959. Integration then was the great unknown, a prospect that was terrifying but necessary — what other step forward could they take?

Today, we are post-integration (as opposed to post-racial) and like to assume that the most harrowing times and thorniest issues are behind us, despite evidence and statistics that say otherwise. Incarceration of blacks is at an all-time high, black unemployment is the highest in the country and climbing. One of the many paradoxes illuminated by "Clybourne Park" is that while blacks now are certainly more present among whites — in the second act they sit around the same Clybourne Park living room as neighbors, not as the help — they remain symbols. The racism of the larger society that forged the memorable, exquisitely tortured Walter Lee Younger and that still affects the lives of Lena and Kevin generations later is absent from the stage. The overall state of African Americans is no longer a major character in its own right. Lorraine Hansberry would have been floored.

In some ways these shows are entirely unrelated. The cachet of "Raisin in the Sun" in 1959 was its POV. Hansberry was young, black, female and middle class — an almost inconceivable demographic at the time — who was writing as the civil rights movement was getting seriously underway. Blacks speaking in their own voice, dropping the mask of stoicism and forbearance to reveal the rage and frustration underneath was radical in more ways than one.

Playwright Bruce Norris is white and came of age after the '60s; "Clybourne" focuses not on blacks but on unmasking whites and their own hypocrisies and pieties about race that have developed over the decades since. Both these artists' perspectives are valid, but they don't really converge in ways that we expect — or that we hope — they would. But then, why would they? Modern race relations are defined by a lack of that convergence.

The last real opportunity for blacks and whites to come together occurs in Act 1 in "Clybourne," when Karl Lindner heatedly tries and fails to persuade his neighbors not to sell to the Youngers. The sale sets in motion the white flight and declining property values that Lindner predicted — well, ensured — would happen. Black re-isolation and community deterioration sets in, and by 2009 whites are back on the scene to remake the place and "improve" what they consciously destroyed by pulling out 50 years earlier.

This is the troubling but anticlimactic history that blacks have lived with and that whites want to forget, or at least render themselves blameless for. And never the twain shall meet.

Meanwhile, blacks continue to endure it all. In both acts and time periods of "Clybourne," Francine/Lena and Albert/Kevin are essentially the same people, constrained by the same anger and social forces; their characters don't appreciably change because the role of blacks in society hasn't. In 2009 it is still their job to make whites (and everyone else, including other blacks) see the error of their ways; it is still where much of their psychic energy goes. Lena and Kevin are more vocal with whites than their forebears, but there's a real sense of battle fatigue made worse by the strange nature of progress. Integration has been thwarted and black life has declined in once-idyllic Clybourne Park, but Lena and Kevin want to claim that history and honor it somehow. They resent the whites' sense of being entitled to change that history as they see fit, a sense of entitlement that's been unbroken for 50 years.

When Albert says to an insistent Bev in Act 1, "We don't want your things, we got our own things,'' it presages the moment 50 years later when white families assume that of course blacks want the benefit of their presence — their "things." But the painful and still relevant truth is that Walter Lee is driven nearly mad in "Raisin" by the lack of all the white folks' things he doesn't have — not just material things like chafing dishes but intangible things such as self-respect, a bright outlook, a lack of worry. In a word, freedom. It is this nearly doomed pursuit that makes the black man such a force in "Raisin." Walter Lee's fury radiates in all directions — to his wife, mother, sister, society, white folk, black folk, and of course, to himself. He's an antihero of Greek-tragedy proportions, endangered even more than he knows. He must be saved, and if he isn't, there are clear consequences for him and for the world at large. That's Hansberry's message.

In Norris' drama, the modern black man is the least interesting figure, a fixed point around which the white characters group and reveal themselves in various ways. The black woman is more animated but similarly fixed: tight-lipped, always tensed for a fight with white folk. Lena is angry that the dream of a successful black neighborhood is still deferred, and the anger grates on her just as it did on her great- aunt for whom she was named. Yet there is nothing she or Kevin can do — except talk. Some things don't change.

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In Chicago's 'Clybourne Park,' everything and nothing seem to change
Chris Jones – Theater critic
Chicago Tribune – September 19, 2011
Source: http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2011-09-19/entertainment/ct-ent-0919-clybourne-review-20110919_1_clybourne-park-steppenwolf-theatre-bruce-norris

If you question whether the discussion of Chicago's racist history can still cause shivers among modern-day Chicago theatergoers, you need only watch what happens at the Steppenwolf Theatre in the first act of Bruce Norris' searing play "Clybourne Park." Quite often there are moments in theater when an audience, suddenly brought to attention, falls quiet. But the silence that suddenly descends at Steppenwolf when a white seller of a house in 1959 asks the simple question, "Well what sort of people are they?" is something else entirely. It is the silence that comes only with fear and recognition.

You hear sharp intakes of breath, see a few heads spin around to discreetly check the racial composition of the audience, and then there's a kind of palpable dread of what's coming, even though the tawdry history of race, real-estate and Chicago — the stories of "turned neighborhoods," violence, expressways constructed as lines of racial demarcation, rapid flights to Glen this or Elm that — has been amply recounted in numerous volumes.

We're still less than a single lifespan removed from the issues that the late Lorraine Hansberry wrote of in 1959 with her seminal Chicago drama "A Raisin in the Sun." When revealed, or re-revealed, with the skill that Norris re-reveals them in "Clybourne Park" — both a riff on and a chronological expansion of "Raisin" — they still are raw. Superficially, the dilemma of the Youngers, a black family that wants nothing more than the right to live where it wants to live, has been solved. The Youngers could probably do that now. But you only have to drive down one of the streets around Steppenwolf, one of the streets that, strangely, does not go through, to see how little, as well as how much, has changed.

Even through Steppenwolf has premiered almost all of Norris' work — he would not have a career as a writer without this theater — "Clybourne Park," which won this year's Pulitzer Prize in drama, arrives belatedly in Chicago (it opened Sunday night under Amy Morton's restrained and carefully wrought direction, and featured unstinting performances from John Judd and Karen Aldridge) with a past in New York and London, and a formidable advance reputation. Another, separate production is headed to Broadway later this season. "Clybourne Park" is everywhere, but, mark, nowhere else is it playing within a few steps of Clybourne Avenue. The aspirational white neighborhood in "Raisin" was fictional; but that one word, "Clybourne," was a pretty good indication of the locale in Hansberry's mind. And the play is being performed right at its artery.

