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***A cinema of Racism: Reel representation
of African–American Women before and
after the civil rights movement era***

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Requirement for the degree of Master in language and culture*

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to God Almighty my creator, my strong pillar, my source of inspiration, wisdom, knowledge and understanding.

He has been the source of my strength throughout this process.

To the memory of my beloved Mother because she always understood.

She was my inspiration to pursue my dreams. Although she is no longer of this world, her memory continues to regulate my life

(May Allah bless her soul).

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ABSTRACT

How black women are depicted in pre and post-civil rights movement films? The significance of this study is that it sheds new light on the ways in which black women are depicted in Hollywood films, and exemplifies some means to deconstruct dehumanizing representations of ourselves. This work advances the goal of exposing the inaccuracies of the dominant gaze. It is, then, essentially a critique of black women's marginalization in American cinema. It also contributes to the sociology of race and media studies by critically analysing what messages are conveyed to the masses regarding the place of black womanhood in American society. Moreover, it explores some specific ways that these cinematic representations of Black womanhood are socially and politically damaging. This study took a place during the academic year 2021-2022. Conceptual content analysis is used in order to better understand the content and better explain the messages contained in the two movies: *Within Our Gates 1920*, and *The help 2011*. In addition, data was collected from online journals, books, e-books, websites and motion pictures for the sake of supporting this study. Conclusively, the findings of this study showed that despite the repercussions of the CRM, somehow African American actresses in particular are still marginalized and struggling because of racism in cinema, and African American women in general are still portrayed in a negative way in Hollywood.

Keywords: Civil Rights Movement, Hollywood, depiction, Racism, Stereotype, Blaxploitation, Black Feminist Thoughts.

ملخص

كيف يتم تصوير النساء السود في أفلام ما قبل وما بعد حركة الحقوق المدنية؟ تكمن أهمية هذه الدراسة في أنها تلقي ضوء جديدًا على الطرق التي يتم بها تصوير النساء السود في أفلام هوليوود ، وتجسد بعض الوسائل لتفكيك التمثيلات اللإنسانية عن أنفسنا. يقدم هذا العمل هدفًا يتمثل في كشف أخطاء النظرة السائدة. إنه إذن في الأساس نقد لتهميش النساء السود في السينما الأمريكية. كما أنه يساهم في علم اجتماع العرق والدراسات الإعلامية من خلال التحليل النقدي للرسائل التي يتم نقلها إلى الجماهير فيما يتعلق بمكانة المرأة السوداء في المجتمع الأمريكي. علاوة على ذلك ، يستكشف بعض الطرق المحددة التي تكون فيها هذه التمثيلات السينمائية للأثوية السوداء ضارة اجتماعيا وسياسيا. تمت هذه الدراسة خلال العام الدراسي 2021-2022. يتم استخدام تحليل المحتوى من أجل فهم المحتوى بشكل أفضل وشرح الرسائل الواردة في الفيلم *Within The Help 2011* و *Our Gates 1920*

بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، تم جمع البيانات من المجلات على الإنترنت والكتب الإلكترونية والمواقع الإلكترونية والصور المتحركة من أجل دعم هذه الدراسة. بشكل قاطع، أظهرت نتائج هذه الدراسة أنه على الرغم من تداعيات حركة الحقوق المدنية ، فإن الممثلات الأمريكيات من أصل أفريقي بشكل خاص ما زلن مهمشات ويكافحن بسبب العنصرية في السينما ، ولا تزال النساء الأمريكيات من أصول أفريقية بشكل عام يصورن بطريقة سلبية في هوليوود.

الكلمات المفتاحية: حركة الحقوق المدنية، هوليوود، التصوير، العنصرية، الصورة النمطية، الاستغلال الأسود، الأفكار النسوية السوداء.

List of Acronyms and abbreviations

CRM:	Civil Rights Movement.
UCLA:	University of California, Los Angeles.
UU:	University of Utah.
LGBTQ :	Lesbiennes, Gays, Bisexuelles, Trans, Queers.
NAACP:	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.
EOEA:	Equal Opportunity in Education Act.
SNCC:	Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.
EEO:	Equal Employment Opportunity.
MGM:	Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Inc.
DGA:.	Directors Guild of America
CORE:	Congress of Racial Equality.
ABW:	Angry Black Woman

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General Introduction

Over the years, Hollywood has shaped our views on various topics, consciously or unconsciously, since it affected society and at the same time, it is affected by the surrounding political, economic and social circumstances. Hollywood movies has certainly made progress since what was probably the most racist film of all time *The Birth of a Nation* (1919) but there still remain issues that represent that racial discrimination in Hollywood movies is not completed yet obliterated. African American actors are mostly depicted in a rather stereotypical manner. That is to say, if these actors are given the chance to appear on screen in the first place, for most blacks is just not cast at all. African American women seem to be hit twice as hard by this injustice, since they are part of two minorities at the same time.

African American women were historically and traditionally depicted in Hollywood film productions as maids and servants, like actresses, Hattie McDaniel and Louise Beavers or sultry sirens like, Lena Horne, Theresa Harris, Fredi Washington and Dorothy Dandridge. The filmic images of African American women that developed in minstrel shows and vaudeville stereotyped African American actresses. The salient existence of black females in Hollywood films, which makes it an obligation to have study in about it. This study then will provide knowledge about the way that African American women were illustrated. It also will enable people to read between lines and unveil the symbols, sings and the hiding messages in films, not just watching for the seek of entertainment and Enjoyment. Moreover, it explores how black females are portrayed in Hollywood films, and find out the main change in the image of black females in Hollywood films. The controversy that lies within this subject requires a deep investigation to determine as the real image of the black females.

Thus, through the course of this study, we aim at finding valuable answers to the following basic research questions:

- 1- How black representation is depicted in sapphire stereotypes in Hollywood?
- 2- How Black women are portrayed in Hollywood films before the CRM?
- 3 - Did the image of the African American women change after the CRM?

This study also shed light on deep impact of the Civil Right movement on how the African American women are portrayed in Hollywood films in which it would be useful for students in the field of media in general. Few researches have been done studies on the depiction of African American women in Hollywood films, but this is one of a few

attempts in which it studies the influence of that movement on the image of the African American women in Hollywood. It will be useful for historical studies.

This dissertation is divided into two major parts. First one, theoretical part, which consists of two chapters. chapter one which is an attempt to give a brief historical background about Hollywood as an artistic tool of propaganda and also highlights how minorities, including: Latinos, Germans and how Africans are portrayed in Hollywood films since the Hollywood industry has played an instrumental role in the mass dissemination of popular culture, both within the United States and internationally, next to reviewing diversity and inclusion from which the need to improve representation in Hollywood is a discussion that is as old as Hollywood itself. It carries on with what Hollywood movies do to perpetuate racial stereotypes and how these movies historically caricatured the Black experience and the black characterization and caricatures then, discusses independent Black films and Hollywood's so-called "race" films passing by the progress of blacks appropriate depiction. Chapter two focuses on defining and providing a historical overview of the Civil Rights Movement, its connection and impact on Hollywood movies as far as the black representation is concerned, not to forget the repercussion of end discrimination on Hollywood films. Chapter three then dives in the representation of African American Women in movies before and after the CRM and how they were portrayed in pre and Post-CRM Movies. Besides, it tries to consolidate the findings by applying conceptual content analysis within. the analysis of two films "Within Our Gates 1920" and "The Help 2011".

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Chapter One
Racism in Hollywood:
Representation of Minorities
and Blacks in Hoolywood movies

1.1. Introduction

Films can leave an indelible imprint on viewers. This unique art form has evolved alongside other forms of technology as a vessel for storytelling, capturing our imaginations and our culture. Since its inception, the Hollywood industry has played an instrumental role in the mass dissemination of popular culture, both within the United States and globally. Yet, White men have almost exclusively created the narratives and myths that comprise Hollywood cultural production, while narratives by women, blacks and racial/ethnic minorities are fewer and less prominent. This chapter gives an overview of racial and gender inequality in representation in the production of Hollywood film and television in the United States.

1.1.1. Hollywood As an Artistic Tool of Propaganda

“Cinema is the most beautiful fraud in the world”, a famous quote by the great Jean Luc Godard. Hollywood’s movies are not only for adults. In fact, a large part is targeting teenagers and children. We all know the famous “Star Wars”, with the intergalactic conquests, or even “Jaws”. But also the “Pirates of the Caribbean”, “Ratatouille”, “Spider Man”, all of which contributed to the education of our generation. It allows us to measure the power of the strategy of wide release, which reaches every country in the whole world. But Hollywood has also its dark side. In fact, as pointed out by Pierre Conesa in his book “Hollywar”, one of its roles is to teach American history to American citizens.

In many Hollywood movies, we have the same myths, embodied by different types of characters portraying the “stranger”, the “foreigner”, the “Other”, which generally refers to a person from another country. Invariably we will discover that the “Other” will be either the cruel enemy or a perfidious warrior etc. But there are some subjects Hollywood doesn’t speak about, because they are too sensitive.. Terrorism, however, is present in a lot of movies, which almost always embodies the brave American soldier, going to the war, and coming back proudly.

Hollywood is a major actor in our everyday life. It is a way to show us the American point of view about any subject, and to do so with convincing visual aspects. Behind a large number of movies ,there is an idea, an opinion that the director or the producers want us to see. It can be a powerful tool to create and consolidate specific perceptions thanks to the seduction and the wonderment it produces. For example, when *The Birth of a Nation* movie 1915 by D.W. Griffith was released. The film depicted Ku Klux

Klansmen as the saviours to the nation that bring back a stable government and uphold American values. The movie used actors in blackface to depict African Americans as savages, using threatening imagery to justify violence against African Americans. After the movie's debut, racial violence against African Americans increased, including the revival of the Ku Klux Klan in November of the same year portrayed black people as savages, ignorants and untouched by civilization. Another example, we do not know anything about the military and humanitarian operation in Somalia in 1992-1993 except for those who have seen “Black Hawk Down”. Sadly, this version is just the Hollywood version, and some other countries tried to make more realistic films about the topic, but with a lesser budget, and unfortunately, they didn't have the same impact on the rest of the world. We always have to remember that we only have one version of the fact with Hollywood movies. This being said, cinema is first of all an art form. Even when the goal is doubtful, we can appreciate how a movie was realized. We can still admire the images of an ethically questionable movie with propaganda purposes such as “Triumph des Willens” by Leni Riefenstahl without being an adept of the ideology behind. Hollywood then, is part of American soft power, a wonderful soft power tool reaching out to the entire world. It is not exaggerated to say that American movies have contributed to the Americanization of the world.

1.2. Minorities in Hollywood

Hollywood minorities such as Arabs, Muslims, Asians, and Blacks have always been depicted as second-class citizens, and this problem was one of Hollywood's best known things. Since its early days, Hollywood have presented them as ethnically inferior than whites, and if we want to understand Hollywood's behaviour toward these minorities, we must look at the picture it presents in its films. Criticisms of Hollywood movie productions often include a discussion of how women and minorities are systematically excluded and/or relegated to minor roles, or roles that match traditional stereotypes. These types of portrayals are important factors in the social construction of reality among the general public, and therefore may perpetuate racism and sexism on a larger scale. Many reports indicate that although both women and minorities have made some advancement in their film portrayals, compared to earlier studies, they still are under-represented in leading roles in Hollywood, and their portrayals are often consistent with traditional stereotypes.

1.2.1. Minority Groups are Underrepresented

Many years ago, the movie industry was ruled by white males – both on and off screen. What this analysis cannot show is the share of movies that have no stereotypical non-white characters. These do not typically get documented in the TVTropes wiki. In general, it is difficult to make any large-scale assessments of whether there are fewer stereotypical depictions now than there used to be. What researchers do track, though, is the number of non-white actors cast and how many directors and writers of color see their films produced. "The greater the range of different roles, the less likely people are to think that a group is just one of these representations," Ono said. Conversely, there is all the more weight on individual characters for groups who are rarely represented on-screen.

