

# *The Wonder Years* in Black and White: A Comparative Analysis

KATRINA THOMPSON MOORE

“What would you do if I sang out of tune?  
Would you stand up and walk out on me?  
Lend me your ears, then I’ll sing you a song  
I will try not to sing out of key, yeah” (Crocker, Genius.com transcript)

Depending on what generation you belong to, these lyrics may spark a variety of memories. “With a Little Help from my Friends” was initially released by the English rock band the Beatles in 1967. But it was the raspy, bluesy voice of singer Joe Crocker’s 1968 version that made this song iconic for the Woodstock generation (Perrone). For members of Gen X and early Millennials, Crocker’s cover may call to mind the television series *The Wonder Years*. Debuting on January 31, 1988, immediately following Super Bowl XXII, this ABC drama introduced an American audience to the Arnold family, which featured parents Norma (Alley Mills) and Jack (Dan Lauria), older brother Wayne (Jason Hervey), big sister Karen (Olivia d’Abo), and centered on the coming-of-age experiences of the youngest child, Kevin Arnold (Fred Savage) (*The Wonder Years* (Original TV Series)). ““The Wonder Years’ is charming. [...] vibrations are promising,” gushed *New York Times* writer John J. O’Connor (50). Created by husband-and-wife duo Neal Marlens and Carol Black, its chances for success were bolstered by Neal Marlens’ already established reputation as the creator of the television series *Growing Pains* which, like *The Wonder Years*, also centered on a white, suburban family. After the series’ premiere, however, it was several months before the new series entered ABC’s

KATRINA THOMPSON MOORE is an Associate Professor in the Department of History and African American Studies, and the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives for the College of Arts and Sciences at Saint Louis University. She is the author of the book, *Ring Shout, Wheel About: The Racial Politics of Music and Dance in North American Slavery* and several other key articles and chapters that examine the complexities of African American history, Black popular culture, and the intersectionality of race and gender in North America. She can be reached at [katrina.moore@slu.edu](mailto:katrina.moore@slu.edu).

*Popular Culture Studies Journal*

Volume 11, Issue 1

©2023

weekly schedule. The network aired new episodes on Tuesdays at 8:30 p.m., sandwiching *The Wonder Years* between two of the most popular shows of the 1980s: *Who's the Boss?* and *Roseanne*. Over time,

*The Wonder Years* would become one of the most iconic television series of the era (Haithman). The delay between the airing of the pilot and the series was risky, but “ABC believe[d] that television viewers have long memories,” wrote O’Connor in his review in 1988. Luckily, the risk paid off. *The Wonder Years* had a six-year run and won accolades. It was awarded a Peabody and several other awards, and it was named on *TV Guide*’s list of 20 Best Shows of the 1980s as well as *Rolling Stone*’s list of 100 Greatest Shows of All Time (Museum of Broadcast Communication). A good memory was needed to not only bridge the delay between the broadcasts of the pilot and the regular series, but also due to the nature of the show being set in the past.

The first season of *The Wonder Years* (TWY ‘88) takes a nostalgic view of 1968. Set in an unidentified, white suburban community, the series offers the story of adolescence through the experiences of child Kevin but is narrated by the adult Kevin (Daniel Stern) speaking from a present-day, late-1980s perspective. Nostalgia is at the very core of the show’s appeal. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, ABC hoped to recapture that nostalgia with its reboot three decades later.

On September 21, 2021, *The Wonder Years* (TWY ’21) was reintroduced to an American audience, but with major changes. Some elements remained the same, beginning with the retention of the title. It is also set in a suburb in 1968 and explores the coming of age of Dean (Elisha Williams), a young male pre-teen through the narration of the main character’s adult version, now speaking from a present-day, 2021 perspective. While the premise of the show parallels the original series, its approach to race is drastically different. TWY ‘88 centers on an all-white family, the Arnolds, in an unspecified, generic white suburb in the United States. The new 2021 series, in contrast, centers on Dean Williams, a young Black male adolescent coming of age in the suburbs of Montgomery, Alabama. Instead of a white family the racially Black Williams family comprises of parents Bill (Dulé Hill) and Lillian (Saycon Sengbloh), older brother Bruce (Spence Moore II), and big sister Kim (Laura Kariuki) (Andreeva).

This article offers a comparative analysis of the original 1988 series and the 2021 remake. This cultural-historical series presents an interesting case for comparison as both programs develop shifting perspectives on race and gender, all the while offering a nostalgic view of history and memory for a popular audience.

This nostalgia is presented in a different manner in each series due to the way race is presented. TWY '88 ran for six seasons with over 100 episodes. TWY '21, in contrast, has only completed a single season, although it has been renewed for a second as of this writing (Petski). Therefore, this analysis only considers the main characters and storylines as introduced in season one for both series. Both series are historical fictions that bring together realistic depictions of history and popular conceptions of that history. Although both series are set in 1968, they each reflect the political and social climate of the time in which they were released. Further, the racial dynamics governing these historical fiction series bring to the forefront questions about memory and nostalgia. This analysis focuses on the narrator and family structure within the society and politics of their respective times to understand the discursive impact of these television series in their respective milieus.

A note before proceeding: the comparative nature of this article is inherently problematic due to the differences in the construction of the show's first season and the over 30 years difference in their debut. In fact, the first season of TWY '88 is quite unique when compared to other 1980s series. As stated, the pilot premiered after the Superbowl on January 31, but it was not until March 15 that the series of six episodes began, starting with a repeat of the pilot episode. In the 1980s, on average, a full season normally had 24-26 episodes; for example, on ABC, *Roseanne*'s first season had 23 episodes and *Who's the Boss* had 22 episodes (Schneider). Since the 1980s, American television has drastically changed; for example, networks have lowered the number of episodes ordered to first gauge audience interest before investing in more episodes. For TWY 2021, ABC initially ordered 9 episodes but, due to its popularity, the network expanded the first season short order to a full order of 22 episodes (Cordero). Beyond the plot, the nostalgia of the original series, and the famous actors in the series, TWY 2021 was available through various platforms (i.e., ABC, Hulu, Disney+, and Star<sup>1</sup>) and therefore offered ample opportunity to gain an audience. TWY '88 was solely dependent on those that tuned in for the series on ABC, but it also had less competition from other shows due to the limited networks and channels.

