
General Information

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FREEDOM:
A JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN AFRICANA STUDIES

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Freedom is published under the auspices of a grant from the Mellon Foundation, the BSU Du Bois Center for the Study of the Black Experience (CSBE) and the Department of History and Government, with the assistance of an editorial/advisory board.

The purpose of *Freedom* is threefold: first, to emphasize the relevance of Africana Studies to contemporary life, focusing particularly on the experiences of communities of African descent in the Americas; second, to facilitate the dissemination of scholarship on Africana Studies; and third, to foster international perspectives in an era of increasing globalization and intercultural contacts. This issue addresses the question: how have Black people approached and engaged with liberational theory and praxis to secure self-determination both historically and contemporarily? This journal specializes in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research focusing on the lived experiences of the Black Diaspora

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Painting: "Family Prayer"

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Painting: “Sunday Mornings at Sugarland”

Samuel Sharpe is a recent graduate of Bowie State University, where he earned a degree in Visual Communication and Digital Media Arts (VCDMA) with a concentration in Advertising and Design. He began painting shortly after high school and has since dedicated himself to honing his craft. Samuel’s mission is to inspire and uplift others through his art.

Statement from the Editor

From Dr. Sheneese Thompson, Editor

Freedom: A Journal of Research in Africana Studies

In 1918, in order to win the war, we had to make Germans into Huns. In order to win, the South had to make Negroes into thieves, monsters, and idiots. Tomorrow, we must make Latins, Southeastern Europeans, Turks, and other Asiatics into actual “lesser breeds without the law.” Some seem to see today anti-Christ in Catholicism; and in Jews, international plotters of the Protocol; and in “the rising tide of color,” a threat to all civilization and human culture. Even if these things were true, it would be difficult to bring the truth clearly before the ignorant mob and guide it toward the overthrow of evil. But if these be half true or wholly false, the mob can only be stirred to action by wholesale lying, and this is difficult and costly, and may be successfully answered; or by secret underground whispering, the methods of night and mask, the psychology of vague and unknown ill, the innuendo that cannot be answered, for it is not openly published.

—W.E.B. Du Bois, “Back Toward Slavery”

in *Black Reconstruction; An Essay Toward a History of the Part which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (1935)

Ninety years ago, W.E.B. Du Bois took on the herculean task of documenting the details of Reconstruction and its collapse which revealed a concerted effort to undo any financial, legal, and social progress made by Black Americans in the period immediately following the Civil War. Du Bois’s writing, timeless and prescient, highlights the importance of truth-telling as a critical tool for undermining dangerous propaganda that threatens to divide humanity in this cultural moment. In the wake of attacks on civil liberties, academic freedom, free speech, human rights, and the pervasive dissemination of misinformation and disinformation, Du Bois’s words are yet again instructive, and here at *Freedom: A Journal of Research in Africana Studies*, we intend to continue to openly publish perspectives that inform and unify the global Black diaspora with the rest of the world.

The submissions in this volume are arranged thematically and address historical and contemporary perspectives on Black archival work, community-building, higher education, representation in popular media, queerness,

and African spiritualities. The volume opens with works of poetry, “For the Future Generations,” by Edie Wallace, “Our Souls Look Back in Wonder,” by Suzanne Johnson, and “Skin//Content: Or, Partitioning the Variance of Dreams,” by R.J. Petteway, each of which collapse time and space to speak to the joy, pain, hope, and complexity of Black pasts, presents, and futures.

Phillip Luke Sintiere’s, “Yolande Du Bois’s Scrapbooks: Sketching an Archival History,” explores the importance of alternative archival methodologies in (re)constructing Black women’s histories. Sintiere establishes Yolande as a Du Bois all her own with a full life outside of the long shadow of her father. Exploring the provenance of the scrapbooks, as well as the importance of proper storage, Sintiere invites us into new ways to study the lives of Yolande and the Du Bois family.

