Swing Papa and *Barry Jordan*: Comic Strips and Black Newspapers in Postwar Toledo

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Introduction

Popular culture reflects, symbolizes, and embodies the thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, and values of its producers and audiences.[1] Popular culture is that part of all culture that is concerned with pleasure, enjoyment, and amusement. Comic art is a form of popular culture dating back to the early 1890s. After the turn of the century, comic strips[2] had become a permanent part of white mainstream newspapers and magazines, but black newspapers overall were not as agreeable to their inclusion.[3] In short, black newspapers focused their attention on the "serious" issues confronting blacks of that period. However, with the advent of large circulation newspapers especially published for black communities coupled with the established tradition of comic strips in major newspapers, many editors of black newspapers began encouraging the inclusion of comic strips.[4] The Baltimore *Afro-American*, *Chicago Defender*, and *Pittsburgh Courier* were the leading large circulating black newspapers that included black comic strips following World War I.[5]

Scholarly essays or chapters written by John Appel, Ian Gordon, Thomas Inge, Steven Jones, John Stevens, and Roland Wolseley examine blacks in comic strips in mainstream newspapers and magazines and/or black comic strips in black newspapers.[6] Together these writings are useful for providing descriptive information about black comic strips and characters that are not well-known, for providing comparisons of white and ethnic representations in comic strips, and for bringing attention and structure to this area of study within the field of comic art scholarship.

Black comic strips[7] are a form of popular art that embodied the hopes and dreams of their cartoonists, the editorial heads of the newspapers that featured them, and middle-class African Americans.[8] The primary goal of this paper is to examine the contexts, textures, and texts of two black comic strips found in two minor, postwar black newspapers, *Toledo Sepia City Press* and *Bronze Raven*, in Toledo, Ohio. The strips, *Swing Papa* and *Barry Jordan*, are excellent artifacts with which to interpret the

cultural and social significance of postwar African American popular art forms and to unpack the "burden of black representation" in comic strips in general. However, they may also provide insight for discovering, identifying, and exploring the values and hopes of African Americans living in Toledo following World War II.

The newspapers, *Toledo Sepia City Press* and *Bronze Raven*, were selected for three reasons. First, six black newspapers have been or are currently being published in Toledo from 1943 to 2005: *Toledo Script*, *Toledo Sepia City Press*, *Bronze Raven*, *Toledo Observer*,[9] *Toledo Journal*, and *Sojourner's Truth*.[10] Of the six newspapers, only *Sepia City Press* and the *Bronze Raven* include comic art. Second, they were published between 1945 and 1955, a time of revolutionary cultural change in the United States that profoundly affected African American life and culture in political, economic, and social arenas. Black newspaper reporting was one primary vehicle for reflecting this change and for voicing the thoughts of African Americans in reaction to this change. Finally, the *Toledo Sepia City Press* and *Bronze Raven* represent smaller, regional black newspapers that included comic art. Much of the scholarship about black comic art refers to strips in larger black circulating newspapers such as *Pittsburgh Courier* and *Chicago Defender*. Such strips as *Bungleton Green*, *Sunny Boy Sam*, *Torchy Brown*, *Jive Gray*, *Speed Jaxon*, and *Breezy* and the cartoonists who drew them were often connected to one large newspaper or another but were read by audiences across the nation. The strips in these Toledo newspapers were mainly "home-drawn" and most likely not read out of the region. Analysis of these regional strips will provide some cultural insight into black Toledo and, to a lesser extent, the black population in Ohio.[11]

Contexts

Both *Swing Papa* and *Barry Jordan* series were created and published during the watershed years following World War II when America was reconstituting itself on several levels domestically and internationally. *Swing Papa* was featured in the *Toledo Sepia City Press*, a black independent newspaper, and was syndicated with the Story Script Syndicate.[12] *Toledo Sepia City Press* was published weekly from April 2, 1948 to May 13, 1950. *Swing Papa* appeared in consecutive issues of the newspaper from April 2, 1948 to August 7, 1948.[13] The creators of *Swing Papa* were Harold Quinn, a Toledo World War II veteran, and O'Wendell Shaw, former editor of the *Ohio State News* and current editor of the *Toledo Sepia City Press*. The strip was located in the "Feature Section" of the *Toledo Sepia*

City Press, which included sections on sports, theatre, comics, gags, and stories of community interest. The number of panels used by Quinn and Shaw ranged from three to eight.

Barry Jordan was created by Jimmy Dixon, a World War II veteran who worked for two years on the European edition of the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper as a staff artist.[14] The series ran in the *Bronze Raven*, an independent black newspaper that was published weekly from September 1948 to January 1976. There was no special "comic strip section" within the newspaper for *Barry Jordan* until November 13, 1954, when the *Bronze Raven* added "The National Foto News."[15] The *Barry Jordan* series appeared on the bottom half of one of the "Foto News" pages. *Barry Jordan* took up the upper half of that space and *Li'l Moe and Joe*, another comic strip, appeared just below it.[16] Dixon's panels ranged from as few as six to as many as eleven panels, almost twice the size of weekly nationally syndicated strips in major newspapers at that time.

