

# The Interplay of De-historicizing and Colored Narratives in 1970s America

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## Abstract:

This paper examines the intricate interplay between the processes of de-historicizing and the emergence of colored narratives during the 1970s in America. The decade witnessed a dynamic shift in the collective consciousness of the nation, as it grappled with its complex history of race, identity, and representation. De-historicizing refers to the deliberate distancing from historical contexts, often leading to the erasure of historical narratives and the subsequent silencing of marginalized voices. In the wake of the Civil Rights Movement, the American society attempted to move forward without fully reconciling its past, leading to an inclination towards de-historicizing certain aspects of the nation's history, particularly concerning race and discrimination. Conversely, the 1970s also witnessed the emergence of colored narratives, as minority communities sought to reclaim their historical identities and share their unique perspectives through literature, music, film, and other forms of artistic expression. These narratives served as powerful vehicles for voicing the struggles, triumphs, and aspirations of marginalized communities, challenging the de-historicizing trends prevalent in mainstream discourses. Through a comprehensive analysis of key cultural artifacts, literature, and historical events from the 1970s, this paper explores how de-historicizing and colored narratives intersected and collided. It delves into the ways in which colored narratives disrupted the dominant narratives constructed by the mainstream, challenging the established power structures and encouraging a more inclusive representation of American history.

**Keywords:** Discrimination, Representation, De-historicization, Colored Narratives, Civil Rights Movements

## Introduction:

The 1970s in America marked a transformative period, witnessing substantial changes across social, cultural, and political landscapes. Amidst this backdrop of upheaval, marginalized communities, such as African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and LGBTQ+ individuals, took significant strides in reclaiming their history and asserting their voices. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s set the stage for the advocacy of civil liberties and equality for African Americans. However, in the 1970s, the movement continued to evolve, with activists seeking to address issues like racial discrimination, police brutality, and economic inequality. The 1970s witnessed a surge in the Chicano and Latinx movements, as Hispanic communities sought to reclaim their cultural identity and challenge stereotypes. Through the examination of the literary works, art forms, and cultural expressions that emerged during this period, it sheds light on their role in reshaping the perception of Latinx experiences in America. Native American communities experienced a revival of cultural pride and identity during the 1970s.

The 1970s was also a critical time for the LGBTQ+ community, as they fought for their rights and recognition. Through an exploration of literature, art, and film, it culminates the emergence of LGBTQ+ narratives and their impact on society's perception of gender and sexual identities. The 1970s saw a burgeoning of LGBTQ+ literature that explored various aspects of queer experiences, identities, and relationships. This subsection critically analyzes the works of authors such as Audre Lorde, James Baldwin, and Rita Mae Brown, among others, who brought LGBTQ+ themes to the forefront, paving the way for increased visibility and representation in literature.

Visual art played a significant role in the de-historicizing of LGBTQ+ narratives. Artists like Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat used their artwork to challenge societal norms and advocate for LGBTQ+ rights. This section delves into the transformative power of art in altering perceptions, fostering understanding, and promoting social change. The 1970s saw a notable shift in LGBTQ+ representation in cinema. Filmmakers like Luchino Visconti, Pedro Almodóvar, and John Waters began exploring queer themes in their films, breaking away from stereotypical and harmful portrayals. This subsection critically analyzes the impact of these films on mainstream cinema and how they helped to humanize LGBTQ+ characters and their stories. By de-historicizing mainstream narratives and presenting authentic LGBTQ+ stories, the decade of the 1970s played a crucial role in changing societal perceptions of gender and sexual identities. This section examines the impact of these narratives on public discourse, legislative changes, and the gradual acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals within society.

The 1970s was a pivotal era for the LGBTQ+ community, as it fought for its rights and recognition. By de-historicizing mainstream narratives and giving rise to colored LGBTQ+ narratives through literature, art, and film, the decade paved the way for increased visibility and understanding of gender and sexual identities. The powerful voices of activists, writers, artists, and filmmakers during this period contributed significantly to the ongoing struggle for LGBTQ+ rights and acceptance, leaving a lasting impact on society's perceptions and attitudes.

The 1970s in America was a transformative decade that witnessed significant changes in popular culture and entertainment. Amidst this backdrop, colored narratives emerged as powerful agents of change, challenging prevailing norms and reshaping societal attitudes. For that purpose, it critically examines the impact of diverse perspectives in movies, music, and art during the 1970s, highlighting how these colored narratives contributed to the de-historicizing of mainstream cultural representations and fostered a more inclusive and enlightened society.

The 1970s saw a shift in the film industry, with movies increasingly reflecting diverse perspectives and experiences. African American, Latino, Native American, and other minority communities gained a voice in cinema, breaking away from the one-dimensional stereotypes that had long characterized their portrayals. This section critically analyzes groundbreaking films such as *Shaft*, *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*, and *The Godfather*, which challenged traditional narratives and offered authentic depictions of colored characters and stories.