This analysis accounts for these differences with its focus on season one of both series. While TWY '21 having more episodes in its first season allows for further development of characters and plot, a full season in television often has a similar

---

<sup>1</sup> These platforms only represent those in the United States. The show was available on various platforms outside of the US.

structure. A season is a cohesive unit in which there are several stories, but there is often a continual thread or theme that is introduced, developed, and has some type of closure at the end of the season, while also having hints of a new storyline that may be developed in the next season (Goldberg). Therefore, focusing on one season, regardless of the varying lengths, should allow for the show's creators, writers, and audience to have a full storyline, especially since few television shows are guaranteed another season. This article focuses on the construction of the foundational characters and how each series attempts to construct race, nostalgia, and memory. If both series ended with one season, this article and its analysis would not change since its focus was on the manner the characters and show were introduced, and not their further development.<sup>2</sup>

### Quantum Leap (Narrating through Time)

In both TWY '88 and TWY '21, the narrator is ever-present, unseen but continually heard. The narrator is the adult version of the main character, meaning that the adult Kevin Arnold (narrated by Arye Gross and Daniel Stern) is about thirty-four years of age, whereas the adult Dean Williams (narrated by Don Cheadle) is closer to sixty-seven. In both series, the narrator performs the role of offering reflective and witty commentary on the childhood experiences of the main character and is one of the most important and memorable aspects of the series.

Journalist Abigail Chandler has claimed that "The TV voiceover is a trope that is as old as TV itself." Nevertheless, its use in both series is innovative. As media writer Kim Handysides states, "Unlike many other shows, *The Wonder Years* doesn't feel as though it's being built around what the narrator is saying, rather it feels as though the narrator is accompanying" the other characters or is present within the scene and in some ways is reliving the experience (Handysides). Carol Black, co-creator of the original series, explained that the function of the narrator was to "play with what people think and what they're saying, or how they would like to see themselves as opposed to how the audience is seeing them" (Handysides). In many shows, the narrator offers a shortcut to getting inside a character's head, but for *The Wonder Years* of 1988 and TWY 2021, the narrator also bridges the worlds of the past (1968) and present (1988 or 2021). The characters in the series reside in 1968 while the perspectives, politics, and dialogue

---

<sup>2</sup> This article was written prior to the airing of TWY '21's second season.

of the narrator can traverse through time. Analyzing the eras that the narrator represents can help us understand his dialogue and the distinct role he plays while it also illustrates differences between the two series and how race, and society are explored within their respective political and social atmospheres.

*The Wonder Years* 1988 is introduced by the narrator's opening statement, which offers a description of the setting, some historical reflection, and introduces the main character. "1968. I was 12 years old. A lot happened that year. Denny McLain won 31 games, *The Mod Squad* hit the air, and I graduated from Hillcrest Elementary and entered junior high school. But we'll get to that." ("Pilot" 01:10-01:15) With these words, the 1968 song "Turn, Turn, Turn" by the Byrds begins, and black-and-white still photographs flicker on-screen, including images of the Black Power fist raised at the 1968 Olympics, Richard Nixon, hippies, protesters, the Vietnam War, Robert Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King delivering speeches, and even an astronaut in space. These familiar images are emblematic of the time. They only provide the background, however, to the true plot, which focuses on the coming-of-age, going from boyhood to late adolescence, of the main character, Kevin Arnold. As the images transition to more generic ones of Americana – white picket fences, cars, and family – the narrator continues. "There is no pretty way to put this," he says. "I grew up in the suburbs. I guess most people think of the suburbs as a place with all the disadvantages of the city, and none of the advantages of the country, and vice versa. But in a way, those were the wonder years for us there in the suburbs. It was a kind of golden age for kids" ("Pilot" 02:05).

*The Wonder Years* 1988 premiered in the last year of the presidency of conservative Republican Ronald Reagan. Evoking Reaganomics, the War on Drugs, the AIDS epidemic, and the escalation of the Cold War, the late-1980s, like 1968 (emblemized by the tragic assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy) are not often considered a "golden age" in U.S. history (Troy). However, as laid out by the narrator, and evident as the series continues, *The Wonder Years* 1988 is more about nostalgia and American mythmaking than historical accuracy. Film and television scholar Steve Anderson states that "TV and other visual media have fostered an increasingly 'derealized' sense of presence, identity, and history[...]. nostalgia symptomatic of a culture that still desires history, but is capable only of randomly cannibalizing styles and images from the past" (Anderson 19-20). Even the creator of the series Neal Marlen states in a 1988 interview, "If you don't have any real feelings for the suburban middle-class life, and if you didn't

have any sense of that time, it wouldn't make sense [...] If there's one common experience that a lot of Americans have right now, I think it is a middle class, suburban environment" (Boyer). Therefore, the narrator manifests as the literal interplay between past and present, which includes real historical events as background but with the appeal of a narrative arc and a character with which the audience can identify and through which they can vicariously experience those events. It intentionally appeals to middle-class, white sensibilities through the romanticized treatment of several themes: childhood, whiteness, family, and the suburbs. In *Myths America Lives By: White Supremacy and the Stories that Give Us Meaning*, Richard Hughes writes that the American Dream of "white Americans [...] glorifies manicured suburbs" yet neglects the segregationist policy that gave them their suburbs; this dream is celebrated and propagated in *The Wonder Years* 1988 (Hughes 71). The complex intersections of race and racism, gender ideals and sexism, and economics are neither considered nor recognized; the narrator takes the (white) audience down a mythical memory lane. The show is set in 1968, but could easily be transferred to 1958, 1978, or 1988 simply by changing the soundtrack, costumes, and sets.

"They called it the Reagan Revolution, and I'll accept that, but for me it always seemed like the Great Rediscovery: a rediscovery of our values and our common sense." This statement from former president Reagan in 1989 corresponds to a time period which, media scholars Bob Batchelor and Scott Stoddart state, "symbolized a nostalgic 1950s view of America – patriotism, conservative family values, and conspicuous consumption" (Batchelor and Stoddart xi). *The Wonder Years* 1988 represented a conservative pushback to the socially conscious, politically engaged, and progressive themes of 1970s television shows such as Norman Lear's *All in the Family*, *Maude*, and *The Jeffersons*, and shows from the 1980s like *Roseanne* and *Who's The Boss?* (Feuer, 12). Media scholar Jane Feuer argues that television was the "most significant medium ideologically" and held an "ongoing relationship" with politics during the Reagan era. *The Wonder Years* 1988 was more reflective of the politics and myths of the late 1980s than 1968 (31).

