

THE TYLER PERRY EFFECT: EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF BLACK MEDIA
IMAGES ON THE BLACK IDENTITY

by

NICOLE E. JACKSON
B.S. Howard University, 2007

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of Tyler Perry's *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* on black viewers' racial identity, based on a survey of 145 members of four predominantly African American churches in the Central Florida area. Mirroring Allen, Dawson, and Brown's (1989) model of an African American racial belief system, this study proposed that both shows would positively influence three dimensions of the black identity including closeness to blacks, black separatism, and the belief in positive stereotypes about blacks, while negatively influencing the dimension that emphasizes negative stereotypes about blacks. Socioeconomic status and religiosity were also hypothesized to predict exposure to both shows. The results show that while *House of Payne* positively influenced two dimensions of the black identity including closeness to blacks and the belief in positive stereotypes about blacks, *Meet the Browns* did not have a statistically significant relationship with any of the dimensions of the black identity. Additionally, results showed mixed support for the relationship between socioeconomic status, religiosity, and show exposure. While education had a negative relationship with exposure to both *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*, the income variable revealed no significant results with either show. Lastly, religiosity was shown to be a significant predictor of exposure to *House of Payne*, but not *Meet the Browns*. The findings suggest that Perry's shows may be considered by viewers as more beneficial than harmful to viewers to their racial identity and experience, which contradicts the critiques of his images as reverberating with negative stereotypical images of the past. Findings also suggest the importance of education and religion to black socialization patterns.

Dedication

This study, a reflection of my time, effort, and talents, is dedicated to my parents, Clifford and Lucille Jackson, who taught me that any and everything was possible.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Black identity is “a product of black socialization processes” (Fujioka, 2005, p. 452; Davis & Gandy, 1999). Because African-Americans have consistently been denied full access into predominantly white Anglo-Saxon establishments (Gordon, 1961), institutions such as the black church, black press, and black education system function to promote in-group relationships, activities, and social settings (Myrdal, 2000; Gordon, 1961). Although Myrdal (2000) suggests that these institutions are nothing more than a distorted image of the American culture and argues against a unique black identity, research including Allen, Dawson, and Brown’s (1989) exploration into an African-American racial belief system reveal that black institutions, such as the ones previously mentioned, serve to influence and shape one’s connection to his or her identity as a person of color. In today’s media rich society, black television media has become a significant influencer of black group consciousness (Fujioka, 2005; Allen, 2001).

African-Americans have had a challenging existence in television media, both in front of and behind the camera. One of the few that have broken through the constraints of television media has been Tyler Perry. Perry’s mark in the entertainment industry began with his very popular stage plays, but it wasn’t until his 2005 theatrical debut *Diary of a Mad Black Woman* did Perry reach super star status. Since then, Perry has produced eight films, each debuting #1 at the box office (Jones, 2009). In 2006 Perry brought his success to the small screen with *House of Payne* followed by *Meet the Browns* in 2009. The premiere of both shows brought in a combined

audience of over 9 million viewers (Dempsey, 2007; Yourse, 2009). Perry's stories and images of black culture have been successful both in Hollywood and on the small screen. He has, however, faced harsh criticism over his portrayals of African-Americans.

One of Perry's biggest critics has been director and filmmaker Spike Lee. In May 2009, during a broadcast of *Our World with Black Enterprise* with journalist Ed Gordon, Lee, in response to the poor images black viewers seem to be most drawn to, made the following comment (Gordon, 2009):

“A lot of stuff on today is coonery and buffoonery. And I know its making a lot of money, breaking records, but we could do better...When I watch the games on TNT, I see these two ads for these two shows and I'm scratching my head. We got a black president. Are we going back to Mantan Moreland, Sleep n Eat?”

Without making a specific reference, it was clear that Lee was alluding to Perry and his successful foray into black television media with his two highly rated shows *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*. Lee is not alone in his assessment. Apart from these accusations, however, what appears to be lacking from the conversation is the potential influence Perry's work has on black group consciousness. Currently, as one of very few black media producers, Perry's productions represent limited opportunities for blacks to see images of themselves, especially when it comes to television media. For African-Americans, black media has been shown to inform and reinforce black group consciousness (Fujioka, 2005; Allen, 2001).

The purpose of this study then, is to examine the institution of black media, which is one of today's most influential shaper of ideas and beliefs, and its effect on black group consciousness. More specifically, this study will examine how exposure to Perry's *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* influences the degree of one's black group identity. The following discussion will begin by first defining the black identity and how it is developed, it will then look at the factors that influence the degree of one's racial identity, and will end with a discussion on Perry's television productions.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The Black Identity

Cross (1971; 1995), a prominent scholar of racial identity, defines the black identity as the racial salience or consciousness one attaches to being an African-American. In the early 1900s the U.S. experienced a sharp rise in immigrants entering the country (Gleason, 1961). In an effort to protect the American identity, the U.S. had to determine how it would absorb foreigners into the country while maintaining its cultural identity and in some aspect preserve the culture of the immigrant. Three significant theories were developed: the melting pot theory, the theory of assimilation, and cultural pluralism (Gordon, 1961). Interestingly, the African-American's absorption into the Western society's norms, values, and belief system was excluded from the conversation (Gordon, 1961). Glazer and Moynihan (1963) argued that "it is not possible for Negroes to view themselves as other ethnic groups viewed themselves...because the Negro is only an American and nothing else. He has no values and culture to guard and protect" (p. 53). In his well-known discussion on the Negro problem, Gunnar Myrdal (2000) similarly suggested that "American Negro culture is not something independent of general American culture. It is a distorted development or pathological condition of the general American culture" (p. 928).

The deracination of Africans through American colonialism and slavery had in fact created a race that struggled to capture the merits of its own identity (Stuckey, 1999; Richardson,

1998). These authors argued that, in many ways, the Negro was *only an American and nothing else*. In his essay, “The cultural philosophy of Paul Robeson,” Stuckey (1999) expounded on Robeson’s view of the Negro identity as “having a deep sense of inferiority,” “feelings of inadequacy,” and the desire “to become as nearly like a white man as possible” (p. 24). Consequently, black leaders, civil rights activists, and scholars of the 60s and 70s called for the transformation of the Negro into what would come to be referred to as the black identity. Robeson believed the Negro could be liberated from his or her feelings of inferiority by being educated on the merits of his or her African roots (Stuckey, 1999). He sought to reconnect the Negro to the spiritual, lingual, and musical artifacts of the West African nations he had been taken from. Asante (1999) saw Negro liberation as a result of *systematic nationalism*, recognizing and facing the struggle of racism in America and by embracing a black consciousness while Marcus Garvey saw the “physical migration” (p. 7) of colored peoples to the continent of Africa as a means of Negro liberation. However, as Allen (2001) argues, slavery and its remnants were both of the body and the mind, therefore to transform the Negro into a culturally conscious being that embraced his blackness, the mind had to be joined with the body in liberation.

The journey to nigrance, the French term for *becoming black* or taking on a more racially conscious identity, stemmed from the black consciousness period of the late sixties to mid seventies (Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1998). As the name suggests, this period was marked

as a time when blacks as a whole began the transition from a negative perspective of being people of color into embracing and recognizing the merits to being of African descent.

In their study “A Schema-Based Approach to Modeling an African-American Racial Belief System,” Allen, Dawson and Brown (1989) provide one of the primary efforts at describing the racial identity of black Americans. The authors identified five dimensions of the black identity, including (1) the belief that blacks should be separate or independent from other races, (2) a feeling of intimacy and familiarity with other blacks, (3) a feeling of intimacy and familiarity to blacks in a higher socioeconomic status and (4) the inclination to hold positive or (5) negative stereotypical beliefs towards blacks. Allen et al. suggest that these dimensions influence how blacks view their reality and how they make decisions about themselves and others based on the perceptions of this reality. More specifically, the authors suggest that political and social behaviors are greatly influenced by these dimensions of the black racial identity. For blacks, they argue, race is a salient part of their identity; although it takes on different levels of significance for each individual, race continues to be an important factor in how blacks maneuver through and understand the world around them. It is important to note that other theories have identified similar components of the black identity, most notably the theory of nigrescence.

Similar to Allen et al.’s (1989) model, nigrescence theories recognize the multidimensionality of black Americans and thereby seek to combine those characteristics and identities that initiate a high salience of the black identity and those that do not (Cross &

Vandiver, 2001). In most nigrescence models these identities are mapped out in stages, with most having between four to five (Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1998; Cross & Vandiver, 2001). Each stage illustrates the salience one has to his/her reference group, which Cross & Vandiver (2001) refer to as a “reference group orientation” (p. 372), in this case, the black identity. Although a number of nigrescence models have been developed (Cross et al, 1996), Cross’ stage model (1971; 1995) has been one of the most cited explorations on this subject (Davis, Alexander, Calvi, Wrese, Greene, Nowak, Cross, & Resnicow, 2010). According to Cross (1971, 1995) the five stages of and to nigrescence include pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, internalization, and internalization-commitment which closely resemble the literature on the other forms of the nigrescence stage model.

Generally, the stages of the nigrescence models closely resemble the dimensions found in Allen et al.’s (1989) study mentioned earlier. The scholars found that “black autonomy” (p. 423) or the belief that blacks should create their own cultural institutions was relevant in measuring one’s black identity. Similarly, the theory of nigrescence identifies the relevancy of this dimension in measuring the black identity via the dimension recognized as immersion-emersion or third stage. It is during this stage the black identity takes on the most salience, with race playing a significant role in how a person views and interprets the world. One’s blackness is sought in the membership of black institutions and the tackling of black oriented issues. Autonomy from traditionally white institutions is sought. It is also during this stage (immersion-emersion) that the black identity is most idealized, where (for a black person) being black is

considered the optimal choice while being any other race, especially white, is considered less than optimal. This stage closely resembles Allen et al.'s dimensions which suggest that the black identity can be measured by the level of intimacy or positive feelings and familiarity one possesses towards other blacks. In addition, both Cross and Allen et al. recognized that the negative feelings held towards other blacks were an important dimension in measuring one's racial belief system. According to Allen et al., this dimension illustrates the "degree to which the individual has internalized and adopt[ed] the negative stereotypes imposed by the dominant society" (p. 424). For Cross, assimilation, deracination and self-hatred, all stemming from negative beliefs towards the black group, characterize persons in this stage. The only dimension of Allen et al.'s study that fails to be replicated in other discussions of the black identity is the *feeling of intimacy and familiarity to blacks in a higher socioeconomic status*; therefore, it will not be included in this study.

These dimensions, in combination, provide a measure of one's black identity or *racial belief system*, and have been found to be heavily influenced by three factors: socioeconomic status, religion, and the black media. As one of the few existing studies that have investigated the tripartite relationship among these factors, Allen et al. (1989) concluded that these socializing institutions did, in fact, play an important role in the development of the black racial identity.

Before continuing this discussion, it is important to note the role of skin color in defining an African American's racial identity. Skin color has been shown to impact the life chances and experiences blacks have in relationships and in the workplace (Hughes & Hertel, 1990; Ransford

1970; Hochschild & Weaver, 2007). The results have been mixed on its influence in the way blacks identify themselves racially, however. While Hughes and Hertel's (1990) study of more than 2,000 African American adults found that lighter skin blacks scored lower on the black consciousness scale when compared to their darker skin counterparts, a more recent study by Hochschild and Weaver (2007) argued that regardless of skin color, blacks in general shared a sense of *linked fate* to one another, which closely resembles the closeness to blacks dimension within the black identity. While not directly relating to black consciousness, other studies have found a link between skin color and the negative attitudes blacks held towards whites, finding that dark skin blacks held this sentiment more than lighter skin blacks (Ransford, 1970).