The cultural contexts of *Barry Jordan* and *Swing Papa* are very interesting to note here because black comic strip characters in American print media date back as early as 1897.[17] Two long running black comic strip series in two major black newspapers include *Bungleton Green*, which appeared in the *Chicago Defender* from 1920 to 1963 and *Sunnyboy Sam*, which appeared in the *Pittsburgh Courier* from 1929 to about 1950.[18] *Bungleton Green*, drawn by four artists over 43 years, portrayed the ironies of black life in Chicago through the eyes of African American Bungleton Green.[19] Both Bungleton and Sunnyboy were representative of the traditional "fall guy" or *schlemiel*. *Sunnyboy Sam* was a comedy/gag strip created by Wilbert Holloway that at first depicted Sunnyboy with heavy dialect, minstrel features, and an intense preoccupation with playing the numbers. However, by 1947, John Stevens notes that Sunnyboy was speaking like a college graduate. Although *Bungleton Green* began as a comedy/gag strip, it switched to an action adventure format in the early 1930s and again during the mid 1940s.[20]

Barry Jordan, in particular, shares many characteristics with detective fiction and comics and *Swing Papa* with adventure comics. *Dick Tracy*, a police detective, perhaps exerted the greatest artistic influence upon Dixon's Barry Jordan. As one of the most popular crime fighting comic strips of the 1930s, 40s, and 50s,[21] *Dick Tracy* was created by Chester Gould and debuted in the Detroit *Mirror* on October 4, 1931.[22] Dick Tracy was not a superhero but a superior and believable "everyman" hero.[23] He and Jordan

were excellent at the work they did and both men were restrained, rational, and dignified. Likewise, Barry Jordan was an "everyman" hero from an African American male's perspective. However, he embodied many of the same characteristics of the white male hero found in literature, stage, radio, film, and (increasingly) television. In fact, he was a figure who incorporated "blackness and white manliness in the same ... male body."[24]

Quinn and Shaw's major influences were most likely black comic strips that appeared in the *Pittsburgh Courier* and *Chicago Defender* or characters in such major comic strips as *Steve Canyon*. *Steve Canyon*, a veteran Army Transport Command pilot created by Milton Caniff, debuted on January 13, 1947 and continued to June 5, 1988.[25] Like Dick Tracy and Barry Jordan, Steve Canyon was also a believable "everyman" hero. However, *Swing Papa* most resembles *Steve Canyon* when comparing it to the adventurous nature of the Canyon strip. Canyon was adjusting to civilian life after the war and making a living by running his own private flying service, Horizons Unlimited. Through his work, Canyon flies to exotic locales, which include adversaries, allies, and romantic interests.[26] In the short span of the *Swing Papa* series, bandleader-hero Bret Harvey travels by train and taxi cab through the streets of Toledo, his main romantic interest is Marta Grayfield, and he is opposed by two robbers who serve as adversaries and assisted by police who act as his allies. *Swing Papa* includes elements of adventure much like *Steve Canyon* but somewhat downplayed because of the romance formula also used.

Textures

Comic strips in general use such film techniques as montage, angle shots, panning, close-ups, cutting, and framing.[27] *Barry Jordan* consisted of a good mixture of "close ups," "medium shots," and "long shots."[28] Long shots were helpful in setting the scene, showing the physical situations in which Barry found himself. Long shots also gave the impression that Barry was involved in dangerous and life-threatening situations. Quinn and Shaw primarily used close-up and medium shots but no long shots. The purpose for this was perhaps to allow the reader to feel intimate and on the same level with Bret Harvey as he moved through the "Negro entertainment world" in Toledo.

Action, tension, and suspense are essential elements in good adventure comic strips and *Swing Papa* and *Barry Jordan* combined all three. In *Barry Jordan*, tension and suspense were heightened by the use of such

stark contrasting colors as black and white.[29] Lively action was shown in the physical confrontations between Jordan and the criminals and between the criminals themselves. Dixon's use of such phrases as "POW!," "WHAM!," and "WHOOSH" emphasizes vigorous physical action.[30] Most of the action in the earlier installments of *Swing Papa* deal with the development of Bret and Marta's love relationship. However, this changes and intensifies significantly in the last half of the strip's installments.