Designer Todd Rosenthal's house is, to say the least, recognizable, although a bit too nice to knock down.

"Clybourne Park" is a masterful work for various reasons. Its referents back to the Hansberry play are as inspired as they are logical. Act 1 of the Norris play is set, at precisely the same moment, in the very house where Hansberry's Youngers want to move. Norris focuses on the white family (a couple, played by Judd and Kirsten Fitzgerald) moving out to the suburbs, and the attempts of those in their neighborhood to prevent the sale of the house to a black family. Norris' conceit is that no one realized the race of the buyers until the eleventh hour, which, given the well-documented tactics of some of the fear-mongering real-estate agents of the era, is entirely credible.

Karl Lindner (Cliff Chamberlain), the notorious representative of the "resident's association" who shows up at the South Side door of the buyers in the Hansberry play only to be rebuffed, has now come to dissuade the sellers from making the sale, which also makes perfect sense. Norris proffers a couple of equally inspired solutions to the issues that "Raisin" raises but does not really explore. He suggests that the white sellers didn't care about selling to a black family because they had their own reasons to hate their community — and maybe they weren't alone, and maybe that's why communities like the one they lived in fractured — and he comes up with a reason as to how Lena Younger got the cheaper house that made her move possible.

Act 2 is set in 2009 in the same Clybourne Park. Now a white family wants to move into what has become a predominantly black neighborhood. Well, "move in" isn't the best expression. It wants to tear down the house and build a McMansion (in 2009, Norris just got in under the recessionary wire for that to be credible). This time, the existing black residents aren't pleased. Echoes of the past — descendants of the previous generations, victims of race wars from one side or another — are everywhere, despite new language and carefully negotiated intimacies. Double-casting reveals many resonances. And yet at the heart of the play is another American agony that perhaps has nothing to do with the color of anyone's skin.

And that's why this is Norris' best play. Steppenwolf audiences are familiar with his satirical skills, his ease with lampooning urban liberals with kids and SUVs and revealing the hypocrisy behind their trips to Whole Foods — their raw ambition, their fevered, dysfunctional souls. But "Clybourne Park" goes a great deal farther. Simply put, it understands and explicates the roots of hate in fear. There is nothing smug or distant or cheap about the authorial voice: It is compassionate and it takes responsibility, even as it is relentless in its peeling of the racial onion, down to its fetid core.

Morton's cast doesn't immediately kick into gear. Fitzgerald and Chamberlain offer relatively broad characterizations — Fitzgerald layers her work with a kind of 1950s

gauze — that take time to grab hold, but they surely wield some power (Fitzgerald is best in the second act; Chamberlain in the first). Stephanie Childers, who play's Karl's wife, and then a buyer, is fine throughout. So is Brendan Marshall-Rashid, in both acts a weasely hanger-on, and the subtly self-effacing James Vincent Meredith, who plays two African-American men who seem to have very different stations in life, and yet who both find themselves constantly having to calm others down.

But this production is rightly dominated by Judd, who plays the wound-tight seller escaping to the suburbs, where he hopes he can uncoil. Judd paints a formidable picture of a bitter, angry man whose sense of community has been up-ended and who smells both revenge and misery. And there is no other Chicago actress who can convey the weight of moral authority quite like Aldredge, even when, as the years of the play go by, she finds herself moving from playing a black maid, looking to keep the lid on a white tinderbox, to a richer, more powerful, more assertive woman, stuck on the other side of a still-yawning divide. And probably no happier.

August 3, 2011
Integration, Gentrification, Conversation
By ERIK PIEPENBURG
New York Times
Source: http://theater.nytimes.com/2011/08/07/theater/clybourne-park-by-bruce-norris-a-gentrification-study.html?ref=lorrainehansberry&_r=5&

EVERY city has a Clybourne Park. At least that's what several regional theaters across the country are betting on as they introduce their audiences to Bruce Norris's darkly humorous play "Clybourne Park," a dissection of race, gentrification and real estate. Both acts of the play, the winner of the 2011 Pulitzer Prize for drama, take place in the living room of a bungalow in a Chicago neighborhood. The first, set in 1959, is an Arthur Milleresque drama about a middle-class white family, their black maid and a visitor from the neighborhood association who wants to keep a "colored family" from buying the house.

In the second act the tide has turned. Fifty years later the neighborhood has become predominantly black and gone through a period of decline but is now starting to recover. A white couple who have purchased the house and want to make major changes encounter resistance from a black couple and others in the community.

After a recent performance of the play at the Woolly Mammoth Theater in Washington, about 30 patrons stayed for a talk-back with Danny Harris, who runs peoplesdistrict.com, a Web site that features what Mr. Harris calls "a collection of stories from everyday people." Mr. Harris said the play was a reminder of the "changing dynamics" of **OTHER**

Washington neighborhoods like Petworth and the U Street Corridor, in the northwestern part of the city, where wine bars, coffee shops and other signs of gentrification are changing communities. “Petworth is a Clybourne Park of D.C.,” he said. Many heads in the theater nodded in agreement.

Part of the power of “Clybourne Park” derives from how the events in Mr. Norris’s play intersect with those in “A Raisin in the Sun,” Lorraine Hansberry’s groundbreaking 1959 drama about a black family on the South Side of Chicago. In “A Raisin in the Sun” the black Youngers plan to move into a white neighborhood when a character named Karl Lindner, a representative of the community association, offers to buy them out. In the first act of Mr. Norris’s play, the same Karl Lindner tries to persuade the house’s white owners not to sell to a black family — the Youngers, it is assumed — out of fear of what that would do to the property values and the culture of the neighborhood.

In an e-mail interview Mr. Norris said that “A Raisin in the Sun” was one of the first major American plays he had been exposed to as a child. When he saw the film adaptation in the seventh grade, he made the connection, he wrote, “that we, the all-white students of my school, were the offspring of Karl Lindner.”

“That’s a lesson that sticks with you, the lesson that you are, essentially the villain in someone else’s story,” he wrote. “Many years later I thought, what if we turned the story around and told it from the opposite angle, the angle of people like my family, the villains, the ones who wanted to keep them out?”