1.2.1.1. If Africa is featured, it's dangerous and untouched by civilization

Hollywood's stereotypical depictions of black people mostly refer to black Americans. Tropes that are about Africans are rarer, partly because few Hollywood movies have African characters. The most common trope about Africa, though, is what TVTropes users have dubbed "Darkest Africa": Movies portraying the continent as a mysterious and dangerous isolated land with only limited ties to "modern" civilization. That depiction has become less common, however.

1.2.1.2. Latino characters are defined by their sex appeal

Latinos are the largest ethnic minority in the US, making up around 18 percent of the population. A look at 2,682 movies since the year 2000 finds that tropes about Latino characters focus most often on their sex appeal. For women, this translates as the "Spicy Latina" trope: a temperamental temptress who can hold her own and always looks sexy.

Men get the role of the seductive "Latin Lover," often a fling for a white woman. Additionally, films tend to ignore the diversity of Latino cultures throughout the Americas: A particular brown-skinned, black-haired look is presented as defining the appearance of all Latinos. TVTropes users call this trope the "Latino is brown" stereotype.

1.2.1.3. Germans in movies are still often Nazis

The most common stereotype about Germans in movies since 2000 is that they are all Nazis. That is closely followed by the character of the German scientist, filed under "Herr Doctor" on TVTropes. The latter was probably influenced by the real-life scientists

who fled to the US during the Nazi regime, most notably Albert Einstein, who was born in Germany.

A curious trope has to do with Germans' supposed love for *Baywatch* and *Knight Rider* star David Hasselhoff. In 1988, Hasselhoff released his version of the song "Looking for Freedom," which was originally recorded by the German Marc Seaberg in the 1970s. Hasselhoff performed the song at the Berlin Wall just weeks after it fell at the end of 1989. The song fit the zeitgeist and was indeed popular in Germany for a time. Now, the "Germans Love David Hasselhoff" trope is used by the TVTropes community as a shorthand for any person or character who receives unexpected popularity outside of their home country.

1.2.2. Diversity in Hollywood

In 2011, Thornton, D. claims that American television will only be able to contribute to a racially equal society, when it stops reproducing these racial stereotypes. When producers are able to cast actors from all different ethnic backgrounds without having to think about it. As long as whiteness remains the prevailing point of reference regarding race (Thornton).

The need to improve representation in Hollywood is a discussion that is as old as Hollywood itself. It has been well-established that diversity is good for business, and since it is all but a guarantee that the U.S. population will continue to become more diverse in the near and distant future, it only makes sense that Hollywood would want to cater to an increasingly diverse audience that is hungry for content. It is absolutely critical that consistent efforts to address representation across the industry continue into next year and beyond.

1.2.2.1. Diversity and Inclusion in Hollywood

Is Hollywood continuing to divide Americans when it comes to race, class, gender, and cultural background? Hollywood still has a long way to go, according to the Hollywood Diversity Report from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA): The share of female and nonwhite characters on-screen has risen quite steadily over the past few years, but also quite slowly. Even though Asians, for example, make up more than half of the world's population, and just under 6 percent of the US population, only 3 percent of all roles in 2017 and 2018 were played by Asians. Black characters made up

12.5 percent of all roles, which approaches proportionate representation for the US population. But in many cases, the portrayals are quite problematic.

Although Hollywood loves to talk about diversity and inclusion, its actions and implementation of initiatives don't always match — but we're getting there. In 2019, as we live in a time endlessly referred to as “divisive,” we have seen a greater surge in the need for diverse stories and content, this shows how the industry is answering the call.

1.3. What Hollywood Movies Do to Perpetuate Racial Stereotypes

Many Hollywood films have historically caricatured the Black experience. Today, even films that aren't overtly racist often perpetuate harmful stereotypes or tropes. However, Black creatives and others have worked tirelessly to combat these views with their own work. This list celebrates various representations both in genre and accolades and contains a number of firsts, including the first Black woman with a movie that earned \$100 million at the box office. Cinematic stereotypes reflect and shape common prejudices. Perceptions can be influenced by portrayals of Asians as nerdy, black men as dangerous and Latinas as fiery. So, how does Hollywood portray various groups? In recent years, there has been increased attention on racism and sexism in Hollywood films, which can be reflected in who acts in front of the camera, who directs behind it and how people are represented on-screen — and often all three. To illustrate how stereotypes have developed in Hollywood, DW analyzed tropes used in more than 6,000 Oscar-eligible movies since 1928.

1.3.1. Black Characters Die First

Black characters often weren't played by black people in the early days of Hollywood. In fact, they barely appeared at all, except as caricatures played by white actors in blackface. This practice originated in the American theatre tradition of minstrelsy, in which racist stereotypes about black people were a staple.

Blackface occurs much less frequently now, after a long period of criticism of the practice: In *Dear White People*, for example, college fraternity members throw a blackface-themed party, which the film, as well as the Netflix series of the same name, use as the basis for a discussion of racism at colleges across the United States. But, as Hollywood has featured more black characters and cast more black actors, it has also emphasized other stereotypes. To this day, black men are often portrayed as scary or angry and black women as loudmouthed and sassy. If a movie features one token black character, it's likely to be the

black best friend. And, if people die in a movie, the black character is still likely to go first. Even with awareness of racial stereotypes rising, Hollywood persists with these tropes.

1.3.2. Racist Caricatures

Blackface minstrelsy is one thread in a rich tapestry of racist caricature in the United States, one that has a dense, complicated, and fraught performative and semiotic tradition. (For a discussion of blackface minstrelsy, go [here](#).) Consider, for example, this 19th century advertisement for soap, which treats recent Irish immigrants as if they were apes. By the twentieth century, Irish Americans would begin to assimilate into the more generic and unmarked category of whiteness, and depictions such as these disappeared.

For African Americans, assimilation into whiteness was impossible, and while the nature of racist caricatures of blackness changed in different historical moments, they never disappeared. For instance, with the coming of sound film in the late 1920s, in American commercial animation continuing characters inspired by blackface minstrelsy such as Mickey and Felix were joined by broader, less subtle, and often more vicious and violent racist caricatures. Hollywood history provides many examples of racist caricatures. Black and Asian people have been repeated targets. Take the 1961 Audrey Hepburn movie *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and the bucktoothed Mr. Yunioshi, whose stereotypical "Engrish" accent was intended to mock Japanese people. This development coincided with the film industry's increasing reliance on jazz music, specifically swing, to win audiences over to sound. Many of these caricatures were associated with jazz music, Harlem, and the jungle—swing music being referred to by its white interlocutors as "jungle music" and there many examples such as from *Coal Black and de Sebben Dwarfs* (WB 1943), The cartoon *Scrub Me Mamma With a Boogie Beat* (Universal 1941), and from *Uncle Tom's Bungalow* (WB 1937).

1.3.3. From Racist Caricatures to Lingering Stereotypes

"Racism, in the form of job exclusion and racially stereotyped roles, has defined the Hollywood film industry since its birth in the early 1900s," the sociologist Nancy Wang Yuen writes in her book, *Reel Inequality: Hollywood Actors and Racism*. Indeed, Asian characters in the early days of Hollywood mostly appeared in the form of racist clichés — either as mysterious, menacing villains or as laughable caricatures such as Mr. Yunioshi. In addition to everything else, that character is played by the entirely white American actor Mickey Rooney, thus making it an example of yellowface: a non-Asian person

impersonating an Asian person. This practice used to be quite common in Hollywood. Production teams were reluctant to hire minority actors of any kind, instead often opting to use white actors in their place. This practice became self-reproducing: Sociologists have found that prejudices break down when people of various ethnic groups have increased contact with each other. But Asian communities have historically been frequently marginalized in the United States. "Even today, most images of Asians and Asian Americans on screen weren't created by Asians or Asian Americans, but by people who don't know much about them," says Kent Ono, who studies media representations of race at the University of Utah (UU). "This creates a very strange idea of who Asians and Asian Americans are for those who don't know any Asian people. And it also creates a very confused and estranged relationship by Asians and Asian Americans to Hollywood, because they can't fully identify with this bizarre representation of themselves."

The information on these stereotypical cinematic devices has been compiled in the community-generated wiki TVTropes.org, from which the names of the various tropes detailed in this article are drawn. Users there can document any recurring motif they observe in a piece of media: Which TV shows claim Elvis is still alive? Which video games feature a creepy child character? Does a movie feature a white actor dressed up to look Asian?

In 2012, for example, the movie *Cloud Atlas* drew criticism for making many of the non-Asian actors up as Asian characters for part of the film. Many critics argued that, as there are already so few roles for Asian actors, let alone roles that are not caricatures, white actors should not be cast to play Asian characters. That came up again when Scarlett Johansson starred in the live-action film of the classic Japanese manga series *Ghost in the Shell* and then Tilda Swinton played an originally Asian character in *Doctor Strange*. And the list goes on.

A trope that began to appear more frequently in the 1960s and '70s is what TVTropes calls the "Mighty Whitey, Mellow Yellow" dynamic: a powerful white main character with a submissive Asian love interest. Before the 1950s, strict self-censorship in US cinema forbade romantic pairings between people of different ethnicities, or "miscegenation," which meant that there were even fewer roles available to Asian actors. When self-censorship gave way to the current system for rating motion pictures, instances

of the trope increased, which indicated that this stereotype of Asian women had already existed before it was depicted on the screen.

Other tropes also became more prominent in the second half of the century. In the 1970s and '80s, the popularity of Bruce Lee and martial arts movies in general led to the entrenchment of the "All Asians Know Martial Arts" trope.

But the most common way of representing Asians and Asian-Americans in US media today is as the "model minority," Ono said: "They might be scientists, doctors or in some technical field. By and large, they're good students, come from good families and don't have any economic problems." This stereotype is not specifically recorded in the TVTropes wiki, but it overlaps with the "Asian and Nerdy" trope, which has occurred more frequently in recent decades.

1.4. Black Representation in Hollywood

While many media outlets have displayed this negative perception of African Americans, film also has been a venue for how groups of people are characterized. Hollywood has long exerted a powerful influence on American ideology (Crane, 2017).

When the film industry was first conceived, it was rare to see a Black person on screen. In instances when there were Black characters, they were either portrayed negatively or as small-minded individuals next to their white counterparts. As the film industry progressed, more Black faces appeared, but with more representation came harmful stereotypes and caricatures. Although presently we are beginning to see more Black representation in film, the amount of roles are still disproportionate. According to a study done by UCLA, white actors and actresses played 67.3% of major film roles in 2019. This is two times greater than the number of people of color as a whole, who made up only 32.7%. Specifically, African Americans came in at 15.7%, demonstrating just how direly the film industry needs to be improved with regards to diversity.

1.4.1. Contempt of Black Characters in Hollywood Movies

Before film had even existed, Black people were already being depicted demeaningly in the entertainment business. Starting in the 1830s, white performers painted their faces, wore torn clothes, and imitated enslaved people. Black people were portrayed only in offensive caricatures: lazy, dumb, hypersexual, and criminal. These early performances in minstrel shows would prove to have a lasting effect on later films and stereotypes we still

carry today. In one of America's earliest popular films, "Birth of a Nation," white actors in blackface portrayed emancipated slaves, presenting African Americans as uncivilized brutes who preyed on white women. During the time of its release, in 1915, the movie was a big hit, so big that it was the first movie ever shown at the white house by yours truly, President Woodrow Wilson, who called it "history written in lightning." Though the film was loved by mainstream audiences, many Black people carried out demonstrations in opposition to the film's depiction of African Americans, notably the NAACP's campaign to ban the film. Despite some criticism of the movie's misleading interpretation of Black people, similar stereotypes continued to appear in entertainment from the early twentieth century to now.

1.4.2. Race Films

"Race film" was a genre of film and a specific film classification prevalent from around 1915 to the 1950s as a means of combatting the Jim Crow South and negative racist stereotypes in the early 1900s. These movies featured Black casts and were made for Black audiences. Producers of these films made them as a way to offset the racism of the Jim Crow South and provide inclusionary entertainment for a growing sector of American consumers. In 1916, brothers George Perry Johnson and Noble Johnson formed the Lincoln Motion Picture Company, which was a race film production company. From the beginning, Black films have been used to challenge stereotypes of race, tell great stories, and create laughs. There have been various eras within Black film history that focused on social and political movements.