Former president Ronald Reagan, described by Richard J. Walton as "a man pulled from Hollywood westerns, and therefore a sort of living embodiment of American nostalgia," was famous for saying, "Let's make America great again" (Walton). Like Donald Trump, who resuscitated the slogan and even made it the basis of his presidential campaign, Reagan promoted the notion that America had lost its past innocence and needed to reclaim its promise (Nader). Similarly, the

creators of the original series saw 1968 as similarly chaotic as the 1980s but pursued the parallel through the lens of childhood and the suburbs, creating a bubble that protected the storylines of the show from outside political and social struggles (Plitt).

TWY 2021 offers a stark contrast in the function and reflections of the narrator. As the main character, Dean Williams, rides a bike on the streets through a Southern, Black suburb in Montgomery, the narrator introduces us to the new series with this monologue:

Growing up, Mom and Dad gave me “The Police Talk,” about how to handle yourself around cops. There was a presidential election that created a racial divide, and there was a flu pandemic that they said would kill a million people around the world. But it was 1968. And that’s the state our community was in. Yeah, even the flu part. This was the year I turned 12, the age where you transfer from boy to man. Or as the old folks used to say, “When a boy starts smelling himself.” The previous summer’s race riots had caused the first wave of “white flight” to the suburbs. As a kid, I didn’t understand all that. We had neighborhoods that were just as safe as the ones they were developing outside the city. There were teachers, veterans, shop owners, all united by pride, self-determination, and the right to spank any kid caught outside after the streetlights came on. (“Pilot” 22:31-21:32)

Even without noting the absence of the Joe Crocker version of “With a Little Help from My Friends” and the black-and-white stills of the 1960s, the introduction to the 2021 series clearly has a different objective than its predecessor. Dean Williams’s adult narration and the experiences and perspectives of the child character steer the show, but the focus, as evident in the introductory monologue, is contemporary political culture. In many ways, the politics, societal norms, and racial structure of 1968 and 2021 are not very different. The racial and social injustice affecting the Black community has existed for some time. The 2021 introductory monologue, then, does not depict an American “golden age” but instead offers a more complex perspective of being Black in the United States.

Nostalgia in the United States is too often a privilege reserved only for whites. The original 1988 series was based on the idea of a collectively shared generational memory. This idea of a collective memory ignores the fact that remembering has as much to do with “identity formation, power and authority, cultural norms, and social interaction” as it does with historical accuracy (Zelizer). The popular memory that makes many Americans look back on 1968 with nostalgia ignores the

history and experiences of African Americans and making this perspective central contributed greatly to the development and plot of TWY 2021. The narrator in both series inhabits the present time of each respective series, but in TWY 2021, narrator represents a more presentist, reflective style.

“Television formula requires that we use our contemporary historical concerns as subject matter” and then we take these concerns and place them” for very specific reasons, in an earlier time [when] values and issues are more clearly defined [and] certain modes of behavior [...] [are] more permissible” (Edgerton and Rollins 4). As *The Wonder Years* 1988 reflected its era of Reaganism, TWY 2021 reflects the world of #BlackLivesMatter and Trumpism (Bump). The introductory monologue of this series brings an awareness of social problems to the storyline absent from the original series. It begins with “The Police Talk,” alluding directly to the ongoing struggle between African Americans and the criminal justice system. In wake of the killings of many Black men and women at the hands of law enforcement and the protests that followed, as well as the continued activism of #BlackLivesMatter and #SayHerName, the narrator in TWY 2021 immediately engages the continual and consistent struggles of Blacks in America (Fondren). Although childhood and suburbia insulate the adolescent Dean Williams from these realities, as they do for Kevin Arnold, the adult Dean is not allowed to reflect solely on the greatness of that earlier time. The protective bubble of collective memory is essentially popped as a result of the current racial climate. Even in narrative reflection, the adult Dean Williams is not allowed to express nostalgia – or rather white nostalgia – in the same way it is propagated in *The Wonder Years* 1988. Instead, TWY 2021 reflects a restorative history with a focus on presentist ideology.

“When you look back to the year 2000, it just doesn’t feel like that big a difference societally and generationally than what we’re experiencing today,” executive producer of TWY 2021 Saladin Patterson says. “Not as much as it felt like when you went from ’88 to ’68. That felt like more of a retrospective lens where you can look to the past and learn something” (Lawler). This series attempts to capture the “nostalgia and wistful tone of the original” series while highlighting “a thriving, middle-class family” amid the complications of the Black experience. Black producer Lee Daniels states that Black families “have not been depicted in this era properly”; therefore, there is a restorative aspect to TWY 2021 (Lawler). As Badia Ahad-Legardy states in *Afro-Nostalgia: Feeling Good in Contemporary Black Culture*, “Black restorative nostalgia involves reviving a black communal spirit of resistance and solidarity made through intentional intertextuality with the



imagery, iconography, and sound of the civil rights and Black Power eras” (Legardy 62). The show engages in restorative nostalgia in the way it “engages historical memory in order to define a new black cultural moment” (147). The narrator balances memory, nostalgia, contemporary Black political ideology, and experiences by placing a middle-class Black family within an inspirational time for Black Americans.

The struggles against Jim Crow, protests, and political revolutions are a part of the memory of the Black experience in the 1960s, but TWY 2021 represents the time after the struggle. Schools and public facilities are legally desegregated, and mass protests (especially the kinds associated with Montgomery, the setting of the show) have quieted. Nevertheless, the narrator reminds the audience of the continuing struggles of the Black community with reference to the “police talk.” At the same time, he balances it with “afro-nostalgia” for a golden age for the Black community. For example, in Episode 5, “The Lock In,” the narrator expresses a longing for his youth in the face of present-day conditions. The episode starts with the narrator stating, “Being twelve in the ’60s was equivalent to being in your twenties today. We didn’t have helicopter parents coddling us at all times like fragile teacups” (“The Lock In” 00:19). After offering a laundry list of examples of how 1960s children were stronger than people today, the narrator narrows his focus on the episode’s central subject: the Black church:

Going to church was also part of growing up that is different. Now, the Black church is one of the most important institutions in American history. It’s been a home that kept Black people unified during hard times, a social and political center that sparked historic movements. And a training ground for a generation leaders and entertainers. So much of what makes Black culture unique comes from its roots in the Black church, and I grew up in a time when it was just a given you went to church every Sunday. (“Lock In” 00:10-1:40)

The homage paid to the Black church of the past both introduces and celebrates Black culture while at the same time offering a nostalgic perspective of the past. These expressions of nostalgia are a common trait of the series.