“Clybourne Park” received mainly positive reviews at its premiere in the winter of 2010 at Playwrights Horizons Off Broadway. (Writing in The New York Times, Ben Brantley called it “spiky and damningly insightful.”) In March of this year in London it won an Olivier, Britain’s equivalent of the Tony Award, for best new play. When it was recognized with the Pulitzer in April, the jury described it as “a powerful work whose memorable characters speak in witty and perceptive ways to America’s sometimes toxic struggle with race and class consciousness.”

“Clybourne Park” follows in the footsteps of Mr. Norris’s other plays, including “The Unmentionables” and “The Pain and the Itch,” in which he devilishly chronicles white guilt and liberal hypocrisy, in the mold of Neil LaBute and Christopher Durang. His fondness for provocation can trigger both gasps and laughter.

Although a note in the script says the play takes place “in the near northwest of central Chicago,” Mr. Norris never uses the word Chicago in the text. That universality, of how racial tension and neighborhood gentrification can exacerbate each other, may be why it appeals to regional theaters. The play will be produced as part of the 2011-12 season at theaters in several American cities, including Seattle, Denver and Providence, R.I. In

early 2012 the Center Theater Group in Los Angeles plans to mount both “A Raisin in the Sun” and “Clybourne Park.”

The play may have the most resonance in Chicago, where the Steppenwolf Theater Company will present it in the fall (and where Ms. Hansberry grew up). The name Clybourn (minus the “e”) has deep roots in the city. Not far from the Steppenwolf is a tiny play lot named Clybourn Park. North Clybourn Avenue cuts diagonally through several North Side neighborhoods. Archibald Clybourn was one of the earliest settlers in the area, said Bill Savage, who teaches Chicago literature and history at Northwestern University. “From the perspective of the Potawatomi Indians living then, I suppose you could call him one of the first gentrifiers,” Mr. Savage said.

Rebecca Rugg, the artistic producer at Steppenwolf, said the way “Raisin” resonates in “Clybourne Park,” and in the history of Chicago, suggests that Mr. Norris has seized a cultural moment.

“I think it has to do with Obama’s family moving into the White House, which could be the most radical example of neighborhood integration this country has ever seen,” said Ms. Rugg, an editor of a forthcoming play anthology, “Reimagining ‘A Raisin in the Sun,’ ” which includes “Clybourne Park.” “There is something that’s profound about that, and that sets the conversation about race in everybody’s neighborhood.”

“Local” will be the buzzword for other regional productions of “Clybourne Park.” Carey Perloff, the artistic director of the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco, which produced the West Coast premiere of “Clybourne Park” in January, said post-show discussions revolved around issues that have been roiling the city for decades, like the appropriation of Japanese-Americans’ homes during World War II and the displacement of working-class Irish residents as gay men and lesbians moved into the Castro neighborhood in the business district during the late ’60s.

The Clybourne Park of the city today, Ms. Perloff said, may be the gritty Tenderloin area downtown, where an influx of social media companies and an attempt by the city to create a new tourist destination are rapidly making it an area in transition.

“Twitter is moving into the Tenderloin, and that’s going to bring in young, mostly white hipsters to a neighborhood that’s been lower middle class,” Ms. Perloff said. “There’s some beautiful 19th-century housing stock there. The tension is going to be palpable.” Mr. Savage, the historian, said: “I don’t think the play is after anything other than forcing people to think about cities and how people live in cities. Both acts have confrontations where people compete over the meaning, the past and the future of a building on a street. Buildings on streets are cities writ small.”

Back at the Woolly Mammoth in Washington, Mr. Harris said he hoped that as "Clybourne Park" makes its way around the country, theaters will use it as a way to introduce residents to issues and places "that have faces and narratives" about how a neighborhood is made and preserved.

"Understanding a community is not about what gentrification is or isn't," he said. "But rather, it's to say: 'This is what I see. What do you see?' "

A Raisin in the Sun

May 29, 2004
Two Visions of Love, Family and Race Across the Generations
By ANNA DEAVERE SMITH
New York Times
Source: http://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/29/theater/two-visions-of-love-family-and-race-across-the-generations.html

In his breakthrough 1986 hit, ''The Colored Museum,'' George C. Wolfe satirized ''A Raisin in the Sun'' in the form of a sketch called ''The Last Mama-on-the-Couch Play.'' In this hilarious piece Mr. Wolfe does a sendup of stereotypical images of blacks. ''We are pleased to bring you yet another Mama-on-the-Couch play,'' the Narrator begins, ''a searing domestic drama that tears at the very fabric of racist America.'' In it the God-fearing, Bible-quoting matriarch ends up watching her son shot down by a white assassin. ''Why couldn't he have been born in an all-black musical?,'' Mama wails. ''Nobody dies in an all-black musical.''

Today on Broadway Mr. Wolfe has directed ''Caroline, or Change,'' a musical (albeit not an all-black one) in which nobody dies. Four blocks away is a revival of Lorraine Hansberry's ''Raisin.''

These two plays together present an unusual moment: a moment when political and theatrical interests mesh, producing something that is artistically satisfying and politically inspiring. Seen together, these works -- one set partly in the basement of a middle-class Jewish household near a swamp in Louisiana in 1963, the other in a rundown apartment on the South Side of Chicago in the 1950's -- offer a new and refreshing lens on our history and on the theater's potential.

Hansberry wrote ''Raisin'' before the civil rights movement gained momentum, before the end of segregation. Yet her play is infused with hope. Kenny Leon, the director, told me he wanted to revive this play because of its values of love and family. Phylicia **OTHER**

Rashad, who plays the mother of the household, echoed that sentiment. ''This play is about continuity,'' she said. ''Continuity. Seeing this dream through.''

In this sense, having Sean Combs play the striving son, Walter Lee, is unexpectedly fitting. Mr. Combs has seen the dream through; he is the entrepreneur that Walter Lee could not have even imagined. It is usually the actor who longs to be the character; in this case, Walter would have loved to have been Mr. Combs.

