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Analysis Paper

In the film “The Help” by Tate Taylor white is an adapted version of the novel by Kathryn Stockett's novel, in the film it unveils tales of stories of maids during the 1960s in mississippi and them while taking care of white families during this time period, which dives into dynamic of race,class and gender in the south. The film is a poignant exploration of the Mammy stereotype, Black femininity, and the representation of Black women within the narrative canvas. Through the characters of Aibileen Clark, Minny Jackson, Taylor weaves a tapestry of experiences that reflect the multifaceted reality of Black womanhood during this tumultuous period in history which has effects on Black womanhood today and the impact the movie has had on society. Through nuanced character portrayals and a keen examination of power dynamics, the film skillfully deconstructs the mammy stereotype while advocating for the recognition of the agency, resilience, and humanity of his Black female protagonists but in ways the film is falls short.This analysis will delve into how the film challenges traditional narratives, sheds light on the complexities of Black womanhood, and confronts the pervasive oppression faced by Black women during this tumultuous period in history and the affects that this controlling images on the film are brought up today .

The history of the Mammy stereotype is the main reason behind this analysis is to make sure that the understanding of what a mammy is and how that stereotype is shown in the film.In this analysis we will discuss the mammy stereotype which shows black women as being nurturers and selfless caregivers to white families the reinforcements of these characteristics of black women are problematic and cause a certain type of discourse surrounding race,gender and

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class especially when thinking about black women. Black femininity which in the analysis will discuss and illustrated how the intersections of layers of race, gender and class that shape the lives of the female protagonists, we see how the film integrates societal expectations of femininity and the ways that in the film black women navigated and resist these constraints. Lastly the analysis will dive into black woman hood and those who have agency to tell whose story and whose voices are marginalized or silenced in the process. As Skeeter embarks on a journey to amplify the voices of the Black maids through her writing, tensions simmer and secrets unravel, laying bare the power dynamics that underpin the representation of Black women in both the fictional world of the narrative and the real-world context of the film industry. The significance of the film is to highlight the way that the mammy stereotype in the film and how this part reinforces the stereotype, while the film has some good parts because of the agency it provides to the maids by them telling the story from their perspective and getting paid for their stories while still highlighting the power dynamics during this time because they aren't able to tell their stories and publish their own stories due to the time period and also highlights black femininity looking at the intersections of race, gender and class in the film "the help".

The film "The Help" which is set in Jackson, Mississippi during the 1960s, the film revolves around black maids working for white families and a young white woman aspiring to be an writer who writes a book telling the experiences of these black maids with the families they take care of. There is a huge historical background that influences some of the narratives within "the help". The time period during which was significant social and political in the United States especially in the South during this time when racial segregation and systematic oppression were pervasive.

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The Help film depicts slavery how slavery influence this mammy stereotype in the film based on slavery, when black women were known especially when describing a mammy amiable, loyal, maternal, non-threatening, obedient, and submissive during slavery black women who were taking care of white children an being maternal figure to these children the correlation between Aibileen and mae mobley were mae mobley calls Aibillen her real mother though mae states this clear fact it deeper than just here stating that but her loyalty and servitude that she went through to take of not only the children but the families cooking,cleaning. How these racial hierarchies, power dynamics and relationships were able to shape the relationships between white and black individuals. The film highlights how black women are represented during this time period showcase the struggles of black women on a broader perspective in society .the way that their voices and stories are marginalized by systems of power and privilege, highlighting the intersectional nature of oppression based on race and gender and it shows within the film and that In "The Help," skillfully deconstructs the Mammy stereotype while exploring the complexities of Black femininity and the pervasive oppression faced by Black women in 1960s Mississippi. Through nuanced character portrayals and a keen examination of power dynamics, the film illuminates the multifaceted identities of its Black female protagonists, challenging traditional narratives and advocating for the recognition of their agency, resilience, and humanity in the face of systemic racism and social marginalization. We notice theories that are presented in the film such as feminist theory,critical race theory and these theories work together to dissect the present intersects of race,class and gender with these women who are black women and maids and the way they are represented and seen based on power dynamics between the women taking care of these families were even in the room they must remain a certain way from a more nurturing role even when they are being marginalized.