Whether it is white nostalgia or afro-nostalgia, the narrators within both versions of *The Wonder Years* represent the guide in every episode. The narrator plays a critical role, but it cannot be separated from that of the main characters, Kevin Arnold and Dean Williams. Their coming-of-age experiences range from romantic crushes to heartbreak, developing self-esteem and dealing with bullies,

and being the youngest sibling in the family. *The Wonder Years* 1988 and TWY 2021 cannot be fully understood without examining the boyhood experiences of Kevin and Dean and their families.

## Boy Meets World

It is important to understand Kevin Arnold not only from the perspective of his adult voice but also from his placement within his family. “The family has always been the cornerstone of American society,” Reagan once said. The suburban single-family home with its heterosexual couple and 2.5 children was considered the ideal American family and formed part of the ideology of the Reagan era. The Arnolds fit perfectly within this nuclear family structure. The mother, Norma, is a homemaker and nurturer. This blond-haired mother and wife, who rarely appeared in pants, is more reminiscent of the character June Cleaver from the 1950s series *Leave It to Beaver* than other 1980s television moms such as Roseanne Barr of the series *Roseanne* or Elyse Keaton of *Family Ties* (Feuer). The series first presents Norma in an exchange with the youngest son, Kevin Arnold, at dinner. As the family sits down to eat, the television in the background broadcasts news of Vietnam, reminding television viewers of the time period in which the series is set. Norma warns her children that Jack, their father, is on his way home from work and says, “Between the traffic and his job, he’s liable to be very tense, so let’s not make him crazy” (“Pilot” 05:10). Throughout the first season, Norma is portrayed as a caregiver, oblivious to the outside world, concerned primarily with the daily maintenance of family life and soothing Dad’s temper.

Media scholar Bridget Kies notes that “women-oriented programs in the 1980s brought attention to feminism,” but *The Wonder Years* 1988 can circumvent this new dawn of prime-time broadcasting through its 1968 setting (Kies 14). By returning to a mythicized family structure in which men were dominant and women were passive nurturers, the show does not include much evidence of the active feminist movement of the late 1960s. A few clues shed light on the potential development of the mother, Norma, however. For example, in Episode 2, “Swingers,” Norma catches Kevin and his friend with the book *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Sex (But Were Afraid to Ask)*; she is furious. Although her anger initially appears to be a response to the sexual nature of the book, we later learn that she’s angry because Kevin stole her copy. This book was released in 1969 and is often seen as the first sex manual. It’s associated with the

sexual revolution and the women's empowerment movement, but here is scripted as a source of shame for both Norma and Kevin (Reuben).

Scholar Bridget Kies has written of the 1980s, "During this period, seemingly dichotomous images of masculinity were present in American politics and culture: the 'new man' embodied by Jimmy Carter, who is sympathetic and supportive of the women's movement, and the cowboy ethos embodied by Ronald Reagan, which favors a more traditionally patriarchal social order. On television, these dueling masculinities were depicted in sitcoms, dramas, late-night comedy shows, and sports programming" (Kies, 3). For example, the series *Who's the Boss*, which also aired on ABC, centered on the character Tony Micelli, a former Major League Baseball player who finds himself negotiating single fatherhood while being a live-in housekeeper for successful business executive Angela; this show was built on quite a different gender structure than *The Wonder Years* (Batchelor and Stoddart). Jack Arnold is not a "new man" but instead represents an archaic form of masculinity, class, and suburbia. The narrator (adult Kevin) introduces his father in the pilot: "it was like he had this understanding with the family. He worked hard for us, he provided for us, and he certainly didn't want to have to talk to us on top of that" ("Pilot"). The stresses of suburban life and being the head of the household emanate through the father. Traffic, middle-level management, supporting a family with all its stresses, and dealing with the fact that life simply did not turn out the way he thought it would explain his overarching grumpiness. The stresses of working- and middle-class white suburban men are explored in Episode 3, "My Father's Office." Kevin goes to work with his dad, witnesses the stress of adult work life and finds sympathy for his father. After returning home, Jack walks angrily into the house and Kevin, following close behind, mimics the same angry, disgruntled behavior, symbolizing the inevitability of white, patriarchal adulthood.

As the youngest in the Arnold family, Kevin tries to balance being seen and unseen by his parents and siblings. The oldest sibling, Karen, represents the newer generation of women, in contrast to her mother Norma. She is a free-spirited hippie, with feminist ideals. From her clothing to her references to free love, birth control, and women's rights to her use of anti-Vietnam rhetoric, Karen is more representative of the complex changes that resulted from the political movements of the 1960s than any other character. But in the first season she has little if any direct interaction with her little brother Kevin. Instead, Kevin is constantly preoccupied with older brother Wayne who bullies and irritates him. The first episode opens with the local neighborhood kids playing a game of football. Kevin

misses a pass thrown by his brother Wayne, which first results in public teasing and escalates into a physical confrontation. As Wayne punches his little brother, Kevin then refers to him as a “butthead,” a title that epitomizes the role Wayne plays throughout the first season. From the hippie sister, the dimwit brother, the submissive, loving but oblivious mother, and the frustrated father, the Arnold family underscores a specific and easily recognized structure of gender, power, class, and whiteness.

Media scholar Cerise L. Glenn uses the term hegemonic masculinity to describe the “normalcy of familial patriarchy through masculinity and whiteness” (Glenn). In her view, “The concept of hegemonic masculinity influences our conceptions of gender for females as well as males because gender works as a binary construction of identity.” As shows of the late-1980s showed a range of different fatherhood and family structures, *The Wonder Years* 1988, being a historical fiction, was able to feed into nostalgia for the supposedly good old days of the 1960s. Jack Arnold, however, is not the benevolent patriarch of the 1950s-era show *Father Knows Best*. Instead, he is representative of that era’s white masculine frustration, attempting to reclaim a lost power that is being disrupted, whether through the activism of the 1960s or because of the cultural shifts of the 1980s. Further, the emphasis on suburbia is a part of this white patriarchal structure cultivated on the screen. The suburbs, for the Arnolds, represent a “homogenous community of like-minded people” – meaning White working- and middle-class people, excluding Blacks, or any other racial-ethnic population (Miller).