Yet because ''Raisin'' has been around so long, one might not expect that today it would come to us with a sense of urgency. Mr. Wolfe recently explained why he lampooned ''Raisin'' years ago. ''It's a brilliant play, and every February they would whip it out,'' he said, talking about its canonical status. ''It's a brilliant play, but it's not the only play.'' Sanaa Lathan, who plays Beneatha, the daughter, in this production, said she came close to turning the role down when her agent called her about it.

In a recent interview, she recalled saying, ''Gosh, it's going to be dated, and I'm going to pass.'' But because she had not read the play since junior high school, she decided to read it again.

Sometimes repetition makes things more real, more vibrant, more apparent. After she finished reading, Ms. Lathan said, she realized she had been ''completely one hundred percent wrong.'' She added, ''I just think it's really, really necessary.''

If Beneatha were real, she might have gone down South to protest against segregation and met girls like Emmie, Caroline Thibodeaux's daughter in Tony Kushner's play ''Caroline, or Change.'' Emmie is part of a new, younger generation that supports the ideas of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Nevertheless, there is a scene at a Hanukkah dinner in which Emmie, while helping her mother serve food, gets into a dispute with one of the guests, Stopnick, the father of her employer. The refreshing surprise is that Stopnick, a Jewish radical from New York, is more progressive than this young black girl. Still, such outspokenness on the part of a black servant is, of course, inappropriate, and Caroline is mortified. Mr. Kushner said in an interview last week that he ''had to confront and then really hold onto the idea that she refuses, finally, the invitation of the time to see herself as capable of transformation and the kind of terrible energy she produces to resist this irresistible pull into the future.''

Emmie, unlike her mother, does not resist that pull into the future. Caroline's fear of moving forward, Mr. Kushner says, represents our current state. On opening night Anika Noni Rose, who memorably plays Emmie, sang out the last words of the play: ''the children of Caroline Thibodeaux.'' I thought I heard ''We are the children of Caroline Thibodeaux,'' and like the rest of the audience, I leaped to my feet. It seemed that I was being invited to stand for something, perhaps on the firm foundation of the civil rights

movement. As Ms. Rose sings out the last lines, she seems to be reviving a common heritage and common values that could support us today.

As I looked around at the audience that night, largely friends of the stars and producers, I recalled a Ruth Orkin photograph of the opening night of Carson McCullers's ''Member of the Wedding.'' The women wore hats, and many were dressed in black. One's eye travels quickly to two figures -- Ethel Waters sitting on a couch and McCullers lying in her lap. They were the real thing, an authentic moment, amid the clatter of Champagne glasses and cigarette holders.

An authentic moment can also be found in the relationship of ''Raisin '' to its hip hop-to-pearls audience that nightly spills out onto 45th Street. Eric Schnall, the associate producer and marketing director, speaks with passion about the people who attend. He said he could be exhausted, ''but I would find myself at home at 10 o'clock on a Wednesday thinking, 'I wonder what our audience is like right now,' and I gotta tell you, I went down to that theater, and part of what was driving me was I was excited about our audiences.''

Mr. Schnall and the producer David Binder have ''street teams'' who are handing out flyers all over town wherever young people are. Part of it is the presence of Mr. Combs, but that is not all of it. For as long as I can remember, current American culture has been chasing diversity in boardrooms, in universities, in corporations. The theater has not been immune to it. Mr. Schnall's achievement is not just that he has delivered a black audience. James Baldwin tells us in his 1969 essay ''Sweet Lorraine,'' that he had never seen so many black people in the theater until he went to see ''Raisin.'' What Mr. Schnall has done is to apply what he learned from plays like ''The Vagina Monologues'' and ''De la Guarda'' -- both plays that by their nature reached out to their publics.

My suggestion would be to first see ''Raisin'' and then ''Caroline.'' It's the past pushing us into the present.

March 7, 1999
THEATER; A Landmark Lesson in Being Black
By MICHAEL ANDERSON
New York Times
Source: http://www.nytimes.com/1999/03/07/theater/theater-a-landmark-lesson-in-being-black.html

THEY had never seen anything like it. The theater critics, hurrying down the aisles under the pressure of deadline, paused at the rear of the Ethel Barrymore Theater. The date was March 11, 1959. For a few moments they stopped considering the words with

which they would salute this poetically named play, ''A Raisin in the Sun.'' Instead, they watched the first-night audience deliver its own verdict: on its feet and willing to applaud, it seemed, for eternity.

The cast took its curtain calls -- Sidney Poitier, Claudia McNeil, Ruby Dee, Diana Sands, Lonne Elder 3d, Lou Gossett Jr., Ivan Dixon, Glynn Turman, John Fiedler, Ed Hall, Douglas Turner -- as the applause engulfed the theater. The stage manager opened and closed the curtain. The director, Lloyd Richards, joined his players, but the ovations swelled ever louder and more insistent: ''Author! Author! Author!''

Finally, Mr. Poitier descended to a fourth-row aisle seat, where the 28-year-old playwright sat, thrilled rigid at the reception of her first produced play. On the arm of her leading man, Lorraine Hansberry took the stage.

''It was as if the audience that night uniquely understood that they had not just seen a play but had attended a historical event,'' the play's co-producer, Philip Rose, said recently, reminiscing about the opening on the eve of its 40th anniversary this Thursday.

In that remarkable theatrical season of 1958-59, Broadway had seen Paul Newman and Geraldine Page open (the previous night) in Tennessee Williams's ''Sweet Bird of Youth,'' directed by Elia Kazan; Helen Hayes and Kim Stanley in ''A Touch of the Poet'' by Eugene O'Neill, directed by Harold Clurman, and Christopher Plummer and Raymond Massey in Archibald MacLeish's ''J.B.,'' also directed by Mr. Kazan.

But until that evening, Broadway had never seen a play written by a black woman, nor a play with a black director, nor a commercially produced drama about black life, rather than musicals or comedy. The Broadway premiere of ''A Raisin in the Sun'' was as much a milestone in the nation's social history as it was in American theater. ''Never before,'' commented James Baldwin, ''had so much of the truth of black people's lives been seen onstage.''