1.4.3. Progress of Black Contributions in Hollywood

Today, African Americans are appearing more frequently in film. However it hasn't always been this way. When the film industry was first conceived, it was rare to see a Black person on screen. In instances when there were Black characters, they were either portrayed negatively or as small-minded individuals next to their white counterparts. As the film industry progressed, more Black faces appeared, but with more representation came harmful stereotypes and caricatures. Although presently we are beginning to see more Black representation in film, the amount of roles are still disproportionate. According to a study done by UCLA, white actors and actresses played 67.3% of major film roles in 2019. This is two times greater than the number of people of color as a whole, who made up only 32.7%. Specifically, African Americans came in at 15.7%, demonstrating just how

directly the film industry needs to be improved with regards to diversity. To study the rich history of Black representation in films, Stacker created a timeline of some of the most significant milestones in Black contributions to the industry

1898: 'Something Good Negro Kiss' The first depiction of on-screen Black love and possibly the first-known Black film, "Something Good Negro Kiss" was made in 1898. It shows two lovers embracing in a sweet kiss. The silent film reel was lost only to be rediscovered in good shape decades later and added in 2018 to the National Film Registry.

1912: 'The Railroad Porter' was produced by the Photoplay Company in 1912. It is considered the first film with an all-Black cast.

1918: 'The Birth of a Race' "Birth of a Nation" was a racist film that celebrated the Ku Klux Klan and which was well-received in 1915. To counter that film's racist stereotypes, Emmet J. Scott began production of "Birth of a Race." The intended epic, meant to be three hours, was never made. Instead, Scott was forced to accept funding from white investors due to his lack of capital, and the original film was changed to moderate their sensitivity.

1920: 'Within Our Gates' is the silent film directed by early Black filmmaker Oscar Micheaux and released in 1920. The film falls under the category of race films and was released during the Jim Crow era.

1963: 'Nothing But a Man' is the first full-feature Black drama featuring an all-Black cast for a mixed audience. The film was initially released in 1963, around the time period the civil rights movement was beginning to take speed.

1967: First interracial kiss on film in US: The first interracial kiss came to American cinema in 1967 with the comedy-drama "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner," one of only a few films in that era to represent interracial marriage positively. Interracial marriage was made legal throughout the U.S. just six months before the movie came out.

1971: 'Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song' :Blaxploitation was an era of film in the '70s intended for young Black Americans. "Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song" was directed by Melvin Van Peebles during this era. The film grossed more than \$10 million dollars but received criticism for its raciness.

1972: ‘The Man’ 1972 political drama stars James Earl Jones as first Black president. In the film, Jones' character Douglass Dilman ascends to the White House from his role as a senator via the order of succession.

1976: First black woman to star in an erotic film, Desiree West was the first Black woman erotic-film star. She debuted in 1973's “Teenage Runaway.” West was known for pushing the envelope with adult scenes featuring Black, interracial, and lesbian scenes.

1993: First Black superhero film ,Long before the release of “Black Panther” came “The Meteor Man,” the first Black superhero film. Robert Townsend directed, co-produced, and starred in the movie, which featured an all-star cast and special appearances from the likes of Cypress Hill, Sinbad, and Naughty by Nature.

2009: Princess Tiana, Princess Tiana was the first Black Disney princess. The children’s movie, “The Princess and the Frog,” came out in 2009.

2015: First historical film about a queer Black woman, 2015's “Bessie” stars Queen Latifah. It is the first historically fictional film about a queer Black blues singer.

2017: ‘Moonlight’ hits the scene; it was the first Black LGBTQ+ film to win an Academy Award for best picture. The 2017 independent drama set in Miami follows a Black man named Chiron as he comes of age, played at different times in his life by Alex Hibbert, Ashton Sanders, and Trevante Rhodes.

2018: ‘Black Panther’, it is the first Black Marvel superhero film to ever be released. The film earned widespread critical acclaim and grossed \$200 million dollars.

Conclusion

Although Black representation in Hollywood has come a long way since its beginnings, there is still more work to be done. Filmmakers should invest more time into mindfully casting other races as “standard” roles that aren’t racially significant. Any race could play an angsty teen or a spy; roles like these aren’t exclusive to only white people. Additionally, there needs to not only be more representation of Black people on screen, but more specifically dark skinned Black women. It’s rare in American media that dark skin Black women are the main character in a film or illustrated in a realistic light. They’re always the “Sapphire” or the butt of the joke. A rule of thumb for mindfully casting Black actors should be that not all Black women are light skin with loose curly hair and not all Black men are involved with the streets. It’s no surprise that movies including and representing real Black experiences have proven to be successful. It’s extremely meaningful when black people are depicted as beautiful, complex, human beings like in real life, as inaccurate representation can be deleterious to a community’s self-worth. Hollywood is in dire need of change so that everybody can be seen, appropriately and accurately, on the big screen.

The history of a black man and black women behind the camera in America is a story that is rarely told, and the way black men were portrayed in film needed an inherent change.

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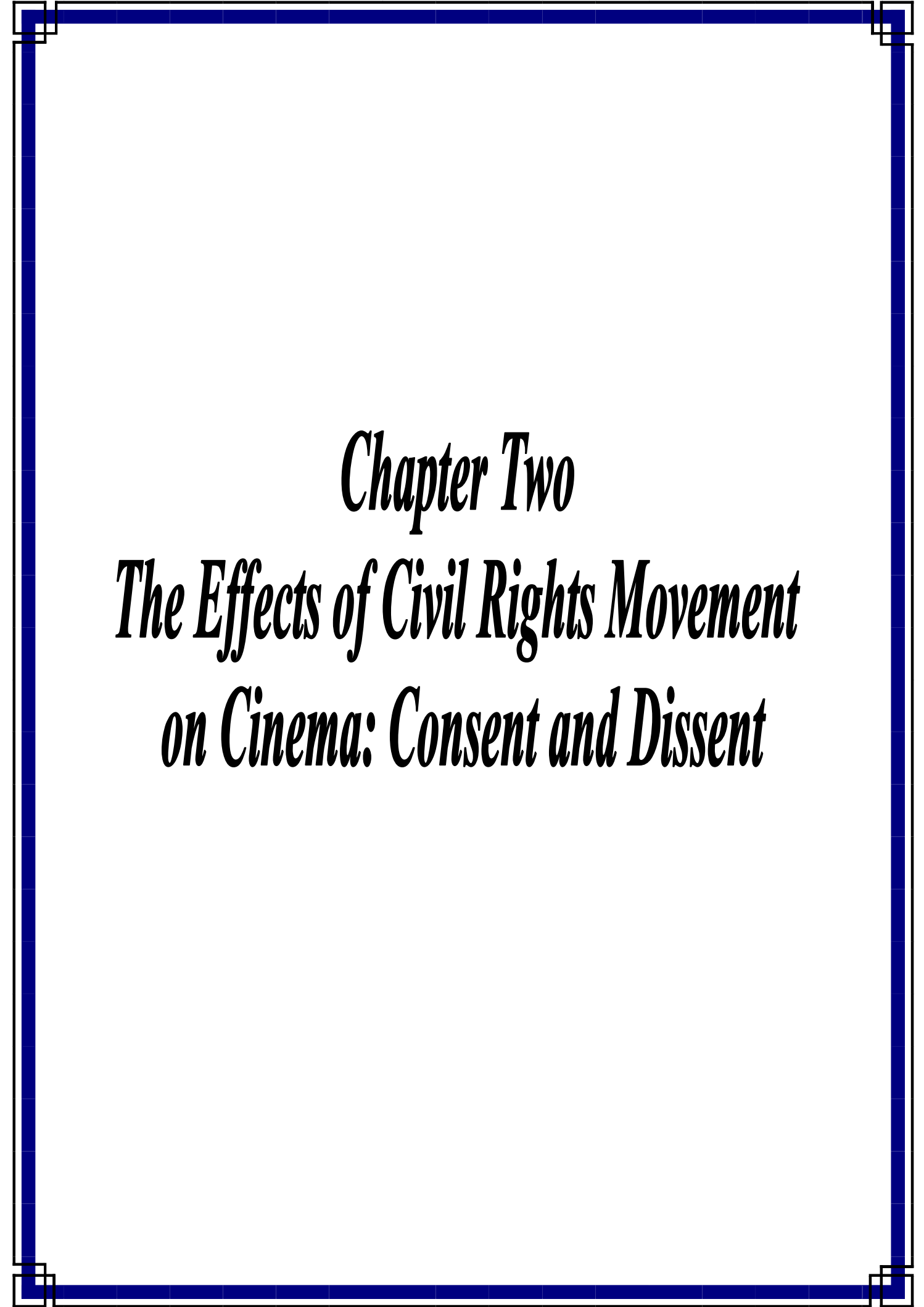
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Chapter Two

*The Effects of Civil Rights Movement
on Cinema: Consent and Dissent*

2.1. Introduction

Racism took roots in America and shaped its life. In the sixties, there were attempts to bring a new breath to American life, there was a hope that the American illness would be cured. In fact, racial discrimination was an urgent problem that the nation had to face, in order to change the image that would alter and prevent America to be a model for democracy over world. Racism at that time was confronted by all front, used all the means possible. The black leaders activism in one hand, and the media on the other, with especial interest on the role of movies, since the civil rights movement paralleled the growing of Hollywood industry in the United States. Noise fit to waken the dead, as Black leaders and organizations have used the media to waken the hearts and minds of the blacks as well as the whites. During that period, the civil right movement proved successful thanks to the use of television and movies. This chapter makes an attempt to assess the role of movies on the civil rights movement., it investigates a powerful mean used in this revolution –movie production. In fact, Hollywood directors and producers returned to the civil rights movement. Black cinema has slowly changed its meaning over the years obviously, the opinions expressed in movies depicting African Americans has changed to the better.

2.2. American Civil Rights Movement

Mass protest movement against racial segregation and discrimination in the southern United States that came to national prominence during the mid-1950s. This movement had its roots in the centuries-long efforts of enslaved Africans and their descendants to resist racial oppression and abolish the institution of slavery. Although enslaved people were emancipated as a result of the Civil War and were then granted basic civil rights through the passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments to the U.S. Constitution, struggles to secure federal protection of these rights continued during the next century.

Through nonviolent protest, the civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s broke the pattern of public facilities' being segregated by "race" in the South and achieved the most important breakthrough in equal-rights legislation for African Americans since the Reconstruction period (1865–77). Although the passage in 1964 and 1965 of major civil rights legislation was victorious for the movement, by then militant Black activists had begun to see their struggle as a freedom or liberation movement not just seeking civil

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rights reforms but instead confronting the enduring economic, political, and cultural consequences of past racial oppression.

2.2.1. The Civil Rights Act of 1964

Is a landmark civil rights and labor law in the United States enacted July 2, 1964, that outlaws discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, and later sexual orientation and gender identity. It prohibits unequal application of voter registration requirements, racial segregation in schools and public accommodations, and employment discrimination. The act "remains one of the most significant legislative achievements in American history"

On July 2, 1964, Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which banned discrimination based on "race, color, religion, sex or national origin" in employment practices and public accommodations. The bill authorized the Attorney General to file lawsuits to enforce the new law. The law also nullified state and local laws that required such discrimination.

2.2.2. Civil Rights Act of 1968

The House of Representatives had been deliberating its Fair Housing Act in early April, before King's assassination and the aforementioned wave of unrest that followed the largest since the Civil War

The House passed the legislation on April 10, less than a week after King was murdered, and President Johnson signed it the next day. The Civil Rights Act of 1968 prohibited discrimination concerning the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, religion, and national origin. It also made it a federal crime to "by force or by the threat of force, injure, intimidate, or interfere with anyone...by reason of their race, color, religion, or national origin.

