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Outline of an essay

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OUTLINE OF AN ESSAY

Introduction

- African Americans are misrepresented in films and media, where they are negatively stereotyped against their white counterparts.
- The media is also used to remind the viewers of the inferiority of African Americans and the supremacy of the whites, aspects that continue to increase the aspect of racism.
- An Early representation of African American in films can be traced to the movie 'Birth of a Nation' in 1915 that portrayed Black men as unintelligent and foolish with sexual aggressiveness towards white women.
- This film did not include any African American individuals as White actors wore masks to play their characters, an aspect that further decreased African American inferiority.
- In African American studies, the focus is usually mainly on the dominant races and how Blacks continue to suffer in the new generation.
- Sensitization in African American studies and films is significant because it will allow a fair representation of blacks, show their uniqueness and their ability to be just like the whites hence fighting racial discrimination.

Portrayal/Representation of Men

- The culture is patriarchal that embraces the dominance of men.
 1. Aggressive and short tempered.
- In films and studies, African American men are represented as aggressive and short-tempered men. It is this aspect that leads them to engage in violent activities.
- They have no control of their emotions and are seen as savages who may attack if let loose.
- African American films tend to show this negative stereotype as well as they focus on the calmness and rationality of whites and the irrationality of black men.

2. Criminals

- African American men are represented as criminals who enjoy a life of crime.
- They are considered lazy because they would rather be criminals rather than work hard and earn a modest living.
- They mostly engage in violent crimes where they end up attacking and injuring innocent people.
- The facts that they are unemployed and are from poor background are

overlooked, and their criminal activities are seen as natural and belonging to their race.

- Any scene or film that is meant to showcase prison life features African Americans as the lead roles in prison.

3. Ignorant and Uneducated

- African American men are cast in roles that show them as uncivilized individuals who have never attended school.
- They are portrayed as ignorant of the occurrence of significant political, economic and social matters in their communities, countries and globally as well.

4. Magical Black men

- Unlike Superheroes who have the powers to save the world from destructions and are considered heroes, Magical black men only appear to save white people from various situations.
- They have magical powers that they can use to empower their people and enhance their lives. However, they chose to use them only to help white people in their society.
- They have no ambitions, desires, and passion for doing things that will benefit

them. They exist primarily to act as a support system for the white lead.

Portrayal/showcasing of Women

- Women are submissive to men in their culture and White men and women.

1. Domestic House help

- Women are given roles that show them in the domestic setting mostly working for white employers.
- They work in the White homes, mostly never going back to see their families.
- They are paid poorly, mistreated and even sexually harassed by their employers, and they do not get the chance to report this matter to the local authorities.

2. Best Friend

- In most films, the leading role is given to a white woman, who is supported by a black woman in the things that she does.
- The black woman spends a lot of time with the white woman abandoning her life and what is important to her.
- She provides words of wisdom and advice to her white best friend, which in most cases she does not implement in her life.
- The black best friend magically appears whenever the white friend is in crisis and

not much goes on in her life apart from reminding her best friend not to lose her values and beliefs.

- Here, black women are stereotyped as having no purpose and direction in life, other than helping out the white characters.

3. Brash Women

- Most films tend to showcase African American women as sassy and with a huge attitude problem.
- They are loud and rude interrupting people as they speak so that their opinion can be heard.
- Films tend to feature Black women who are loud, aggressive and melodramatic in most aspects.
- They tend to fight amongst each other showcasing that they are uncivilized enough to hold rational conversations.
- They are also illiterate and ignorant of various facts. They allow their men to make decisions for them because they lack the integrity to do so.

Effects of these Negative Stereotypes

1. Effects on the Society

- These negative stereotypes have led to Black men being discriminated and profiled as criminals. It becomes translated into the community where whenever a crime is committed, the first suspect is always the Black man.
- Police brutality on Black people continues to increase due to the negative information they receive on the media on the violent, criminal and dangerous nature of Black people.
- Employers turn down African Americans for excellent jobs because films show them mostly in low skilled jobs or the domestic settings for women.
- Black men are viewed as failures, and the society has little expectation of Black men. Whenever a Black man is successful, he is scrutinized by the public and allegations of crime and drugs are suspected as the cause of his success.

2. Impacts on young Black Boys and Girls

- Young boys grow up understanding that they will always be viewed as criminals. In some cases, they fulfill this stereotype by engaging in a life of crime.
- They are shown that education is not essential to them and the emphasis of sports is provided to them. It becomes clear that an African American boy who does not enjoy sports or is not good in certain sports does not fit into the community.
- These stereotypes hinder Black children from excelling in their academics since their IQ levels are considered low.

- Young girls grow up understanding that if they are not loud, dramatic and aggressive, then they cannot pass their opinions and messages across.
- They study to obtain literacy that will be enough to secure them a low paying job. Most of their time is taken up trying to fit in the society and becoming friends with white girls. They lose focus on their life and end up making decisions in future that do not benefit them.

Conclusion

- African Americans are negatively stereotyped in the films and media, and little or no attention is paid to their unique culture and values.
- Primary roles are provided to whites of both genders. Films that star African Americans as the lead roles tend to showcase the negative stereotypes associated with this community.
- Sensitization of the negative impacts that this representation has on the society and African Americans should be done to ensure that film directors show African Americans in a positive manner that inspires the community.