Skin color is an important element within the racial identity of blacks. This is especially evident in Russell, Wilson, and Hall's (1992) examination of biracial and light skin blacks and the challenges they face both in the racial identification of themselves and also in the racial identity others place on them. The authors found that although their light skin offered them advantages over darker skin blacks, they still found it difficult to plug into a black identity. As a result, some overcompensated by being overtly "black" while others abandoned a black identity altogether. This discussion will not end anytime soon, however it is best to conclude with a quote that sums up the entire argument: "Skin color appears to affect identity, but in complex and seemingly unpredictable ways" (Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992, p. 62).

Research (including Allen et al.) on how the black racial identity is developed via socialization is reviewed next.

Developing a Black Identity

“Socialize” is a term dating back to the 1828 edition of the Oxford Dictionary in which it was defined as “to render social, to make fit for living in a society” (Clause, 1968, p. 21). The process of socializing or socialization can be found in various studies of social sciences including psychology, economics, political science, anthropology and sociology (Mercer & Wanderer, 1970) and communication. At the core of all social sciences is the study of group experiences - how individuals interact within the group environment (Mercer & Wanderer). However, it is the angle that each field of study takes in examining socialization that distinguishes one field from the other. This discussion will focus on the differences found in the fields of anthropology and sociology as they are the most relevant to the current discussion of cultural learning.

In the most general terms, sociology can be defined as “the scientific study of human relations” (Mercer & Wanderer, 1970, p. 12). It seeks to understand the behaviors of individuals as a result of group interaction in an attempt to make inferences and to theorize about future group experiences. The term socialization began making its mark in sociology by the mid 19th century when a number of sociologists made observations in reference to the study in their writings. Those sociologists included German sociologist Georg Simmel and American sociologists F.P. Giddings and E.A. Ross (Clausen, 1968). For sociologists, sociology examines “the process whereby man [sic] becomes fully human” (Clausen, 1968, p. 25). Sociologists have focused their attention on collective behavior as it pertains to social control and the learning and

acquiring of “human nature” (p. 48) as an effect of group interaction; it is this last focus that greatly distinguishes it from the anthropology view of socialization, as will be explained later.

A more current description of socialization within the field of sociology can be found in Maccoby’s (2007) definition: the “process whereby naïve individuals are taught the skills, behavior patterns, values, and motivations needed for competent functioning...” in the dominant society (p. 13). Although sociologists have focused their attention on the socialization efforts of children and adolescents (Clausen, 1968), socialization is an on going process that takes place long into adulthood as humans must constantly learn how to effectively maneuver through each juncture of life. For children and adolescents, parents, religion, teachers, and siblings take on the role of the primary socializing agents (Maccoby, 2007). However, these agents change as one enters into adulthood.

Arnett (2007) found that for emerging adults (ages 18-25) parents and friends played a less significant role in the socialization process than they did in the child and adolescence years. Because emerging adulthood is characterized by a time of self-development in which education, career, and personal life goals take precedence over marriage and starting a family, the primary socializing agents included the work place and media. Fingerman and Pitzer (2007) looked at socialization in old age and found that as adults transitioned into the late stages of life, social partners, culture, and self-socialization played an integral role in the socialization process. These findings suggest that as traditional learning mechanisms such as the family and education system become less relevant in the socialization process less traditional outlets including messages from

the media take on a more prominent role in the learning process which has been shown to continue into the later years of life.

In terms of defining socialization, where sociologists are concerned with child rearing and acquiring the traits of human nature, anthropology focuses more on organized groups of people who share cultural patterns and personality attainment (Mercer & Wanderer, 1970). For example, Margaret Mead, an American cultural anthropologist, examined the role education played in childhood, as a socializing agent, within the Samoan culture while American anthropologist John Whiting studied the Kwoma of New Guinea to understand the socialization processes of that culture (Clausen, 1968). Within the U.S., studies of blacks from an anthropological standpoint include Oliver's (2006) examination of "the streets" and its role as a socializing institution among black males in a lower socioeconomic status, Love's (2010) analysis of socialization efforts among black nursing students at a traditionally white university, and Leslie's (1998) discussion on black mothers and their use of Brer Rabbit stories as a cultural socializing tool. In the study of anthropology the focus on socialization in a society is referred to as cultural transmission.

Bisin and Verdier (2005) define cultural transmission as "the transmission of preferences, beliefs, and norms of behavior which is the result of social interactions across and within generations" (p. 2). Mercer and Wanderer (1970) define it as a process "whereby a society preserves its norms and perpetuates itself" (p. 31). Both definitions illustrate the core objective of cultural transmission: to preserve and sustain the cultural artifacts that make up a society.

Cavalli-Sforza and Feldman (1981) outlined the process by which “culture is learned and transmitted” (p. 10) from generation to generation. Drawing from the theoretical perspectives of Darwinian Fitness and Diffusion of Innovations, the model of cultural transmission seeks to explain how a culture is sustained through the learning and dissemination of its cultural traits.

Although Darwinian fitness focuses on biological processes while Diffusion of Innovations examines the transmission of ideas, products, and technology, both theories play an important role in defining the process of cultural transmission. As its name suggests, Darwinian fitness is a term used in reference to the biological reproduction and preservation of genetic traits. The traits that exhibit a significant amount of Darwinian fitness are those that are sustained over time by the continuous replication of certain genetics from parents to children and subsequently from generation to generation. Specific eye color, height, hair textures, and even diseases found in persons from particular familial and ethnic backgrounds are some biological traits that illustrate Darwinian fitness.

Cavalli-Sforza and Feldman (1981) define cultural transmission as a two step process in which one first becomes aware of his or her cultural trait and then makes the decision to accept or reject that trait, which in the cultural transmission process can be better defined as the decision to learn a new behavior or be socialized. It is this process of awareness of and deliberate choice to learn that determines the Darwinian fitness of a trait. Unlike the biological process in which a trait is genetically transmitted through persons and generations, “cultural inheritance” is dependent on social interactions (p. 78).

Cultural diffusion and inheritance are a function of three models of “social transmission” (Schonpflug, 2001, p. 174; Hewlett & Cavalli-Sforza, 1986): vertical, horizontal, and oblique. Vertical transmission is the process by which culture is passed down from parent to child while horizontal transmission defines the process by which culture is transmitted from persons within the same generation such as siblings, friends, peers, and even family members that are proximal in age and oblique transmission can occur in two ways: (1) the learning of cultural traits from teachers, grandparents, and religious leaders and (2) through the transmission of mediated messages. This study seeks to examine the role these models play in the transmission of an African-American belief system or black identity as it relates to black group consciousness, by looking at three essential socializing influences in the black community including socioeconomic status, religion and black television media.

As previously discussed, the black identity is comprised of five dimensions-four of which will be specifically discussed in this study-(1) the belief that blacks should be separate or independent from other races, (2) a feeling of intimacy and familiarity with other blacks and (3) the inclination to hold positive or (4) negative stereotypical beliefs towards blacks. As Allen et al. (1989) suggest, these dimensions will vary in degree for each individual based on his or her status, exposure to mediated messages and his or her ability to handle social information. More specifically, as previously mentioned, the authors identified three factors that influenced the learning and transmission of racial identity among African-Americans: socioeconomic status, religion and the black media. This tripartite relationship is reviewed next.

Tripartite relationship between socioeconomic status, religion, and exposure to black media

In their study “A Schema-Based Approach to Modeling an African-American Racial Belief System” that was mentioned earlier, Allen et al. (1989) proposed the existence of a tripartite relationship among three variables: personal background factors (socioeconomic status and religiosity), exposure to black media and the black identity. Based on previous literature, the authors argued that specific personal background factors would influence exposure to black media (which the authors segmented into print and television media, however, this study will only discuss television media), which would then influence the salience of and feelings toward the black identity and whose final effect would be the basis of political and social behavior. This model was a response to Myrdal, Glazer and Moynihan who, as discussed earlier, asserted that race was of little consequence to blacks, that the African-American viewpoint and decision making processes were not informed by race but by other factors. Based on their results, Allen et al. emphasized three conclusions: the relationship between socioeconomic status, religion, and exposure to black media lacked significance; however results showed that exposure to black media greatly influenced one’s black racial salience.

Socioeconomic Status and Black Television

Research (e.g., Glasser & Metzger, 1975; Greenberg & Dervin, 1970) has historically shown that those in a lower socioeconomic status tend to view television (and media in general) at higher rates than those in a higher social and economic status. For blacks, the same is also true. The relationship between socioeconomic status and exposure to black media,

specifically, is not directly related to one's measure of racial identity. Rather, it is the availability or lack of resources that influences one's exposure to black television media (Allen et al., 1989).

In their examination of the African American racial belief system, Allen et al. (1989) argue that socioeconomic status has a negative relationship with one's exposure to black television media. The authors suggest that because of the opportunities a high socioeconomic status, a variable consisting of education, occupation, and family income, may offer, blacks in a higher economic and social position are more likely to choose exposure to black media in the form of black print media. Although the authors found the relationship between socioeconomic status and exposure to black television media lacked in statistical significance, other studies have successfully found a corresponding relationship between the two variables.

Allen and Hatchett's (1986) study on the relationship between exposure to black media and one's idea of social reality, reported a statistically significant relationship between socioeconomic status and exposure to black television media. The authors found that less educated blacks who were racially trained by their parents were more likely to view black television than blacks with a higher education and who had also been racially trained by their parents. In addition, a more recent study by Vercellotti and Brewer (2006) examined the consumption habits for black news media to determine the demographics of African Americans that were more likely to consume black news in the form of print or television.

The authors found that as income levels increased exposure to black television news media decreased.

Based on the previous review of literature, it is suggested that:

H1: Socioeconomic status has a negative relationship with exposure to

a) *House of Payne*

b) *Meet the Browns*

Religiosity and Black Television

The black church is an important institution in the black community. Among other responsibilities, it serves to promote relationships, activities, and social settings among African-Americans (Gordon, 1961). Of the 30 million African Americans in the United States, about 24 million attend one of the major denominations within the black church (Henderson & Hayes, 2006). Research has shown that, in the black community, religious commitment or dedication is a major factor in determining one's exposure to black media.

In their outline of an African American racial belief system, Allen, et al. (1989), suggest that those blacks with a strong connection to the black church would exhibit high measures of racial consciousness. As a result, the authors argued that these blacks would be more inclined to seek out media that portrayed characters with similar racial backgrounds in an effort to learn about their racial group and to view positive portrayals of blacks. Results showed that religiosity was useful in predicting exposure to black media. In examining the connection between religion, group identification, and political participation, Wilcox and Gomez (1990)

found that, for blacks, religion is positively associated with black group identification. Similarly, Jacobson (1992) found that religion positively correlated with the black pride dimension. While the latter two studies do not directly focus on the relationship between religiosity and exposure to black media, these studies, combined with the Allen et al. (1989) study, are important in understanding the connection among religiosity, racial consciousness, and black media exposure. Focusing on Tyler Perry's two most highly rated television situation comedies as described earlier, this study suggests the following hypothesis:

H2: Blacks that exhibit a high measure of religiosity will view Tyler Perry's *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* more often than those blacks with a lower measure of religiosity.