2.2.3. Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement

Civil rights protest activity had an observable impact on white American's views on race and politics over time. White people who live in counties in which civil rights protests of historical significance occurred have been found to have lower levels of racial resentment against blacks, are more likely to identify with the Democratic Party as well as more likely to support affirmative action.

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One study found that non-violent activism of the era tended to produce favorable media coverage and changes in public opinion focusing on the issues organizers were raising, but violent protests tended to generate unfavorable media coverage that generated public desire to restore law and order.

The 1964 Act was passed to end discrimination in various fields based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in the areas of employment and public accommodation. The 1964 Act did not prohibit sex discrimination against persons employed at educational institutions. A parallel law, had also been enacted in 1964 to prohibit discrimination in federally funded private and public entities. It covered race, color, and national origin but excluded sex. Feminists during the early 1970s lobbied Congress to add sex as a protected class category. In 1972, was enacted to fill this gap and prohibit discrimination in all federally funded education programs, or the Education Amendments of 1972 was later renamed the Patsy T. Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act (EOEA) following Mink's death in 2002.

2.3. Hollywood & the Civil Rights Movement

Movies can shape public opinion and in many ways are an indicator of the Status quo. They can be used to sway sympathies, sometimes in the wrong direction. The historic film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) went a long way in convincing people to join the racist white supremacist hate group the Ku Klux Klan (KKK).

From the very beginning of Hollywood there has been a conflict between opposite sides of the racial divide. The deplorable practice of using black face continued throughout the 1920's, 1930's, 1940's and early 1950's. The *Bull-Dogger* (1921), *The Littlest Rebel* (1935), *Up in the Air* (1940). In the mid 1950's the growing momentum of the Civil Rights Movement began to be reflected in Hollywood. Otto Preminger's *Carmen Jones* (1954) featured a black cast and not white actors painted in black face.

Sidney Poitier won an Oscar for his role in *Lillies of the Field* (1963) audiences and critics alike were swept away with Poitier's portrayal of a travelling handyman who becomes the answer to the prayers of a group of nuns who wanted to build a chapel in the desert. Black Americans were finally beginning to have a more positive roles in cinema, but the struggle continued on and off the screen.

2.3.1. Race and Civil Rights Movies in Hollywood

The Civil Rights Movement was the necessary response to decades of segregation and discrimination within society. During the 1960s, when the film of “Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner” was released, Hollywood produced few movies about the political activism that comprised the civil rights movement. Instead, the movie industry turned to Sidney Poitier to offer representations of black middle-class respectability and colorblind racial discourse in hopes of changing the hearts and minds of whites across the country. Yet, Hollywood’s most celebrated civil rights drama debuted three years after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and two years after the Voting Rights Act of 1965, amid a very different political climate. The film’s premiere in December 1967 was fourteen months after Huey Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, and nearly eighteen months after Stokely Carmichael, director of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), began making calls for “Black Power.” James Baldwin, writing in July 1968, noted the contradiction between Hollywood’s images of black respectability vis-à-vis Poitier’s roles and the desires of the burgeoning Black Power movement, “white Americans appear to be under the compulsion to dream, whereas black Americans are under the compulsion to awaken.”

Hollywood civil rights movies have played an essential role in the articulation and influence of the racial ideology of colorblindness in the decades since the 1960s. Hollywood versions of civil rights appeared on screen at crucial moments in which debates about the legacy of the civil rights movement fundamentally influenced civil rights policy. For as much hope as a film like *Moonlight* offers, last year’s two Hollywood civil rights dramas—*Hidden Figures* and *Loving*—demonstrate the deep rootedness of industry’s “colorblind aesthetics.” I define “colorblind aesthetics” as a series of well-established film techniques that, beginning in the late 1980s, routinely situate colour-blind white heroism at the center of civil rights dramas and encourage identification among white spectators. These aesthetics have done nothing to advance the cause for black liberation but have instead proven essential to the reinforcement of white supremacy through the articulation of the racial ideology of colorblindness in the post-civil rights era.

2.3.2. Civil Rights Cinema

It would be impossible to argue that something called ‘civil rights cinema’ existed before the end of the 1980s, by which time a provisional sub-genre of feature films had

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begun to develop around race and rights with reference out to the Movement. In the 1960s films that examined civil rights struggles in any guise at all were usually reviewed as ‘small town movies’ or ‘southern melodrama’ or ‘social problem pictures’. Over the last two decades of the twentieth century, there has developed a critically self-conscious body of work on commemoration and retrieval and it is during this period that, as Richard Rorty has observed, ‘the novel, the movie and the TV program gradually but steadily replaced the sermon and the treatise as the principal vehicles of moral change and progress’. Before this, movies with plots incorporating civil rights struggles could turn up in any popular genre from westerns to courtroom dramas, and even comedies.

Hollywood civil rights movies have played an essential role in the articulation and influence of the racial ideology of colorblindness in the decades since the 1960s. Hollywood versions of civil rights appeared on screen at crucial moments in which debates about the legacy of the civil rights movement fundamentally influenced civil rights policy. For as much hope as a film like *Moonlight* offers, last year’s two Hollywood civil rights dramas—*Hidden Figures* and *Loving*—demonstrate the deep rootedness of industry’s “colorblind aesthetics.” I define “colorblind aesthetics” as a series of well-established film techniques that, beginning in the late 1980s, routinely situate colorblind white heroism at the center of civil rights dramas and encourage identification among white spectators. These aesthetics have done nothing to advance the cause for black liberation but have instead proven essential to the reinforcement of white supremacy through the articulation of the racial ideology of colorblindness in the post-civil rights era.

1.3.3. Movie-Made Movement

When considering the movie-made Movement, one begins to detect a new battle over audience that divides along racial lines, with directors fighting over custody of the past in order to protect the 1960s and its icons. Spike Lee campaigned against a white director, Norman Jewison, directing a film based on *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (despite the older director’s success with films like *In The Heat Of The Night* and *A Soldier’s Story*).

In a similar way, if, as Maurice Halbwachs maintains, we need historical witnesses to confirm our recognition of the past in collective memory, the casting of Medgar Evers and Martin Luther King Jr.’s children in *Ghosts of Mississippi* and *Boycott* garners a sense of authenticity for black audiences and exhibits a kind of moral deference to African American shared memories.

Few films capture what Cornel West has described as the ‘boiling sense of rage and a passionate pessimism regarding America’s will to justice’ that characterised the civil rights years for many black people in the South.³⁷ Yet *A Time To Kill* does tap in to that sense of disquiet, its racial enclaves congealed into custom until shaken by the angry black father breaking open a legacy of race hatred that whites found morally reprehensible but many tacitly sanctioned for so long. Carl Lee as reconceived in Akiva Goldsman’s screenplay, is a reminder of Clyde Franklin’s assertion in 1994 that ‘in America adult black males have only been “men” for about twenty years’ and that they are still seldom recognised as ‘societally approved men’. Goldsman and Schmacher make Carl Lee an African American populist

2.4. The Repercussion of End Discrimination on Hollywood Films

George p. Hunt, managing editor of life magazine, stat that in 1965 that success of civil rights reform depended largely on the media’s willingness to engage in in-depth coverage of the race issuell. (L.James 52). Hollywood was always affected by social and political issues .In the Second World War, Hollywood shifted from entertainment films toward social and political criticism. The success of the civil rights movements and the end the ear of segregating had deep impact on films. After applying Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the establishment of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), blacks become more involved into the film making industry. The blacks became activated in the moving making industry, their thoughts and ideas are reflected on screen.

2.4.1. Blacks on Screen in the Sixties

Although pre-civil rights saw little to no integration of blacks into the film industry, the image of black on screen had a bit of change. The early 1950s saw a type of film known as the —Negro Cycle, which were produced and directed by whites, but humanized blacks on screen, show casting the real struggle that black face in their life.

These films took advantage of the new post-war liberalism and pointed white audiences toward acknowledgment and respect for African American rights (Rhines 40). This type of film had no direct relationship into the Civil Rights movements but the depiction of deplorable treatment towards blacks and the message of inequality may raise awareness of this unjust divide in society.

Negro Cycle —Films were the first to shed light on real issues facing blacks in society: poverty, interracial marriages and finding fulfilment in the narrow confines

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determined by a hostile white world (Bogle 195). Although these films may have intended to show reality of black life's, in fact the film were full of stereotypes and Prejudgments which like all stereotyped representations, and prejudgments contained a little truth, surrounded by an even larger lie. Blaxploitation was another type films emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s, it is considered an ethnic subgenre of the general category of exploitation films. Blaxploitation films almost made outside Hollywood, with low budget. Blaxploitation movies were directed to the black Audience.

Blaxploitation films from the late 1960's and early 70's were produced by white film makers for black audiences. These films were basically a way to exploit black audiences and fill movie theatres in urban areas. No thought went into these productions, they would take an established genre like crime movies or vampire movies *Blacula (1972)* and replace the white cast with a black cast.

Blacks and black activists groups such the NAACP, core were refusing these stereotype image that black were portrayed with. —From the late 1940s through the 1960s, with a strategy of mass protest that later exploded into rebellion, blacks affected changes in all areas of American society. Black folk created a political and cultural atmosphere in which the issues of race and freedom could not be ignored, (Guerrero 29). As Guerrero states in *Framing Blackness: The African American Image in Film*: For the racial ideology and stereotypes that are but part of dominant cinema's work are not fixed or static. Instead, they are a set of dynamic, lived relations and social transactions; the filmic conventions and codes of racial subordination are continually being reworked, shifting under the pressure of material, aesthetic, and social conditions. In 1969, Gordon Parks famous Parks was the first African American to direct a Hollywood feature film, *The Learning Tree*, Parks said about his film; —I had 14 or 15 Black people behind the camera for the first time in the history of films. There was a Black director. The producer was Black, the scoring was done by a Black man. The third cameraman for the first time was a black man, (Rhines 41).

The NAACP was the first organisation for racial equality, it was organizing a massive boycott of the major film industries as a tactic to increase racial minority presence in film industry. In 1982, Janet Waska, author of *Movies and Money*, assesses The state of black employment in U.S. feature films has not improved and behind the camera opportunities for black filmmakers have dried up. Over a ten-year period from 1972 to 1982, the number of black oriented feature films dropped dramatically, and it was

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reported that in the early 1980s. Blacks were not even getting their traditional exploitive or stereotypical roles.

A study by the Directors Guild of America (DGA) found out that —of 237 directors, Columbia had hired only one minority; Fox two of 22 146; Universal nineteen of 770; Warner Bros. one of 147; none at Paramount, MGM/UA, or Disney (Rhines 83). These results indicate that lack of minorities who hold power positions in the film industry. The majority of whites took the positions of authority, which is consider as a big problem .white directors have big impact on the visual aspects of a film, and the themes of the film and the way they are formed . They dominate every thing even what an audience should gain from the cinematic experience.

This extreme imbalance of racial, ethnic, and most likely gender, influences in the film industry produces a plethora of films which depict the same values, ideals, and visions and in turn skews how society views the world through the naturalization of attitudes provided by the media. Opportunities for blacks have increased and continue to develop in the Hollywood film, but this development is usually at the expense of previous oppressions and prejudices. Rhines provides an example of how widespread and noticeable imperfections in the film industry lead to change.

2.4.2. African Americans Growing up on The Film Industry

The image of African American in movies changed over time .Many of old films showed black characters in negative image which the blacks would not identify as being truly themselves. But when their image changed a lot after the events of the sixties. The 1915 saw for the first time the formation of independent African American filmmakers, who attacked the first film *The Birth Of A Nation*, who gave a bad image of the African American. They produced films with their own money, with a more positive image of blacks.

After World War II, white America's general sympathy for the Civil Rights movement allowed blacks to direct Hollywood films and to play heroic, non-threatening roles on screen. The Black Power movement allowed blacks to strike out at whites and to celebrate cultural traits distinct from those of white America, (Guerrero 50).