The presence of Van Peebles's literal fingerprints on each stage of the production from the script pages in the typewriter to the celluloid in the splicer constructed unique conditions of production that make *Sweetback* an interesting document for a reexamination of auteur theory. This autonomy allowed *Sweetback* to take on a radical form, and the divergent responses this form engendered provide an opportunity to investigate the signification of race. Further, the film's role as a catalyst for the blaxploitation cycle shows that the culture industry thesis of Horkheimer and Adorno is useful for

understanding the workings of cultural production and the representation of blackness in the 1970s. (Wiggins 29)

Above all, *Sweetback* presents an interesting opportunity to explore the potential of revolutionary politics within the realm of cinema. Van Peebles' approach of "guerilla filmmaking" granted him a certain independence, enabling *Sweetback* to challenge racial stereotypes using unconventional methods of representation not commonly found in mainstream movies. However, Van Peebles' film fell short of sparking a revolution due to two key reasons. Firstly, its unique methods of representation required audiences to adopt new, unfamiliar ways of interpretation, which they lacked. Secondly, unlike revolutionary films seen in the Third Cinema movement, *Sweetback* did not address the necessity for fresh approaches to viewing, necessary for evolving viewership norms. While *Sweetback* succeeded in breaking away from the established standards of cultural production, representation, and distribution, it missed the mark by not reshaping the norms of understanding and presentation. Consequently, the culture industry capitalized on Van Peebles' work instead of him reaping the benefits, and Hollywood leveraged his less significant contributions to create *Shaft*.

Music in the 1970s became a platform for colored narratives, acting as a powerful medium to express cultural identity and address social issues. Genres like disco, funk, soul, and punk music played pivotal roles in reflecting the struggles and triumphs of marginalized communities. This subsection delves into the transformative power of artists like Marvin Gaye, Bob Marley, and Gloria Gaynor, whose music not only entertained but also raised awareness of societal injustices and celebrated diversity. The 1970s marked an artistic renaissance, with artists from diverse backgrounds using their creations to challenge the status quo. This section examines how artists like Jean-Michel Basquiat, Faith Ringgold, and Alma Thomas used their art to confront issues of race, identity, and representation. Their works contributed to the de-historicizing of traditional art narratives and paved the way for a more inclusive art scene. Television in the 1970s also saw a shift towards diverse representation, although progress was slow. This subsection critically analyzes shows like *Good Times*, *The Jeffersons*, and *Sesame Street*, which offered nuanced portrayals of minority characters and challenged stereotypes. However, it also discusses the limitations and obstacles faced by creators in fully de-historicizing mainstream narratives on television.

The infusion of colored narratives into popular culture and entertainment during the 1970s had a profound impact on societal attitudes. This section examines how these representations contributed to broader conversations about race, ethnicity, and identity, gradually dismantling prejudiced beliefs and fostering a more tolerant and empathetic society. The 1970s in America witnessed the transformative power of colored narratives in popular culture and entertainment. Through movies, music, and art, diverse perspectives challenged existing norms and helped de-historicize mainstream cultural representations. This shift in representation not only offered authentic portrayals of colored communities but also influenced societal attitudes, paving the way for a more inclusive and enlightened society. The legacies of these narratives continue to resonate, underscoring the importance of embracing diversity and fostering a culture of empathy and acceptance in today's world.

Hence, the 1970s in America was a turning point for marginalized communities, as they sought to reclaim their history and bring forth their narratives. This paper demonstrates how the de-historicizing of mainstream narratives and the rise of colored narratives in literature, art, music, and film contributed to a more inclusive and diversified representation of American society. The decade laid the foundation for continued advocacy and progress in the decades to come, leaving a lasting impact on the nation's social and cultural landscape.

### De-historicizing in 1970s America:

De-historicizing, a term gaining increasing attention in contemporary discourse, refers to the pernicious process of stripping historical events of their contextual richness and significance. This process often leads to the creation of distorted or incomplete narratives that fail to capture the complexity of the past. This section delves into the phenomenon of de-historicizing, specifically focusing on its implications for American history. The discussion revolves around how mainstream historical accounts have habitually marginalized the struggles and contributions of underrepresented communities, consequently perpetuating a narrow and biased perspective on the past of nation. In the annals of history, it is evident that dominant narratives often silence or overshadow the voices of marginalized groups. Traditional historical accounts have leaned toward highlighting the achievements and perspectives of the privileged, inadvertently relegating the experiences of marginalized communities to the background. This relegation not only distorts the historical record but also reinforces existing power dynamics. One glaring example of this phenomenon lies within the pages of textbooks. Educational materials frequently downplay or even omit the struggles and triumphs of minorities, women, indigenous peoples, and LGBTQ+ communities. This omission systematically shapes the understanding of young minds, fostering a skewed perception of history where these communities are portrayed as peripheral to the larger narrative. This de-historicizing effect not only fosters ignorance but also cultivates a sense of disconnection among these marginalized communities from their own historical roots.