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The interpretation that this film as on black women being able to see themselves on film and how these constant representation of black women are needed to be deconstructed and analyze through these different theories. The historical context of “The help” especially the Civil Rights Movement and the impact it has on how the women were sacred to tell their stories due to the time period and how they could have backlash of being jailed by them telling their stories and the way it shaped the narrative that are being told .We can dissected how Aibileen is showcasing characteristics of the mammy stereotype where she is being seen as the primary caregiver and nurture to the white families that she take care of. The way that Aibileen navigates her black femininity and her role as the caregiver can be seen in how she remains light-hearted about the situations she faces with her family while with her friend Minny. However, when talking to Skeeter about how Elizabeth leaves Mae Mobley's diaper on overnight, it truly saddens her. Aibileen faces constraints because she's not able to voice or speak on how this is wrong because of her position in society and her identity as a black woman, yet she plays a major role in how Mae Mobley is being raised. She acts as a maternal figure, potty training the child, changing the baby, and teaching the child how to be kind and smart. These are not traditional maid roles, but by being portrayed this way, she can be seen as a mammy because she remains loyal, maternal, and a caregiver, especially to the children in the home. Through various scenes she is an obedient servant to her employers while during the social setting with all the ladies playing cards ,they are basically stating how she is dirty and unclean and she needs her own bathroom which reinforces those stereotypes and power dynamics when in these setting its as putting her in her place and letting her know she's beneath them and not even a woman because she has all functions as a woman and similar ro them but not at the same time because she black and lower class than them.

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The clear representation in the film of intersectional identities and the experiences of black women which are caused because of their race, gender and class we can see because of by them being black maids shows their class within society and not being able to have certain positions in society due to their gender and race the opportunities that are allotted to them because of their position in society.

In the film “The Help” we can see the methodology that is employed by the characters plays a crucial role in driving the narrative forward and shedding light on the experiences of Black maids in the Jim Crow South. Through a combination of interviews, personal observations, and critical analysis, the characters engage in a methodical exploration of race, gender, and power dynamics within their community. The main methodology that is present in this analysis would be interviews and storytelling which are the ways their able to gather information in the film to tell the stories of the maids during this time period, how the interviews are primary sources of the experiences that these women are have with their white employers which showcase the main struggles they face such as not being able to to use the same bathroom as their employers because of society stating that they are unclean because of their race, even the scenes were Hilly states she counts and put pencil marks on the toilet paper to know if Minny has utilized her bathroom. While seeing the personal interactions and experiences of Minny and Aibileen which really amplifies on their shared experiences has black maid the shared experience creates a great analysis of intersection of race, class and gender because they share the same experiences but can be seen in the mammy stereotype though the families they serve are completely different Aibileen is in charge of taking care of Mae Mobley who is a child while Minny is in charge of taking care of Hillys and her mom which though they are in two different

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family dynamics we see Minny making sure the mother is ready to go, preparing food for the mother and setting up her shoes for her to watch, the mammy stereotype is there because she is constantly being loyal to the family by showing up, obedient to the request that they are giving here and a caregiver to their family we see Minny being there more for their family than her own in the movie where her oldest daughter is like the second mother to the household and helping her siblings do homework, bathing and eventually having to get a job at thirteen to support the household which is something that none of the white women children would be doing which is reinforcing the opening scene that states "my mother was a maid so I knew I would be one" stated by Abillien and creates a controlling image of black women in servitude roles and their place in society.

They are experiencing the same situations when it comes to the bathroom, the way they have to stay silent and obedient even when they are being treated poorly shows the power dynamics present and what time period we can see how when Minny's daughter had to go to work she tells her not to "shut your mouth and do whatever the white folks say" which reinforces and highlights those mammy characteristics that are within the film to be obedient. Alongside the collection of narratives and personal accounts, "The Help" engages in analytical analysis of the data gathered, challenging stereotypes, interrogating power dynamics, and critiquing societal norms. Through Skeeter's writing process and the interactions between characters, the film delves into deeper questions about identity, agency, and social justice, offering critical reflections on the complexities of race and gender in 1960s Mississippi. The deconstruction of the mammy stereotype and how the film helps challenge that stereotype through the way the maids have

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agency in the way that their story is being told receiving payment for their stories but lack agency at the same time due to them not being able to publish their own stories.

In sum, the methodology presented in "The Help" involves a systematic approach to understanding and documenting the experiences of Black maids in the Jim Crow South, utilizing interviews, personal observations, and analytical analysis to shed light on the intersectional dynamics of power and privilege within their community. Analyzing "The Help" requires delving into the themes within the story, which provides significant insights into the complicated dynamics of race, gender, and power in 1960s Mississippi. The data in this context includes a variety of information, such as character interactions, language, visual signals, and historical background, all of which contribute to our understanding of the film's themes and messages.

The analysis of "The Help" is twofold: first, to discover the underlying narratives and representations embedded in the film's storytelling, and second, to critically examine how these narratives reflect and comment on larger social issues such as systemic racism, gender inequality, and resistance. By closely examining the data presented in the film, we can gain a deeper understanding of its thematic significance and its implications for our understanding of historical and contemporary social dynamics.