Quinn and Shaw's style is somewhat sophomoric in character. The story set around the adventures of a musician (bandleader) is culturally significant because the role and history of African American music in American society in general is long and complex.[31] Philip Ennis states unequivocally that "black contributions in composition and performance have had an influence on American music out of all proportion to the size of the black population." He also suggests that music was perhaps "one of black people's most powerful weapons of individual strength and collective survival."[32] In acknowledging the role and significance of music in black culture, it is no surprise that black comic artists created strips that centrally connects music to the life of the strip's hero. However, Quinn and Shaw's expression of this black bandleader's adventures in comic art form was amateurish. For example, in several places throughout the strip's run, misspellings and missing punctuation marks appeared.[33] Dixon's style, on the other hand, was unique and original compared to cartoonists of his day. All of his characters were drawn with clear, sharp, bold lines. He also paid particular attention to facial expressions and body stances[34] and maintained Jordan's rationality and modernity through the way he drew Jordan and the other characters, e.g., facial expressions demonstrating thought, characters exhibiting good posture while standing.

Texts

Swing Papa was featured in the *Toledo Sepia City Press* in 1948 and *Barry Jordan* appeared in the *Bronze Raven* from 1954 to 1955.[35] *Swing Papa* and *Barry Jordan* have a few common characteristics. Both featured African American male musicians (although Barry Jordan was also an amateur detective), and both are adventure continuity comic strips[36] set in the city. The hero of *Swing Papa* is Bret Harvey, "maestro of the devastating 'Swingsters Sweet' orchestra," and his primary instrument is the tenor saxophone. In the April 2, 1948 issue of the newspaper, creators Harold "Dave" Quinn and O'Wendell Shaw describe the strip as providing

a "true-to-life story of the glamour, tinsel and [romance] of the Negro entertainment world, featuring music, adventures, travel, beautiful women and suave men." Indeed, *Swing Papa* accelerates in action from the first installment when Bret Harvey "succumbs to the seductive wiles" of Marta Grayfield, a "glamorous 'hanger-on' from the realm of society and wealth."[37]

While the narrative of *Swing Papa* begins in an unidentified city, by May 1, 1948, the fifth installment, much of the action occurs in Toledo. Bret's "suave" physical appearance, activities with his band and Marta remind the reader that the strip is both urban and hip. Marta's hair is meticulously done and Bret's is "processed," which was a symbol of status among men in the black music community. They both wear fashionable clothes and urban artifacts including nightclubs, taxicabs, and city street corners are abundant. The strip truly featured romance, music, adventures, and travel. Once Bret and Marta arrive in Toledo, Chick Lewis of the *Sepia City Press* meets them and Bob Howe, Mayor of Sepia City.[38] Before Bret performs that evening, the Mayor of Sepia City presents him with a key to the city of Toledo. More physical action and adventures continue in the May 15, 1948 installment when the last panel introduces two robbers confirming with each other that Bret is the bandleader currently in the city.[39] The reader is cued to their negative role in the strip because the robbers are two (black) men with noticeably large noses (as compared to the other characters), they both wear hats, and one has a beard with sideburns. The men bump into Bret and steal his "pocket book" (or wallet).[40] For a time, Bret and Marta chase the robbers in a taxicab. Later, Bret jumps on to the robbers' vehicle and fist fights the driver from outside of the car.[41] The car crashes and Bret falls to the ground, but, coincidentally, the police witnessed the entire car chase and are present to subdue and arrest the criminals.

It becomes apparent that *Swing Papa* is somewhat less sophisticated than the *Barry Jordan* series in terms of both the treatment and development of plot, character, and graphic art. However, *Swing Papa* does excel in making a conscious effort to include several references to Toledo in general and to places within the city of Toledo, e.g., Trianon Ballroom, Deluxe Cab, Bellman's and Waiter's Club, Thomas Hotel, Latin Club, Lion Department Store, Indiana Avenue, City Park Avenue, and Rosy Cab.[42]

Like Bret Harvey, Barry Jordan is a musician. He is an "ace tenor sax-man"[43] and the "leader of his trio."[44] Jordan's trio[45] included himself and two other men, Bucky and Slim.[46] The novelty of Jordan's persona is that he is primarily a competent and successful musician but also an equally com-

petent and successful amateur detective battling the "evil" lurking in and around hotels and clubs in the Midwest.[47] Physically, Jordan is attractive to women, specifically blues singer Dee Dee Torch and the Kenny twins, Karen and Kay.[48] However, for the duration of the series, he is single with no references to a spouse, significant other, children, parents, or siblings. In fact, Jordan's closest friends appear only to be Bucky and Slim. Like Bret Harvey, Barry Jordan is also urban with appealing, "urban physical characteristics." He is shaded brown, has well groomed hair (natural, not processed), clear muscular features, full but not oversized nose and lips; a firm, square jaw, and he wears fashionable, tailored suits.[49] The iconic imagery of *Barry Jordan* also stresses the "urban landscape" with all of its trappings.[50]