The suburbs are as much a part of the storyline as the various family members. The suburbs represent a protective enclosure for homogeneous whiteness and supports the perpetuation and idealization of patriarchy. The Reagan era was a time when the press, policymakers, and advocacy groups issued warnings about the state of the family; therefore, the focus on suburbia, family, and nostalgia of a lost time was a part of the series’ appeal. In many ways, TWY 2021 retains the original show’s focus on the family, suburbia, and nostalgia. However, the construction of the family in TWY 2021 represents more than just domesticity and the assertion of white masculinity: it suggests the need to correct and reconstruct the history and culture of Black life through the restorative medium of television.

### The Cosby Show (Retro)

“A lot of Black families were lower middle and middle class [...] And they have not been depicted in this era properly,” states TWY 2021 producer Lee Daniels. (Lawler) The Williamses, like the Arnolds, display stereotypical characteristics of a nuclear family. Two heterosexual parents live with three children in a Black suburban community. David Stamps writes that “The African American family has continuously come under attack. [...] absentee fathers, mothers working multiple jobs, and nontraditional parenting [...] have controlled the narrative” (Stamp 405). He argues that “broadcast television” has attempted to “combat previous negative stereotypes” through shows such as *The Cosby Show* and *Black-ish*. TWY 2021 definitely falls within this category as well, as evident by the Williams family’s construction as “well-rounded, educated family members that are representative of suburban, affluent minorities in America” just like the families on *The Cosby Show* and *Black-ish* (413).

“My parents had high standards for us. I appreciate it now and so does my bank account, but at the time man it was annoying” (“Pilot” 3:23). The narrator’s introduction of Bill (Dulé Hill) and Lillian (Saycon Sengbloh) Williams is followed by a scene where Lillian quizzes their only daughter, Kim (Laura Kariuki), for the SATs during breakfast. To Kim’s chagrin, both parents follow up with a discussion of the importance of college. They lovingly debate whether she should attend Auburn, a majority-white university in Alabama, or Tuskegee, the historically Black college that they both attended. This exchange in the first episode sets the stage for the type of family this show wants to represent: a well-educated, middle-class Black household.

Lillian has a master’s degree and is a working mother who seems to successfully balance her professional career while taking care of her family and is actively engaged in the community (Collins). An accountant, team mom for her son’s baseball team, and matriarch of the family, Lillian is quite like her Black television mom predecessors, lawyer Claire Huxtable of *The Cosby Show* and anesthesiologist Rainbow Johnson of *Black-ish*. According to Vaness Cox and L. Monique Ward, “sociohistorical forces within the United States have created additional demands for Black women [...]. it was often necessary for Black women to work to help provide for their families” (Cox and Ward 542). Although Lillian is not the sole provider in the Williams household, her career is highlighted in the series, even more so than Bill’s. And whereas in the original series Kevin goes to work with his dad, Jack, in the episode “My Father’s Office,” in TWY 2021, Dean Williams goes to work with his mother, Lillian, in the fourth episode, “The Workplace.”

The 2021 episode's progressive attitudes toward gender are evident in the different titles of the episodes and illustrates intentionality. In the episode, Lillian is shown working with other mainly white male accountants, while the women, who are all white, are relegated to the secretary pool. Lillian finds an accounting error and beckons three white male colleagues into her office to fix the problem. Although she is not their supervisor, Lillian is shown as being in charge and well respected, even when compared to her one Black colleague, an afro-wearing male. The narrator conveys the awe he felt toward his mother by comparing her to an elite college football quarterback, saying, "seeing my mom in action was like watching a Crimson Tide QB call a play right before halftime" ("The Workplace" 17:29-17:50). Lillian is subsequently shown in football gear making a touchdown. The Black mother, Lillian, dominates two traditionally white, male spaces, football and white-collar employment. This does not mean that racism and sexism are no longer obstacles in her way. Her accounting skills are well respected, but she is still expected to bring cupcakes when requested and often eats alone because she fits in with neither the white men (as her one Black male colleague can) nor the white women. K. Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality explains Lillian's combined experiences of racism and misogyny, a combination that is often experienced by Black women (Crenshaw). At the end of "The Workplace," Lillian and Dean return home after a long day. Upon entering her home, Lillian is bombarded with household demands from Bill and Kim. In response, Dean intervenes, asking, "We just got home – will you people give us a second?" ("The Workplace" 19:00-19:31). That protective response illustrates the new respect he has for his mother's daily toil and offers a stark contrast to Kevin's mimicry of his father's frustration at the ending of the "My Father's Office" episode in the 1988 series.

Like his wife Lillian, Bill Williams is a progressive, well-educated, and devoted father and husband. "My dad was a music professor by day and a funk musician by night. In other words, he was the baddest dude I knew," says narrator Dean. With his catchphrase of "be cool," Bill represents the positive qualities of earlier Black sitcom dads while defying the common stereotypes of Black men on television ("Pilot"). Scholars have documented the full range of "unfavorable portrayals" undergone by Black men in scripted television, including "nonthreatening and assimilative" doormats to "hyperstereotypical images of [...] criminal, drug-addict, dead-beat absentee father, and uneducated" fools (see Bell and Harris; Jackson; and Punyanunt-Carter for a discussion of such stereotypes). Stamps notes that within the current climate that is pushing for "equity and inclusion" a "reimagining of

representation of Black men in television may be necessary.” Research has often focused on the negative portrayal of Black men, but as Stamps points out, “over time, Black male characters’ awareness and vocal interrogation of social issues and salient ideologies aligned with the Black community have grown more prevalent in recent television programming” (Stamps). The “reimagining of representation,” as Stamps describes it, is evident in how Black males are portrayed in TWY 2021.