I will be looking at reviews of the film on Rotten Tomatoes. One review states, "Abruptly ending and slightly overlong it may be, the performances from the three female leads and the authenticity of the setting cover the cracks in an otherwise charming film." When looking at comments like this, it becomes evident that one of the problems people had with the film was its portrayal during the Black Lives Matter Movement. Netflix had the movie on their platform

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during this time, and it reached #1 because people were utilizing it to educate themselves on racism. However, a film like this isn't the best choice for educating oneself on racism because it focuses mainly on the idea that the only way there can be racial progress is for a white protagonist to save these women from their situation, which is not truly the case. Reviews such as the one above, which glorify the movie as charming, fail to showcase the oppression that the maids truly face or its flaws. The film can be seen as whitewashed due to the way the stories are told and not fully being told. Furthermore, another comment stated on rotten tomatoes "As a piece of entertainment, it works. As a historical document, its contents are too sanitized in an effort to avoid inflaming old tensions and that mutes its impact" i resonate closely with this comment because the film is per entertainment because it doesn't clearly be a form of history because it can be extremely white washed and mutes what really is happening during this time and a film based on black maids during civil rights movement it only showing them in an mammy archetype which is a black caregiver an an extension of the white families she takes care of but not having her own identity through certain characteristics in the film we can how the maids walk behind, open the doors for the white women they work for, dropping their heads and trying their hardest to not be seen even though their not really given an option. Additionally, only parts of the civil rights movement are shown in the film, which doesn't convey the true message behind it.

The film "The Help" the data mainly comes from the film which mainly focuses on character interactions, visual imagery and historical context and interpretation of themes in the film and characters. The Help provided an analysis, which goes into topics such as the Mammy stereotype, Black femininity, and media representations of Black women in film. Which is great

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when seeing what type of discourse is can be discussed surrounding the film. By focusing on character interactions, language, and visual indications, we can gain a better understanding of the film's portrayal of race, gender, and power dynamics in 1960s Mississippi. In the following sections of this analysis, we will look at the Interpretation of "The Help," seeing how they contribute to our comprehension of the film's primary themes and messages. Through a detailed evaluation of the data supplied, we will discover the complexities of representation and storytelling in "The Help," providing light on race, gender, social injustice and mammy stereotypes.

Now that we have established the key elements of "The Help," including its focus on the stories of black maids, the significance of its setting, and the intricacies of its plot, we will delve deeper into the interpretation of the film. Through a detailed evaluation of the data supplied within the narrative, we will uncover the complexities of representation and storytelling in "The Help," shedding light on its themes of race, gender, social injustice, and the perpetuation of mammy stereotypes. The film's portrayal of the black maids during this tumultuous time period serves as a lens through which to examine themes of social injustice, racial identity, and the enduring legacy of the mammy stereotype. In the opening scene of "The Help," Aibileen's reflection on her childhood aspirations highlights the intergenerational transmission of societal expectations within black communities, where the role of caretaker and servant is normalized from a young age. This controlling image perpetuates the notion that black women must conform to white standards of behavior and appearance, a theme that reverberates throughout the film and remains relevant in contemporary society.

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Furthermore, the film's setting in the racially-charged environment of the American South provides a rich backdrop for exploring the complexities of race, gender, and power dynamics. Even today, the South is synonymous with a history of racial discrimination and oppression, and "The Help" confronts this legacy head-on, which challenges the viewers to confront uncomfortable truths about America's past and present. As we navigate the interpretation of "The Help," we will closely examine how these key elements coalesce to convey the film's central themes and messages, offering insight into the enduring impact of systemic racism and the importance of challenging stereotypes and prejudices in society. Through analysis of comments from viewers of the film, its status as number one on Netflix during the Black Lives Matter Movement, and personal understanding because it was supposed to represent some form of a good fable movie about racism, when in reality, that's not what the film was supposed to be about. This is why I stated that the movie can be seen as both good and bad. When looking at the overall portrayal of the black women, it does not showcase that during this time, black women were prominent leaders of the civil rights movement and had opinions. In the analysis of the film, we clearly see how the white women are opinionated, but the thoughts of how these maids truly feel are never stated. So, the agency is there by them telling their stories, but the main story revolves around a protagonist white woman who is gaining her own voice and identity through these black women's stories, which is a lack of agency.

As the film is an adaptation of the original book, they had full direction. Furthermore, we can see how the film being shown, especially with Jim Crow Laws, highlights a "separate but not equal mindset." There are many scenes where the maids stay in homes on the other side of town, which are not the best part of town and are usually pretty small, reflecting their socioeconomic

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status. By contrast, their employers stay in nicer homes, showing the type of hierarchies that are in place to keep these black women in a disposition of power. In the film, Hilly constantly reminds them that they are black women and shouldn't expect anything more. When speaking to their white employers, they never look at them directly and always drop their heads. However, upon imagining seeing this movie for analysis, I initially thought this movie was not that bad. But the more I watched and analyzed it, the more problems I noticed than good. We talked about black looks and how we as black individuals constantly see ourselves in oppressive roles, but it's harder to see it when the films are being directed and produced by white men. The internalization of racism and the dehumanizing image of black people become more apparent and normalize because of how much it is digested. Which hence , towards societal norms where black women are not seen as the idea of femininity because white women are seen as the ideal idea of feminine. We can see how the norms in the film towards .

Sorry Dr. Bednar i didn't finish .