These advancements, it was not until the mid-1980's that the American film industry completely underwent structural changes, which allowed blacks greater access to positions of control behind the camera Guerrero, an African-American film historian and professor

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of film and African-American studies at New York University wrote, The important point about this frustrating chronology of fluctuating industry racism is that Hollywood is a system entirely motivated by short-term profit. Because of this, the industry is conservative and changes only when forced to do so by the combined pressures of multiple influences, no matter how just or important any single condition may be (93).

These multiple influences usually include these pressures it begins to take action, but not always in the way activists expect. Because of these representations are ever changing to meet the desires of the viewer and can never fully or realistically represent those whom they are trying to imitate.

Slowly a small but distinct body of films is developing in which Movement successes are celebrated and strategies and losses interrogated *Freedom Song* (2000), *Boycott* (2001) and *The Rosa Parks Story* (2002), for example. But these films, like Spike Lee's *Malcolm X* (1992) and *A Huey P. Newton Story* (2001), fall outside of the broad (predominantly white) mainstream cinematic tradition. More usually, black activists (CORE and SNCC) and protagonists (Medgar Evers, Martin Luther King Jr.) have been caught in an epistemological drift, their stories dispersed and scattered through narratives in which white protagonists undergo a rite of passage or racial conversion. Most white directors and screenwriters espouse a liberal reformist vision in working out private salvations. But as Martin Luther King Jr. opined in *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (1967), liberalism can be 'all too sentimental concerning human nature', leaning towards a 'false idealism'. Films made in our own historical moment tend to ensure that civil rights cinema becomes a cinema of integration and reconciliation. They function in a postmodern imaginary as socially symbolic texts in which racial tensions that remain unresolved in life find temporary resolution in narrative space. To do this, they focus on relationships between individuals, reducing larger historical events to personal histories, domesticating public memory of the Civil Rights Movement.

Conclusion

The Civil Rights Movement in America did not finish with Dr. King's work. It is an ongoing process that we're still struggling with to this day. Over the course of several decades, many films and TV shows have worked to capture the emotions and messages of equality. *Cinema Civil Rights* presents the untold history of how Black audiences, activists, and lobbyists influenced the representation of race in Hollywood in the decades before the 1960s civil rights era. Employing a nuanced analysis of power, these representations were shaped by a complex set of negotiations between various individuals and organizations.

Civil Rights debates helped shaped the movies, but also how the movies themselves provided a vital public forum for addressing taboo subjects like interracial sexuality, segregation, and lynching. Emotionally gripping, theoretically sophisticated, and meticulously researched, *Cinema Civil Rights* presents us with an in-depth look at the film industry's role in both articulating and censoring the national conversation on race.

Chapter Three
Representation of African American
Women in Movies
Before and after the CRM

3.1. Introduction

The black woman's unfortunate standing in Hollywood history is why the California African American Museum's "Center Stage: African American Women in Silent Race Films," which runs until October 15, is so significant. It reveals how as early as 100 years ago, independent black filmmakers presented complex portrayals of women of color that major studios never fathomed. These silent gems depict black women exploring their religious faith, fighting for the rights of African Americans and in loving relationships. They underscore how even today Hollywood has much ground to cover in its depiction of black women. Seeing the start of the Civil Rights Movement, most of the better opportunities open to Blacks were found on television. Hollywood made its concessions as well, and several Black actresses found their names etched across the American pathos.

According to Melissa Harris-Perry, women have always had to wrestle with derogatory assumptions about their character and identity. Women have been continuously discriminated against in terms of their position on the social, political and economic spectrum of society and although this lack of recognition is due to a very complex web of issues and socio-political factors, it is safe to state that cinema plays a huge part in this distorted image of African American women.

Because films reflect the society for which they are made and illustrate social norms and interests, this chapter debates a comparative study between the representation of African American women in Pre and Post civil rights films when it comes to the "invisibility" that they faced during the CRM in America during the 1950s and 1960s. This is shown by examining two significant films: *Within Our Gates* 1920, and *The Help* 2011.

3.2. A Historical Overview of African American Women in Hollywood Films

Being part of two marginalized groups historically deemed inferior, Black females figured in a distinctive way different from either Black men or White women. They were ascribed peculiar derogatory images that were the legacy of a long-lived racism and sexism. Myths perpetuated by Whites and long underpinning the image of Blacks might contain common elements for Black females and males as their experiences were two sides of the same coin and influenced each other. However, standing on the nexus of American race and sex ideologies, Black women were doubly discredited. Racial and discriminatory representations of Black womanhood which had roots in the antebellum era evolved according to Patricia Morton around four central figures: the "inept domestic servant" (the

mammy), the domineering matriarch, the sex object (the Jezebel), the Angry Black Woman (the Sapphire) and the tragic mulatto. Drawing on some works by Black female writers and Blacks' racial uplift strategy between the 1890s and the 1930s, this article delineates the distorted conceptualization of Black women, and the way it molded their identities. It will primarily map out four of these images namely the mammy, the Jezebel, the Sapphire and the tragic mulatto.

3.2.1. The Mammy Character

“The Mammy” is the most derogating and damaging image of black womanhood in American mass media. It shows black women as the opposite of the conception of desired American womanhood (Jewell 10-12).

One of the most frequent and enduring stereotyped racial caricature of African American women to emerge from film is the mammy character. The names *Mammy* and *Aunt* were both used in Southern antebellum fiction to describe a role and a person within the plantation household who served as a baby nurse, cook, and general domestic worker (Parks). The mammy stereotype refers to strong, ugly, and masculine black women who sacrificed her life to serve white families. The mammy is often portrayed as an overweight, large-breasted, Motherly figure, who served Caucasian families in the South (Chen, G. M., Williams, S. and Hendrickson, N. 115).

Also West states that the Mammy is common stereotype image of African American women, which back to the slave era. West assume that there is historical reasons behind the creation of mammy character ,she claimed that historians ,writers ,and films maker created the mammy character to make the pain and struggle of black females seen not that hard and also to hide the truth of black women's life in which they were maltreated ,tortured and rapped .Moreover, Melissa Harris Perry states that the reason behind the birth of the mammy character is to justify past enslavement and thralldom, and it was commove current oppressions and segregation



Figure 01: the Mammy Stereotype

The mammy stereotype comes into the picture in Hollywood in 1939. Hattie McDaniel was the first African American woman to win an academy award for playing a role of mammy in film *Gone with the Wind*. In 2011, Octavia Spencer played the same role in film *The Help*. Even it is more than 72 years the mammy character is still played in Hollywood films. Bogel describes the mammy stereotype as a large, sexual and dark woman who has more loyalty to the white family that she serves the owner family rather than her own family (Bogle 9).

The mammy character was over display in Hollywood through the Medea character in Tyler Perry movies. The Medea character in Tyler Perry films consider as the modern version of the mammy character. According to McCoy, The Medea's attitude is not improper as a male or as a female, rather it just a perfect showcase of what a stereotype is, which is a belief composed to drift away from the truth. (McCoy, Tyler Perry and the Weight of Misrepresentation. 127-146).

3.2.2. The Jezebel Character

Perhaps she remembers her great-great grandmother who wanted to protest but only rolled her eyes and willed herself not to scream when the white man mounted her from behind. *Andrea Williams* (2001).

The portrayal of black women as lascivious by nature is an enduring stereotype. The descriptive words associated with this stereotype are singular in their focus: seductive, alluring, worldly, beguiling, tempting, and lewd. Historically, white women, as a category, were portrayed as models of self-respect, self-control, and modesty - even sexual purity, but black women were often portrayed as innately promiscuous, even predatory. This depiction of black women is signified by the name Jezebel.

K. Sue Jewell (1993), a contemporary sociologist, conceptualized the Jezebel as a tragic mulatto - "thin lips, long straight hair, slender nose, thin figure and fair complexion"(p. 46). This conceptualization is too narrow. It is true that the "tragic mulatto" and "Jezebel" share the reputation of being sexually seductive, and both are antithetical to the desexualized Mammy caricature; nevertheless, it is a mistake to assume that only, or even mainly, fair-complexioned black women were sexually objectified by the larger American society. From the early 1630s to the present, black American women of all shades have been portrayed as hypersexual "bad-black-girls".

According to Hill Collins, The jezebel stereotype is portraying black women who have uncontrolled sexual appetites (Hill-Collins 127). In another words the jezebel character describes the African American women as sexual tool, women who used her body to get what she want .Dunn said —the jezebel is a woman motivated by her sexual abilities to use men to get what she wants (Dunn 114) Jackson states that the reason behind the creation of the jezebel character is to justify intimidation, menace that white owner was applying on black women actually using the black females a sexual tool is not a new thing in Hollywood films or in American culture.



Figure 02: The Jezebel Stereotype

Sarah Baartman was a symbol of stereotype depiction of African women .she was born in extern cape in South African (Natasha Gordon 6) . Her life was full of difficulties, suffer and tragedy. Her mother died when she was two years and her father died when she was an adolescent. In 1810, Sarah Barratman was brought to London by Hendrik gazer (Natasha Gordon 7), and she was placed on display as an entertainment attraction for European audiences. She standing naked under to gaze of European audience, they began by staring at her in disgusting way and laughing at her (Washington, H.A. 85).

Sarah Baaratman was given to animal trainer in Paris where she was put in cage and forced to behave in an animalistic manner (83). She died in 1815, at the age of 28 (Netto150). Unfortunately, even after her death she could not rest in peace. Her body was further violated by who claimed to be interested in science.

Harris –Perry states that in early twentieth century African American women tried to resist this stereotype by advocating temperance and piety, thus many African American women were afraid that if they put on make-up, wore revealing clothes or expressed affection in public, it would confirm the image of the jezebell. (Harris-Perry 59-61).

3.2.3. The Sapphire Character

The sapphire stereotype is another historical character of African American women in Hollywood films. The Sapphire Caricature portrays black women as rude, loud, malicious, stubborn, and overbearing. This is the Angry Black Woman (ABW) popularized in the cinema and on television. She is tart-tongued and emasculating, one hand on a hip and the other pointing and jabbing (or arms akimbo), violently and rhythmically rocking her head, mocking African American men for offenses ranging from being unemployed to sexually pursuing white women. She is a shrill nagger with irrational states of anger and indignation and is often mean-spirited and abusive. Although African American men are her primary targets, she has venom for anyone who insults or disrespects her. The Sapphire's desire to dominate and her hypersensitivity to injustices make her a perpetual complainer, but she does not criticize to improve things; rather, she criticizes because she is unendingly bitter and wishes that unhappiness on others. The Sapphire Caricature is a harsh portrayal of African American women, but it is more than that; it is a social control mechanism that is employed to punish black women who violate the societal norms that encourage them to be passive, servile, non-threatening, and unseen.

The Sapphire/ABW stereotype used it for different purposes. It is a social control Mechanism that is employed to punish black women who violate the social norms that encourage them to be passive, servile, nonthreatening, and unseen (Pilgrim 121).

In other words, because their passion and righteous indignation is often misread as irrational anger, this image can be used to silence and shame Black women who dare to challenge social inequalities, complain about their circumstances, or demand fair treatment. The studies on the sapphire character are very lack, this is because African American women identify themselves as angry and tough as key elements of their personality.



Figure 03: A Stereotype Image of an Angry Black Woman

3.2.4. The Tragic Mulatto

Lydia Maria Child introduced the literary character that we call the tragic mulattain two short stories: *The Quadroons* (1842) and *Slavery's Pleasant Homes* (1843). She portrayed her as the offspring of a White slaveholder and his Black female slave. This mulatta's life was tragic as she was ignorant of both her mother's race and her own, believing herself to be White and free. Her father died, her "Negro blood" was discovered, she was deserted by her White lover, and died a victim of slavery and White male violence. Despite his/her mixed Black and White ancestry the mulatto was considered Black in the light of the pervasive "one-drop rule" or the "Black drop rule" which held that "a single drop of 'Black blood'" made a person a Black. One's classification as Black was accordingly predicated on the minutest trace of Black descent. As late as 1940, Langston Hughes noted in his essay *The Big Sea*, that the word "Negro" was used "to mean anyone who has any Negro blood at all in his veins." More strikingly, due to White Americans' anxiety about the "Negroization", the Blackening, or in Morton's words "the infection and pollution" of White society, the mulatto was perceived as the product of a "sin" committed by either Blacks or Whites and miscegenation was considered the greatest of all sins. She/he was also frequently portrayed as the offspring of an unnatural relationship. All

these factors were contributory to the emergence of the image of “the tragic mulatto,” who figured as an unstable, dangerous person who desired sex with White people because of his/her mixed blood.