Black Media and the Black Identity

As emphasized earlier, Allen et al. (1989) and others have found, media are a significant reinforcer of racial belief systems. This is not surprising as media play an important role in the socializing process. In particular, Bandura's (2002) Social Cognitive Theory of Mass Communication provides a logical way of understanding the media's effect, suggesting that individuals use the media to learn about themselves and the world around them. Moreover, for purposes of evaluating the soundness of their personal choices or decisions individuals also engage the media. This theory suggests a range of models that can explain media's effect on viewers' behaviors, decision making processes, and beliefs about their reality. This discussion, however, will focus on the symbolic modeling component of the theory as it is the most relevant.

It is both impossible and dangerous to exclusively learn through direct experience or to learn about the consequences of one's behavior only by first experiencing those consequences (or benefits). Rather, in addition to direct experience, learning is a process that takes place vicariously, which Bandura (2002) suggests is done through symbolic modeling. The media play a significant role in disseminating these symbolic models. By observing these models, consumers learn new behaviors, beliefs, ideas, and the possible consequences of those behaviors without the need to directly experience it for themselves. Observational learning is an important characteristic of symbolic modeling as media models have the ability to relay messages to a large and diverse audience. It is important to note that symbolic modeling does not suggest that viewer's simply duplicate the behaviors they consume. Observers are more apt to perform the modeled behavior once the following four criteria have been met in some way: attention has been given to the model, the model's behavior has been retained by the viewer, the viewer then practices the execution of the behavior, and lastly performance is based on the viewer's motivation to carry out the performance of the acquired behaviors, including perceived benefits.

Through media models, viewers are able to validate their choices, make judgments about future choices, and are able to live vicariously through the experiences of others. Individuals are limited in their direct experiences with the world around them, therefore observational or vicarious learning is a necessary part of life. While media are not the only learning tools, as has been shown above, in today's media rich society they play an increasingly major role in our learning processes. As "distorted media versions of social reality can foster shared

misconceptions of people, places, and things” (Bandura, 2002, p. 125), it becomes clear why studies such as Allen et al. (1989) examined the role media plays in the African-American racial belief system.

Black Americans have a unique relationship with the mass media, television media in particular. When compared to Caucasians, African-Americans watch television at substantially higher rates (Abrams, 2008; Bales, 1986). Interestingly, Abrams (2008) found that when blacks watched television because of *habit/boredom* they were more inclined to see Caucasians as having more “vitality”. In a four year longitudinal study, Bales (1986) found that African-Americans were more “confident” and had more trust in the information they received from television than did Caucasians. Gandy (2001) and Jones (1990) found that in addition to watching high amounts of television (3 to 5 hours each day), black respondents spent the majority of their time with media that was directed towards an African-American audience.

As the before mentioned social cognitive theory suggests, viewers are more apt to model the behavior of television characters that they can most identify with (Bandura, 2002). In his discussion of Spike Lee’s film “She’s Gotta Have It,” Scott (2003) suggests that the media’s effect on viewers is increased or strengthened when the media model closely resembles the viewer. In this respect, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. understood the influential power of the mass media and used it to rally black Americans as well as other Americans across the United States during the civil rights movement (Asante, 2005).

Dr. King tapped television to ensure that blacks throughout the nation witnessed the ill and harsh treatment fellow blacks endured across the different cities and states of the United States at the hands of whites (Asante, 2005). For some blacks, more specifically those in the Northern states, these televised portrayals served as their *awakening* to the realities of racism in the South (Asante, 2005). This experience started them on the path to black consciousness. For the others who were already aware of racism in America and even those who lived it daily, the televised portrayals (demonstrations, beatings, burnings, marches etc.) made them confront their own contribution to the fight for true equality. As Asante (2005) argues: “One ‘black is beautiful’ by Stokeley Carmichael carried live and in color on national television could do more to alert the black community to self-dignity and pride than a decade of NAACP legal battles” (p. 63). Allen et al.’s (1989) study recognized this unique relationship between the black identity and television, more specifically black television.

Allen et al. (1989) suggest the importance of mass media in the “communication and transmission of cultural orientations” (p. 426). As was the case during the previous example of the civil rights movement, the authors argued that exposure to black media, especially black television media, had the ability to reinforce black group consciousness. More specifically, the authors found a positive and statistically significant relationship between exposure to black television and three of the four dimensions of the black identity including: the inclination to hold positive stereotypical beliefs towards blacks, the belief that blacks should be separate or independent from other races and a feeling of intimacy for and familiarity with other blacks.

These results mirror Allen and Bielby (1979) and Allen and Hatchet's (1986) studies which found that those blacks who viewed black shows were more likely to feel a sense of "alienation from white society" (p. 443) and those who spent more time with black television were more likely to have a black separatist perspective, respectively.

In a study of the Black Entertainment Television (BET) channel, Jones (1990) specifically examined black viewers' feelings toward the medium in addition to measuring their black identity. The results showed that high racial salience positively related to the likeliness of viewing BET programming. In addition, Allen and Hatchet also found that frequent viewers of black television were more likely to exhibit "strong nonmainstream black group identification" (p. 114). These are both important and telling findings, as they reinforce the relationship among exposure to black television and the black identity measure. More specifically, they detail the possible effects Tyler Perry's television portrayals are having on its viewers. Based on the previous discussion, this study suggests that:

H3: Exposure to

- a) *House of Payne*
- b) *Meet the Browns*

has a positive relationship with black autonomy.

H4: Exposure to

- a) *House of Payne*
- b) *Meet the Browns*

has a positive relationship with closeness to the masses of African Americans.

H5: Exposure to

- a) *House of Payne*
- b) *Meet the Browns*

has a positive relationship with the propensity to adopt positive stereotypical beliefs about African Americans.

H6: Exposure to

- a) *House of Payne*
- b) *Meet the Browns*

has a negative influence on the propensity to believe negative stereotypical beliefs about African Americans.

The following section will review the past and current history of black television media.

Black Television

In the “Souls of Black Folk,” DuBois considers the dilemma blacks face as minorities in America (Du Bois, 1994, p. 5):

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood (sic), to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American...

No where else has this struggle been played out so vividly than in the situational comedy genre of television. The tale of the African in America has been on display since the 1800s (Means Coleman, 2000). It is a story that, for the most part, has been a creation of white America. Beginning with minstrel shows of the 1800s, in which representations of blackness included grossly stereotyped portrayals of white men dressed up in black face speaking in a distorted version of the English language, blacks have seen versions of their purposed selves played out in front of the masses. These distorted *versions* of blackness, some argue, can still be found in today's black media portrayals.

The period of minstrelsy created some of the most well-known stereotypes of African-Americans that can be found throughout the history of blacks in media. The coon and Uncle Tom depictions seem to encapsulate the various stereotypical characterizations. Means Coleman (2000) suggests that recreations of the singing, dancing, comedic coon made popular in the minstrel theater can be found in black character television portrayals such as J.J. Evans of *Good Times* (1974-1979), George Jefferson of the *The Jeffersons* (1975-1985), Martin of the Fox television series *Martin* (1992-1997), and Shawn and Marlon of *The Wayans Brothers* (1999). Robert Guillaume's portrayal as Benson in the ABC program *Benson* (1979-1986), Diahann Carroll's role in *Julia* (1968-1971), and Carlton Banks, the "preppy, staunchly conservative, fully assimilated, Tom Jones- loving" (p. 108) cousin of Will on the *Fresh Prince of Bel Air* (1990-1996), according to the author, are clear reflections of the Uncle Tom stereotypical image, a well known characterization found in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. As the

majority of female portrayals were performed by cross-dressing males (both white and black) during the minstrelsy shows of the 1800s, stereotypical characterizations of black women found in some of today's black television media can be traced back to the early days of radio and television programming (Means Coleman, 2000).

The overweight mammy and mean, emasculating Sapphire are stereotypical portrayals that have become a mainstay in black media's portrayal of women (West, 1995). *The Beulah Show*, first having success on radio then on TV in the 1950s, introduced the mammy character, famously portrayed by Hattie McDaniel in 1939's *Gone with the Wind*, to the television mediated audience (Means Coleman, 2000; Nelson 1998). Mammy, the overweight, dark skinned woman, religiously devoted to her duty as the house maid, and void of sexuality (West, 1995), can be found in some of today's recent television portrayals, including Nell Carter's Emmy and Golden Globe nominated role as Nell Harper on *Gimme a Break!* (1981-1987) (Dates, 1993) and the overweight, stay at home wife and mother Louis Jefferson of *The Jeffersons* (1975-1985) (Burr, 2001). The stereotypical Sapphire image, named after Sapphire Stevens – the “pure shrew – unable to breathe without raising [her] voice; unable to think without complaining about something” (Bogle, 2001, p. 36) of the radio and television program *Amos 'n' Andy* are reflected in some of today's television portrayals including Thelma of *Good Times*, Florence Henderson of *The Jeffersons*, Harriette Winslow of *Family Matters* (1989-1998), Gina Payne and Pam James of *Martin* (Means Coleman, 2000), to name a few.

These extreme stereotypical portrayals of blackness and American-ness have been continuously played out in front of mass audiences. Very few television programs have been able to successfully portray black characters that exhibit non-stereotypical depictions of the black identity and in addition are able to maneuver through the Western culture without becoming culturally out of touch. NBC's *The Cosby Show* (1984-1992) and *A Different World* (1987-1993) and CBS's short lived *Frank's Place* (1987-1988) are the few exceptions (Means Coleman, 2000). These shows showcased intelligent black characters that exhibited mainstream success including Cliff and Claire Huxtable's occupations as an OB-GYN and Attorney, respectively, and as college students and professors on *A Different World*. Their use of non-stereotypical "cultural signifiers" is what set these shows apart from both their predecessors and successors (Means Coleman, p. 97, 2000). For example, in *The Cosby Show* black art, jazz music, and t-shirts with the names of various historically black colleges and universities are continually used as representations of the black culture.

The genre of media programs that continues to exploit these "historical images" (West, 1995, p. 458) falls within the situation comedy or *sitcom* genre of television media. The situation comedy, a format made popular by the *Amos n Andy* television show (Means Coleman, 2000), is a 30 minute comedic program positioned around a main issue that almost always comes to a happy resolution by the end of the program (Gray, 1986; Nelson, 1998). It is important to examine this genre of television media and its effects for two major reasons. First, blacks have appeared in many roles on television, but their most prevalent roles have been in the situation

comedy, with 184 having a black lead since 1947 (Nelson, 1998; Holte, 1984; Allen & Hatchett, 1986). Second, blacks consume situation comedies more than any other genre (Abrams, 2008).

The following section will discuss audience perception of black media as it relates to the impact on black group membership.

Audience perception of black media images' effect on the black identity

Minorities, in general, and blacks, in particular, consume media images differently than white audiences (Abrams, 2008; Gandy, 2001; Jones, 1990). When watching black media images, black viewers tend to make judgments on the message's effect on their identity as members of their racial group (Fujioka, 2005). As Tatum (1997) suggests, the issue of racial group identity fails to be an issue for most white viewers. Black media messages, however, share a role in informing black viewers about who they are and how others may view them as members within that group (Allen, 2001).

According to the theory of collective identity, a commonality in race and ethnicity can promote a sense of community and belonging (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1989). This suggests that, for black audiences, black media images can both encourage and support the feeling of one's membership within the collective black group identity (Fujioka, 2005). Viewers then evaluate those images and make judgments on the accuracy of those images in portraying the African-American group, as a whole.