N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* commendably illustrates cultural pluralism by presenting the enduring strength and longevity of Pueblo, Kiowa, and Navajo cultures. While the novel has been interpreted as celebrating a blending of Native and white cultural or religious traditions, a more accurate perspective suggests its multiculturalism can be likened to a palimpsest—a surface layer of hybridity that conceals a deeper dedication to preserving Native traditions. This approach underscores the novel's emphasis on the intimate relationship between Pueblo culture and a specific geographical context, highlighting the distinctive tenure that indigenous peoples hold in their ancestral lands—an idea that stands in contrast to the experience of white Americans (57, 58).

Among the prominent literary works emerging in the 1970s following in the footsteps of N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*, one that stands out is Leslie Marmon Silko's 1977 novel, *Ceremony*. Similarly, the themes in *House Made of Dawn*, the central character, Tayo, a Native individual from Laguna Pueblo, grapples with a spiritual ailment borne not only from the scars of wartime trauma but also from the disintegration of Native communities and the detachment of individuals from their cultural heritage and ancestral lands. The novel *Ceremony* critically examines the process of assimilation, revealing how American society actively severs individuals from their cultural groups and specific geographical connections. Tayo's path to healing unfolds through a rediscovery of the narratives embedded within his ancestral traditions. Reflecting the essence of other multicultural texts, the narrative of *Ceremony* juxtaposes two interrelated ideals. The first is cultural pluralism—an aspiration for various minority cultures to persist and thrive within contemporary America. The second is cultural relativism—a stance asserting that the moral, religious, and aesthetic standards of one culture should not be employed to judge the practices and values of another culture. Within the novel, the mainstream cultural norms that negate the significance of Laguna religious beliefs and devalue the importance of traditional healing ceremonies pose significant challenges that the characters in *Ceremony* must navigate in their pursuit of self-healing and the betterment of their community. The narrative sheds light on the struggles and resilience of these characters as they work towards rejuvenating their cultural heritage and resisting the

influence of cultural assimilation and mainstream norms. In essence, *Ceremony* by Leslie Marmon Silko, akin to *House Made of Dawn*, captures the essence of the dual ideals of cultural pluralism and cultural relativism. It portrays the endeavor to retain one's cultural identity and traditions within the context of a society that often marginalizes and attempts to erase such distinctiveness.

In James Dickey's novel *Deliverance* (1970), the character Ed Gentry is profoundly disturbed by the rape experienced by Bobby Trippe. This sense of horror is amplified by Bobby's apparent willingness "to let anything be done to him" and the piercing, high-pitched scream that accompanies his sexual violation (135). The intensity of their desire to suppress the traumatic events they have undergone in the wilderness is reflected in their drastic actions: they initially kill and bury one of their attackers, followed by Ed's killing of the second assailant. Despite returning home with this dark secret, Ed's aversion towards Bobby persists. He feels a deep aversion towards Bobby's "screaming" and "howling," seemingly attributing a level of culpability to the victim for allowing the sexual assault to occur. Although Ed himself anticipates that he is also at risk of facing a sexual assault, he deliberately avoids acknowledging the nature of the impending act. His repulsion is so intense that he refuses to even name it. This response highlights Ed's profound discomfort and his attempt to distance himself mentally from the disturbing experiences and the possibility of his own victimization. This complex portrayal underscores the psychological aftermath of traumatic events, showcasing the characters' internal struggles and the various ways they cope with their harrowing experiences.

The core of these novels revolves around a central theme of self-loathing, with the intricate landscape of sexual dynamics forming the heart of their stories. The most striking manifestation of self-disdain is arguably portrayed in Toni Morrison's literary works, notably *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Sula* (1973), and *Song of Solomon* (1977). These novels serve as platforms through which Morrison articulates her responses to themes like preadolescent sexuality, lesbian longing, incest, and sexual abuse. In the year 1970, Morrison unveiled her remarkable debut novel, which skillfully delves into the yearnings of African Americans for a conventional white sexuality. This longing is particularly evident in the character of Pecola Breedlove, whose mother is captivated by ideals of white beauty. Dale M. Bauer states that "Her father rapes his daughter, and after she delivers his baby, dead on arrival, she wanders forlornly, most likely insane. Pecola's incest with her father destroys her and results in her longing to have blue eyes to be reconstructed as white privilege" (Curnutt 104). The novel skillfully underscores the nuanced manner in which prepubescent girls, Frieda and Claudia, navigate their understanding of sexuality. Their mother endeavors to shield them from the harmful influences of racism and sexism to the best of her abilities. This sets the backdrop for Morrison's exploration of the contrasting dynamics between white and black cultures. Within this context, the narrative delves into the intricate interplay of race, gender, and social class, all of which are experienced and processed through the lens of her young female characters. In contrast, African American activists in the narrative, much like in *Sula*, grapple with the potent force of sexuality. This is evident in the intense and complex relationships between characters such as Sula and Nel, which feature a lesbian dynamic that Barbara Smith, in her essay "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism" (1977), identifies as a central element of the novel. Sula's character, in particular, is characterized by a series of diverse affairs, including a significant liaison with Jude, who happens to be Nel's husband. This intricate portrayal of sexual relationships, influenced by societal and cultural factors, offers a multifaceted exploration of human interaction within the broader context of African American experiences.