The patriarchal dominance of the angry white father in the original series is reimagined as progressive Black fatherhood, which is quite common for Black middle-class television dads in this type of family-oriented show. Further, the Williams family consists not only of a nuclear family, but also includes an extended family, including grandparents. This is another significant difference between TWY 2021 and *The Wonder Years* 1988, since the original show did not even mention an extended family in the first season; at the same time, the inclusion of active grandparents follows in line with more progressive Black family shows, such as *Black-ish*, *Family Matters*, and *The Cosby Show*. Bill’s father, Granddaddy Clisby (Richard Grant) appears in several episodes and is often used to show generational divides. For example, in Episode 18, “Goose Grease,” three generations of Williams males (Clisby, Bill, and Dean) have chicken pox and are quarantined in the house alone together. Bill is discussing tasks that range from preparing food, laundry, and other household duties. In response to being assigned chores, Granddaddy Clisby states, “Oh, I don’t do chores; never did. My mama did them for me until I was sixteen, and then my wife took over.” Bill responds to his father, “It’s the ’60s. Men have evolved since your generation. We’re not helpless around the house anymore” (“Goose Grease” 05:30-05:45). This scene is emblematic of one of the themes of the show, which shows Bill as a more progressive father and husband who is supportive of women’s advancement.

Positive constructions of generations of Black masculinity are clearly a goal of the series. This becomes even more evident when the Bill and Lillian’s eldest son, Bruce (Spence Moore II), returns from Vietnam in Episode 9. Bruce is a stellar athlete and student and is a supportive big brother to Dean and Kim; he offers a stark contrast to big brother Wayne Arnold of the 1988 series. Following in his father’s and grandfather’s footsteps, Bruce fights heroically for his country and even receives a military honor recognizing his selflessness and bravery. Bruce provides a positive role model to Dean, while also providing a link between the plot of the television series and the historical Vietnam War. Interestingly, Kim also contributes to the series’ historical awareness through her interest in Black Power

activism and organizations such as the Black Panther Party. Both characters offer the audience peeks outside of the protective structure of the Williams home. Though they are figured as representing a younger generation, Bruce and Kim represent alternate perspectives on the Civil Rights Movement that would resonate strongly with TWY 2021's audience that was enmeshed in #BlackLivesMatter and #SayHerName". An aspect of the series is watching how Dean learns from older family members while also navigating his own path as a pre-teen, Black male in 1968.

The Williams' see themselves first and foremost as Black Americans. The specific hardships of the Southern Black experience in the late 1960s remain at the periphery of the family's world, but it is present. Living in the suburbs with good incomes and the protections and opportunities resulting from the Civil Rights movement all mean that racism is not a major hindrance in their lives. For the young Dean Williams, the world is still not "post-racial," but racial progress is evident front and center. The emphasis on progress and diversity is clear not only in the construction of the Williams family, but also in the diversity of his junior high school. For example, in one episode, Dean attends the bar mitzvah of one of his close friends, who is Jewish. Unlike the original series, which focused on a white family, white suburbs, and white school, TWY 2021 not only focuses on Black culture and people but also demonstrates diversity in its white characters. In many ways, this depiction of racial harmony in the series conflicts with the real experiences of Blacks in 1968, which the narrator acknowledges by periodically reminding the audience of the problems of the color line.

If Reagan's call to "make America great" was an ideological touchstone of *The Wonder Years* 1988, Trump's call to "Make America Great Again" is also clearly motivating the new series of 2021. TWY 2021 is a direct response to the attempts to silence or ignore the complex experiences of Blacks in America that is an aspect of the current political climate, and it does so by centering the lives of Black people in a non-stereotypical way. The re-making and complete restructuring of an originally white television series into a Black television series also represents a theme that can be seen in popular culture today.

### Gimmie a Break! (From Reboots)

The ubiquity of remakes and reboots today show that it is both possible and popular to "retool classical television images over and over," as media scholar Carlen



Lavigne has written. Reincarnations of other 1980s and 1990s classics such as *Saved by The Bell* and *Charmed* provide opportunities for the audiences of the original series to experience nostalgia, while also attempting to capture a new generation. The term reboot often implies a return to production after a long hiatus, often with the same, but older, cast. The reboot shows us where are they now, as we see with reboots of such popular series as *Will and Grace* and *Sex and the City*. The creators of TWY 2021 are doing more than simply rebooting. Media scholar Steven Gil uses the term “remake” to illustrate the various ways a past show might be rethought as an “adaptation, sequel, reboot,” or “parody.” He explains, “Taking terms such as ‘original’ and ‘remake’ at face value suggests an unbalanced distribution of creative agency and overlooks the similarity of intertextual influences in both cases” (Gil). The idea of remaking by using the original as a foundation text but not simply duplicating the entire show adds to the “complexity of the remake,” according to Gil. As a remake, TWY 2021 shares characteristics of its 1988 predecessor, but the way it transformed its racial structure makes it distinct from other reincarnated shows, however only time will tell how this show will mature and further develop as the seasons progress.

Most remakes and reboots we see today are simply attempts to make previously all-white narratives more diverse by adding one or two BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) characters into a cast that was originally predominantly or all-white. These additions rarely reflect the complexity of the culture and experience of BIPOC people. Another popular approach in the re-imagining of old shows is racebending, or “Racebend Throwback,” as blogger Ashley Turner has described it: “an interesting trend where they take an old show and not only reboot but change the race of the cast.” Examples of racebending are rarely well received by audiences and critics, who often found their storylines and characters lacking in complexity. Racebending in popular culture is often accompanied by whitewashing, in which formerly white characters and storylines are simply replaced by BIPOC characters, without recognition or consideration of cultural and lived differences. However, TWY 2021 moves beyond this formula, offering new and old audiences alike a fresh perspective on a familiar narrative. One thing that makes TWY 2021 different is that it features not only Black characters but also Black writers and Black producers, who are less likely to succumb unquestioningly to race-bending and whitewashing and are more likely to recognize and incorporate additional complexity into the storyline. Senior editor Kathleen Newman-Bremang of Refinery29’s *Unbothered* states, “I would rather see a story of a new Black family

that's not just repurposing this white person story," and that is what this remake accomplishes (Benchetrit).

"It looks like you can go home again," reflected *US Weekly* writer Emily Longeretta on ABC's return to the series (Longeretta). But this simple statement does not define the genre of television the new version offers. TWY 2021 redirects the camera from the Arnolds and points it at the South and the Black side of town, so to speak. The Williams are not simply stand-ins for the place of the Arnolds, as they would be in a remake; they are a different family that happens to exist at the same time, and they also happen to be Black. Essentially, TWY 2021 simply changes the camera focus from the Arnolds of the 1988 version to the Williams, and with that new focus, the viewing audience gets a more diverse perspective of a family in the late 1960s. The Williams are a completely different family who live in a different city and have different circumstances and experiences, which are constantly influenced and shaped by different factors.

