

The End of Black Harlem:They Say/ I say/ Quote:

In the article “*The End of Black Harlem*”, Michael Henry Adams discusses how gentrification is going to displace the black population of Harlem along with its vibrant black culture. Specifically, Adam argues that gentrification is a racial problem and the “good changes” coming to Harlem are detrimental to the black community because it will lead to their displacement. Black people won’t be able to afford the new prices that are surging in Harlem that others can afford. In Adam’s view “It’s not just that blacks happen to occupy the lower ranks of America’s wealth tables. It’s that the economy and our political system, even as they promise equality, are stacked against us ... The median white household is worth around \$141,000 today, but a typical black household’s wealth is only \$11,000”. In other words, even though it seems like gentrification only targets economic inequality, that itself is tied with racial lines. Thus, the majority of black people are being directly affected by gentrification. Although some people believe that the increase in price is the price of having a “good thing”, Adam reminds the reader that the “good things” in Harlem are to attract wealthier people and not to enhance the quality of life of the existing black community. Overall, Adam believes that the era of black Harlem is going to end through the presence of gentrification.

I have mixed thoughts. In my view, having chain stores such as Whole Foods can be beneficial to a community who wants to have that type of service. However, it seems that a majority of Harlemites reject these services if it means that it will come to their displacement. For example, the introduction of popular stores will attract wealthier people who are able to pay

the market rate price. But, Harlem natives will not be able to keep up with the increased rent prices, affecting the black community the most. Therefore, I do agree with Adam that gentrification is changing the black Harlem.

Questions:

1. Why isn't affordable housing enough to protect lower income folks?
→ The median rent of NYC is much higher than the median income of Harlem, so the affordable housing being created is still not affordable for its lowest income members.
2. Is it possible to combine Harlem's uniqueness with mainstream stores and not displace people?
→ Lower income people need to have security in where they are living and newer residents will need to be open minded and respectful of the culture they are entering in.

Purpose: The purpose of this article is to inform people that black Harlem is changing against the interest of black people, and instead for the interest of white, wealthier people.

Audience: The audience of this article seems to be educated people who already have a background knowledge on gentrification and are aware of the Harlem community.

Harlem Gentrification: From Black to White

They Say/ I say/ Quote:

In the article "*Harlem Gentrification: From Black to White*", Leslie Gordon Goffee discusses the wave of new white residents coming into Harlem and gentrifying the area. Specifically, how white residents are bringing their commodities and preferences into the area which already had a pre-existing culture. As director Spike Lee puts it, "white newcomers had

the "Christopher Columbus syndrome", which led them to sail in, plant their flag here and there, and claim to have discovered what had been there all along". Lee's point is that once the new residents of Harlem have noticed the beauty of the neighborhood, they fled in not acknowledging what was there and instead started changing it for themselves. Some believe that the arrival of more wealthier individuals is better for the community because education improves and areas get cleaner. But, this brings up the bigger issue on why the black community was not deserving of these changes and even if they can reap these benefits if they don't get displaced. In sum, Goffee shows the perspective of native Harlemites on their fear that Harlem won't be Harlem anymore.

I agree. I think it is a problem that these communities see that their neighborhood is changing from wealthier individuals. For instance traditional soul food restaurants are being displaced by fancy European restaurants instead, indicating that there is a higher preference for one than the other, even though this is the preference of newcomers. While it is nice to have a variety of stores, it's not helpful that these stores can only serve a select few and not the existing community.

Questions:

1. What is a way of increasing the unemployment and poverty rate in Central Harlem?
→ I think the city needs to take initiative to address the economic inequality between races. In the last article it made a point that minorities were never given the chance to catch up to whites, leading to generations of poor minorities. There should be more government assistance for those who are lower income.
2. Are preferences black and white?

→ No they are not, however we assign things with a different race because that is what the majority of those people can afford to do. It's not that people don't want fancy restaurants, it's just that they can't afford it. It's not that white people don't like black culture, it's from years of stereotypes and classist beliefs that make them not want to learn and appreciate black history.

Purpose: The purpose of this article is to inform people that the population of black people in Harlem are decreasing, even though they inhabited the land when no one else wanted to.

Audience: The audience of this article seems to be people who are older (already home owners or renters or about to be) and know about the basics of gentrification.

No longer majority black, Harlem is in transition

They Say/ I say/ Quote:

In the article "*No longer majority black, Harlem is in transition*", Sam Robert analyzes the population shift in Harlem. Specifically, how the amount of blacks are decreasing and whites increasing in the neighborhood. As Robert states "There, blacks account for 6 in 10 residents, but those born in the United States make up barely half of all residents. Since 2000, the proportion of whites living there has more than doubled, to more than one in 10 residents the highest since the 1940s". By saying this, it is clear that the gentrification in the area is having a direct impact to black people in Harlem. Some may say that gentrification is not a racial issue but an economic issue, but evidence shows that gentrification has racial implications. Race is tied with economic inequality in America so therefore, race is connected to gentrification. In sum, even though Harlem is known for being "black urban America", the percentage of the black community is decreasing in the area.

I agree. I think these statistics do show that blacks are being displaced by the gentrification caused by wealthier people. Since they can pay market rate prices, the property value of the place increases and therefore so does rent. Although it is a good thing that people find Harlem an attractive neighborhood, it is not fair to say once something is special it can only be for wealthier people. However, this does bring up the question, who can move into Harlem? Can only black people enter the community? Overall then, I guess I have mixed feelings on this shift in population.

Questions:

1. Where are the people being displaced residing? (I don't know the answer)
2. Is it fair to say only black people can live in Harlem?

→ I don't think that it's fair to say that, Mr.Dodson also makes that point in the article. He says you can be angry about being discriminated against on where you can live but also say this is only for blacks. Therefore, I wonder if there is a way to preserve black culture in an area where the population of blacks is decreasing?

Purpose: The purpose of this article is to make clear of the changing population demographics in Harlem

Audience: The audience seems to be educated adults who have a background on the Harlem area.