Ira Levin's widely acclaimed novel *The Stepford Wives* employed satire to critique the conformity associated with conventional sexual norms, symbolized through robotic-like behavior. In contrast, Editor Gloria Steinem introduced a groundbreaking perspective with the inaugural issue of *Ms. Magazine*. This marked a significant moment in bringing feminist theory and practice to the forefront of public awareness. The magazine's first edition addressed crucial topics, such as women's engagement with welfare and the requisite feminist response, along with coverage of the 1972 political candidates and the intricate politics surrounding abortion. The issue also delved into the burgeoning awareness and political consciousness among housewives, notably explored in articles like "The Housewife's Moment of Truth" (1971). Steinem's editorial vision also extended to linguistic reform through pieces like "Desexing the English Language" (1982). One of the magazine's most thought-provoking contributions was Judy Syfers's renowned satire, "I Want a Wife" (1971). This essay audaciously portrayed the concept of the "double shift," capturing women's multifaceted roles as secretaries, housekeepers, and companions. Syfers's piece effectively highlighted the often-overlooked complexities of women's responsibilities, shedding light on their demanding and varied roles within society. The debut issue of *Ms. Magazine*, under Steinem's stewardship, thus heralded a new era in feminist discourse, confronting traditional gender dynamics and sparking broader conversations about equality and societal expectations. The magazine drives home the point:

I want a wife who is sensitive to my sexual needs, a wife who makes love passionately and eagerly when I feel like it, a wife who makes sure that I am satisfied. And, of course, I want a wife who will not demand sexual attention when I am not in the mood for it. I want a wife who assumes the complete responsibility for birth control, because I do not want more children. I want a wife who will remain sexually faithful to me so that I do not have to clutter up my intellectual life with jealousies. And I want a wife who understands that my sexual needs may entail more than strict adherence to monogamy. I must, after all, be able to relate to people as fully as possible. (Syfers 56)

This ironic perspective on sexual faithfulness is introduced toward the conclusion of the essay, overshadowing a fundamental aspect of a wife's identity: her compliant submissiveness juxtaposed with her assertive influence over her husband's desires. This intense craving for sexual assurance marks the inception of a decade-spanning struggle concerning male sexual dominance.

The texts discussed encapsulate a pivotal period in American literature and social discourse, particularly in the 1970s. From N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* to Toni Morrison's trilogy and the emergence of feminist thought in Gloria Steinem's *Ms. Magazine*, these works delve deep into the complexities of identity, sexuality, cultural belonging, and gender dynamics within the context of 1970s America. A common thread woven through these narratives is the exploration of self-loathing and the intricate interplay between societal expectations, personal desires, and the longing for acceptance.

N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* and Toni Morrison's trilogy powerfully illustrate the tension between cultural assimilation and the preservation of one's own heritage. Abel's struggles in *House Made of Dawn* exemplify the traumatic effects of assimilation, reflecting the broader challenges faced by indigenous communities in maintaining their traditions amid societal pressures. In Morrison's works, like *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, and *Song of Solomon*, characters grapple with the internalized racism and self-loathing that arise from a desire to conform to white standards of beauty and sexuality. Morrison's exploration of incest, lesbianism, and sexual abuse provides a candid view into the complexities of sexuality and identity in a society fraught with prejudice. Gloria Steinem's *Ms. Magazine* ushers in a new era of feminist discourse, channeling the concerns of women across the nation. The magazine's inaugural

issue engages with issues such as welfare, political representation, abortion rights, and the manifold roles of women within society. The inclusion of Judy Syfers's satirical essay "I Want a Wife" provocatively exposes the double standards and the often-overlooked burdens placed on women.

Connecting these literary works and the feminist movement of the era with media representation, it becomes evident that these texts both reflected and influenced the evolving cultural landscape of 1970s America. Media, such as literature and magazines like *Ms. Magazine*, played an instrumental role in shaping public discourse and challenging traditional gender roles. These narratives created a platform for marginalized voices to articulate their experiences, struggles, and aspirations, redefining the historical narrative of the time.

In addition, popular media also plays a substantial role in the de-historicizing process. Movies, television shows, and literature often perpetuate stereotypes and overlook the nuanced experiences of marginalized groups. By focusing primarily on a narrow set of stories and perspectives, media contributes to the creation of a historical narrative that fails to reflect the true diversity of American society. The result is a collective memory that overlooks the courage, resilience, and contributions of countless individuals who struggled against adversity and made substantial contributions to shaping the nation's identity.