Hansberry's story -- about the black Younger family's decision to risk moving from their ''rat-trap'' on the South Side of Chicago to a three-bedroom house in an all-white neighborhood -- interwove prescient observations about identity, feminism and personal ethics. Unlike the wooden ''problem plays'' about blacks that preceded it, ''A Raisin in the Sun'' seemed steeped in human drama. The cruelties of racism -- ''What happens to a dream deferred/ Does it dry up/ Like a raisin in the sun?'' in the words of the Langston Hughes poem that gave the play its title -- are illuminated through the dynamics of conflict and love between mother and son, husband and wife, brother and sister.

Kenneth Tynan remarked in his review of ''A Raisin in the Sun'' in The New Yorker that ''a play is not an entity in itself, it is a part of history.'' In that sense, the presence of the play on Broadway appeared to be a triumph of determined idealism for those involved. The 1960's would see productions of ''The Blacks,'' the drama by Jean Genet about racism, as well as works by the black playwrights LeRoi Jones (later Amiri Baraka) and Ed Bullins. Lonne Elder 3d would go on to write the acclaimed 1969 play ''Ceremonies in Dark Old Men.''

But in the 1950's, before the acclaim that greeted ''A Raisin in the Sun,'' ''Broadway was not ready for a play about a black family,'' Mr. Richards, the director, said. What Broadway knew about black people, Hansberry once told a reporter, involved ''cardboard characters, cute dialect bits, or hip-swinging musicals from exotic scores.'' (And few enough of those: in the 77 productions of the 1958-59 season, Actors Equity reported that the number of Broadway parts for black actors totaled 24.)

THE inspiration for ''A Raisin in the Sun,'' its author said, came after she had seen a play in 1956 that left her ''disgusted with a whole body of material about Negroes.'' That night, she told her husband, Robert Nemiroff, ''I'm going to write a social drama about Negroes that will be good art.'' But since devoting herself full-time to playwriting in 1955, she had accomplished little -- drafts of three plays had gone nowhere beyond sympathetic readings by her husband and friends.

She expected much the same in the late summer of 1957, when she and Nemiroff invited company for a dinner of spaghetti and banana-cream pie to their fourth-floor walk-up on Bleecker Street in Greenwich Village.

Then Nemiroff began to read from the work that had possessed his wife for nearly a year. This time it was different. ''The feeling was one of excitement,'' Mr. Rose said, during an interview in his office on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. After an animated discussion that went on into the night, Mr. Rose called Hansberry early the next morning. ''I told her,'' he said, '' 'this play has to get done, and it has to get done on Broadway.' ''

Mr. Rose would end up as a producer of nearly two dozen plays, including ''Purlie Victorious'' (1961), ''The Owl and the Pussycat'' (1964) and the musical ''Shenandoah'' (1975). But at the time, he was 36 years old and in the music business, producing and publishing. He said he had assumed that there would be difficulties in getting a work by a first-time playwright on the boards, but not that raising the money would take nearly 15 agonizing months.

Networking among his friends brought a response ''somewhere between admiration and pity,'' he said, along with donations of $50 toward what they regarded as a lost

cause. Established theatrical backers were equally skeptical. ''Much as some expressed admiration,'' Nemiroff wrote in his introduction to the Modern Library edition of ''A Raisin in the Sun,'' the play ''was turned down by virtually every established name in the business.''

The conventional wisdom was that ''nobody was going to pay those prices to see 'a bunch of Negroes emoting,' '' Hansberry later said in a letter included in ''To Be Young, Gifted and Black,'' a collection of her writings. (Nemiroff assembled the book after Hansberry's death from cancer at 34 in 1965, during the run of her second Broadway play, ''The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window''; Nemiroff died in 1991.)

''Very often, the professionals were respectful, even admiring that I would think of trying to get the play on,'' said Mr. Rose, who is writing a book about the production. ''However, they could not see where it would make any money.''

He did have one ace: his friend Sidney Poitier. Already a movie star, the actor had agreed to join the cast after being ''overwhelmed by the power of the material,'' as he wrote in his own memoir, ''This Life.'' ''Without Sidney Poitier,'' Mr. Rose said, ''the play would never have seen the light of day.''

Mr. Poitier was also responsible for the director. ''I had a pact with Sidney Poitier,'' Mr. Richards said in an interview at his home on the Upper West Side. It dated to their time as students of the director and drama teacher Paul Mann. ''One day, after class, Sidney said, 'If I ever do anything on Broadway, I want you to direct it.' ''

In December 1957, Mr. Poitier introduced Mr. Richards, already known as an actor, teacher and director, to Mr. Rose and Hansberry. They clicked.

''There was no question that I wanted to do the play,'' Mr. Richards said, remembering that when he and his wife first read it, ''We laughed and cried; it was a wonderful evening reading.'' Still, it was the work of a neophyte, and he and Hansberry struggled until opening night to develop her script. Although not autobiographical, the story originated from an incident in Hansberry's childhood.

Her parents, politically and socially prominent in Chicago's black upper-middle class, agreed in 1938 to take the lead in the fight against housing segregation by buying a home in an all-white neighborhood near the University of Chicago. Hansberry would always remember being an 8-year-old who was ''spat at, cursed and pummeled in the daily trek to and from school.'' She also remembered the nights her mother patroled their house with a loaded pistol against the ''literally howling mobs'' that surrounded their home and once threw bricks through their windows.

But the real story of the play, Mr. Rose said, was not the family's move to the unreceptive white neighborhood but Walter Lee Younger, the character portrayed by Mr. Poitier, ''and his development, his being able to accept certain responsibilities.'' With this as the goal, playwright and director began their work. Meanwhile, the tasks of production went on, including casting.

'' 'Raisin' was a big breakthrough,'' said Ruby Dee. ''The mainstream was not welcoming for African-American actors.'' She signed on even though she would not have the ingenue role of Walter Lee's sister that she desired; Diana Sands got the part, while Claudia McNeil portrayed his mother. Instead, Ms. Dee would play his wife, Ruth: ''Another one of those put-upon wives. And they always seemed to be named Ruth!'' But, she added: ''I dusted off my disappointment. This was very important. It was going to be a Broadway show.''

It would be, that is, if the money could be raised. Throughout 1958, Mr. Rose sought big-money angels. ''The smart money on Broadway was not involved and would not be involved,'' Mr. Richards said. The $75,000 budget (equivalent to more than $420,000 today) would eventually come from a group of 147 investors -- ''more than any play on Broadway had had up to that time,'' Mr. Richards said. Mr. Poitier's wife, Juanita, invested $4,000 and ''about two or three people, including Harry Belafonte, put in $2,000 each,'' Mr. Rose said. But the most significant investor was the playwright William Gibson, whose ''Two for the Seesaw'' had opened a successful run with Anne Bancroft and Henry Fonda in January 1958.