Thematically, *Barry Jordan* is a morality play involving good guys and bad guys. This theme illustrates the strip's relationship with both the classical detective story and the hard-boiled detective story.[51] In the two fully developed plots, the crimes are organized and carried out by both men and women. Furthermore, most of the crimes Jordan encountered are not violent and ugly in the sense of bloody murder, brutal torture, and gun brandishing.[52] Rather, Jordan is faced with crimes of the "mind" such as arson that require no more than physical force. From July 17, 1954, to July 16, 1955, Jordan faced three major crime situations. The first occurs at the interracial Island Casino Club in Toledo where Jordan solves an "infidelity racket." The second plot called "The Fire Bug," involves an arson ring targeting nightclubs. The final plotline, which was never resolved because the strip ended on July 16, involved the disappearance of "beautiful women" from the "Float," a popular recreational spot at the Gordon Resort Hotel which the detached, anonymous narrator describes as "one of the most exclusive [n]egro hotels in the south-west."[53]

Conclusion

The cultural significance of *Swing Papa* and *Barry Jordan* as postwar African American popular art forms is expressed in two different ways. Through *Swing Papa*, Quinn and Shaw illustrated an expression of black life and culture that was adventurous, glamorous, and fantastic. They told a story of life in Toledo that was exciting but not based on real social conditions. *Swing Papa* was not necessarily calling attention to important social and cultural issues in black Toledo such as voting, the nonexistence of black principals in the Toledo Public School system, or black member-

ship drives for the Young Men's Christian Association, Frederick Douglass Community Association, and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.[54] *Swing Papa* also did not highlight such important issues in black America as civil rights and banning segregation in all public transportation.[55] *Swing Papa* is an example of a "black urban romance and adventure" formula.[56] Its primary purpose was to engender pleasure in and identify with its black audience through the use of middle-class affluence, unlimited consumerism, individualism, social and economic mobility, violence, and a heterosexual love relationship, all centered in a separate-but-equal black world.[57] *Swing Papa* envisioned a black Toledo where black male musicians were truly the cultural heroes of the urban landscape and where the entertainment world was vibrant and alive, though, at the same time, racially segregated.

The *Barry Jordan* series as a whole, on the other hand, made a covert political statement because it represented the fulfillment of an African American male fully integrated into the American social order: Jordan's world is racially integrated, he relates with whites and blacks equally with ease, he has an acceptable occupation and a successful career as a musician, and, finally, Jordan possesses an intellectual, mental, moral, ethical, and artistic capacity superior to the other characters.[58] However, the series did not make overt political statements about racial injustice, discrimination, or segregationist practices as did characters in Morrie Turner's *Wee Pals* and Brumsic Brandon, Jr.'s *Luther*, both of the late sixties, and characters in the currently, popular (and highly controversial) *Boondocks* by Aaron McGruder.[59] Rather, Barry Jordan's presence in postwar comic art *was* the political message Dixon conveyed. That is, Dixon protested earlier portrayals of African American males by creating one who was *not* feckless, jet black, lazy, dumb, and dishonest.

It is significant to note that while there is little evidence that black organizations supported any type of popular cultural products, such civil rights organizations as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) were vocal about certain black popular products. Although its goals and hopes focused on full participation in the main social, political and economic activities of American life[60] and with the "abolition of enforced segregation in all public life,"[61] the NAACP adopted a resolution at its 1951 Atlanta convention targeting black artists performing before unsegregated stage and theater audiences and requested that they "insist on including non-segregation clauses in their future contracts." This resolution attacks radio and television programs that "depict the Negro and

other minority groups in a stereotyped and derogatory manner."[62] The main reasons the NAACP viewed these representations as negative is because they believed the images tended to "strengthen the conclusion among uninformed or prejudiced peoples that Negroes and other minorities are inferior, lazy, dumb and dishonest" and because they believed these "false" images seriously hampered and retarded the development of the work of the "Association and other interested groups and associations to promote intelligent appraisal of all human beings as individuals."[63]

If the NAACP believed negative stereotyped images could hamper their work and cause "prejudiced" people to view African Americans as inferior, then, by implication, the reverse was also possible. If the "churched, stably employed, [and] affiliated with an intricate network of clubs and fraternal orders" black middle-class could be represented in stage, radio, film, and television, then the NAACP's work could be advanced and African Americans could be viewed as intelligent, moral, hard-working, and aspiring American citizens.[64] Black or American popular stage, radio, film, and television programs that accomplished this should be commended. The presentation of *Barry Jordan*, then, though not stage, radio, film, and television, was the exact depiction that the NAACP would see as advancing their effort to promote the "intelligent appraisal" of African Americans as individuals. Unfortunately, comic art was not viewed as having the same level of influence as these other popular entertainment forms as evidenced by them not being considered or mentioned by the NAACP.

In conclusion, through the publication of *Barry Jordan* and *Swing Papa*, black readers of the *Bronze Raven* and *Toledo Sepia City Press* were able to observe (and perhaps) engage in a critique and prescriptive dialogue regarding black urban life in a postwar America. This urban life included black male musicians who were revered and esteemed and it made black culture the *center* of black life in Toledo and cities like it.