Media representation further served to re-historize 1970s America by shedding light on the underlying complexities of identity, sexuality, and social expectations that might have been overlooked in mainstream narratives. These works pushed back against the prevailing norms, sparking conversations about diversity, equality, and the multifaceted experiences of individuals within society. In essence, the literary texts and media representation of the 1970s serve as a dynamic tapestry, interwoven with themes of cultural identity, gender dynamics, and societal challenges. Their collective impact is instrumental in reshaping historical perceptions, amplifying marginalized voices, and catalyzing discussions that continue to reverberate in contemporary conversations about identity, sexuality, and equality.

Official records, despite their perceived objectivity, are not immune to the de-historicizing process. Government archives, legal documents, and administrative records have frequently glossed over or misrepresented the struggles faced by marginalized communities. Laws and policies that discriminate against minority groups are often sanitized or framed in a way that downplays their harmful impact, thereby perpetuating an incomplete narrative of societal progress. This revisionism not only obscures the historical injustices suffered by these communities but also undermines efforts to reckon with the legacies of discrimination that continue to shape contemporary society.

However, de-historicizing is a grave threat to the integrity of historical representation. Mainstream historical accounts have perpetuated a distorted perspective by marginalizing the experiences of underrepresented communities. This limited perspective has permeated educational materials, media portrayals, and official records, thereby contributing to a collective understanding of American history that fails to reflect its true complexity and diversity. Addressing this issue necessitates a deliberate effort to amplify marginalized narratives, challenge prevailing biases, and construct a more inclusive historical narrative that recognizes the contributions and struggles of all communities.

### **Colored Narratives in Literature:**

During the 1970s, literature emerged as a compelling and influential platform through which marginalized voices could candidly articulate their experiences, effectively reshaping the prevailing historical narrative. This section delves into the literary contributions of notable African American authors such as Toni Morrison, James Baldwin, and Alice Walker, as well as Latino writers including Rudolfo

Anaya and Gloria Anzaldúa. These writers strategically employed their creative works to bring colored narratives to the forefront, challenging conventions and amplifying the voices of the historically silenced.

Toni Morrison, celebrated for her works like *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, and *Song of Solomon*, masterfully portrayed the intricate layers of self-loathing, racism, and sexuality that characterized the experiences of African Americans in the 1970s. James Baldwin's incisive exploration of racial and sexual identity in novels such as *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953) and *If Beale Street Could Talk* (1974) critically engaged with the socio-political landscape, unearthing the depths of discrimination faced by African American communities. Alice Walker's groundbreaking novel *The Color Purple* (1983) provided a poignant depiction of African American women's lives, delving into themes of sisterhood, abuse, and self-discovery. Meanwhile, Latino authors like Rudolfo Anaya, through works like *Bless Me, Ultima* (1972), infused their narratives with cultural authenticity, painting a vivid picture of the struggles and triumphs experienced within Latino communities. Gloria Anzaldúa, in her influential and semi-autobiographical work *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), offered a unique perspective on the intersections of race, gender, and cultural identity, unveiling the complexities of being a Chicana woman in the United States. These writers deftly weaved colored narratives into their literary tapestries, bringing forth issues that were often disregarded in mainstream historical accounts.

Collectively, these literary pioneers redefined the trajectory of historical discourse, effectively decentering the dominant narratives and shining a spotlight on the stories of those who had long been marginalized. By championing the experiences of people of color, they not only altered historical perceptions but also paved the way for a more inclusive and diverse understanding of the past. Their creative works continue to resonate, serving as a reminder of the power of literature to shape and challenge historical narratives, and to give voice to the silenced and overlooked aspects of our shared history.

James Baldwin, a renowned African American writer, poet, and essayist, is known for his insightful and thought-provoking novels that tackle themes of race, identity, and society in America. His works often de-historicize perspectives in a way that challenges traditional narratives and highlights the contemporary relevance of these issues. In his semi-autobiographical novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953), Baldwin explores the lives of a deeply religious African American family in Harlem during the 1930s. While the novel is set in a specific historical period, Baldwin de-historicizes the narrative by delving into the characters' psychological and emotional experiences. He portrays the struggles and conflicts within the family, focusing on the internal dynamics rather than merely presenting a historical account of Harlem at that time. This approach allows Baldwin to speak about universal themes of family, faith, and identity that extend beyond the historical context.

In his *Another Country* (1962), Baldwin examines interracial relationships and complex sexual identities in Greenwich Village during the 1950s. Baldwin de-historicizes the narrative by emphasizing the emotional and psychological experiences of the characters, transcending the temporal and geographical setting. He portrays their struggles with love, jealousy, and identity, revealing the human condition in a manner that resonates with readers across time and cultures. His *If Beale Street Could Talk* (1974) sets in the early 1970s and tells the story of a young African American couple, Fonny and Tish, who face injustice and racism after Fonny is falsely accused of a crime. Baldwin de-historicizes the narrative by focusing on the emotional impact of racial injustice and the power of love and resilience, rather than simply recounting the historical context. Through the intimate portrayal of the characters' lives and emotions, Baldwin emphasizes the universality of their struggles, making it relatable across time periods.