''I sent him the play,'' Mr. Rose recalled. ''He called me and said: 'This play must get on Broadway.' '' With that endorsement (and Mr. Gibson's own stake of $750), his tax consultant, David J. Cogan, a previous Broadway investor who initially had rejected ''A Raisin in the Sun,'' signed on as co-producer, and the financing was complete. Rehearsals began on Dec. 27, 1958.

There was only one problem: no theater on Broadway would agree to rent to ''A Raisin in the Sun.'' The same arguments were repeated: a white audience would not pay to see a nonmusical about blacks. The possibility of black theatergoers was dismissed out of hand. And if they did come, would white patrons stay away -- perhaps even boycott other shows? In 1958, the Supreme Court's landmark school desegregation decision was four years old; not until February 1960 would the student sit-ins put the racial equality movement permanently before the nation's conscience. Even in the relatively urbane climate of the Village, an interracial couple like Hansberry and Nemiroff could expect stares and denial of service in some restaurants.

MR. ROSE said he was advised to terminate the production until he could obtain a theater. Instead, he took a gamble: he booked the traditional tryout theaters in New

Haven and Philadelphia. ''And I prayed a lot,'' he said. ''But I knew if we didn't do it, nothing was going to get done. The hope was that we had something so spectacular, Broadway couldn't ignore us.'' His daring paid off. The rave reviews for the four-night engagement in New Haven were matched during the two-week run in Philadelphia.

''A Raisin in the Sun'' ended up playing for 19 months at the Ethel Barrymore on Broadway. Hansberry won the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for best play, and most of the original cast starred in the 1961 film version, directed by Daniel Petrie. The 1973 musical ''Raisin'' was adapted from the play and produced by Nemiroff. The play has been translated into 30 languages.

In retrospect, Mr. Rose can joke that during the prolonged incubation of ''A Raisin in the Sun'' he was discouraged ''only about half the time.'' But his explanation for his stubborn determination is simple: ''I believed in it. I loved the play.''

OTHER PRODUCTIONS – DRAMATURGICAL MATERIALS

Materials from the Steppenwolf Production

All of these materials can be found collected in Steppenwolf's Program 2011-2012, Volume 1
Source: http://www.steppenwolf.org/Plays-Events/productions/index.aspx?id=527

The City & The Other
A conversation with Bill Savage, Distinguished Senior Lecturer, Northwestern University and Martha Lavey, Steppenwolf Artistic Director

Martha Lavey: Bill, in addition to being an expert on Chicago literature, you are also, it happens, a lifelong Chicago resident. Correct?
Bill Savage: I've lived in Rogers Park my whole life so while writing and talking and teaching about neighborhood novelists, I also have the experience of being a neighborhood guy. I was born in 1962, right now I am almost 50 years old and I have the same phone number I memorized when I was five.

ML: Oh, those 50 years are coincidental, because as you know, the first act of Clybourne Park is set in 1959 and the second act is set 50 years later in 2009. Perhaps you and I can spend some time talking about Chicago in this last 50 years.
BS: Well, one of the things that happens if you're in the same place for as long as I have been, or some people end up being, is you end up having "vertical knowledge." That is, layers of knowledge over time about how the place has changed--remembering streets and places as much by what used to be there as by what's there now. And that is a really important part of understanding cities over time, because cities are always a combination of persistence and change.

ML: That's a fantastic way to describe cities – as a testament to persistence and change. Talk about those forces in the first act of Clybourne Park.
BS: It seems to me that the first act helps us understand what whiteness means. Up until the late 19th and into the early 20th century, what we think of as ethnic white groups would have been considered almost as separate as the races. You had as much conflict between Irish and German, and Irish and Polish, and Italian and Lithuanian and all these groups that now we tend to think of as primarily "white". One of the ways that sense of white identity got created in the urban landscape was through racial covenants that would exclude African-Americans from renting or buying in particular neighborhoods. These covenants were created in usually two ways. One way would be through, and I use the term very loosely, "gentlemen's agreements" among real estate brokers (and this is very vividly depicted in Richard Wright's Native Son). Alternately, community groups would get all of the property owners in an area to sign off on a covenant agreeing not to sell to whatever group they defined as "the other," which sometimes would also include Jews and Catholics.

ML: One of the things that I want to talk about is the manifestation of racism in the American South vs. the North. In the South, racism was enforced by actual law, and in the North, it worked differently.
BS: Well, in the South you had the Jim Crow laws that started to be put in place right after Reconstruction was abandoned. I hate to say Reconstruction failed, because it didn't get a chance to succeed. So African Americans begin coming north not long after the Civil War in order to escape that particular form of legalized racism, which was, of course, backed up with lynch law. Racism in the North, particularly the industrial North, was tempered by the need for workers. When African-Americans came to the city, they were often used as strike-breakers, which didn't help with race relations, which were also made tense because of the de facto although not de jure racial segregation where real estate companies would not rent or sell to African Americans outside of a certain prescribed area. Northern segregation was a matter of real estate covenants and then of white violence and vigilance essentially around the edges. Richard Wright is the first guy you want to go to read about this, along with Gwendolyn Brooks and Lorraine Hansberry and Langston Hughes and other African-American writers. But James T. Farrell is a great writer to read from the perspective of white neighborhood people feeling threatened – or not - by blacks moving in.

ML: Bringing this back to Chicago – in your reading, how does Clybourne Park intersect with all this history?
BS: Bruce's play is so great, because he's got so many nuances and layers. For instance, calling it "Clybourne Park." He's invoking Hansberry's fictive neighborhood, but he's obviously created his own. There is no 406 North Clybourn.

ML: There is a little pocket park called Clybourn Park.
BS: Clybourn starts at Division, right around the corner from here at 1200 North. But Clybourne with an "e" was the name of one of the first white settlers, Archibald Clybourne. His name was spelled with and without an "e," they didn't have spell-check back then so they couldn't keep track, but he came in 1802, so as far as the Pottowatame were concerned, he was the first gentrifier. Or one of the first. And "Park" is the eponym of so many Chicago neighborhoods on every side of town. So Bruce has got all sorts of little details that are really, really interesting in terms of making this a Chicago play, as well as a more broad address to American identity.