Popular black media have faced criticism for not accurately reflecting the black group experience. Inniss and Feagin (1995) found that, although very popular, some black viewers

perceived *The Cosby Show* as a less than accurate portrayal of what it was to be black in America. The Huxtable's upper middle class, two-parent household, for some, was not reflective of the black family. In a study examining strategies black viewers use to protect themselves against threats to their black group membership, Fujioka (2005) found that black viewers did not perceive the depictions of African-Americans in entertainment media as accurately reflecting blacks as a group. The following research questions have been proposed to further examine how viewers evaluate the characters in Perry's *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*:

RQ1: How will viewers evaluate the portrayal of the black characters in

- a) *House of Payne*
- b) *Meet the Browns*?

RQ2: How accurately will viewers believe

- a) *House of Payne*
- b) *Meet the Browns*

reflects black group membership experience?

The following section will examine how blackness is portrayed in Perry's *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* by reviewing commentary from popular news media and black leaders in media.

Tyler Perry's *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*

Since his 2005 theatrical film *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, Tyler Perry has held the reins on black entertainment (Huguenin, 2009; Rainer, 2010). Based on Perry's website, in his short career he has written and produced six stage plays, nine films, and one New York Times' bestseller. Indeed, people of color come out in droves to support Perry's work. For example,

eight of his films have debuted #1 at the box office (Jones, 2009), with his highest grossing film, *Madea Goes to Jail*, bringing in over \$90 million (Frankel, 2009; Saval, 2009). He is black entertainment's golden child, to say the least. In addition to his list of accomplishments in the entertainment industry, Perry currently has two of the highest ranking shows among black audiences on cable television: *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*.

Perry's first television program to air, *House of Payne* (2006-present), is currently in syndication with new episodes airing on the Turner Broadcasting System (TBS). On its website, the sitcom is described as "a new comedy series about a multigenerational, working class family who experiences all of life's struggles with faith, love and most importantly humor." It follows the lives of the Payne family; a black family living in Atlanta, GA. With a very colorful group of characters, *Meet the Browns*, Tyler's second television program which began airing on TBS in 2009 immediately after *House of Payne*, follows the "misadventures" of Leroy Brown and his family.

Although it was not in this study's parameters to compare/contrast the content of Perry's highly rated shows, it is important to discuss the differences found between *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*. Based on the researcher's own examination, from the surface, both shows seem to replicate each other. Both are centered on a non-traditional family, both share a consistent theme of religion throughout the series, and both follow the prescribed layout of a traditional situational comedy (sitcom). To gain more insight into the disparities between the two shows, descriptions of each show from popular media will be examined.

A brisk overview and comparison of pop culture's literature discussing Perry's *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* presents a very simple, yet telling explanation of the differences found between the two programs. To begin, based on the literature, *House of Payne* is very much so based on the family. Of course, it offers an untraditional take on family but in a very traditional sense. As Stasi (2007) of the *New York Post* explains, "*House of Payne*... is what you call a regular, everyday, family sitcom" (p. 114). In fact, it is regularly likened to Norman Lear's *All in the Family* (Gray, 2007; Kronke, 2007; Barnhart, 2007) and *Good Times* (Bellafante, 2007). Some have even gone as far to suggest that *House of Payne* offers a comparison to *The Cosby Show*, although inadequate (Cox, 2007).

The House of Payne portrays the Payne family, a multigenerational family living under one roof in Atlanta, GA (Moore, 2007; Hedgpeth, 2007). It details the stories of two, fully intact families that include 1. Patriarch of the family Curtis, his wife Ella, and son Calvin alongside 2. Curtis' nephew CJ, his wife Janine and two younger children (Vejnoska, 2007). For Perry, having both parents present in the Payne household was an important and necessary part of the story line (Moore, 2007). As Steve Koonin, president of Turner Entertainment Networks states in reference to Perry's *House of Payne*, "We wanted a show that made people celebrate the pleasures and values of family, but in a real sense" (Vejnoska, 2007).

The portrayal of the family is where *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* seem to draw their biggest distinction. While *Meet the Browns* does portray the lives of Leroy Brown and his daughter Cora and husband and wife duo Will and Sasha (Kinon, 2009), it very loosely draws on

this aspect. The story line more so focuses on the interactions between Mr. Brown and the “eccentric residents and employees” (Kinon, 2009, p.72; Ho, 2009) living and working at his retirement home which is also his home. Mr. Brown’s unconventional clothing choices and off kilter jargon is what the show is built around (Duke, 2009). The differences between *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* suggest that the role and portrayal of the family in black media is an important aspect in determining how viewers’ are influenced by television images and also how the images are perceived in relation to being an accurate portrayal of the black experience.

Although each is distinctly different from the other, both shows have been widely successful in terms of drawing large audiences. The premier of *House of Payne* brought in over 5 million viewers (Dempsey, 2007) while *Meet the Browns* premiered with 4.2 million viewers becoming the second most watched series among blacks behind Fox’s *American Idol* in 2009 (Yourse, 2009). *House of Payne* was nominated in 2008 and then awarded in 2009 with the NAACP’s Image Award for Outstanding Comedy Series. In 2009, both shows were the most watched among blacks 18 to 34 (Yourse, 2009). While *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* have been tremendously successful, both they and Perry have been met with sharp criticism.

In a piece on the relevancy of the NAACP and its yearly Image Award television special, which honors people of color in the entertainment industry, Barres (2009) writes (p. B04):

“At the very least, it should drop the Image Awards. After all, celebrating one-dimensional characters like those in Tyler Perry’s *House of Payne* isn’t that far from praising the 1950s portrayals of blacks in *Amos ‘n’ Andy*, is it?”

Similarly, Bianco (2007) of *USA Today* calls attention to Perry's use of "horrendous mish-mash of old jokes and ugly stereotypes" found in the *House of Payne* (p. 4D). In the same vein, Gallo (2007) writes, "In the first episode, *House of Payne* rolls through a collection of stereotypes and characters familiar to TV audiences. It's old fashioned in structure, sets, and characters" (p. 10). Of Perry's work, Professor Todd Boyd as quoted by La Ferla (2007) of *The New York Times* argues, "His films represent a 'rebirth of the Stepin Fetchit' mentality...the product of an increasingly visible right wing evangelical Christian culture (p. 2)." In a very telling argument of compare and contrast between Perry and the Reverend Jeremiah A. Wright, film critic Roger Moore (Toto, 2008) suggests that "He (Perry) always leaves the race card off the table, with a nearly equal share of black and white villains and sympathetic figures" (p. D01).

A recent and lengthy discussion by Hilton Als (2010) of *The New Yorker* provided the most comprehensive position critics have taken on Perry and his work (N010):

"...Perry's work does fill a need, building on the comfortable predictability of such black sitcoms as *Good Times* and *Sanford and Son*, and adding a dose of Christian reassurance."

"His message of uplift leaves little room, for instance, for a truthful portrayal of black-white relations in this country."

"In Perry's hands, blackness is not a complicated, unresolved fact of American life but an occasion for shallow melodrama that renders the screen far flatter than it should be."

Although Perry's work has been critically analyzed by popular cultural icons such as Spike Lee and various media and entertainment critics, interestingly he has escaped scholarly critique. With sales grossing over \$400 million in less than 5 years, it could be assumed that the

amount of scholarly research on Tyler Perry's work would be extensive (Campbell, 2009).

However, scholarly writings on his work are scarce.

One of the very few academic resources that fully examine Perry's work is Timothy Lyle's 2009 unpublished thesis titled "Check with Yo' Man First; Check with Yo' Man: Perry Appropriates Drag as a Tool to Re-circulate Patriarchal Ideology." In his discussion, Lyle focuses exclusively on the two themes that continuously appear in Perry's stage plays: "gender and sexual politics" (Lyle, 2009, p.1). He offers a critical analysis on Perry's communication techniques of gender and homosexuality in his plays and how those messages conflict with traditional female roles and ideologies such as, "safe feminist spaces, motherhood, female self-sufficiency and female self-definition" (Lyle, 2009, p. 1).

In "Check with Yo' Man First" Lyle cites the second and only other critical analysis to date completed on Perry's work, K.B. Saine's 2005 article "The Black American's Chitlin/Gospel/Urban Show: Tyler Perry and the Madea Plays" (Lyle, 2009). Saine's analysis was published in *Theatre Symposium*, however this journal is available only to members of the Southeastern Theatre Conference, Inc. Lyle's review of Saine's work is very brief. However, he did point out that Saine's analysis was less based on the themes and characters that appeared in Perry's work, but rather it was more so based on how Perry's work, in general, fits into the long history of the black stage play circuit (Lyle, 2009).

The shortcoming in research and analysis when it comes to Perry's work invigorate this current project even more. Tyler Perry has become a staple in black entertainment. Although

alone in its journey, the intent of this research is to motivate discussion and to inspire additional critiques of Perry's work, which has become so important in the lives of many black Americans. Because he is such a force in the arts and entertainment of the African-American community, it becomes imperative to analyze the impact of his work on the negotiation of the African-American racial belief system.

Based on the findings of Allen et al. (1989), one of the most authoritative studies on the relationship among African-American identity, black media, socioeconomic status, and religion, this study will examine the extent to which these relationships apply to two of Perry's most highly watched television situation comedies (i.e. *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*) within the African-American community.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Sample

A convenience sample of 145 people (29% men, 71% women) was drawn from four churches in a small Central Florida community (see Table 2). All four churches were headed by an African American male and consisted of either an all or majority black membership. The mean age was 42.95 (SD = 13.9) years of age (see Table 1). Education was spread amongst the respondents with 33% completing some college, 29% obtaining a college degree, 20% with only a high school diploma and 13% with some form of a post graduate degree (see Table 2). Twenty five percent of respondents had a total family income at or exceeding \$65,000 per year, while the remaining 46% of respondents' total family income fell between \$20,000 and \$50,000 (see Table 2). Lastly, religious affiliation was unequally distributed among the respondents: 69% described their affiliation as non denominational, 12.4% as Pentecostal, 9.7% as Baptist, and the remaining 4.8% were characterized by 'other' (see Table 2).

Although such a sample may not be generalizable to the broader African American population, the church has played a historically dominant role in the affairs of black America and continues to attract a cross section of black people in terms of age, gender, and class (Allen, 2001). Also, previous research on the development of the black identity (e.g. Allen et al, Ellison, 1991; Jacobson, 1992; Wilcox & Gomez, 1990) mentioned previously has included a focus on religiosity. Therefore, seeking responses from church going African-Americans would be a reasonable way of tapping the experiences of an important segment of the African-American population and its ongoing participation in one of its major socializing institutions.

Procedure

Traditional pen and paper surveys were administered to the study participants. Surveys (see Appendix D) were distributed to respondents at either the beginning or end of their regularly scheduled weekly church activities including choir rehearsal, brother and sisterhood meetings, Bible studies and church services.

Measures

- I. Demographic variables:
 - a) Gender
 - b) Age
 - c) Education Attainment
 - d) Total Family Income
 - e) Religious Affiliation
 - f) Race
- II. Television Media Exposure variable:
 - a) Viewership frequency of *House of Payne*
 - b) Viewership frequency of *Meet the Browns*
- III. Religiosity Variable
- IV. Black Racial Belief System variable:
 - a) Closeness to blacks
 - b) Black autonomy
 - c) Positive stereotypical beliefs

d) Negative stereotypical beliefs

V. Accuracy of portrayals

VI. Affective evaluation of portrayals

DATA for H1 and H2

Hypothesis 1 predicted that socioeconomic status would have a negative influence on exposure to *The House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*, while Hypothesis 2 predicted that religiosity would have a positive influence on the exposure variables.