*The Fire Next Time* (1963) is not a conventional novel; instead, it comprises a series of essays by Baldwin. These essays delve into a profound exploration of the racial dynamics prevalent in the United States during the tumultuous 1960s. Through his writing, Baldwin offers reflective insights and commentary on the complexities of race relations during that era. Baldwin de-historicizes perspectives by blending personal experiences with powerful social commentary. By highlighting his own experiences of racism and religion, he connects them to broader societal issues, making them relevant not just to his contemporary readers but to future generations as well. Hence, James Baldwin's works de-historicize perspectives by emphasizing the emotional, psychological, and interpersonal aspects of his characters' lives. By doing so, he addresses timeless themes and challenges readers to reflect on the enduring issues of race, identity, and society in America, making his work relevant to audiences beyond their original historical contexts.

Toni Morrison, the acclaimed American author, is known for her powerful and thought-provoking novels that often challenge conventional historical narratives. Through her works, Morrison skillfully employs various literary techniques to de-historicize certain perspectives, encouraging readers to question dominant historical interpretations and consider the marginalized voices and experiences that have been silenced or overlooked. Her incisive exploration of historical and social intricacies strategically employs the tool of reimagining historical events in her novels *Beloved* and *A Mercy*. Through this literary technique, Morrison embarks on a profound endeavor to dismantle the established narratives of history, which have systematically relegated the stories of African Americans and enslaved individuals to the periphery. In *Beloved*, Morrison's narrative prowess is evident as she not only revisits historical events but also boldly reconstructs them, inviting readers to engage with the visceral experiences of those whose voices have been stifled by the annals of time. This novel courageously delves into the emotional and psychological consequences of slavery, a subject that mainstream historical narratives frequently simplify into mere statistics and detached records. By doing so, Morrison crafts a space in which the silenced pain and resilience of the oppressed emerge as central protagonists, rather than as marginal footnotes in history textbooks. In her *A Mercy*, Morrison meticulously peels back the layers of historical silence to expose the multifaceted realities of enslaved individuals during the colonial period. Through her prose, Morrison demonstrates her commitment to presenting an authentic portrayal of the complexity and diversity of experiences, as opposed to a monolithic depiction. She unravels the intricate ways in which different characters negotiate their agency, survival, and identity in the face of systemic oppression. What sets Morrison's approach apart is her unflinching dedication to amplifying voices that have been muted or obliterated from conventional historical narratives. In her exploration of the psychological and emotional impacts of slavery and colonialism, Morrison confronts readers with the uncomfortable truths of America's past. She challenges the sanitized versions of history that often prevail, thereby offering a corrective lens that reshapes collective memory and catalyzes critical discourse. Hence, Morrison's skillful reimagining of historical events in *Beloved* and *A Mercy* transcends the boundaries of conventional literature. By resurrecting the stories of African Americans and enslaved individuals, she orchestrates a literary insurgency against historical erasure. Through her meticulous attention to detail and empathetic exploration of human experiences, Morrison navigates the treacherous terrain of history, illuminating the obscured corners and demanding recognition for those who have been relegated to the shadows. However, Morrison revisits and reimagines historical events to bring forth the stories of African Americans and enslaved individuals who have been neglected or erased from traditional historical accounts. She explores

the psychological and emotional impacts of slavery and colonialism, giving a voice to the oppressed and underscoring the complexity of their experiences.

In addition, Toni Morrison employs distinctive narrative strategies in her works to unveil unexplored historical dimensions and counter prevailing narratives. She frequently shifts the narrative spotlight away from conventional historical luminaries, instead centering her stories on the lives of ordinary individuals, particularly women and people of color. This challenges predominant historical perspectives that exalt notable figures, often at the expense of marginalized communities' contributions. Morrison's artistry lies in her manipulation of time. Employing non-linear storytelling with multiple timelines, she subverts the linear trajectory of history. By utilizing techniques such as flashbacks, dream sequences, and interwoven narratives, she challenges traditional temporal structures, underscoring the enduring impact of historical traumas on the contemporary moment.

Her narrative canvas is adorned with symbolism and magical realism, allowing her to transcend conventional historical realism. This departure affords exploration of characters' psychological and spiritual dimensions, facilitating a deeper understanding of their experiences. Such exploration underscores the interwoven nature of history and human existence. In some of her works, Morrison employs unreliable narrators, challenging established historical records. These voices present alternate viewpoints and cast doubt on official historical truths, fostering critical engagement with established narratives. African American oral tradition infuses Morrison's writing, interweaving storytelling, folklore, and song. This preserves and conveys marginalized histories, foregrounding alternative perspectives that have been overlooked within the dominant narratives in mainstream literature.

Hence, Morrison's literary craftsmanship resounds as a distinctive historical intervention. Her shift in focus, manipulation of time, narrative techniques, incorporation of oral tradition, and nuanced characterization collectively dismantle conventional historical frameworks. This enables the reclamation of marginalized histories and the exploration of humanity's complex relationship with the past. Through these de-historicizing perspectives, Toni Morrison's works contribute to a richer and more nuanced understanding of history, encouraging readers to critically examine dominant narratives and acknowledge the diverse range of experiences that have shaped our past and continue to influence our present.