NOTES

1. Ray B. Browne, "Popular Culture—New Notes Toward a Definition," in *The Popular Culture Reader*, 3rd ed., ed. Christopher D. Geist and Jack Nachbar (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1983), 13, 15, 17; and Russel B. Nye, "Notes on a Rationale for Popular Culture," in *The Popular Culture Reader*, 3rd ed., ed. Christopher D. Geist and Jack Nachbar, 24.

2. Comic strips are "open-ended dramatic narratives about a recurring set of characters, told with a balance between narrative text and visual action, often including dialogue

in balloons, and published serially in newspapers." See M. Thomas Inge, "Introduction," *Journal of Popular Culture* 12 (Spring 1979): 631; and M. Thomas Inge, "Comic Art," in *Handbook of American Popular Culture*, ed. M. Thomas Inge (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978), 77.

3. As Roland Wolseley writes, this was because black newspapers reported "news of racial conflict . . . musings on the internal problems of race . . . doleful editorials, and great quantities of promotion materials for entertainment and sports personalities on various business enterprises." See Roland E. Wolseley, *The Black Press, U.S.A.*, 2nd ed. (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1990), 207.

4. M. Thomas Inge, "Introduction," in *Dark Laughter: The Satiric Art of Oliver W. Harrington*, ed. M. Thomas Inge (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993), vii.

5. See John D. Stevens, "Reflections in a Dark Mirror: Comic Strips in Black Newspapers," *Journal of Popular Culture* 10 (Summer 1976): 239-44.

6. See John J. Appel, "Ethnicity in Cartoon Art," in *Cartoons and Ethnicity: 1992 Festival of Cartoon Art* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Libraries, 1992), 13-48; Ian Gordon, *Comic Strips and Consumer Culture, 1890-1945* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998), 59-79; M. Thomas Inge, "Introduction," in *Dark Laughter: The Satiric Art of Oliver W. Harrington*, ed. M. Thomas Inge, vii-xliii; Steven Loring Jones, "From 'Under Cork' to Overcoming: Black Images in the Comics," in *Ethnic Images in the Comics* (Philadelphia: Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, 1986), 21-30; John D. Stevens, "'Bungleton Green': Black Comic Strip Ran 43 Years," *Journalism Quarterly* 51 (Spring 1974): 122-24; John D. Stevens, "Reflections in a Dark Mirror: Comic Strips in Black Newspapers," *Journal of Popular Culture* 10 (Summer 1976): 239-44; and Roland E. Wolseley, *The Black Press, U.S.A.*, 2nd ed., 207-210.

7. *Black comic strips* have core characters of African descent and are primarily authored by persons of African descent but have occasionally been authored by persons of European descent, e.g., John Saunders and strip *Dateline: Danger* (1968). Black comic strips amuse or engender pleasure in black and white (or interracial) audiences and emerge from self-conscious intentions, whether artistic, economic, or political, to illuminate African American characters and/or black experiences, real or created. There are three types of black comic strips: comedy (gag), family, and action. See Thomas Cripps, *Black Film as Genre* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978); and Mark A. Reid, *Redefining Black Film* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

8. John D. Stevens, "Reflections in a Dark Mirror: Comic Strips in Black Newspapers," 239; and M. Thomas Inge, "Introduction," in *Dark Laughter: The Satiric Art of Oliver W. Harrington*, ed. M. Thomas Inge, vii.

9. *Toledo Script* (September 1943-February 1949[?]), *Toledo Sepia City Press* (2 April 1948-13 May 1950), *Bronze Raven* (18 September 1948-10 January 1976), and *Toledo Observer* (24 July 1971). Additional information is in Stephen Gutgesell, *Guide to Ohio Newspapers 1793-1973: Union Bibliography of Ohio Newspapers Available in Ohio Libraries* (Columbus: Ohio Historical Society, 1974), 343, 347. Microfilm reproductions of the *Bronze Raven*, *Toledo Script*, and *Toledo Sepia City Press* are archived at the Toledo-Lucas County Public Library. Gutgesell's *Guide* notes that the Toledo-Lucas County Public Library holds one issue of the *Toledo Observer* dated 24 July 1971. When I inquired of the reference librarian on 4 August 2003, I was informed that this issue was in storage at the Library's warehouse in downtown Toledo. At that time, there was no mechanism in place to retrieve the single issue. In addition, reproductions of the *Bronze Raven* begin with the 6 January 1951 issue, not the 18 September 1948 issue.

10. The predominant black newspaper in Toledo currently is the *Toledo Journal* which was first distributed in 1975. *Sojourner's Truth*, another black newspaper, appeared some

time in 1997.

11. Felicia G. Jones Ross's chapter "Democracy's Textbook: A History of the Black Press in Ohio, 1865-1985" in Henry Lewis Suggs' *The Black Press in the Middle West, 1865-1985* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996), 243-66, provides insight into prominent black newspapers with particular attention to Cleveland's *Call and Post* but, unfortunately, does not discuss the existence, role, or significance of black comic art in black newspapers.