Dependent Variable. Based on Allen et al., respondents' exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* was measured by their response to the following statement on a 5-point scale which ranged from 1 (*never*), 2 (*rarely*), 3 (*sometimes*), 4 (*often*) to 5 (*very often*): "How often do you watch the following programs: (1) Tyler Perry's *House of Payne* and (2) Tyler Perry's *Meet the Browns*."

Independent Variables. Also, following Allen et al., religiosity was measured by respondents' response to the following questions on a 5-point scale which ranged from 1 (*never*), 2 (*rarely*), 3 (*sometimes*), 4 (*often*) and 5 (*very often*): (1) "How often do you read religious books? (2) How often do you listen to religious programs? (3) How often do you pray? to (4) How often do you ask someone to pray for you?" These four questions were combined to create one scale of religiosity which ranged from 4 (*never*), 8 (*rarely*), 12 (*sometimes*), 16 (*often*) and 20 (*very often*).

Socioeconomic status was measured by asking respondents the number of years they completed in school and their total family income per year (occupation was not measured in the present study). For years in school, the available responses ranged from high school, some college, and college degree, to post graduate degree. Total family income was measured on a scale that included the following options: *between zero and \$10,000, between \$10,001 and \$20,000, between \$20,001 and \$30,000, between \$30,001 to \$40,000, between \$40,001 and \$50,000, between \$50,001 and \$60,000, and more than \$60,000.*

DATA for H3, H4, H5, and H6

Hypotheses 3 through 5 predict that the exposure variable will have a positive influence on black autonomy, closeness to blacks as a group, and the propensity to adopt positive stereotypical beliefs about African-Americans while hypothesis 6 predicts that the exposure variable would have a negative influence on the propensity to adopt negative stereotypical beliefs about African-Americans.

Dependent Variable. Black identity was a combined variable made up of responses from four scales which measured closeness to blacks, black separatism, and positive and negative stereotypical beliefs toward black individuals. Respondents' measure of closeness to blacks was measured by their responses to the following questions on a 4-point scale that ranged from 1 (*not close at all*), 2 (*not very close*), 3 (*somewhat close*), to 4 (*extremely close*): "How close do you feel to religious church going people? How close do you feel to middle-class black people? How close do you feel to working-class black people? How close do you feel to older black people?"

How close do you feel to black elected officials? How close do you feel to black doctors, lawyers, and professional people? and How close do you feel to younger black people?”

Respondents’ level of black separatism and positive and negative stereotypical beliefs towards blacks was measured on a 5-point scale which ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*), 2 (*disagree*), 3 (*neutral*), 4 (*agree*), and 5 (*strongly agree*). Black separatism was measured using the following statements: “Black children should study an African language, blacks should always vote for black candidates when they run, black women should not date white men, black men should not date white women and black parents should give their children African names.” The belief in negative stereotypes about blacks was measured using the following statements: “Most black people are ashamed of themselves, most black people are lazy, most black people neglect their families, most black people are lying or trifling, most black people give up easily, most black people are weak, and most black people are selfish.” The belief in positive stereotypes about blacks was measured using the following statements: “Most black people are hard working, most black people do for others, and most black people are proud of themselves.”

Independent Variables. Exposure to Tyler Perry’s *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* was measured by asking the following question on a 5-point scale which ranged from 1 (*never*), 2 (*rarely*), 3 (*sometimes*), 4 (*often*) to 5 (*very often*): “How often do you watch the following programs: (1) Tyler Perry’s *House of Payne* and (2) Tyler Perry’s *Meet the Browns*.”

The exposure variable, now the independent variable, was measured as previously stated, on a five point Likert scale with scores ranging from 1 to 5. Each respondent is asked to rate the

following statements from never, rarely, sometimes, often, and very often: “How often do you watch *The House of Payne*?” and “How often do you watch *Meet the Browns*?”

Data for RQ1 and RQ2

Research questions 1 and 2 inquired how viewers will evaluate the portrayal and accuracy of the black characters in *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*.

Dependent Variable. Evaluation of the accuracy of portrayals in *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* was measured by their responses to the following statement on a 5-point scale which ranged from 1 (*very inaccurate*), 2 (*somewhat inaccurate*), 3 (*neutral*), 4 (*somewhat accurate*) to 5 (*very accurate*): “Please rate how accurate you believe the characters in the following two shows to be portrayed.”

Evaluation of the portrayals to be positive or negative was measured by their responses to the following statement on a 5-point scale which ranged from 1 (*very negative*), 2 (*somewhat negative*), 3 (*neutral*), 4 (*somewhat positive*) to 5 (*very positive*): “Please rate how positive or negative you believe the portrayals to be in the following two shows.”

Independent Variables. Demographic variables including age, education, gender, and income was measured by asking the following questions: “What is your age?” “How many years in school have you completed?” “What is your sex?” and “Approximately, what is your total family income per year?” respectively.

Religiosity and the four dimensions of the black identity were operationalized in the same manner as previously discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Concerning the first hypothesis which predicted that socioeconomic status would have a negative relationship with exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*, the results were mixed. Socioeconomic status was operationalized using two separate measures that included education level and total family income. As Table 3 shows, a Kruskal Wallis test detected a statistically significant difference ($H(3, 137) = 15.925, p < .001$) among four education levels held by African American viewers of the *House of Payne*. Viewers with a high school education registered the highest mean rank (93.29) of exposure followed by those with some college education (67.08), a college degree (59.75), and post graduate education (57.62). A post hoc one-way ANOVA ($F(3, 133) = 5.949, p < .001$) utilizing the Tamhane test (see Table 3), revealed that pairwise differences were significant only between high school education and each of the other levels. These results were further reinforced with a post hoc Bonferroni test.

Another Kruskal Wallis test (see Table 3) also identified a statistically significant difference ($H(3, 135) = 13.503, p = .004$) among the four education levels possessed by African American viewers of *Meet the Browns*. Just like in the case of *House of Payne*, viewers of *Meet the Browns* with a high school education had the highest mean rank (90.6) of exposure to the show followed by those with some college education (66.04), a college degree (62.01), and those with a post graduate education (54.35). A post hoc one-way ANOVA ($F(3, 131) = 5.383, p = .002$) which also employed the Tamhane test and a subsequent Bonferroni test identified exactly

the same pattern of significant pairwise difference as described above in the case of *House of Payne*.

Regarding the total family income measure, however, Kruskal-Wallis tests failed to find statistically significant variations (see Table 4) in the total family income levels of African American viewers of each of these two shows vis-à-vis their frequency of watching. Even when income levels were collapsed into two categories based on the median response, the results were still not significant. Also, as a failsafe the total family income measure was treated as an interval variable and engaged in a bivariate regression analysis with frequency of exposure to both shows as the dependent variable; but it did not make a difference in the results.

In response to the second hypothesis which stipulated a positive link between religiosity and exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*, the results were mixed. While a bivariate linear regression analysis showed that religiosity was a significant predictor of exposure to *House of Payne* $F(1, 133) = 5.584, p = .02$, (see Table 5), accounting for 4.1% of the variance in frequency of watching the show by members of the African American community; another bivariate linear regression analysis did not reveal a statistically significant relationship between religiosity and exposure to *Meet the Browns* (see Table 5).

In response to the third hypothesis which contended that exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* would have a positive relationship with black autonomy, the results failed to support the hypothesis. Initially, a multiple regression with both shows as predictors of autonomy was conducted in order to test the hypothesis and also to compare influence of the two

predictors. Although eight outliers were detected and removed (cases with studentized residuals of 2 and above), it did not make a difference. Also, possible multicollinearity of the two predictors was identified as the two shows turned out not only to be highly correlated ($r = .87$) as predictors of African American autonomy but other indicators of possible multicollinearity were present (e.g., VIF of 4.16 for either predictor). Therefore, three separate bivariate regressions were performed with each show and a composite of both shows as predictors of African American autonomy. Outliers found were removed if it made a significant difference. As Table 6 shows, none of these relationships turned out statistically significant.

A fourth hypothesis positing that exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* would have a positive relationship with closeness to the masses of African Americans was partially supported. Similar to the testing of the third hypothesis, a multiple regression involving both shows as positive predictors of affiliation with the African American community was performed. Upon the removal of four outliers, the model fit was significant ($F(3, 117) = 4.93, p = .01$) but only exposure to *House of Payne* ($\beta = .36, p = .03$ as per Table 7) was a significant predictor accounting for 8% of the variance. A subsequent two-level hierarchical regression using the enter method produced a statistically significant model ($F(3, 117) = 4.93, p = .01$), yet *Meet the Browns* did not significantly add to the amount of variance explained in the dependent variable.

In regard to the fifth hypothesis which contended that exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* would have a positive relationship with the tendency to espouse positive

stereotypical beliefs about African Americans, it was also partially supported by the results. A multiple regression with both shows as predictors was not significant. Because there was evidence of possible multicollinearity (the two shows were highly correlated at $r = .87$ and the V.I.F. was 4.26 for both shows), two bivariate regressions (with outliers removed) were performed with each show as the independent variable. While the model fit for *House of Payne* as an independent variable was significant ($F(1, 128) 4.054, p = .05$, accounting for 3% of the variance), the one for *Meet the Browns* was not. Table 8 shows that *House of Payne* positively influenced the dependent variable ($\beta = .18$).

The sixth hypothesis which suggested that exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* mitigates the tendency to believe in negative stereotypical beliefs about African Americans was also not supported by the results (see Table 9). The same procedure of testing the earlier hypotheses and removing outliers was employed.

The first research question sought to examine how African American viewers evaluated the depiction of black characters in *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*. Bivariate linear regression analyses showed that frequency of exposure was a significant predictor of the positive evaluation of the portrayal of black characters for both *House of Payne* ($F(1, 128) 46.33, p < .0001$, accounting for 26.7% of the variance, and as Table 10 shows $\beta = .52$) and *Meet the Browns* ($F(1, 119) 57.154, p < .001$, explaining 32.6 % of the variance, and as Table 10 shows $\beta = .57$). In addition, a repeated one-way ANOVA established that the type of Tyler Perry sitcom had a significant effect on the evaluation it received from viewers in terms of its portrayal of

black characters ($F(1, 128) = 10.315, p = .002$). Post hoc analysis using the Bonferroni test indicated that *House of Payne* ($M = 3.63, SD = 1.01$) was perceived as more positive in its portrayal of black characters than *Meet the Browns* ($M = 3.44, SD = 1.08$).

However, while neither respondents' gender (Table 11) nor their educational level (Table 12) or age (Table 13) was shown to be a significant predictor of a show's perceived positive or negative portrayal of black characters, a Mann-Whitney U test (Table 14) detected a statistically significant difference ($U = 1726, p = .05$) among viewers of *House of Payne* based on income level. Viewers who were in the lower income level (Mean Rank = 72.66) were more likely to perceive *House of Payne* as more positive than members of a higher income level (Mean Rank = 60.01). These two income levels were constructed based on the median income value of the sample and were adopted because the initial income levels did not yield any significant differences. Likewise, another Mann-Whitney U test (Table 14) identified a statistically significant difference ($U = 1456, p = .02$) among viewers of *Meet the Browns* based on income level. Just like in the case of *House of Payne*, viewers who were in the lower income level (Mean Rank = 70.53) were more likely to perceive *Meet the Browns* as more positive than members of a higher income level (Mean Rank = 56.10).