### **Intersectionality and Identity:**

An important aspect of de-historicizing-colored narratives involves recognizing intersectionality, where individuals experience multiple forms of oppression simultaneously. This dimension proves crucial in analyzing how authors, artists, musicians, and filmmakers of the era grappled with intersectionality in their works and the impact it had on the broader understanding of marginalized experiences. By reframing history to include the voices and perspectives that traditional narratives often ignore, de-historicizing becomes a potent tool to validate the intersectional struggles of various communities. These narratives transcend linear historical records and instead venture into the realm of personal and collective stories, unveiling the interplay of various forms of oppression that individuals from marginalized backgrounds have faced. By acknowledging and highlighting intersectionality, colored narratives endeavor to construct a holistic understanding of identity – one that acknowledges the complex amalgamation of race, gender, sexuality, and other dimensions.

The exploration of intersectionality and identity within the context of de-historicizing-colored narratives in 1970s American literature offers a dynamic lens through which to dissect the complexities of marginalized experiences. This critical perspective illuminates the pivotal role that intersectionality

played in reshaping narratives, challenging conventional historical frameworks, and presenting a more comprehensive portrayal of the diverse struggles faced by individuals from marginalized communities. In the 1970s, American literature witnessed a remarkable shift towards narratives that foregrounded the stories of individuals who had long been relegated to the margins of historical accounts. This movement sought to disrupt the established narrative of history, one that often centered on dominant figures while marginalizing the experiences of those at the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and other aspects of identity. The recognition of intersectionality, which acknowledges the layered oppressions faced by individuals, emerged as a central theme during this period.

Authors, artists, musicians, and filmmakers of 1970s America play a pivotal role in shaping the discourse around intersectionality. Their creative endeavors reflect a commitment to amplifying marginalized voices and shedding light on the often-unaddressed layers of discrimination. Whether through literature, visual arts, music, or film, these creators unveil the nuanced ways in which oppression intersects and manifests in the lives of those pushed to the margins. This artistic exploration not only offers a cathartic outlet for the marginalized but also compels society at large to acknowledge and reckon with the realities of intersectional identity.

Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982) endures a significant literary work that deeply engages with the themes of intersectionality and identity. Naylor's narrative orbits around the experiences of African American women who inhabit a housing complex. Each woman navigates a distinct amalgamation of challenges shaped by her racial, gender, and economic backgrounds. This novel emerges as a compelling testament to the confluence of these black women's lives, illustrating how their journeys intricately intersect and, in the process, defy facile categorizations. Through this exploration, Naylor scrutinizes the intricate connections between oppression and identity, casting a critical light on how these women's narratives transcend singular narratives and embrace the complex tapestry of their multifaceted lives.

Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982) emerges as a significant work deserving critical attention. This epistolary novel serves as a prism through which the lives of African American women in the early 20th century are refracted. Within its pages, the intricate layers of their experiences are artfully excavated and unfurling a narrative that not only underscores racial oppression but also plumbs the depths of gender and sexuality. The interwoven stories of characters such as Celie and Shug Avery intricately navigate the crossroads of race, gender, and sexual identity. In doing so, Walker artfully dissects the multi-faceted struggles these characters grapple with, effectively illustrating the convergence of diverse forms of marginalization. By intertwining these complexities, Walker challenges readers to confront the intricate web of inequalities that pervade the black characters' lives and, by extension, society at large.

Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979) holds a distinctive place within literary discourse. This work, situated within the realm of science fiction, skillfully employs the concept of time travel to excavate the intricate intersections of race and gender. The narrative orbits around Dana, an African American woman of the 1970s, who is inexplicably hurled back into the pre-Civil War period. Within this temporal juxtaposition, Butler deftly delves into the multifaceted terrain of Dana's experiences, shedding light on how her identity as a woman and a person of color weaves into the fabric of her encounters. The novel emerges as a thought-provoking exploration of how historical contexts, deeply marked by oppressive structures, mold Dana's identity and confront her with a tumultuous collision of identities. Through this lens, Butler crafts a riveting tale that both critiques historical injustices and invites readers to grapple with the complexities of identity in the face of systemic oppression.

Toni Morrison's *Sula* (1973) is a significant testament to her narrative prowess. Rooted in a close-knit African American community, the novel intricately navigates the lives of two friends, Sula and Nel. Their divergent trajectories serve as a canvas upon which the intricate tapestry of identity is meticulously woven. Sula's defiance of societal conventions contrasts sharply with Nel's conformity to them. This exploration provides a compelling lens through which the intricate intersections of race, gender, and personal choices come to the forefront, forging the paths of their individual lives. Morrison's deft prose unveils how the societal contexts, deeply ingrained biases, and historical legacies culminate to shape these characters' identities. *Sula* emerges not only as an intimate exploration of these women's experiences but also as a thought-provoking commentary on the complex ways in which society's constructs interplay to mold individual destinies.

