

The book chapter “The Violence of Captivity: Black Life Behind Bars” from *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present* by Robyn Maynard and “Episode 3: The Birth of American Music” from the podcast *1619* hosted by Nikole Hannah-Jones are similar in having very powerful messages about the abuse of black people with relevant examples, but they use different methods of communicating their messages. These secondary sources both focus on black people and the ways they have been mistreated throughout American and Canadian history. Both have an upsetting effect on the reader and use popular examples that their audience can relate to. One difference, however, is that the audio source is more aurally engaging than the written source with its use of sound effects and music. The other difference is that the audio source presents its topic with a captivating story, while the written source uses more facts.

The first similarity between the sources is the likeness of their topics and the point they are trying to prove. As both discuss ideas of racism, they both make connections to slavery in North America. In *1619*, slavery is mentioned several times in connection to the narrator’s story about the history of American music. The beginning of American music, as explained by the narrator, comes from a painful history of slavery. The music that would later become “not just of black America, but the sound of America” (Hannah-Jones) was originally sung “by Americans born into slavery” (Hannah-Jones). This relates to a point made in *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present*, which connects incarceration to slavery. This source describes that “[f]or Black and Indigenous communities, incarceration is merely an extension of practices of captivity that date back centuries” (Maynard 109) and even labels Canadian prisons as “slavery’s afterlife” (Maynard 109). Both sources also discuss topics that are more generally about racism alone, each with many examples to support this theme. One main topic in *1619* is black performers, which is an important factor in the origin of American music. At one point in this history, “America’s

primary form of entertainment” (Hannah-Jones) was blackface. This act which was normal at the time shows the extremely racist beginnings of American music. Then, in *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present*, Maynard demonstrates a similar point, but with the chapter’s topic of incarceration. Just as American music has racist beginnings, the violence described in Canadian prisons “is rooted in anti-Black racism” (Maynard 111). Each source, using its own evidence, communicates the same ideas of slavery and racism.

These secondary sources are both very effective in using examples that resonate deeply with their audience and translate their message well. *1619* uses a mixture of popular culture examples of music and celebrities, as well as older ones, to appeal to their audience and communicate that people all throughout history have been stealing black music. Many artists such as David Bowie, Amy Winehouse and Toto are referenced. The element that is similar “in all of these songs is, basically, blackness” (Hannah-Jones). There were also mentions of “[s]ome of America’s favorite stars [that] did numbers in blackface” (Hannah-Jones) such as Judy Garland and Bing Crosby, and America’s first talking motion picture “The Jazz Singer” having a number in blackface. Maynard’s book accomplishes this same idea of using specific examples to allow its readers to better connect with the ideas of the chapter. Since the book is about incarceration in Canada, using examples of prisons from Ontario to Nova Scotia, over a range of years, engages the readers with the content and makes the violence towards black people seem very real and close. One example was as recent as 2012 at Bordeaux jail in Quebec, which was revealed “to have horrific and inhumane conditions” (Maynard 110). These shocking examples from both sources effectively grab the audience’s attention by making them connect with their topics and help them remember the information with notable references.

On the other hand, a significant difference between an audio source and a written source is how engaging they are and how they hold the audience's attention. While both of these secondary sources were equally interesting in terms of information, I found the audio source *1619* more engaging overall because of its use of sounds and music. Utilizing different sounds is useful in keeping audiences actively listening, compared to the written source which is the same throughout the entire chapter and less attention-grabbing. Several types of music are used to make the podcast interesting, such as deep singing to instantly captivate, music that sounds as if it is coming from a record player as eerie sounds play in the background, and a variety of other songs. Any time a song is referenced, the narration will pause for the music to play for a few seconds, just enough time to keep listeners intrigued. Additionally, there are some subtle sound effects used in this audio source that distinguish it further from a written source. Even the smallest of sounds make a big difference in engagement. These include the sound of seagulls in the background, and the slight echo to add dramatic effect as the sound transitions from music to voice. Each carefully placed sound gives this audio source another element of excitement that the written source does not have.

There are a variety of ways to deliver a message, which these secondary sources each exemplify by using different formats. *1619* used a story to present its message, while *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present* is more a compilation of facts to support its ideas. In the audio source, the narrator begins by telling a story that hooks the listeners. The narrator starts by setting the scene of his story, being "last fall, [...] at [his] friend's house" (Hannah-Jones) and includes specific details, such as that he was "making dinner" and "chopping vegetables" (Hannah-Jones). The listener is brought back to the story throughout the episode, and it even ends with the story alongside the message that American music is black music, and that it is about their struggle for freedom. This element of storytelling makes the listeners feel as though they are part of the experience while always

reminding them of the points that the narrator is making. Then, with the written source, the reader has to connect to the ideas of the chapter through the facts and examples provided. The message that incarceration is a violent form of captivity, and “the ultimate deprivation of liberty” (Maynard 109), especially for people such as Black and Indigenous communities, is communicated with evidence instead of a story. There are fewer opportunities for the audience to feel connected to the source, but it is still powerful in delivering its message. Giving evidence is just effective in communicating this written source’s ideas as storytelling is for the audio source, however the audio source is more engaging.

Maynard’s chapter “The Violence of Captivity: Black Life Behind Bars” from the book *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present* and “Episode 3: The Birth of American Music” from the podcast *1619* by Nikole Hannah-Jones have similar messages regarding racism towards black people and use a wide variety of examples, yet they differ in how they deliver this information to their audiences. Both secondary sources reference ideas of racism and slavery in North America. They do this using many excellent examples that their audiences can relate to, helping them connect to the sources. The sources are different in how engaging they are, with the audio source being particularly engaging with its sound effects and music. The second difference between these sources is their method of communicating their messages, the audio source utilizing storytelling and the written source only using facts and examples. Both sources, even with these differences, effectively deliver their powerful and resonating messages.

Works Cited

- Maynard, Robyn. "The Violence of Captivity: Black Life Behind Bars." *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present*, Fernwood Publishing, 2017, pp. 109-112.
- Hannah-Jones, Nikole. "Episode 3: The Birth of American Music." *1619* from the NYTimes, 6 September 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/06/podcasts/1619-black-american-music-appropriation.html>.