With regard to the second research question which investigated how much African American viewers perceived *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* to be accurate in presenting the black group membership experience, bivariate linear regression analyses showed that frequency of exposure was a significant predictor of how accurate the depiction was in both

House of Payne ($F(1, 129) = 60.79, p < .001, \beta = .57$ see Table 15; accounting for 32.2% of the variance) and *Meet the Browns* ($F(1, 124) = 43.28, p < .001, \beta = .51, p < .001$, see Table 15; accounting for 26% of the variance). Further, a repeated one-way ANOVA detected that type of Tyler Perry sitcom had a significant effect on the perception by African American viewers of its accuracy in coverage of the black membership ($F(1, 131) = 14.693, p < .001$). Post hoc analysis employing the Bonferroni test showed that *House of Payne* ($M = 3.44, SD = 1.11$) was perceived as more accurate in reflecting the black group membership experience than *Meet the Browns* ($M = 3.11, SD = 1.23$).

However, just like in the results for the first research question, neither respondents' gender (Table 16) nor their age (Table 17) was shown to be a significant predictor of whether a show would be perceived as accurate or inaccurate in its portrayal of the black group membership experience. Yet, while a Mann-Whitney U test ($U = 1646, p = .05$) showed that *Meet the Browns* was seen as less accurate by viewers who possessed at least a college degree (Mean Rank = 57.88) versus those who did not (Mean Rank = 70.64); *House of Payne* was not (see Table 18). Another Mann-Whitney U test ($U = 1548, p = .04$) also showed that viewers who were in the lower income bracket (Mean Rank = 70.85) were more likely to perceive *Meet the Browns* as more accurate in its reflection of the black group membership experience than viewers in a higher income bracket (Mean Rank = 57.80) the results for *House of Payne* in this regard were not statistically significant (see Table 19). In both the case of education levels and income levels, the two levels employed were constructed based on the median values of the sample and were

adopted because (as mentioned before) the initial levels of analysis did not yield any significant differences.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Guided primarily by Allen et al.'s (1989) model of an African American racial belief system, this study examined the influence of Tyler Perry's *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* on the four dimensions of the black identity, including black separatism, closeness to blacks, and the belief in positive and/or negative stereotypes about blacks. Before examining these relationships, it was important to explore the relationship between socioeconomic status and religiosity with exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*, as these two factors have been shown to influence exposure to black media in general (Allen et al., 1989; Allen & Hatchett, 1986; Vercellotti & Brewer, 2006). Based on literature such as Fujioka (2005), the study also examined how African American viewers perceived each of the two shows in terms of accuracy and affective evaluation of the portrayal of African Americans and their experiences. The study's results provided the following five significant conclusions, which will be discussed in further detail:

- Particular socioeconomic factors, more specifically education attainment, may negatively influence exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*.
- Religiosity may account for viewers' exposure more to *House of Payne* than to *Meet the Browns*.
- *House of Payne* may have a more significant influence on viewers' black identity than *Meet the Browns*.

- Frequency of exposure, income, and education may predict affective evaluation and perceived accuracy of both *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*.
- *House of Payne* may be considered a more accurate and positive reflection of the black group experience than *Meet the Browns*.

Mirroring Allen et al.'s model of an African American racial belief system, this study argued that socioeconomic status would negatively impact exposure to both *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*. More specifically, it was expected that the higher one ranked in socioeconomic status the less exposure he or she would have to the two shows and vice versa. For both shows, the results supported this hypothesis. Results showed that as education increased, exposure to Perry's *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* decreased. These results are in line with Allen and Bielby's (1979) study that also found a negative relationship between the education and viewership variables, as referenced earlier. Interestingly, the authors (Allen and Bielby) noted that these findings are not specific to blacks, but rather that this relationship applies to the general population as well.

The income variable, however, was not significant in the present study when paired with the exposure variable of both the *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*. In this regard, the present study's results mirror those of Allen et al.'s (1989) study although the latter examined socioeconomic status as a composite variable consisting of income, education, and occupational prestige while the present study measured only the first two and did so singly. Just like Allen et

al., Jones' (1990) study of Black Entertainment Television (BET), referenced earlier, found income to have a non-significant role in determining exposure to the black media network.

According to the results of the present study, religiosity's influence on exposure to Perry's *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* was inconsistent. As expected, the degree of religiosity positively influenced the extent of exposure to the *House of Payne*. This finding corresponds with Allen, et al.'s study, which found that religiosity did have a positive and direct influence on the degree of African Americans' engagement of black media as a whole, although the link between religiosity and exposure to black television in particular was not statistically significant.

The positive link between religiosity and Tyler Perry's *House of Payne* found in the present study suggests that the content of this particular show may resonate with African Americans more than the content of black television in general. However, failure of the present study to reveal a statistically significant link between religiosity and exposure to Tyler Perry's *Meet the Browns* may point to some differences in the way the black audience perceives the content of the two shows. Thus, it is possible that though both shows emphasize religion in their content (as suggested earlier), differences in how the audience perceives this content may be helpful to shed more light on the inconsistent results regarding exposure to *House of Payne* versus *Meet the Browns* in the present study.

The results of the present study lend some support to Allen et al.'s model of an African American racial belief system in accounting for black media consumption within the African

American community. It appears that black viewers tend to identify with the religious content of *House of Payne*, thus gravitating towards it in terms of frequency of exposure. Thus, this finding continues to emphasize the important role religion plays in the lives of African Americans, as suggested earlier, in that black religious establishments tend to promote “racial solidarity” (Ellison, 1991, p. 477) and are positively associated with dimensions of the black identity (Ellison, 1991; Allen et al., 1989; Wilcox & Gomez, 1990). Frequent exposure to *House of Payne* by African American viewers then becomes another way of enacting one’s black identity, at least in a religious sense.

Fujioka’s (2005) study, which examined strategies black media consumers use to protect themselves against threats to their black group membership may also offer a useful way to explain the inconsistencies between the present study’s results regarding *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*. As described earlier, she found that when black viewers did not perceive the depictions of African-Americans in media as accurately reflecting blacks as a group they exhibited negative evaluations of the images. Fujioka’s findings suggest that black media consumers select media that align with their beliefs and ideas, allowing them to feel the lowest level of discomfort and incongruence. As such, African Americans may find the religious content in *House of Payne* in agreement with their religious beliefs thus their frequent exposure to the show. On the other hand, the failure by the present study to link the degree of religiosity to exposure to *Meet the Browns* may be due to the fact that exposure to the show can be explained better by other variables beyond religiosity.

To gain a more concrete relationship between religiosity and the black media exposure variable, it is suggested that future research compare the amount of black media exposure among African Americans that attend traditionally black denominations or majority black churches with that of African Americans engaged in denominations or churches that are not traditionally of African American influence. Based on Fujioka's (2005) study, it would also be important for future research to consider viewers' affective judgments towards a program when determining a relationship between religiosity and black media exposure. In other words, to what extent does the perception of black media as a positive, negative, or accurate reflection of the black experience influence the relationship between religiosity and black media exposure?

The results further suggest that *House of Payne* had a more significant influence on viewers' black identity than *Meet the Browns*. More specifically, this study found that while *Meet the Browns* was not linked to any of the black identity variables in a statistically significant way, *House of Payne* was a significant predictor of two of the four dimensions within the black identity, including: closeness to blacks and viewers' positive stereotypical beliefs about blacks. The latter finding strengthens Allen et al.'s (1989) examination of the African American racial belief system. According to the authors, the black media function to "crystallize black racial consciousness" (p. 426), by transmitting cultural customs specific to being black. It seems that, as mentioned previously, viewers are more apt to model the behavior of television characters that they can most identify with (Bandura, 2002). In this respect, as it was emphasized earlier, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. understood the influential power of the mass media and used it to rally

black Americans as well as other Americans across the United States during the civil rights movement (Asante, 2005).

It is not clear why only *House of Payne* and not *Meet the Browns* would be significantly linked to the African American identity as defined above. Although this study only provided a brief and superficial examination of the content differences between the two shows, the results suggest that viewers may perceive differences that lead them to relate to the two shows differently. It is imperative for future studies to investigate these differences further. For a show that continues to be watched heavily by the black community as *Meet the Browns*, perhaps there are other dimensions of the African American experience it would correspond with better but were missed by the Allen et al. (1989) study, on which this study was based.

Furthermore, this study sought to determine how African American viewers affectively evaluated the black character portrayals in *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*. It also measured the perceived accuracy of the portrayals as a reflection of the black group experience. Results showed that three factors were significant predictors for each inquiry: frequency of exposure, income, and education. More specifically, education was a primary predictor for viewer perception of and evaluation of *Meet the Browns*, while income and frequency of exposure played a major role in predicting both variables. These results reflect Davis and Gandy's (1999) assertion that evaluations of black media portrayals are heavily influenced by one's "sociostructural environment" (p. 383). More specifically, in examining black viewer's evaluation of media as portraying black men as violent, the author's found that education was a

primary influencer of viewers' evaluations. Further, Allen and Bielby (1979) specifically examined frequency of exposure as it related to evaluation of black television, in addition to demographic and socioeconomic variables. Mirroring the current study's results, the authors found that education and socioeconomic status were primary determinants of viewers' evaluation of black media. These results suggest that while income may not influence exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*, it can strongly predict how viewers come to evaluate the shows' images.

A number of studies (Jones, 1990; Davis & Gandy, 1999; Allen & Hatchett, 1986; Allen & Bielby, 1976) have examined black media evaluation as it relates to the different dimensions of the black identity. This study, however, did not detail that relationship. In examining Tyler Perry and his television shows, future research should take the black identity into consideration when evaluating viewers' perceptions of the images. In addition to the exposure, socioeconomic, and gender variables, the black identity dimensions will add depth to the discussion.

Finally, the results suggest that *House of Payne* may be considered a more accurate and positive reflection of the black group experience than *Meet the Browns*. It is not clear why there is a difference between the two shows. It was argued earlier, however, that *House of Payne* offers a more traditional and focused portrayal of family life than does *Meet the Browns*. The results suggest that traditional, family oriented television programs may be perceived by black viewers as more accurate and positive than other programs that are more focused on the workplace environment and non-family relationships.

The overall outcome of this study has a redemptive quality, at least for Tyler Perry. Earlier in the discussion, a preview of Perry's most staunch critiques was outlined. The general consensus: Perry's *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* did more harm than good to its black viewers. More specifically, the primary argument contended that both shows were simply reenactments of historical and painful stereotypes of African Americans. The results of this study, however, would suggest otherwise. Despite relying on a rather small and non-randomly selected sample that may have limited generalizability to the wider African American community, the study's results allow for a more analytical discussion of Perry's influence on his audience. Going beyond the superficial assumptions of mere conjecture, this study quantitatively focused on the media consumer and the outcome of his or her consumption, finding that at least one of Perry's shows (*House of Payne*) could potentially be a significant and positive predictor of viewers' connection to their identity as African Americans. As there are few documented scholarly critiques of Perry and his work, the author is hopeful that this current discussion will spawn additional analysis that delves deeper into the significance of Perry's presence in today's black media.