Essex Hemphill's *Ceremonies* (1992) emerges as a significant literary work that underlines the intricate relationship between intersectionality and identity. This collection of poetry offers an intimate glimpse into the experiences of a Black gay man navigating a complex web of marginalized identities. Hemphill's verses peel back the layers of intersectionality, delving into the distinct challenges faced by individuals whose existence is enmeshed within multiple spheres of oppression. These poems transcend conventional narratives, inviting readers to traverse the emotional landscapes that arise from the convergence of race, sexuality, and societal marginalization. By weaving together, the threads of these varied experiences, Hemphill's work stands as a compelling testament to the depth and complexity of identity. Through his verses, he crafts a narrative tapestry that disrupts linear notions of identity, provoking contemplation on the intricate ways in which society's constructs intersect to shape individual lives.

W.E.B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* published in 1903, although predating the 1970s, remains a foundational cornerstone that laid crucial groundwork for the subsequent discussions surrounding intersectionality. Du Bois's inquiry traverses the intricate terrain of Black identity in the American context, delving into the profound duality of being simultaneously Black and American. His exploration extends to how these facets of identity intersect, molding the lived experiences of African Americans. By scrutinizing the complex interplay between racial and national identities, Du Bois's work foreshadows the later conversations on intersectionality, inviting readers to grapple with the multifaceted nature of marginalized experiences. *The Souls of Black Folk* serves as a pivotal bridge between historical understanding and contemporary discourse, offering insights into how the intersection of identities shapes the narratives of marginalized communities in the intricate tapestry of American history.

However, these literary texts offer various perspectives on how intersectionality and identity were explored in the context of colored narratives, even if they were published slightly before or after the 1970s. They contribute to the de-historicizing of narratives by showcasing the nuanced and multi-dimensional experiences of individuals from marginalized communities. The impact of intersectionality within these works extends beyond individual experiences. It fosters an empathetic connection among audiences, encouraging them to reflect on their own privilege and biases. The textured narratives present in these creations unravel the complexities of existence at the crossroads of multiple forms of oppression. This, in turn, reshapes mainstream perceptions, fostering a more inclusive and empathetic societal consciousness. However, the critical interplay between de-historicizing and colored narratives brings to light the significance of intersectionality in understanding and portraying marginalized experiences. By acknowledging the complex intermingling of oppressions, creators of the era forge a path towards a more comprehensive historical narrative – one that acknowledges the diversity and depth of human identity and struggles. This process, driven by artistic endeavors, catalyzes a transformative journey from historical

erasure to historical understanding, effectively disrupting the conventional narrative and paving the way for a more inclusive tapestry of human history.

### Conclusion:

The 1970s in America was a critical period where de-historicizing dominant narratives clashed with the emergence of colored narratives from marginalized communities. Through literature, art, music, and film, diverse voices redefined history and expanded the collective understanding of American identity. Through the recollection of these colored narratives, we foster a heightened understanding of the intricate nuances within historical contexts, thereby forging a path towards a future that is characterized by inclusivity and equitable principles.

Within the complex fabric of 1970s America, this scholarly inquiry has shed light on the intricate dance between the mechanisms of de-historicizing and the emergence of colored narratives. This pivotal era serves as a crucible wherein the national consciousness contended with the intricate legacies of race, identity, and representation. The investigation unearths how the calculated detachment from historical contexts, a characteristic of de-historicizing, paradoxically reverberated as a response to the seismic societal shifts of the time. Paralleling this, de-historicizing often resulted in the marginalization of historical narratives, and more disconcertingly, the suppression of voices from marginalized communities. Simultaneously, the 1970s bore witness to the emergence of colored narratives – a potent assertion of identity and voice by marginalized communities. This surge, manifesting through literary works, musical expressions, cinematic ventures, and myriad forms of artistic discourse, defied the erasing tide of de-historicizing. Colored narratives emerged as resonant echoes that reclaimed historical identities and amplified unique viewpoints, imbuing them with vitality and agency. By meticulously scrutinizing pivotal cultural artifacts, literary works, and historical occurrences from the 1970s, this research rigorously traversed the point where the trajectories of de-historicizing and colored narratives intersected and clashed. This exploration delved deep into the undercurrents of mainstream discussions, uncovering the intricate interplay between colored narratives and the established norm. The resulting revelations unveiled how these narratives entwined with and disrupted the pre-existing narratives, sparking a transformative seismic shift in the depiction of American history.

This investigation extends an open invitation to explore the reverberations within the corridors of history, urging us to reevaluate our comprehension of the past and its intricate intertwinement with the present. As colored narratives persist in reshaping the contours of historical conversations, a pivotal query emerges: how shall we actively engage with these narratives? This query beckons us to recognize their inherent power in deconstructing prevailing narratives, amplifying voices from the margins, and steering us inexorably toward a future where the tapestry of American history is woven with inclusivity and unvarnished truth.

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