ML: From your observation, is gentrification in Chicago a perpetually evolving process?
BS: For a neighborhood to be gentrifiable it has to have a certain kind of housing stock, a certain kind of relationship to the transport systems (usually the CTA but also arterial roads and so forth), and it has to have once been a good neighborhood that declined and became a bad neighborhood or an industrial working district where the factories shut down. That first becomes attractive for artists, or poor people, who need a place to

live, then the people who open coffee shops for the artists, then the people who open bookstores and bars for the artists, then the people who want to live around the bookstores, bars, and coffee shops in a neighborhood full of artists. The most vivid examples of this in Chicago in the past few decades are Wicker Park and Bucktown. When Nelson Algren lived in Bucktown, it was a Polish ghetto that was transforming into a Latino ghetto. Now it is a hipster capital of the planet. The irony of this is when the hipsters complain about the Yuppies moving in, even though the hipsters are the ones who drove out the Latinos and the Poles.

ML: No strollers, please. You mentioned a couple of writers. For someone interested in reading the stories of Chicago's neighborhoods, what would you recommend?
BS: I'd begin with James T. Ferrell -- "Chicago Stories". Then, chronologically, after Ferrell would be Richard Wright with "Native Son," which is just a monumental book, a book that really dramatizes the essentially self-fulfilling prophecy of white racism, which is: if you treat people like animals eventually they will turn into animals and bite you. Then, Nelson Algren writes about the '40s and '50s in Wicker Park -- "In the Neon Wilderness" or the novel "The Man with a Golden Arm." The writers to read about post-Industrial Chicago are Stuart Dybek, "Coast of Chicago," "Magellan" and "Childhood and other Neighborhoods." Also, there are a lot of great Latino writers in this town, Sandra Cisneros, Ana Castillo. Bayo Ojikutu teaches at DePaul -- his book "47th Street Black" is fantastic contemporary work. All write about this kind of new wave of immigrants, new kinds of encounters between the "other" and the settled, or the already there, whoever they might be.

Race, Pulitzers and Punchlines
An interview with Clybourne Park playwright Bruce Norris and Artistic Producer Rebecca Rugg

Excerpted from Reimagining A Raisin in the Sun: Former New Plays, forthcoming from NU Press.

Rebecca Rugg: The Royal Court production of Clybourne Park moved to the West End and won the Olivier for Best New Play. And then it won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Congratulations.
Bruce Norris: On the West End, I felt like I was sitting outside of myself watching this whole thing happen, feeling like it was happening to someone not me.

RR: Is that because of anxiety?
BN: I have a very complicated relationship to the entire notion of commercial productions at all. Almost in kind of an adolescent way, I have an attitude that if someone likes what I do then that means by definition it is not good. If I do my job

correctly I should outrage people and have rotten vegetables thrown at me, that that would be the only proof that I had done something successfully. Like I said, it's completely adolescent but that's the instinct that I have. So when people like something that I've done and they pay for it, it's very confusing to me. I don't understand why they would be paying for it if I wrote it to upset them.

RR: How is life different post-Pulitzer?
BN: The most important change is that now I have a very attractive glass paperweight with the profile of Joseph Pulitzer etched into it, so my papers remain securely in place on my desktop.

RR: Clybourne Park is a very complex play about race, among other topics. The experience of watching it, and I'll speak here as a white person, is quite complicated.
BN: Well, I think the most interesting question that has been put to me about it was the one you put to me last time we talked, which was "did you write this play for white people?" Remember?

RR: Yeah, and you said yes.
BN: And I said yes.

RR: And I was totally shocked. I was sure you were going to say no.
BN: No, I think it is a play for white people. It's a play about white people. It's about the white response to race, about being the power elite, about being the people who have power in the race argument, and what that makes us in the present day - the contortions that makes us go through. Because on the Left we really, really like to deny the power that we have. We don't want to seem like we're powerful and have the largest army in the world. We want to pretend that we don't. So, while the play is about white people, it's even better if there are black people in the audience because it makes white people even more uncomfortable.

RR: I've heard you say elsewhere, that Clybourne Park is inspired by Karl Linder, who, before he was yours, was Lorraine Hansberry's character in A Raisin in the Sun.
BN: I saw A Raisin in the Sun as a film in probably 7th grade. Interestingly our Social Studies teacher was showing it to a class of all white students who lived in an independent school district the boundaries of which had been formed specifically to prevent being our being integrated into the Houston school district and being bussed to other schools with black students.

So I don't know whether our teacher was just obtuse or crafty and subversive but she was showing us a movie that basically in the end -- because Karl doesn't come in until the second act -- is really pointing a finger at us and saying we are those people. So I watch it at twelve years old and I could realize even then that I'm Karl Linder. To see

that when you're a kid and to realize that you're the villain has an impact.
For years I thought I wanted to play Karl Linder but then as time went on I thought it's really an interesting story to think about the conversation that was going on in the white community about the Younger family moving into Clybourne Park. It percolated for many years and that's how I ended up writing this play.

RR: Can we talk about theatrical realism? Is Clybourne Park part of a theatrical genealogy that you can trace?
BN: Well, I tend to write in the "realistic" form because it limits what's possible and that gives a play a rigidity, a structure. A more freeform approach to writing a play feels loose and a little bit flimsy to me. I like the firm structure that's imposed by realism, not just realistic behavior, but realistic furniture and facts. If you want to demonstrate something about the way we behave and interact with each other, then it's really useful to have a concrete world there to interact with. I think when people want to write about dreams and magic onstage, they often don't have much they want to say about behavior. They want to talk about ideas and not behavior.

RR: I had the opportunity to teach this play to students at Northwestern recently, and the subject of the jokes arose. Students wanted to know why the black woman is spared being the punch line of a joke, from a playwright who doesn't spare anyone.
BN: It's not as though everyone in the room has to be the butt of a joke, one by one. It's a conversation, not a formula. But also, the black woman IS the person who everyone in that room would be most afraid of offending, the one person who would be off limits. All she has to do is say she's uncomfortable and everyone gets worried.