APPENDIX A: TABLES

Table 1 Demographics by Age

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
<i>Respondent Age</i>	18	78	42.95	13.96

Table 2 Demographic Frequencies by Sex, Education Level, Total Family Income, and Religious Affiliation

	Frequency	Percent
<i>Sex</i>		
Male	42	29.0%
Female	103	71.0%
<i>Education Level</i>		
High School	30	20.7%
Some College	49	33.8%
College Degree	42	29.0%
Post Graduate Degree	20	13.8%
<i>Total Family Income</i>		
\$0 - \$10,000	9	6.2%
\$10,001 - \$20,000	13	9.0%
\$20,001 - \$30,000	18	12.4%
\$30,001 - \$40,000	25	17.2%
\$40,001 - \$50,000	23	15.9%
\$50,001 - \$60,000	14	9.7%
More than \$60,000	37	25.5%
<i>Religious Affiliation</i>		
Baptist	14	9.7%
Pentecostal	18	12.4%
Non-denominational	100	69.0%
Other	7	4.8%

Table 3 Education Level by Frequency of Exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*

Education Level	Mean Rank	Mean	Significant differences
<i>House of Payne</i>			
High School	93.29	3.66	High School & Some College***
Some College	67.08	2.80	High School & College Degree*
College Degree	59.75	2.62	High School & Post Graduate*
Post Graduate	57.62	2.60	
<i>Meet the Browns</i>			
High School	90.76	3.78	High School & Some College****
Some College	66.04	2.89	High School & College Degree***
College Degree	62.01	2.79	High School & Post Graduate**
Post Graduate	54.35	2.56	

Kruskal-Wallis test: $p < .001$ and $= .004$ respectively

Tamhane test: $p < *.001, = **.004, = ****.01, = *****.02$

Table 4 Kruskal-Wallis tests of Frequency of Exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* by Family Income Level

<i>House of Payne</i>	
\$ Income Level	Mean Rank
0-10,000	73.28
10,001-20,000	87.67
20,001-30,000	54.74
30,001-40,000	70.98
40,001-50,000	67.39
50,001-60,000	60.31
➤ 60,000	67.91
<i>Meet the Browns</i>	
0-10,000	69.78
10,001-20,000	74.18
20,001-30,000	69.00
30,001-40,000	67.87
40,001-50,000	68.96
50,001-60,000	60.69
➤ 60,000	64.35

Kruskal-Wallis tests not significant in both cases.

Table 5 Bivariate Regressions of Frequency of Exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* by Religiosity

	Unstandardized Squares		Standardized Squares		
	B	S.E.	Beta	t	p
<i>House of Payne</i>	.01	.04	.20	2.4	.02
<i>Meet the Browns</i>	.04	.04	.08	.88	.38

Table 6 Bivariate Regressions of Black Autonomy by Frequency of Exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*

	Unstandardized Squares		Standardized Squares		
	B	S.E.	Beta	t	p
<i>House of Payne</i>	.43	.25	.16	1.73	.09
<i>Meet the Browns</i>	.21	.29	.07	.74	.46
Composite	.35	.25	.13	1.38	.17

Table 7 Multiple Regression of Closeness to African American Masses by Frequency of Exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*

	Unstandardized Squares		Standardized Squares		
	B	S. E.	Beta	t	p
<i>House of Payne</i>	1.0	.47	.36	2.2	.03
<i>Meet the Browns</i>	-.28	.46	-.10	-.63	.53

Table 8 Bivariate Regressions of Positively Stereotyping African Americans by Frequency of Exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*

	Unstandardized Squares		Standardized Squares		
	B	S.E.	Beta	t	p
<i>House of Payne</i>	.29	.15	.18	2.0	.05
<i>Meet the Browns</i>	.18	.14	.12	1.33	.19

Table 9 Bivariate Regressions of Negatively Stereotyping African Americans by Frequency of Exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*

	Unstandardized Squares		Standardized Squares		
	B	S.E.	Beta	t	p
<i>House of Payne</i>	.11	.33	.03	.32	.75
<i>Meet the Browns</i>	.08	.32	.02	.26	.80

Table 10 Bivariate Regressions of Sitcom Type's Positive Portrayal of African Americans by Frequency of Exposure

	Unstandardized Squares		Standardized Squares		
	B	S.E.	Beta	t	p
<i>House of Payne</i>	.41	.06	.52	6.81	.0001
<i>Meet the Browns</i>	.45	.06	.57	7.56	.0001

Table 11 T tests of *House of Payne* & *Meet the Browns* Positive Portrayal of African American Experience by Gender

	t	n	Mean	p
<i>House of Payne</i>	-0.269			.79
M		40	3.65	
F		97	3.70	
<i>Meet the Browns</i>	-1.102			.27
M		36	3.28	
F		94	3.51	

Table 12 Mann-Whitney tests of Perceived Sitcom's Positive Portrayal of African Americans by Education Level

	Education Level	Mean Rank	N	n	U	p
<i>House of Payne</i>			133		1,794.500	.08
	No College Degree	71.89		76		
	College Degree	60.48		57		
<i>Meet the Browns</i>			128		1,647.000	.07
	No College Degree	69.62		72		
	College Degree	57.91		56		

Table 13 Bivariate Regressions of Sitcom Type's Positive Portrayal of African Americans by Age

	Unstandardized Squares		Standardized Squares		
	B	S.E.	Beta	t	p
<i>House of Payne</i>	.003	.006	-.04	-.462	.65
<i>Meet the Browns</i>	-.008	.006	-.12	-1.246	.22

Table 14 Mann-Whitney tests of Perceived Sitcom's Positive Portrayal of African Americans by Income Level

Income Level	Mean Rank	N	n	U	p
<i>House of Payne</i>		131		1,726.000	.05
Lower	72.66		62		
Higher	60.01		69		
<i>Meet the Browns</i>		124		1,456.000	.02
Lower	70.53		55		
Higher	56.10		69		

Table 15 Bivariate Regressions Sitcom Type's Accurate Presentation of African American Experience by Frequency of Exposure

	Unstandardized Squares		Standardized Squares		
	B	S.E.	Beta	t	p
<i>House of Payne</i>	.48	.06	.57	7.80	.0001
<i>Meet the Browns</i>	.51	.08	.51	6.58	.0001

Table 16 T tests of *House of Payne* & *Meet the Browns* Accurate Presentation of African American Experience by Gender

	t	n	Mean	p
<i>House of Payne</i>	-.690			.49
F		99	3.54	
M		42	3.40	
<i>Meet the Browns</i>	-1.580			.12
F		94	3.21	
M		37	2.84	

Table 17 Bivariate Regressions of Sitcom Type's Accurate Presentation of African American Experience by Age

	Unstandardized Squares		Standardized Squares		
	B	S.E.	Beta	t	p
<i>House of Payne</i>	.004	.006	.05	.596	.55
<i>Meet the Browns</i>	-.001	.008	-.01	-.16	.87

Table 18 Mann-Whitney tests of Perceived Sitcom's Accurate Presentation of African American Experience by Education Level

Education Level	Mean Rank	N	n	U	p
<i>House of Payne</i>		137		1,951.500	.10
No College Degree	73.66		77		
College Degree	63.02		60		
<i>Meet the Browns</i>		129		1,646.000	.05
No College Degree	70.64		72		
College Degree	57.88		57		

Table 19 Mann-Whitney tests of Perceived Sitcom's Accurate Portrayal of African American Experience by Income Level

Income Level	Mean Rank	N	n	U	p
<i>House of Payne</i>		135		1,918.000	.106
Lower	73.56		63		
Higher	63.14		72		
<i>Meet the Browns</i>		126		1,548.000	.04
Lower	70.85		55		
Higher	57.80		71		

APPENDIX B: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR TABLES

Table 20 Descriptive Statistics for Table 4 Bivariate Regressions of Frequency of Exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns* by Religiosity

	Mean	Standard Deviation	n
<i>House of Payne</i>	2.88	1.17	133
<i>Religiosity</i>	16.02	2.48	133
<i>Meet the Browns</i>	2.96	1.24	133
<i>Religiosity</i>	15.97	2.53	133

Table 21 Descriptive Statistics for Table 6 Bivariate Regressions of Black Autonomy by Frequency of Exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*

	Mean	Standard Deviation	n
<i>House of Payne</i>	2.83	1.16	121
<i>Black Autonomy</i>	16.07	3.21	121
<i>Meet the Browns</i>	3.0	1.25	130
<i>Black Autonomy</i>	16.18	4.04	130
<i>Composite</i>	2.89	1.17	121
<i>Black Autonomy</i>	16.06	4.04	121

Table 22 Descriptive Statistics for Table 7 Multiple Regression of Closeness to African American Masses by Frequency of Exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*

	Mean	Standard Deviation	n
<i>House of Payne</i>	2.92	1.17	118
<i>Closeness to African Americans</i>	22	3.39	118
<i>Meet the Browns</i>	2.97	1.22	118
<i>Closeness to African Americans</i>	22	3.39	118

Table 23 Descriptive Statistics for Table 8 Bivariate Regressions of Positively Stereotyping African Americans by Frequency of Exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*

	Mean	Standard Deviation	n
<i>House of Payne</i>	2.97	1.20	128
<i>Positively Stereotyping African Americans</i>	11.65	1.97	128
<i>Meet the Browns</i>	3.06	1.26	127
<i>Positively Stereotyping African Americans</i>	11.62	1.97	127

Table 24 Descriptive Statistics for Table 9 Bivariate Regressions of Negatively Stereotyping African Americans by Frequency of Exposure to *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*

	Mean	Standard Deviation	n
<i>House of Payne</i>	2.91	1.16	115
<i>Negatively Stereotyping African Americans</i>	13.53	4.10	115
<i>Meet the Browns</i>	2.99	1.20	115
<i>Negatively Stereotyping African Americans</i>	13.53	4.10	115

Table 25 Descriptive Statistics for Table 10 Bivariate Regressions of Sitcom Type's Positive Portrayal of African Americans by Frequency of Exposure

	Mean	Standard Deviation	n
<i>House of Payne</i>	3.0	1.17	129
<i>Positive Portrayal of African Americans</i>	3.74	.92	129
<i>Meet the Browns</i>	3.04	1.22	120
<i>Positive Portrayal of African Americans</i>	3.53	.97	120

Table 26 Descriptive Statistics for Table 13 Bivariate Regressions Sitcom Type's Positive Portrayal of African Americans by Age

	Mean	Standard Deviation	n
<i>House of Payne</i>	3.78	.91	125
<i>Age</i>	43.16	14.10	125
<i>Meet the Browns</i>	3.58	.94	118
<i>Age</i>	42.28	13.92	118

Table 27 Descriptive Statistics for Table 15 Bivariate Regressions Sitcom Type's Accurate Presentation of African American Experience by Frequency of Exposure

	Mean	Standard Deviation	n
<i>House of Payne Exposure</i>	2.98	1.18	130
<i>Accurate Presentation</i>	3.62	.99	130
<i>Meet the Browns Exposure</i>	3.0	1.21	125
<i>Accurate Presentation</i>	3.3	1.20	125

Table 28 Descriptive Statistics for Table 17 Bivariate Regressions Sitcom Type's Accurate Presentation of African American Experience by Age

	Mean	Standard Deviation	n
<i>House of Payne Accurate Presentation</i>	3.64	.96	124
<i>Age</i>	43.15	14.16	124
<i>Meet the Browns Accurate Presentation</i>	3.10	1.23	123
<i>Age</i>	41.9	13.72	123

APPENDIX C: FREQUENCY TABLES FOR COMPOSITE VARIABLES

Table 29 Frequency Table for Religiosity Variable: How often do you read religious books?