12. Minor auxiliaries of the black press (and mainstream press) less formally tied to publishing include news services, feature syndicates, and the dissemination of broadcasting and public relations. Feature syndicates are firms that sell comic strips, panel cartoons, personal columns, and other content for release everywhere on the same date. In the mainstream press, major syndicates include King Features Syndicate and United Features Syndicate. It does not appear that black newspapers had features syndicates created by blacks available to them until 1984 when Syndicated Writers & Artists, Inc. was founded. However, *Toledo Sepia City Press* lists a copyright year for *Swing Papa* as "1948" and cites the "Story Script Syndicate" as the syndicate responsible for this strip. In the May 22, 1948 edition of the *Press*, the editor describes the Story Script Syndicate as "an interracial group of writers and artists who have joined hands in a nation wide effort to open new and broader avenues of outlet for the productions of Negro writers and artists." Few references are made to this syndicate prior to the close of the newspaper in 1950. See Roland E. Wolseley, *The Black Press, U.S.A.*, 2nd ed., 349, 354; and "Toledo Magazine Attracts Patrons Throughout Nation," *Toledo Sepia City Press*, 22 May 1948, 4.

13. No installment appeared in the July 31 issue and the editors provided no explanation concerning its absence.

14. *(Toledo) Bronze Raven*, 17 July 1954, 1.

15. "The National Foto News" was a separate special insert subtitled "America's Most Outstanding Negro Pictorial Weekly." "The National Foto News" mainly featured photographs with news briefs about national and statewide African American celebrities.

16. *Li'l Moe and Joe* was an adventure continuity comic strip named for its two black pre-adolescent (boy) heroes. The *Barry Jordan* and *Li'l Moe and Joe* series appeared together from July 17, 1954 until May 28, 1955. No installments for *Li'l Moe and Joe* appeared after May 1955. This strip in the *Bronze Raven* and other strips in *Toledo Sepia City Press—Breezy* (15 January 1949), *Cheerful Chappie* (12 February 1949-19 February 1949, 5 March 1949-12 March 1949), *The Hills* (22 January 1949), *Jim Steele* (8 January 1949), *and Little Magnolia* (15 January 1949-12 February 1949, 26 February 1949, 19 March 1949, 2 April 1949-7 May 1949)—were not selected for analysis because the protagonists of these strips were unlike Jordan and Harvey and because the genres are different. With the exception of *Li'l Moe and Joe*, the abovementioned strips are comedy/gag strips.

17. John J. Appel, "Ethnicity in Cartoon Art," in *Cartoons and Ethnicity: 1992 Festival of Cartoon Art*, 34.

18. See John D. Stevens, "'Bungleton Green': Black Comic Strip Ran 43 Years," 122-24; and Roland E. Wolseley, *The Black Press, U.S.A.*, 2nd ed., 209-210.

19. Leslie I. Rogers drew the strip from 1920 to 1929, Henry Brown from 1929 to 1934, Jay Jackson from 1934 to 1954, and Chester Commodore from 1954 to 1963. John D. Stevens, "Reflections in a Dark Mirror: Comic Strips in Black Newspapers," 241; and John D. Stevens, "'Bungleton Green,'" 122.

20. M. Thomas Inge, "Introduction," *Dark Laughter: The Satiric Art of Oliver W. Harrington,* ed. M. Thomas Inge, viii; and John D. Stevens, "Reflections in a Dark Mirror," 239, 241-42.

21. Bill Crouch, Jr., ed., *Dick Tracy: America's Most Famous Detective*; Richard

Marschall, "The Aesthetics of Dick Tracy," in *Dick Tracy: America's Most Famous Detective*, ed. Bill Crouch, Jr., 104-9; and Garyn G. Roberts, *Dick Tracy and American Culture: Morality and Mythology, Text and Context* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Company, 1993).

22. Roberts, *Dick Tracy and American Culture*, 26, 288.

23. Lawrence E. Mintz, "Fantasy, Formula, Realism, and Propaganda in Milton Caniff's Comic Strips," *Journal of Popular Culture* 12 (Spring 1979): 667.

24. Kevin Gaines, "Assimilationist Minstrelsy as Racial Uplift Ideology: James D. Corrothers's Literary Quest for Black Leadership," *American Quarterly* 45 (September 1993): 357.

25. Robert C. Harvey, ed., *Milton Caniff: Conversations* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002), xxi, xxxvi.

26. Mintz, "Fantasy, Formula, Realism, and Propaganda in Milton Caniff's Comic Strips," 661.

27. M. Thomas Inge, "Comic Art," in *Handbook of American Popular Culture*, ed. M. Thomas Inge, 78.

28. Robert C. Harvey, "Aesthetics of the Comic Strip," *Journal of Popular Culture* 12 (Spring 1979): 650.

29. Jimmy Dixon. *Barry Jordan*. *(Toledo) Bronze Raven (Toledo, OH)*. 12 Feb. 1955, 3/7; 19 Feb. 1955, 3/2-6; and 5 Mar. 1955, 3/10.