RR: With those same students we had a long conversation about the presence of the deaf woman in the first act. I wonder if you can talk about that character and the choice to include her.
BN: Well the first thing I'll say is that deaf is funny. And I defy anyone who tells me differently. But it's not that the deaf woman herself is funny, or her deafness that's funny, it's everyone around her and how they treat her and act towards her that's funny. And it makes it clear how awful everyone is around race, that there is this false CARE taken towards her deafness. It shines a light on race, by contrast.

RR: Why isn't there a disabled person in the contemporary scenes?
BN: Well, there wouldn't be. She's deaf, and I wanted to make the point that nobody who could HEAR Karl Lindner would marry him. Who else would marry him?

The "Clybourne Park" in A Raisin in the Sun

In January 1959, the national conversation about race centered on the topic of neighborhood integration, particularly that of black families moving into white neighborhoods. The discussion, which had been triggered by a series of earlier court battles (Hansberry v. Lee, 1940; Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, 1954; et. al.) was given new energy by playwright Lorraine Hansberry and her play A Raisin in the Sun.

The play concerns an African-American family, the Younger family, whose matriarch Lena is set to inherit $10,000 in life insurance from her late husband's policy. The family of five—Lena's daughter Beneatha, her son Walter Lee and his wife Ruby and son Travis—lives on Chicago's South Side in a tiny apartment, with a shared bathroom down the hall. The prospect of the imminent inheritance engenders a furious storm of hopes, dreams, and impatient accusations. The family ultimately uses the money to buy a home in a white neighborhood of the city, which Hansberry fictionally names "Clybourne Park."

Karl Lindner, the only white character within Hansberry's play and a representative of the Clybourne Park Improvement Association, offers to buy the Youngers' recently acquired home back from them. His efforts are motivated by a desire for a very specific type of population control—to prevent new black neighbors from moving to the white community. Although the offer is initially rebuffed by Walter Lee, an unfortunate investment that results in Walter being swindled of half of his father's insurance money, prompts Hansberry's protagonist to consider accepting Lindner's money and, in so doing, to tacitly accept the Clybourne Park Improvement Association's racist views.

"I'll look that son-of-a-bitch right in his eye and say—'All right, Mr. Charlie. All right, Mr. Lindner—that's your neighborhood out there! You got a right to keep it like you want! You got a right to have it like you want! Just write the check and the house is yours.' And—and I am going to say—'And you—you people just put the money in my hand and you won't have to live next to this bunch of stinking niggers!" - A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry (New York: Vintage, 1986), p. 144.

With these words, Walter places a spotlight on the intersection of race and community. He gestures to the logic that supported six decades of Jim Crow legislation, that enabled "separate but equal" to exist, that justified the abuse of black bodies when they inadvertently crossed the invisible line that separated "their" and "our" sections of town, beach, bus, diner, store. He reveals the bias that lies at the heart of efforts to prevent African-Americans from ever becoming neighbors to white homeowners. Ultimately, the Youngers resolve to make the move and A Raisin in the Sun ends as the family moves out of their too-small apartment into a home with a yard in an unwelcoming, potentially hostile community. A Raisin in the Sun, the first black drama produced on Broadway,

was an immediate critical and commercial success. Theater critics praised the 1959 production, cited its broad appeal, and frequently compared it to canonical theatrical works. As Brooks Atkinson observed in his New York Times review,

"You might, in fact, regard A Raisin in the Sun as a Negro The Cherry Orchard." Brooks Atkinson, "A Raisin in the Sun," (New York Times, March 12, 1959.)

Audiences, of all colors, flocked to the Ethel Barrymore Theatre on Broadway and demonstrated through their presence and dollars that people were interested in seeing and hearing African-American experiences portrayed on the stage. The play established Lorraine Hansberry as a major playwright and a leading voice of the American Theater in the 1960s, enhanced the already lustrous reputation of film actor Sidney Poitier and launched the careers of a series of individuals who would actively reshape the look and sound of American theater over the next generation, including director Lloyd Richards and actors Ruby Dee, Ossie Davis, Glenn Turman and Douglas Turner Ward. Over the years, A Raisin in the Sun maintained its popularity and with every remount, revival and adaptation catalyzed a discussion of race in the United States by drawing attention to the tensions and anxieties related to neighborhood integration. In 1961, the original cast reunited to appear in a film version of the play. Twelve years later, A Raisin in the Sun was adapted into a musical, Raisin, which ran for two years on Broadway and received the Tony Award for best musical. Since then, Hansberry's play has seen numerous productions, the most recent being the Tony Award-nominated 2004 Broadway revival with Sean Combs, Phylicia Rashad and Audra Mcdonald as headliners.

The House Hansberry Built
by Artistic Intern Evan Garrett

Lorraine Hansberry's classic American play, A Raisin in the Sun, was the inspiration for Bruce Norris's new work Clybourne Park. While A Raisin in the Sun is a dramatic fiction, it is based on Hansberry's real-life experience as a child, when her family moved in to Chicago's segregated Washington Park neighborhood.

Restrictive covenants—realty laws expressively demanding or forbidding certain acts of new leasers—have dominated Chicago's history. In the 1930s, Washington Park's race-based covenants expressly forbade black lessees in its southern subdivision. When the African-American Hansberry family purchased and moved into their home at 6140 S. Rhodes Ave., the Woodlawn Property Owner's Association filed claim, noting their disallowance of black tenants. Not only did the Owners' Association, led by Anna M. Lee, file for court, but repeated instances of violence haunted the Hansberrys. Two disgruntled neighbors threw bricks through the family's windows within a week of their moving in—causing police to be called on guard for the next several months. Tensions

continually grew, forcing the Hansberry parents to carry a loaded pistol in the home. Carl Hansberry, Lorraine's father, fought a three-year legal battle culminating in the important Supreme Court decision Hansberry v. Lee to acquire their home on the South Side. The decision led the way for the disbandment of restrictive covenants based on race. On February 10, 2010, the Chicago City Council's Committee on Historical Landmarks Preservation officially designated the Lorraine Hansberry House as a historical landmark.

Materials from the Lincoln Center Theater Production

Please see supplementary materials for this information.