J. Edward Hackett and Magana Kabugi both analyze Martin Luther King, Jr. vis-à-vis community. “The Possibility King’s Beloved Community Going Forward” meditates on the philosophical underpinnings of King’s concept of “beloved community,” as well as approaches to applying that philosophy toward a future that centers love and humanity. “Cartooning the Beloved Community: Martin Luther King Jr. and Political Personhood in ‘The Montgomery Story’” considers how King, non-violent direct action, and his concept of community is represented in the comic book, *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story* (1957). Kabugi studies the importance of print media in political propaganda of the time and how *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story* was a concerted effort to counteract negative stereotypes about Black Americans.

“Twice as Hard: A Black Parable for Existing in Higher Education,” by Frederick V. Engram, Jr. interrogates the promises and pitfalls of academic careers for Black professionals at predominantly white institutions. Engram challenges the notion that overworking guarantees job security and upward mobility and warns against the attending health concerns like physical and mental burnout. Engram constructs a qualitative study to explore the impact of these parables on people at various stages of the academic profession.

The last three articles address femininity, queerness, as well as their representations in music, television, film, and the world. Angela Nelson’s, “The Symbolic Annihilation of Black Working-Class Women in The Black Family (aka Good Times),” addresses the complexity of representation in the beloved series, *Good Times*. Nelson highlights the tensions between constructing a

beloved Black matriarch and subverting the agency of women in the face of interpersonal and domestic violence present in the show. Conversely, Pilar Caceres Cartagena's, "Blackness, Femininity, and Queerness within Afro-Peruvian Female Hip Hop" explores how Black, queer, women hip hop artists in Peru use the artform to disrupt normative representations of race, gender, and sexuality and establish a counterculture in the face of national efforts to overdetermine Peruvian-ness in a way that excludes marginalized people and identities. Finally, Toluwani Roberts's, "Queer in an African Worldsense: The Spirituality of Sexuality in Nigeria and South Africa," examines Igbo and Zulu cultures and the history of same-sex marriage between women in those communities to write against narratives that suggest that same-sex relationships emerged in Africa as a consequence of colonization. Roberts's article offers readers much to consider in this cultural moment marked by a retrenchment of rights for all, and especially those who are LGBTQIA identified.

The volume concludes with reviews of Manisha Sinha's, *The Rise and Fall of the Second American Republic: Reconstruction, 1860-1920* (2024), Kwasi Konadu's, *Many Black Women of this Fortress: Graça, Mónica and Adwoa, Three Enslaved Women of Portugal's African Empire* (2022), and Omari Souza's, *Design Against Racism: Creating Work That Transforms Communities* (2025), all of which tie nicely into the established themes of the journal, and each add meaningful scholarship to the study of Black lives and histories.

With extreme gratitude to the contributors in this volume and the grand legacy of W.E.B. Du Bois, upon whose shoulders we stand, I implore readers to consider how ninety years later, we can use Du Bois's prescient words, as well as those of the contributing authors, as a blueprint to not fall prey to the propaganda that supposes our friends are our enemies and our enemies our are friends.

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VOLUME III
Call for Papers

Abstracts Due: October 3, 2025

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Our editorial board invites you to submit 250 to 300-word abstracts for research articles, book reviews, poetry, and original multimedia-based submissions. Any performance-based submissions must not be publicly accessible or previously hosted on other platforms. Research articles should be limited to between 3,000 and 5,000 words; book reviews and short fiction should be limited to 1,500 words, and multimedia submissions should be no more than 10 minutes. All written submissions should follow the most recent Chicago Manual of Style. Submissions should be emailed as a word document or a link to the multimedia file to duboiscenter@bowiestate.edu. Please remove your name, institutional affiliation, and any other identifying information from your complete manuscript for review.

The deadline for abstract submissions is October 3, 2025. Authors will be notified that their abstract has been accepted by Nov 7, 2025. Complete manuscripts for accepted abstracts will be due January 23, 2026, and the issue will be published in July 2026. If you have questions about the journal or submitting to it, please email duboiscenter@bowiestate.edu attention Dr. Karen Cook-Bell, Managing Editor.