30. Jimmy Dixon. *Barry Jordan*. *(Toledo) Bronze Raven (Toledo, OH)*. 18 Sept. 1954, 4/4,6; and 25 Dec. 1954, 4-5.

31. See Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans: A History*, 3rd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997).

32. Philip Ennis, *The Seventh Stream: The Emergence of Rocknroll in American Popular Music* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1992), 31.

33. Harold "Dave" Quinn and O'Wendell Shaw. *Swing Papa*. *Toledo Sepia City Press* (Toledo, OH). 17 April 1948, Story Script Syndicate: 4/3; 24 Apr. 1948, 4/6; 1 May 1948, 4/4; and 5 June 1948, 4/1.

34. Jimmy Dixon. *Barry Jordan*. *(Toledo) Bronze Raven (Toledo, OH)*. 17 July 1954, 4/7; 31 July 1948, 4/5; 11 Sept. 1954, 4/7.

35. The *Bronze Raven* was published from Saturday, September 18, 1948 to Saturday, January 10, 1976. Established by Frances Belcher with her husband, Richard Belcher, the *Bronze Raven* reported on local, state, and national events from a black perspective, provided information about cultural activities in and around the Toledo area, and were a voice to the dominant culture of Toledo on behalf of the black community.

36. An adventure continuity comic strip provides daily (or weekly) cliffhangers, captivating storylines, interesting characters, exotic settings, and the hero encounters high-risk physical dangers. See Robert C. Harvey, "Aesthetics of the Comic Strip," *Journal of Popular Culture* 12 (Spring 1979): 644; and Roberts, *Dick Tracy and American Culture*, 8.

37. *Toledo Sepia City Press*, 2 April 1948, 4.

38. Harold "Dave" Quinn and O'Wendell Shaw. *Swing Papa*. *Toledo Sepia City Press* (Toledo, OH). 1 May 1948, Story Script Syndicate: 4/3-4. An article in the *Bronze Raven* explains the role and significance of the Sepia City Mayor: "The Mayor of Sepia City is an honorary, non-paying position. He is elected by the citizens of this community and takes an active interest in their civic, political and economic problems. While the position is an honorary one, the Mayor traditionally has influence with City and County officials. He is a respected spokesman of this community." See "Primaries begin for Mayor of Sepia City," *(Toledo) Bronze Raven*, 5 Mar. 1955, 1.

39. *Toledo Sepia City Press*, 4.

40. Harold "Dave" Quinn and O'Wendell Shaw. *Swing Papa*. *Toledo Sepia City Press*

(Toledo, OH). 29 May 1948, Story Script Syndicate: 4/4.

41. Quinn and Shaw. *Swing Papa*. *Toledo Sepia City Press* (Toledo, OH). 10 July 1948, Story Script Syndicate: 4/3-4.

42. Quinn and Shaw. *Swing Papa*. *Toledo Sepia City Press* (Toledo, OH). 24 Apr. 1948, Story Script Syndicate: 4/2; 1 May 1948, 4/2; 8 May 1948, 4/3; 15 May 1948, 4/1; 12 June 1948, 4/4; 3 July 1948, 4/1, 3; 10 July 1948, 4/3-4.

43. Leading black saxophonists of the 1940s and 1950s were R&B bandleader Louis Jordan and jazz musicians Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Sonny Rollins, and Ornette Coleman. A concert announcement in the *Bronze Raven* noted that alto saxophonist Bill Harvey was going to be a part of the "huge 4 Star Attraction of continuous entertainment" in the Rainbow Garden in Fremont, Ohio, on 18 September 1954, 10. Also see *Barry Jordan* in *(Toledo) Bronze Raven*, 17 July 1954, 4. Jazz of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s relied heavily on the alto and tenor saxophones for their unique sound. Rhythm and blues (R&B) of the same period was also built on the use of the tenor saxophone and electric guitar. See Arnold Shaw, *Black Popular Music in America: From The Spirituals, Minstrels, and Ragtime to Soul, Disco, and Hip-Hop* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1986), 167.

44. Jimmy Dixon. *Barry Jordan*. *(Toledo) Bronze Raven (Toledo, OH)*. 1 Jan. 1955, 3/5.

45. The King Cole Trio led by Nat King Cole with guitarist Oscar Moore and bassist Wesley Prince was one of the most popular jazz trios of the 1950s. The *Bronze Raven* reported on October 30, 1954 that Cole's Capital recording "Hajji Baba" sold 10,000 copies the first day it was released (1). See Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 511; and J. Fred MacDonald, *Don't Touch That Dial!: Radio Programming in American Life from 1920 to 1960* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1979), 359.