The mulatto woman’s inability to belong to either world is well reflected by Helga Crane, the heroine of Nella Larsen’s *Quicksand* (1928). Her continuous quest for happiness and “her need of something, something vaguely familiar, but which she could not put a name to and hold for definite examination” incites her restlessness and fragmentation. Helga Crane’s “dissatisfaction and asphyxiation” haunts her and inhibits her feeling of being at home and with her own people. Her double consciousness and identity prevents her from belonging to either society for both were equally complicated and rigid in their ramifications. She felt that “if you couldn’t prove your ancestry and connections, you were tolerated, but you didn’t ‘belong’.”

Being “whitish” and regarded thus as more beautiful than full-blooded Black women, many mulattas were also during slavery sold for the exclusive purpose of prostitution and concubinage. The mulatta’s imagery was hereby conspicuously dichotomized between “good” and “bad”, between the elevated “whitish”, beautiful, refined, and hence capable of progress and the seductive Jezebel who was reminiscent of the debasement and the suffering of Blacks. Thence, she was deemed the personification of Blacks’ “pathology” and moral decline on which racial segregation rested. Blacks’ association of miscegenation with “Black degradation and lack of opportunity” ignited their “need for racial purity and social separation” that could feed their racial pride.



Figure 04: Megan Markle (Mulatto Women)

Additionally, a belief that “most race mixing occurred between White men and lower-class Negro women who had not had a chance to develop middle-class standards of sexual purity,” helped enhance the perception of the mulatto as the epitome of Blacks’ disgrace and stigmatization, called forth cultural stereotypes regarding the lewdness and depravity of Black females, and therefore held these women responsible for their people’s degradation. Hence, the mulatta grew to despise her descent, her family and herself. This resulted in her damaged and damaging psyche, eminently drawn in David Pilgrim’s summary of the literary and cinematic portrayal of the mulatta:

“Literary and cinematic portrayals of the tragic mulatto emphasized her personal pathologies: self-hatred, depression, alcoholism, sexual perversion, and suicide attempts being the most common. If light enough to “pass” as White, she did, but passing led to deeper self-loathing. She pitied or despised Blacks and the “Blackness” in herself; she hated or feared Whites yet desperately sought their approval. In a race-based society, the tragic mulatto found peace only in death”

3.3. African American Women and the Civil Rights Movement

African-American women in the civil rights movement were pivotal to its success. They volunteered as activists, advocates, educators, clerics, writers, spiritual guides, caretakers and politicians for the civil rights movement; leading and participating in organizations that contributed to the cause of civil rights. Rosa Parks's refusal to sit at the back of a public bus resulted in the year-long Montgomery bus boycott, and the eventual desegregation of interstate travel in the United States. Women were members of the NAACP because they believed it could help them contribute to the cause of civil rights. Some of those involved with the Black Panthers were nationally recognized as leaders, and still others did editorial work on the *Black Panther* newspaper spurring internal discussions about gender issues. Ella Baker founded the SNCC and was a prominent figure in the civil rights movement. Female students involved with the SNCC helped to organize sit-ins and the Freedom Rides. At the same time many elderly black women in towns across the Southern US cared for the organization's volunteers at their homes, providing the students food, a bed, healing aid and motherly love. Other women involved also formed church groups, bridge clubs, and professional organizations, such as the National Council of Negro Women, to help achieve freedom for themselves and their race. Several who participated in these organizations lost their jobs because of their involvement.

3.3.1. The Feminist Civil Rights Movement in The 1970s

Many women played important roles in the Civil Rights Movement, from leading local civil rights organizations to serving as lawyers on school segregation lawsuits. Their efforts to lead the movement were often overshadowed by men, who still get more attention and credit for its successes in popular historical narratives and commemorations. Many women experienced gender discrimination and sexual harassment within the movement and later turned towards the feminist movement in the 1970s.

The Civil Rights History Project interviews with participants in the struggle include both expressions of pride in women's achievements and also candid assessments about the difficulties they faced within the movement.

Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons was a member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and one of three women chosen to be a field director for the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project. She discusses the difficulties she faced in this position and notes that gender equality was not a given, but had to be fought for: "I often

had to struggle around issues related to a woman being a project director. We had to fight for the resources, you know. We had to fight to get a good car because the guys would get first dibs on everything, and that wasn't fair...it was a struggle to be taken seriously by the leadership, as well as by your male colleagues." She continues, "One of the things that we often don't talk about, but there was sexual harassment that often happened toward the women. And so, that was one of the things that, you know, I took a stand on, that 'This was not – we're not going to get a consensus on this. There is not going to be sexual harassment of any of the women on this project or any of the women in this community. And you will be put out if you do it.'"

Lonnie King was an activist with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in Atlanta. He remembers meeting other students from the Nashville movement when SNCC became a nationwide organization in 1960. He recalls his surprise that Diane Nash was not elected to be the representative from Nashville, and echoes Simmons' criticisms about male privilege and domination: "Diane Nash, in my view, *was* the Nashville movement and by that I mean this: Others were there, but they weren't Diane Nash. Diane was articulate; she was a beautiful woman, very photogenic, very committed. And very intelligent and had a following. I never did understand how, except maybe for sexism, I never understood how [James] Bevel, Marion [Barry], and for that matter, John Lewis, kind of leapfrogged over her. I never understood that because she was in fact the leader in Nashville. It was Diane. The others were followers of her... I so never understood that to be honest with you. She's an unsung... a real unsung hero of the movement in Nashville, in my opinion."

Ekwueme Michael Thewell was a student at Howard University and a leader of the Nonviolent Action Group, an organization that eventually joined with SNCC. He reflects on the sacrifices that women college students at Howard made in joining the struggle, and remarks on the constraints they faced after doing so: "It is only in retrospect that I recognize the extraordinary price that our sisters paid for being as devoted to the struggle as they were. It meant that they weren't into homecoming queen kind of activities. That they weren't into the accepted behaviour of a Howard lady. That they weren't into the trivia of fashion and dressing up. Though they were attractive women and they took care of themselves, but they weren't the kind of trophy wives for the med school students and they weren't—some of them might have been members of the Greek letter organizations, but most of them I suspect weren't. So that they occupied a place outside the conventional

social norms of the whole university student body. So did the men. But with men, I think, we can just say, ‘Kiss my black ass’ and go on about our business. It wasn’t so clear to me that a woman could do the same thing.”

Older interviewees emphasize the opportunities that were available to an earlier generation of women. Mildred Bond Roxborough, a long-time secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, discusses the importance of women leaders in local branches: “Well, actually when you think about women’s contributions to the NAACP, without the women we wouldn’t have an NAACP. The person who was responsible for generating the organizing meeting was a woman. Of course, ever since then we’ve had women in key roles—not in the majority, but in the very key roles which were responsible for the evolution of the NAACP. I think in terms of people like Daisy Lampkin, who was a member of our national board from Pittsburgh; she travelled around the country garnering memberships and helping to organize branches. That was back in the ‘30s and ‘40s before it became fashionable or popular for women to travel. You have women who subsequently held positions in the NAACP nationally as program directors and as leaders of various divisions.” She goes on to discuss the contributions of many women to the success of the NAACP.

Doris Adelaide Derby, another SNCC activist, remembers that the challenge and urgency of the freedom struggle was a formative experience for young activist women, who had to learn resourcefulness on the job: “I always did what I wanted to do. I had my own inner drive. And I found that when I came up with ideas and I was ready to work to see it through, and I think that happened with a lot of women in SNCC. We needed all hands on deck, and so, when we found ourselves in situations, we had to rely on whoever was around. And if somebody had XYZ skills, and somebody only had ABC, we had to come together. We used to joke about that, but in reality, the women, you know, were strong. In the struggle, the women were strong.”

Ruby Nell Sales, who later overcame psychological traumas from the racial violence she witnessed in the movement, encourages us to look beyond the simplistic story of Rosa Parks refusing to move to the back of the bus in Montgomery. As she explains, Parks was a long-time activist who had sought justice for African American women who were frequently assaulted—both verbally and physically—in their daily lives: “...When we look at Rosa Parks, people often think that she was – she did that because of her civil rights and

wanting to sit down on the bus. But she also did that – it was a rebellion of maids, a rebellion of working class women, who were tired of boarding the buses in Montgomery, the public space, and being assaulted and called out-of-their names and abused by white bus drivers. And that’s why that Movement could hold so long. If it had just been merely a protest about riding the bus, it might have shattered. But it went to the very heart of black womanhood, and black women played a major role in sustaining that movement.”

3.4. The portrayal of African American Women in Pre and Post-CRM Movies Via the Analysis of “Within Our Gates 1920”and “The Help 2014”

Before the emergence of the idea of civil rights, black women have been treated as less-than-human in many contexts, including the sciences, popular culture, law, and everyday life. Moreover, black female marginality is produced and reproduced through invisibility: they are less likely to hold elected office positions, high-profile jobs, and are among the missing in many popular cultural images.

As black feminist scholars have demonstrated, their marginality is underscored by a lack of presence in mass media. When black women’s experiences are visible, they lack the full range of real world experiences that include normalized human emotions and educational achievement.

Films are critical sites for examination of cultural images; for films are political undertakings that represent, produce and reproduce power relations. Cinemas not only provide entertainment, but also send messages to viewers, helping to shape our values and belief systems. But the question raised here, is whether the negative representation of African American Women in Hollywood movies has been changed or at least influenced by the CRM or not?

3.4.1. The Analysis of Within Our Gates 1920

Oscar Micheaux’s *Within Our Gates* (1920). Crammed into 80 minutes is a complex plot of love, betrayal, murder, rape, lynching, gambling, miscegenation, racial uplift, white bigotry, and black migration from the rural South to the urban North. Translated onto film are the hardships of blacks in the Jim Crow era United States, the promises and disappointments of black freedom, and the emergence of the “New Negro.” The film is one of the earliest examples, and certainly the most ambitious extant example, of black

appropriation of the emerging technology to contest representations of African Americans in mass culture.

“Oscar Micheaux’s bold, forceful melodrama—the oldest surviving feature by a black American director—unfolds the vast political dimensions of intimate romantic crises. Evelyn Preer stars as Sylvia Landry, a young black woman in a Northern town, who suffers a broken engagement. With a brisk and sharp-edged style, Micheaux sketches a wide view of black society, depicting an engineer with an international career, a private eye with influential friends, a predatory gangster, devoted educators—and the harrowing ambient violence of Jim Crow, which he shows unsparingly and gruesomely. Micheaux’s narrative manner is as daring as his subject matter, with flashbacks and interpolations amplifying the story; a remarkable twist regarding Sylvia’s identity, slipped in at the end, opens up a nearly hallucinatory historical vortex.” – Richard Brody, *The New Yorker*. With Flo Clements.



Figure 05: Sylvia Landry (Evelyn Preer)

Like an overstuffed used bookstore, *Within Our Gates* invites close and repeated inspection. Although I have watched the film countless times, with each viewing I discover something previously overlooked. Micheaux was a neophyte, self-taught filmmaker when he directed the film, and the intricacies of the movie’s plot are sometimes difficult to follow. Yet, if the plot is understood as a triptych of related but distinct acts, the film’s scope and ambitions become clear, indeed remarkable.

The film opens with the protagonist, Sylvia Landry, a young black woman, visiting her cousin Alma in the North while she awaits her fiancé's return from military service. Harboring designs on her cousin's betrothed, Alma contrives to fix Sylvia up with her brother-in-law, a dissipated card shark. Alma succeeds in catching Sylvia in a compromising situation just as her fiancé returns, prompting him to break off the engagement. Despondent, Sylvia returns south and dedicates herself to teaching at a school for the children of black sharecroppers. Despite the tireless efforts Sylvia and her mentor, Rev. Wilson Jacobs, the school is overcrowded and severely underfunded by local white authorities. Faced with the school's collapse, Sylvia returns to the North to raise funds.