The simultaneous existence of these families within their fictional worlds is clearly shown in TWY 2021 Episode 19, "Love and War." In this episode, eldest Williams brother Bruce is dealing with survivor's guilt from the loss of a fellow soldier and friend in the Vietnam War. It is revealed at the end of this episode that this fallen soldier is Brian Cooper, the brother of the character Winnie Cooper from the original 1988 series ("Love and War"). Brian's death in Vietnam is central to the season premiere of the original *The Wonder Years* 1988, and its inclusion in TWY 2021 thus offers a direct acknowledgment of a relationship between the two series. This is yet one more way that this reincarnation stands out from the rest of the reboots, remakes, and spinoffs that populate today's media landscape.

The remaking of popular past shows is highly dependent on nostalgia to attract an initial audience. Television producer Jhanike Bullard of CBS states that they are "tapping into that emotional core that will resonate with your audience" (Benchetrit). The "emotional" appeal or nostalgia of any series can have a variety of sources; nostalgia for the 1960s era commonly evokes experiences of childhood, suburban life, and the nuclear family. One cannot help but wonder if racial nostalgia in the television world can continue to thrive in an era where people are debating the validity of Black lives – in history, the classroom, and the world itself. Although renewed for a second season, TWY 2021 must not only transcend the heightened racism of today but also survive a media environment where so many other remakes and reboots have failed. Regardless of its long-term survival, TWY 2021 has at

least attempted to complicate the idea of the remake and how previously loved series can be reintroduced to new audiences.

## Works Cited

- Ahad-Legardy, Badia. *Afro Nostalgia: Feeling Good in Contemporary Black Culture*. U Illinois P, 2021.
- Andreeva, Nelli. "Don Cheadle set as narrator of ABC's 'The Wonder Years' reboot." *Deadline*, 26 Mar. 2021, <https://deadline.com/2021/03/don-cheadle-narrator-the-wonder-years-reboot-abc-1234722585>.
- Batchelor, Bob and Scott Stoddart, *The 1980s*, Greenwood Press, 2007.
- Gina Castle Bell & Tina M. Harris. "Exploring representations of Black masculinity and emasculation on NBC's *Parenthood*." *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*, vol. 10 no. 2, 2016: 135-52.
- Benechtrit, Jenna. "Television reboots are an easy sell – but are they crowding out BIPOC voices." *CBC News*, 25 July 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/entertainment/reboots-bipoc-actors-original-stories-1.6114926>.
- Black, Carol, and Neal Marlens, creators. *The Wonder Years*. ABC, 1988-1993.
- Boyer Peter J., "Words and image: A show on the 60's helps a network in the 80's." *The New York Times* 11 Apr. 1988, <https://www.nytimes.com/1988/04/11/arts/words-and-image-a-show-on-the-60-s-helps-a-network-in-the-80-s.html>.
- Bump, Philip. "Over and over Trump has focused on Black Lives Matter as a target of derision or violence," *Washington Post*, 1 Sept. 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/09/01/over-over-trump-has-focused-black-lives-matter-target-derision-or-violence>.
- Chandler ,Abby. "You Talkin' to Me?: How TV narration got personal," *The Guardian*, 25 Oct. 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2019/oct/25/you-talkin-to-me-how-tv-narration-got-personal>.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. "The Meaning of Motherhood in Black Culture and Black Mother-Daughter Relationships," *Sage*, vol. 4 no. 2, 1987: 3.
- Courteney Celestin, "Black Motherhood on Primetime Television," *Confluence*, 31 Jan. 2021, <https://confluence.gallatin.nyu.edu/context/interdisciplinary-seminar/black-motherhood-on-primetime-television>.

- Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color." *Stanford Law Review*, vol. 43 no. 6, 1991: 1241-99.
- Crocker, Joe. "With a Little Help from My Friends." *Joe Crocker Live* 1990. *Genius*, <https://genius.com/Joe-cocker-with-a-little-help-from-my-friends-live-lyrics>, Transcript of Lyrics.
- Cordero, Rosy. "The Wonder Years' and 'Home Economics' get full season orders from ABC" *Deadline*, 26 Oct. 2021, <https://deadline.com/2021/10/the-wonder-years-home-economics-full-season-orders-abc-1234862678>.
- Cox, V., & Ward, L. M. "A Wholistic View of Black Women on Scripted TV: A content analysis." *Journal of Black Psychology*, vol. 45 no. 6-7, 2019: 540-70.
- Edgerton, Gary R. and Peter C. Rollins, eds. *Shaping Collective Memory in the Media Age*, UP Kentucky, 2001
- Feuer, Jane. *Seeing Through the Eighties: Television and Reaganism*, Duke UP, 1995.
- Fondren, Precious. "The 'Say Her Name' movement started for a reason: We forget black women killed by police," *TeenVogue*, 11 June 2020, <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/say-her-name-origin>.
- Gil, Steven "A Remake by Any Other Name: Use of a premise under a new title," edited by Carlen Lavigne, *Remake Television: Reboot, Re-use, Recycle*. Lexington Books, 2014: 21-36.
- Glenn, Cerise L. "White Masculinity and the TV Sitcom Dad: Tracing the 'progression' of portrayals of fatherhood." *Communicating Marginalized Masculinities: Identity Politics in TV, Film, and New Media*, edited by Ronald L. Jackson II and Jamie E. Moshin, Taylor and Francis, 2013: 174-88.
- Goldberg, Lesley. "The Pandemic Forced the Broadcast Networks to Evolve-Will It Last?" *The Hollywood Reporter*, 15 May 2021, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/tv/tv-news/pandemic-forced-broadcast-networks-evolve-pilot-season-1234953851/#!>.
- "Goose Grease." Yael Galena. *The Wonder Years*. Hulu, 2022.
- Haithman, Diane. "Success turns into mixed blessing for creators of 'Wonder Years'". *Los Angeles Times*, 30 Nov. 1988, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1988-11-30-ca-630-story.html>.
- Handysides, Kim "'The Wonder Years' narration: The best thing since sliced bread," *The Blast*, 11 Oct. 2021, <https://theblast.com/102960/the-wonder-years-narration-the-best-thing-since-sliced-bread>.