46. Bucky's and Slim's instruments were never mentioned in the strip and it is unclear whether Jordan's trio played jazz or R&B. However, since Jordan played the tenor saxophone, it is conceivable that Bucky and Slim played the rhythm instruments. If they played the rhythm instruments then an argument for either style could be adequately supported with evidence: Both styles generally have rhythm sections consisting of guitar, piano, drums, or double bass. Jimmy Dixon. *Barry Jordan*. *(Toledo) Bronze Raven (Toledo, OH)*. 17 July 1954, 4/4; 7 Aug. 1954, 4/1-7. Also see Paul O.W. Tanner, David W. Megill, and Maurice Gerow, *Jazz*, 7th ed. (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown, 1992), 11.

47. Jimmy Dixon. *Barry Jordan*. *(Toledo) Bronze Raven (Toledo, OH)*. 30 Oct. 1954, 9/6; 4 Dec. 1954, 3/3.

48. Dixon. *Barry Jordan*. *(Toledo) Bronze Raven (Toledo, OH)*. 24 July 1954, 4/2-7; 18 June 1955, 3/6-9; and 16 July 1955, 7/3-8.

49. Dixon. *Barry Jordan*. *(Toledo) Bronze Raven (Toledo, OH)*. 17 July 1954, 4/2; 31 July 1954, 4/3-4; and 11 Sept. 1954, 4/3, 6.

50. Stephen F. Soitos in his *The Blues Detective: A Study of African American Detective Fiction* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996) shows that classical and hardboiled detectives work in or come from the city and that the "landscape of the city can often contribute important elements to the story in terms of mystery and motivation" (23).

51. Richard Marschall, "The Aesthetics of Dick Tracy," in *Dick Tracy: America's Most Famous Detective*, ed. Bill Crouch, Jr., (Secaucus, N.J.: Citadel Press, 1987), 104. My interpretation of the *Barry Jordan* series as detective story formula is based on John G. Cawelti's analysis of the classical detective story and the hard-boiled detective story in *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 80-98, 139-56. In addition, comparisons of the similar conventions of plot, character and scenic development shared by both detective paradigms as outlined by Stephen Soitos in his *The Blues Detective* advances one's understanding of *Barry Jordan*

as a detective story. These conventions, all utilized by Dixon in *Barry Jordan*, include analytical reasoning, narrative approach, conflict with official police, urban landscape, plot over character development, and individual values over group values (23-24).

52. Mike Benton, *The Illustrated History of Crime Comics* (Dallas: Taylor Publishing, 1993), 10.

53. Jimmy Dixon. *Barry Jordan*. *(Toledo) Bronze Raven (Toledo, OH)*. 11 June 1955, 3/9.

54. R. W. "Bob" Howe, Mayor, "Viewed from Sepia City," *Toledo Sepia City Press*, 10 Apr. 1948, 4; 5 June 1948, 4; and "Editorial: Toledo's New Principals," *(Toledo) Bronze Raven*, 18 June 1955, 2.

55. "Congress' Record Shows Failure on Civil Rights," *(Toledo) Bronze Raven*, 3 July 1954, 1; and "House Approves Bill to Ban Jim Crow Travel," *(Toledo) Bronze Raven*, 31 July 1954, 1.

56. See John Cawelti's definitions of adventure and romance in *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance*, 39-42.

57. See Herman Gray's discussion of black sitcoms in *Watching Race: Television and the Struggle for "Blackness"* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 73-89.

58. See James W. Chesebro's discussion of central characters in popular television series who employ a romantic communication system in "Communication, Values, and Popular Television Series—A Four-Year Assessment," in *Television: The Critical View*, 4th ed., ed. Horace Newcomb (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 17-51. According to Chesebro's analysis, Barry Jordan is a romantic type of central character.

59. Steven Loring Jones, "From 'Under Cork' to Overcoming: Black Images in the Comics," in *Ethnic Images in the Comics* (Philadelphia: Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, 1986), 27; Ben McGrath, "The Radical: Why Do Editors Keep Throwing "The Boondocks" Off The Funnies Page?," *The New Yorker*, 12 Apr. 2004, < http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?040419fa_fact2> (6 Aug. 2005).

60. Thomas Cripps, "*Amos 'n' Andy* and the Debate over American Racial Integration," in *American History/American Television: Interpreting the Video Past*, ed. John E. O'Connor (New York: Ungar, 1983), 33.

61. "Resolutions Adopted by the Forty-Second Annual Convention of the NAACP at Atlanta, Ga., June 30, 1951," *Crisis* 58.7 (August-September 1951): 475.

62. *Crisis*, 478.

63. Ibid., 478-79.

64. Cripps, "*Amos 'n' Andy* and the Debate over American Racial Integration," in *American History/American Television*, ed. John E. O'Connor (New York: Ungar, 1983), 34.

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