Figure 06: Dr Vivian and Sylvia

To this point, the film appears to be a romantic melodrama yoked to a story of thwarted racial uplift in the rural South. Micheaux was a self-made man who embraced and proselytized the era's "up by the boot straps" dogma. The son of former slaves, he held odd jobs before homesteading in South Dakota. There, although largely self-educated, he began to write and publish stories and novels, which he sold door to door. Convinced that his semi-autobiographical novel *The Homesteader* was worthy of a film, he secured sufficient funds to form a movie production company and, in 1919, released his first film. A year later, when he made *Within Our Gates*, he continued to promote black uplift while displaying anxiety about corrupting urban influences on rural blacks. Like the jeremiads

delivered by contemporary black ministers, Micheaux's film dwelled on the obligation to strive for respectability. As a pioneer black filmmaker working in a medium abounding with invidious racial stereotypes, Micheaux acutely sensed the importance of depicting blacks comporting themselves with decorum and modesty. Even so, he did not shy away from acknowledging those blacks whose behavior, he believed, contributed to stereotypes. In contrast to Sylvia and Rev. Jacobs, who are paragons of respectability, Alma and her brother-in-law personify forms of selfishness and dissolution that impede the race's potential.

The tone and focus of *Within Our Gates* shift markedly when Sylvia journeys north to fundraise. Micheaux resorts to improbable plot contrivances to shift our attention to the poisonous effects of white racism. Already frustrated by her failure to raise money, Sylvia is waylaid by a black thug who snatches her purse. Fortunately, Dr. V. Vivian, a dashing young black man "passionately engaged in social questions," runs down her assailant. A budding romance between Dr. Vivian and Sylvia is abruptly halted when she is struck by an automobile belonging, coincidentally, to a wealthy white philanthropist. After learning of Sylvia's mission, the philanthropist considers donating money to Sylvia's school. A southern friend to whom she turns for advice is appalled that misguided altruism may lead the philanthropist to waste her wealth on blacks, who, the friend insists, cannot and should not be educated. The philanthropist eventually rejects this advice and makes a huge donation to Sylvia's school. Sylvia quickly recovers from her injuries and hastens south with the donation.

Despite the rickety plot turns in this portion of the film, Micheaux offers a searing portrait of the ideology of white supremacy. Overturning prevailing wisdom, portrayed notably in D. W. Griffith's film epic *Birth of a Nation* (1915), *Within Our Gates* underscores that racism is fueled by ignorance and hinders national unity. Whereas Griffith's film suggests that the revelation of blacks' true capacities and natures would restore racial unity and fraternity among northern and southern whites, Micheaux counters that if northern whites could see through the fog of white southern bigotry they would recognize that blacks were citizens worthy of both rights and respect.

Micheaux is not naïve about the likelihood of whites achieving such clarity. One of the movie's most poignant vignettes depicts the predicament of "Old Ned," a black preacher who must humiliate himself and attest that "Yes'm. White folks is mighty fine," in order to

collect small donations for his church from bigoted whites. After doing so, the preacher stares into the camera and confesses, “Again, I’ve sold my birthright. All for a miserable mess of pottage. Negroes and Whites all are equal. As for me, miserable sinner, hell is my destiny.” Unlike the black characters in *Birth of a Nation*, who are either bestial or loyal and subservient, Old Ned wears a mask of deference while harboring resentment and self-loathing, illustrating the psychic pain endured by blacks who comported themselves in accordance with the dictates of white supremacy.



Figure 07: Gridlestone’s brother and Sylvia (Rape Scene)

In the final act of the film Micheaux displays his maturing talents as both a storyteller and social critic, exploring his larger concerns—violence and the sexual politics of white supremacy—with exceptional insight. After Sylvia’s return to the South, Dr. Vivian continues to pine for her. He tracks down Alma, who recounts her cousin’s tragic history. In an extended flashback, Dr. Vivian learns that Sylvia was raised by the Landrys, a black family who, in spite of poverty and white opposition, managed to provide Sylvia with a modicum of education. Subsequently, Mr. Landry became embroiled in a dispute with his cruel landlord, Mr. Gridlestone, and was wrongfully accused of his murder. Gridlestone had actually been murdered by an embittered white farmer, but Efram, a fawning black servant of Gridlestone’s, accused Landry to gain the favor of the white mob intent on avenging the planter’s murder. In the film’s climax, Micheaux dramatically juxtaposes the lynching of Mr. Landry and his wife with the simultaneous attempted rape

of Sylvia by Gridlestone's brother. Between scenes of the hanging and burning of the Landrys, Sylvia engages in a frantic struggle with her would-be rapist. During the fight, Gridlestone's brother notices a distinctive scar on Sylvia's breast and realizes that he is attempting to violate his own daughter, whom he had fathered with a local black woman. Shocked by his discovery, he allows Sylvia to escape.

In this remarkable scene Micheaux translated the black critique of lynching to film. At a time of mounting black mobilization against lynching, Micheaux pressed his viewers to empathize with the victims of white violence. In Micheaux's hands lynching and rape were evidence of white, not black, barbarism. In contrast to Gus, the stereotypical black rapist in *Birth of a Nation*, Micheaux's rapist is a privileged and apparently "respectable" white. And rather than a lamentable but justified act of self-defense, lynching, in Micheaux's film, is irrational, capricious, and indefensible savagery against innocent and estimable citizens like the Landrys. Although Ida Wells-Barnett and others had leveled similar attacks against lynching, no one had previously shown Micheaux's talent at translating the denunciation of crime into art. Even present day viewers jaded by the violence commonplace in contemporary films find Micheaux's rendering of lynching haunting and galvanizing.

After each viewing of *Within Our Gates*, I am struck by Micheaux's audacity and ambition. He sought to appropriate a still primitive medium to depict the complexities of the black experience in America while making a film that would enthrall viewers as interested in spectacle and entertainment as in a message of racial uplift. Like his contemporaries Scott Joplin, Bert Williams, and others, Micheaux was exploring how black social justice could be insinuated into the cultural marketplace. Only now is it possible to appreciate fully how successfully Micheaux achieved these goals in *Within Our Gates*.



Figure 08: Reverend Jacobs and Sylvia

3.4.2. Presentation of Racism

The film portrayed several aspects of contemporary African-American society. Heroes and heroines included Sylvia Landry and Reverend Jacobs, criminals such as Larry, and “lackeys” such as a minister whom Mrs. Stafford supported, who encouraged African Americans to reject suffrage. The critic Ronald J. Green suggests that Bernice Ladd as Mrs. Statton represents a “Lillian Gish figure”, referring to her role in *The Birth of a Nation*. Statton is portrayed as racist and anti-feminist. Green notes that Micheaux intended the links between the films, and cast Ladd in part for her physical resemblance to Gish. Early in *Within Our Gates* Micheaux uses the character Mrs. Geraldine Stratton, a rich southern white woman, to depict the reality of American life not a world where there are no white people. Mrs. Stratton embodies the essence of southern prejudice; as a result of her fear of black women receiving the right to vote, she opposes women suffrage. With the use of the cinematic techniques, the viewer looks over the shoulder of Mrs. Stratton as she reads a newspaper article entitled “Law Proposed to Stop Negroes”. This article explains that the Mississippi senator James K. Vardaman has proposed a bill to negate the Fifteenth Amendment. Vardaman justifies his action by stating: “from the soles of their flat feet to the crown of their head, Negroes are undoubtedly inferior beings, therefore, how can we in conscience permit them to vote?”

3.4.3. Analysis of “The Help 2011”

The Help is a moving, funny and heart-wrenching film. I cringe at these sorts of descriptions usually, but The Help uses these emotions so effectively, and quite evenly, that it’s worth mentioning each.

Reminding me a little of Spielberg’s beautiful *The Color Purple*, based on Alice Walker’s fantastic novel, this movie is based on Kathryn Stockett’s book, which is rather popular. In Jackson, Mississippi in the early ‘60s, every white child is raised lovingly by their family’s black maid, while every white parent allows the maids to handle their children, but not to use their bathroom. Racial tensions are high, and subject to many discriminatory laws, and the black women suffer abuse at the hands of their snooty employers.

From smiling to being upset, *The Help* is a drama that sends emotions all over. The emotions that are felt aren’t just received through the dialogue but also from many other elements. The acting, camera work, and mise-en-scene make the movie what it is because they set the tone of the movie. They help the movie to become a great one. The movie takes place during the Civil rights era in America (early 1960s), in Jackson Mississippi. It stars Emma Stone who plays a woman name Skeeter Phelan who wants to become a journalist. She goes to help out the African American maids by getting their point of view on the white families that they work for and the hardship that they go through every day. Skeeter can be seen as the hero of the movie because she gave the maids a voice when no one else did. When we first meet Skeeter Phelan, we can already see that she is different from everyone else (as shown below) because of the way she looks and the way she talks to the maids. She treats the maids as if they are actual people and she isn’t as fake as the others.

Skeeter Phelan (Emma Stone) returns home to Jackson having graduated from college, and sets about her career as a writer: her first job is answering domestic questions in the local newspaper. She asks her friends’ maids to help her write the articles, and they volunteer copious household tips. But at home, Skeeter’s beloved family maid Constantine has left mysteriously, and her stubborn mother (Alison Janney) won’t give her a straight answer, returning her attention to the wonderful women in town raising white children.



Figure 09: Skeeter Phelan (Emma Stone) and Minny Jackson (Octavia Spencer) and Aibileen Clark (Viola Davis)

She befriends two inspirational women, Minny Jackson (Octavia Spencer) and Aibileen Clark (Viola Davis) and as they share tales of their lives as domestics for white people, Skeeter sees potential for not only a compelling book, but for a chance to change the narrow minds of the infuriating people who surround her.

It could be argued that Minny, Aibileen and Skeeter are all leading roles: each woman has her own story, with the makers actually giving them an equal share of the screen time. Emma Stone is pleasant to watch, but the show is stolen, melted down and made into gold by Viola Davis and Octavia Spencer.

Minny- headstrong and zero-tolerance- is fired by the local butter-wouldn't-melt-bitch Hilly Holbrook for using the indoor whites-only bathroom during a hurricane. With a thoroughly damaged reputation by the time Hilly is finished with her, Minny is hired by the only other nice (and therefore despised) woman in town, Celia Foote, to whom she passes her housekeeping tips, and her most fragrant recipes, all passed off as Celia's own work by the time her husband gets home. Spencer creates a delightful character, bringing the majority of the film's comic material to life, while embodying a woman who has seen it all and done it all.



Figure 10: Aibileen Clark (Viola Davis) with a little White Girl

The beautiful Aibileen is so tender and loving, yet maternally firm, having seen seasons of white children she loved grow into their cruel parents, despite everything. She has a tragic past, and needs the children she cares for to reignite her passion for life. Davis and Spencer make the movie what it is. Both received Oscar nominations, Spencer winning Best Supporting Actress, and both deliver charming, engaging, emotional performances in easily one of the best films of 2011.

So, there is the moving: the growing sisterhood between the women in Jackson; the funny: the hideously hilarious comeuppance of Hilly...and her mother's reaction; and the heart-wrenching: Aibileen's final sorrow as she is forced away from her beloved white child. *The Help* is a wonderful, emotional experience, which uplifts as it saddens, and tickles the funnybones as it yanks the heartstrings.