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	2	1.4	1.4
	Rarely	14	9.7	11.5
	Sometimes	34	23.4	36.0
	Often	44	30.3	67.6
	Very Often	45	31.0	100.0
	Total	139	95.9	
Total		145	100.0	

Table 30 Frequency Table for Religiosity Variable: How often do you listen to religious programs?

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely	7	4.8	5.0
	Sometimes	26	17.9	23.6
	Often	46	31.7	56.4
	Very Often	61	42.1	100.0
	Total	140	96.6	
Total		145	100.0	

Table 31 Frequency Table for Religiosity Variable: How often do you pray?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Sometimes	8	5.5	5.7
Often	31	21.4	27.9
Very Often	101	69.7	100.0
Total	140	96.6	
Total	145	100.0	

Table 32 Frequency Table for Religiosity Variable: How often do you ask someone to pray for you?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never	1	.7	.7
Rarely	28	19.3	21.2
Sometimes	46	31.7	54.7
Often	39	26.9	83.2
Very Often	23	15.9	100.0
Total	137	94.5	
Total	145	100.0	

Table 33 Frequency Table for Closeness Variable: How close do you feel to religious church going people?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Not close at all	2	1.4	1.4
Not very close	6	4.1	5.8
Somewhat close	62	42.8	50.4
Extremely Close	69	47.6	100.0
Total	139	95.9	
Total	145	100.0	

Table 34 Frequency Table for Closeness Variable: How close do you feel to middle class black people?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Not close at all	1	.7	.7
Not very close	14	9.7	10.7
Somewhat close	72	49.7	62.1
Extremely Close	53	36.6	100.0
Total	140	96.6	
Total	145	100.0	

Table 35 Frequency Table for Closeness Variable: How close do you feel to working class black people?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Not very close	5	3.4	3.6
Somewhat close	68	46.9	52.5
Extremely Close	66	45.5	100.0
Total	139	95.9	
Total	145	100.0	

Table 36 Frequency Table for Closeness Variable: How close do you feel to older black people?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Not close at all	2	1.4	1.4
Not very close	11	7.6	9.3
Somewhat close	62	42.8	53.6
Extremely Close	65	44.8	100.0
Total	140	96.6	
Total	145	100.0	

Table 37 Frequency Table for Closeness Variable: How close do you feel to black elected officials?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Not close at all	29	20.0	21.2
Not very close	49	33.8	56.9
Somewhat close	41	28.3	86.9
Extremely Close	18	12.4	100.0
Total	137	94.5	
Total	145	100.0	

Table 38 Frequency Table for Closeness Variable: How close do you feel to black doctors, lawyers, and professional people?

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not close at all	16	11.0	11.9
	Not very close	32	22.1	35.8
	Somewhat close	54	37.2	76.1
	Extremely Close	32	22.1	100.0
	Total	134	92.4	
Total		145	100.0	

Table 39 Frequency Table for Closeness Variable: How close do you feel to younger black people?

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not close at all	5	3.4	3.7
	Not very close	18	12.4	17.0
	Somewhat close	73	50.3	71.1
	Extremely Close	39	26.9	100.0
	Total	135	93.1	
Total		145	100.0	

Table 40 Frequency Table for Black Autonomy Variable: Black children should study an African language.

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	4	2.8	2.9
	Disagree	19	13.1	16.4
	Neutral	46	31.7	49.3
	Agree	42	29.0	79.3
	Strongly Agree	29	20.0	100.0
	Total	140	96.6	
Total		145	100.0	

Table 41 Frequency Table for Black Autonomy Variable: Blacks should always vote for black candidates when they run.

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	23	15.9	16.7
	Disagree	64	44.1	63.0
	Neutral	34	23.4	87.7
	Agree	8	5.5	93.5
	Strongly Agree	9	6.2	100.0
	Total	138	95.2	
Total		145	100.0	

Table 42 Frequency Table for Black Autonomy Variable: Black women should not date white men.

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	29	20.0	20.7
	Disagree	60	41.4	63.6
	Neutral	35	24.1	88.6
	Agree	10	6.9	95.7
	Strongly Agree	6	4.1	100.0
	Total	140	96.6	
Total		145	100.0	

Table 43 Frequency Table for Black Autonomy Variable: Black people should shop in black owned stores whenever possible.

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	13	9.0	9.3
	Disagree	17	11.7	21.4
	Neutral	36	24.8	47.1
	Agree	45	31.0	79.3
	Strongly Agree	29	20.0	100.0
	Total	140	96.6	
Total		145	100.0	

Table 44 Frequency Table for Black Autonomy Variable: Black men should not date white women.

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	30	20.7	21.3
	Disagree	55	37.9	60.3
	Neutral	36	24.8	85.8
	Agree	13	9.0	95.0
	Strongly Agree	7	4.8	100.0
	Total	141	97.2	
Total		145	100.0	

Table 45 Frequency Table for Black Autonomy Variable: Black parents should give their children African names.

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	27	18.6	19.9
	Disagree	46	31.7	53.7
	Neutral	52	35.9	91.9
	Agree	7	4.8	97.1
	Strongly Agree	4	2.8	100.0
	Total	136	93.8	
Total		145	100.0	

Table 46 Frequency Table for Positive Stereotypes about Blacks Variable: Most black people are hard working.

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	.7	.8
	Disagree	6	4.1	5.3
	Neutral	25	17.2	24.4
	Agree	55	37.9	66.4
	Strongly Agree	44	30.3	100.0
	Total	131	90.3	
Total		145	100.0	

Table 47 Frequency Table for Positive Stereotypes about Blacks Variable: Most black people do for others.

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	3	2.1	2.2
	Disagree	10	6.9	9.4
	Neutral	41	28.3	38.8
	Agree	59	40.7	81.3
	Strongly Agree	26	17.9	100.0
	Total	139	95.9	
Total		145	100.0	

Table 48 Frequency Table for Positive Stereotypes about Blacks Variable: Most black people are proud of themselves.

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	1.4	1.4
	Disagree	12	8.3	10.1
	Neutral	26	17.9	28.8
	Agree	59	40.7	71.2
	Strongly Agree	40	27.6	100.0
	Total	139	95.9	
Total		145	100.0	

Table 49 Frequency Table for Negative Stereotypes about Blacks Variable: Most black people are ashamed of themselves.

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	36	24.8	26.3
	Disagree	62	42.8	71.5
	Neutral	20	13.8	86.1
	Agree	17	11.7	98.5
	Strongly Agree	2	1.4	100.0
	Total	137	94.5	
Total		145	100.0	

Table 50 Frequency Table for Negative Stereotypes about Blacks Variable: Most black people are lazy.

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	65	44.8	47.8
	Disagree	47	32.4	82.4
	Neutral	15	10.3	93.4
	Agree	4	2.8	96.3
	Strongly Agree	5	3.4	100.0
	Total	136	93.8	
Total		145	100.0	

Table 51 Frequency Table for Negative Stereotypes about Blacks Variable: Most black people neglect their families.

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	47	32.4	34.3
	Disagree	62	42.8	79.6
	Neutral	14	9.7	89.8
	Agree	8	5.5	95.6
	Strongly Agree	6	4.1	100.0
	Total	137	94.5	
Total		145	100.0	

Table 52 Frequency Table for Negative Stereotypes about Blacks Variable: Most black people are lying or trifling.

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	61	42.1	44.9
	Disagree	52	35.9	83.1
	Neutral	11	7.6	91.2
	Agree	7	4.8	96.3
	Strongly Agree	5	3.4	100.0
	Total	136	93.8	
Total		145	100.0	

Table 53 Frequency Table for Negative Stereotypes about Blacks Variable: Most black people give up easily.

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	27	18.6	19.7
	Disagree	50	34.5	56.2
	Neutral	41	28.3	86.1
	Agree	15	10.3	97.1
	Strongly Agree	4	2.8	100.0
	Total	137	94.5	
Total		145	100.0	

Table 54 Frequency Table for Negative Stereotypes about Blacks Variable: Most black people are weak.

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	58	40.0	42.6
	Disagree	48	33.1	77.9
	Neutral	15	10.3	89.0
	Agree	8	5.5	94.9
	Strongly Agree	7	4.8	100.0
	Total	136	93.8	
Total		145	100.0	

Table 55 Frequency Table for Negative Stereotypes about Blacks Variable: Most black people are selfish.

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	40	27.6	28.8
	Disagree	49	33.8	64.0
	Neutral	35	24.1	89.2
	Agree	10	6.9	96.4
	Strongly Agree	5	3.4	100.0
	Total	139	95.9	
Total		145	100.0	

APPENDIX D: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The Tyler Perry Effect: Examining the Influence of Black Media Images on the Black Identity

Survey Questionnaire

What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

Please list your occupation:

What is your age? _____

How would you describe your religious affiliation?

How many years in school have you completed?

- High school
- Some college
- College degree
- Post graduate degree

- Baptist
- Pentecostal
- Catholic
- Non-denominational
- Seventh Day Adventist
- Other: _____

Approximately, what is your total family income per year?

- Between zero and \$10,000
- Between \$10,001 and \$20,000
- Between \$20,001 and \$30,000
- Between \$30,001 and \$40,000
- Between \$40,001 and \$50,000
- Between \$50,001 and \$60,000
- More than \$60,000

What is your race?

- White
- Black, African Am., or Negro
- Asian
- Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish
- Other

Please rate how accurate you believe the characters in the following two shows to be portrayed:

	Very Accurate	Somewhat Accurate	Neutral	Somewhat Inaccurate	Very Inaccurate
<i>House of Payne</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Meet the Browns</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please rate how positive or negative you believe the portrayals to be in the following two shows:

	Very Positive	Somewhat Positive	Neutral	Somewhat Negative	Very Negative
<i>House of Payne</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Meet the Browns</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please rate the following questions and statements:

	Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
How often do you read religious books?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often do you listen to religious programs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often do you pray?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often do you ask someone to pray for you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often do you watch the following programs?					
o Tyler Perry's <i>House of Payne</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o Tyler Perry's <i>Meet the Browns</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The word close refers to feeling connected or relating to

	Extremely *Close	Somewhat *Close	Not Very *Close	Not *Close at All
How close do you feel to religious church going people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How close do you feel to middle-class black people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How close do you feel to working-class black people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How close do you feel to older black people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How close do you feel to black elected officials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How close do you feel to black doctors, lawyers, and professional people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How close do you feel to younger black people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Black children should study an African language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blacks should always vote for black candidates when they run.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black women should not date white men.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black people should shop in black-owned stores whenever possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black men should not date white women.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black parents should give their children African names.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Most black people are ashamed of themselves.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Most black people are lazy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Most black people neglect their families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Most black people are lying or trifling.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Most black people are hard working.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Most black people do for others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Most black people give up easily.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Most black people are weak.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Most black people are proud of themselves.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Most black people are selfish.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX E: IRB APPROVAL



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1
FWA00000351, IRB00001138**

To: **Nicole E. Jackson**

Date: **February 17, 2011**

Dear Researcher:

On 2/17/2011, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination
Project Title: The Tyler Perry Effect: Examining the Influence of Black Media
Images on the Black Identity
Investigator: Nicole E Jackson
IRB Number: SBE-11-07472
Funding Agency:
Grant Title:
Research ID: N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Joseph Bielitzki, DVM, UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 02/17/2011 12:33:10 PM EST

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Joanne Muratori'.

IRB Coordinator

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