- Hughes, Richard T. *Myths America Lives By: White Supremacy and the Stories That Give Us Meaning*. U Illinois P, 2018.
- Jackson, Ronald L. *Scripting the Black Masculine Body: Identity, Discourse, and Racial Politics in Popular Media*. SUNY Press, 2006
- Jackson, Ronald L. and Jamie E. Moshin. *Communicating Marginalized Masculinities: Identity Politics in TV, Film, and New Media*. Routledge, 2012.
- Kies, Bridget. "Television's 'Mr. Moms': Idealizing the New Man in 1980s domestic sitcoms." *Feminist Media Histories*, vol. 4 no. 1, 2018: 142-70.
- . *Masculinity in American Television from Carter to Clinton*. 2018. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, PhD dissertation.
- Lawler, Kelly. "Why Lee Daniels and ABC brought 'The Wonder Years' back with a Black family in the 1960s' *USA Today*, 22 Sept. 2021, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/tv/2021/09/22/the-wonder-years-reboot-why-abc-brought-back-black-family/5783648001>.
- Longeretta, Emily. "TV Reboots and Revivals: A full guide to what's coming." *US Weekly*, 3 Aug. 2022. <https://www.usmagazine.com/entertainment/pictures/tv-reboots-and-revivals>.
- "Love and War." Kendra Cole. *The Wonder Years*. Hulu, 2022.
- Miller, Laura J. "Family Togetherness and the Suburban Ideal." *Sociological Forum*, vol. 10 no. 3, 1995: 393-418.
- The Museum of Broadcast Communications. "Encyclopedia of Television." Archived from the original on 2 Jan. 2015. Retrieved 22 Mar 2015, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150102020337/http://www.museum.tv/eotv/wonderyears.htm>.
- Nader, Ralph. "What does Trump Mean by 'Make America Great Again'?" *HuffPost*, 15 Dec. 2017, [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/what-does-trump-mean-by-make-america-great-again\\_b\\_5a341e29e4b02bd1c8c6066b](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/what-does-trump-mean-by-make-america-great-again_b_5a341e29e4b02bd1c8c6066b).
- Newcomb, Horace. *TV: The Most Popular Art*. Anchor Books, 1992.
- Miller, Laura J. "Family Togetherness and the Suburban Ideal." *Sociological Forum*, vol. 10 no. 3, 1995: 393-418.
- O'Connor, John J. "TV: 'Wonder Years,' a new series on ABC." *New York Times*, 30 Jan. 1988, pp. 50, <https://www.nytimes.com/1988/01/30/arts/tv-wonder-years-a-new-series-on-abc.html>.
- Patterson, Saladin K., creator. *The Wonder Years*. ABC and Hulu, 2021-Present.
- Pearlman, Joseph. "From Pilot Episode to TV Show." *Backstage*, 15 Aug. 2022,

- <https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/what-happens-during-the-pilot-to-tv-show-process-69256>.
- Perrone, Pierre. "Joe Cocker: Formidable vocalist who triumphed at Woodstock and won a Grammy with 'Up Where We Belong'." *The Independent*, 23 Dec. 2014, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/news/joe-cocker-formidable-vocalist-who-triumphed-at-woodstock-and-won-a-grammy-with-up-where-we-belong-9943221.html>.
- Petski, Denise. "The Wonder Years' season 2 premiere pushed to summer on ABC." *Deadline*, 7 Nov. 2022, <https://deadline.com/2022/11/the-wonder-years-season-2-premiere-pushed-summer-abc-1235166085>.
- "Pilot." Carol Black and Neal Marlens. *The Wonder Years*. Hulu, 1988.
- "Pilot." Saladin K. Patterson. *The Wonder Years*. Hulu, 2021.
- Plitt, Amy. "Looking Back in Wonder: An oral history of 'The Wonder Years'." *The Rolling Stone*, 19 Oct. 2014, <https://www.rollingstone.com/tv-movies/tv-movie-news/look-back-in-wonder-an-oral-history-of-the-wonder-years-185657>.
- Punyanunt-Carter, N. M. The perceived realism of African American portrayals on television. *The Howard Journal of Communications*, vol. 19 no. 3, 2008: 241-57.
- Reagan, Ronald. "Proclamation 4999: National Family Week, 1982." *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum*, 12 Nov. 1982, <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/proclamation-4999-national-family-week-1982>.
- Reuben, David. *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex But were Afraid to Ask*. Bantam Books, 1969.
- Schneider, Michael. "Networks put in short orders for next season." *TVGuide.com*, 8 July 2015, <https://www.tvguide.com/news/networks-short-orders-1035027>.
- Stamps, David L. "The Social Construction of the African American Family on Broadcast Television: A comparative analysis of *The Cosby Show* and *Blackish*." *Howard Journal of Communications*, vol. 28 no. 4, 2017: 405-20.
- Stamps, David L. "B(1)ack By Popular Demand: An Analysis of Positive Black Male Characters in Television and Audiences' Community Cultural Wealth." *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, vol. 45 no. 2, 2020: 97-118.
- "Swingers." Carol Black and Neal Marlens. *The Wonder Years*. Hulu, 1988.

- “The Lock In.” Amberia Allen. *The Wonder Years*. Hulu, 2021.
- The Wonder Years*. Created Carol Black and Neal Marlens, NBC Broadcast, 1988, Hulu, <https://www.hulu.com/series/the-wonder-years>.
- The Wonder Years*. Created by Saladin K. Patterson, 2022, Hulu <https://www.hulu.com/series/the-wonder-years>.
- “The Workplace.” Meredith Dawson and Kendra Cole. *The Wonder Years*. Hulu, 2021.
- Troy, Gil. *Morning in America: How Ronald Reagan Invented the 1980s*. Princeton UP, 2005.
- Turner, Ashley. “BGN TBT: Are racebending TV reboots like ‘Bewitched’ in a good idea.” *Black Girl Nerds*, 6 Sept. 2018, <https://blackgirlnerds.com/bgn-tbt-are-racebending-tv-reboots-like-bewitched-a-good-idea>.
- Walton, Richard J. “Ronald Reagan and the politics of nostalgia.” *The Washington Post*, 3 May 1981, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/entertainment/books/1981/05/03/ronald-reagan-and-the-politics-of-nostalgia/cf2078d1-2861-425b-b1e9-bca2a37e9d7d>.
- “Welcome to the Original “The Wonder Years” Series!” *The Wonder Years (Original TV Series)*, 12 Oct. 2022, <https://www.wonder-years.tv/twyoriginalseries.html>.
- Zelizer, Barbie. “Reading the Past Against the Grain: The shape of memory studies,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, vol. 12, 1995: 214-39.