Figure 11: Skeeter Phelan (Emma Stone) and her Mother (Alison Janney)

When looking at the clothes all the women have on, including their hair, you can see that she's different. Skeeter has her own hair out and curly while wearing a simple dull outfit, whereas all the other women have on their fake stiff hair and bright dresses. Throughout the movie, these women always have their guard up when it comes to the way they look. They have an image to maintain and they don't want to show any kind of weakness when it comes to how they dress. You can tell that Skeeter doesn't really care much about her appearance because if you look at how she dresses through the entire movie you can see she's wearing clothes that look worn out and don't fit her as much. The only time we see of the women not dressed so prissy is when Hilly is driving to Skeeter's house (as shown below). She's dressed in casual clothes with her hair down and messy, chugging down a beer while smoking. The way she dresses changed because she finds out that the story about her eating Minny's shit was in the new released book the Skeeter wrote. She doesn't care about the way she dresses at this point because all she is worried about is making sure that no one knows that the person in the book was actually her.

What also makes Skeeter different is the fact that she actually had a maid when she was younger that she looked up to. This is also why she is so nice to the maids because one of them was absolutely nice to her but then she lost her. Cicely Tyson plays this maid named Constantine Jefferson who took care of Skeeter like she was her own and made sure she was fine. Skeeter felt special back then so now she is trying to let the maids feel special too.

While trying to help the maids with their voices, she has to deal with her mother (played by Allison Janney) trying to get her to find a man. One of the maids that she talks to is Aibileen Clark, a woman who lost her son, played by Viola Davis and she plays the part well. She plays the part so well that you can get emotional just by looking at the expression on her face. When you look at the scene (as shown below) where Aibileen starts to talk about her son's death, the only light there is, is on Aibileen's face. This little strand of light shows that she is opening up, talking about something that she's been bottling up for the longest. She is now expressing that there is nothing that's gonna stop her from getting her stories out to the public, this can also be seen as the turning point for Aibileen.

Before Aibileen starts telling her story about her son, the camera is on her and another maid name Minnie Jackson (played by Octavia Spencer who I think is hilarious), and as she starts talking, the camera slowly pans left towards her until she is in the center of the screen. At this time she is also at the center of her story, meaning that Aibileen is at the center of her breaking point. At the point where she just want to let everyone know what she goes through as a maid.

Emma Stone, Viola Davis, and Octavia Spencer are great choice of actresses for this movie. And without these specific people the visual of *The Help* probably wouldn't have been as good as it seem because the acting wouldn't have been the same. This would mean that the viewer wouldn't have gotten to experience the same emotions as they did if there were different actors. And while Minnie Jackson got her appreciation with being a maid and Skeeter Phelan going off to New York, Aibileen loses her job because of a lie but with that she gains something more important; her voice.



Figure 12: Aibileen introducing Skeeter to Minny Jackson

Aibileen ends up introducing Skeeter to Minny Jackson. Minny is also a maid at a white household. She tells Skeeter how she has lost her job working for Skeeter's friend Hilly. Hilly is a woman who bosses all of the other white women around, and is cruel to the African American maids. Hilly dislikes Minny but she can't resist her pies, which builds up tension in the movie when the film is zoomed up on Hilly's face after she has eaten Minny's pie and Minny tells her "Eat my shit". After Hilly being in disgust from actually eating Minny's shit she also ends up finding out that Skeeter has betrayed her and the other white women when she finds out that Skeeter's published book is about the relationship between the white women and the maids. Even though the book didn't make her tick off until she found out that Minny talked about her eating the pie of shit. She then tries to go after Skeeter.

This film involves a lot of betrayal, even though to the white people Skeeter was the wrong person, but to the maids she was known as their hero. The maids were recognized and awarded once the book was published since they had helped Skeeter write her first book. While the maids were satisfied, the white people grew hatred for Skeeter.

Conclusion

The bipolar conceptualization of Black and White womanhood assigned Black women all the negative traits of disgrace whereas White women were attributed all the idealized aspects of “true womanhood”, such as piety, deference, domesticity, passionlessness, chastity, cleanness and fragility. Conversely, Black women were conceived and pictured as primitive, lustful, seductive, physically strong, domineering, unwomanly and dirty. There was a breadth of stereotypical perceptions of Black women, which placed them outside the enclave of delicacy, femininity, respectability and virtue. As Patricia Morton suggests, “all except Mammy had profoundly derogatory, dehumanizing characterization.

This chapter I have analysed two movies of different time production which are “Within Our Gates 1920” and “The Help 2011” I followed conceptual analysis as a method in our analysis. I found out that there was a slight change or some changes in the representation of African American women in Hollywood films. I could notice that this image became more realistic over the year, maybe not in a positive way, but it became represented in a way that is accurate or true to life. As we observed with the last movie The Help 2011, when the three stereotypes did not appear in the same image we used to see.

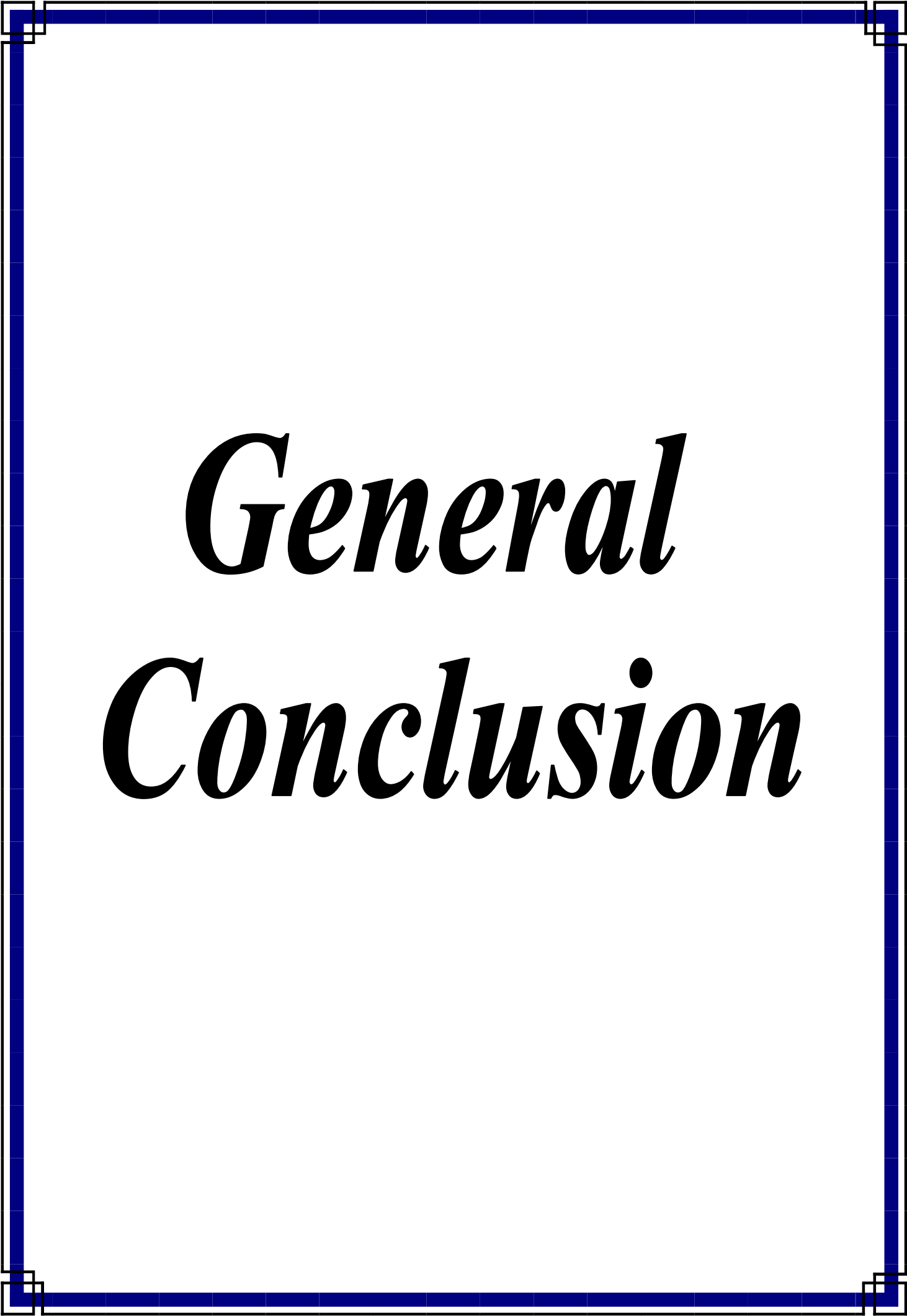
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General Conclusion

Hollywood is a pioneer in film industry. It is considered as an international institution that includes various races, religions, and social classes. Black women have always faced both race and gender disparity in their field. The aftermath of slavery not only resulted in many social, economic and political effects but also led to the delineation of negative racial stereotypes in the portrayal of black women in movies. The industry sometimes showed the stereotypical ideas of black women from mammies to sapphires, portraying black women as people who are unnecessarily aggressive and obnoxious.

Today African American women have a great position in this industry. The focus of this study is to analyse how African American women are portrayed in Hollywood films, in which three Hollywood movies were selected. Aside the African American women depiction, the study focused on how African American women are portrayed in the historical stereotype of mammy, jezebel and sapphire and also focus on the influence of the civil rights movement.

The representation of African American women in modern civil rights film is a result of the "invisibility" that they faced during the civil rights movement in America during the 1950s and 1960s. the media's scant but negative coverage of women activists along with male leaders, such as Malcolm X's attitude toward African American women during the period of the movement, is the reason why ultimately African American women activists received lack of recognition for their involvement in the movement. Also the lack of recognition for these women is evident in modern civil rights film and they negatively portray African American women's role during the movement.

Based on the data analysis of this study, black women are more illustrated in negative way rather than positive. The analysis borrowed from this study indicates that African American woman are always *showcased* in a bad way; and this appears through *thecolor purple* and *Forcolored girls*. These two movies show black women as they are useless, weak, pitiful humans rather than joyful. Black females are represented as they are satisfied with their miserable situation and they are always attend to make the other's life better than theirs.

As we mentioned above that black females were represented negatively, *Hidden figures* contract this negative image by introducing them positively. Through this movie we notice that there is a slight change in the way African American are demonstrated.

On the other hand, we found out that the three historical stereotypes (the mammy, the sapphire, the jezebel) were well pronounced in the three movies. The analysis derived from this study shows that every African American woman has either one or all of these stereotypes. However, the use of these stereotypes are differ from story to another and adapt from one genre to another (fiction and non-fiction). We can see this through the three films. The mammy stereotypes appear in different manners. The mammy character refers to a nurturer, a person who cares about the others, and who serves everyone without complaining.

Through the analysis we found out that the mammy stereotype took a new face over years, and this is obvious in the color purple 1989 the mammy character was expressed in all its meaning, but in the two other films we saw a bit of change in which it has been updated in a modern way, and that exaggeration in description decreased a little bit.

In addition, the sapphire just like the mammy stereotype, it has been changed for the better over time, and this brighten up when we compare between Katherine in Hidden figures with Sophia in The color purple. Both of them represented the sapphire character, but in sophia's character it seems more vulgar and savage. While with Katherine it seems less unfriendly and more self-esteem. By contrast, the jezebel stereotype didn't know any kind of change, but it is no longer used as usual, as in the case of Hidden figures.

In this study we had focus on the influence of the Civil Rights movement on the representation of the African American women. CRM has long-term effects on the American society. Also it influenced Hollywood industry over several levels. It is clear that CRM had improve the opportunities of blacks behind the scenes, also we noticed that CRM had a positive impact on black females representations in films. Although we can not feel that change only after three decades. In defense on what we mentioned above, that the movement itself has not direct cause on the change, but due to its results, such as social integration, litigation, and Equal Employment Opportunity which contributed in the development of the African American women representation on screen.

Nowadays, forty years after CRM we can notice that the image of African American women had changed into a positive way , and became more realistic , and this is due to Mrs Michelle Barak Obama foundation which aimed to improve the Black women position in side and out side Hollywood .

General Conclusion

Eventually, it is important to note that the conducted research aimed primarily at exploring the depiction of African American women in Hollywood movies before and after the CRM. Nevertheless, we didn't take into account other aspects related to the image of the black women in general .We had focus only on movies. As a result, a further studies may be carried out in order to highlight a wider scope, such as, television series and programs, or may also explore another category of minorities.

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