

Black Representation In Media

Demon Thomas
Sociology
University of North Carolina at Asheville
Asheville, North Carolina

Faculty Advisor: Megan Underhill

Abstract

Criminal. Jezebel. Mamie. Thug. Inhuman. Beast. Loud. Slave. Dumb. These are some of the controlling images of Black people that circulate in the white media. Stereotypes placed upon Black men and women stem from slavery. “Cultural trauma significantly influences representations of history in all media... the trauma of revisiting stories about slavery and other horrors can trigger unresolved, negative emotions” (Ndounou, 2014). Throughout film history, African Americans have been underrepresented. Social, finances and racial bias are barriers that keep Black Americans' representation from succeeding in films. Black professionals are underrepresented, and when it comes to the buying side, Black distributors make up a small fraction in total. “Jobs in the industry often go to insiders' acquaintances or members of their extended networks, who tend to be overwhelmingly white and upper-class” (Dunn, Lyn, Onyeador and Zegeye, 2021). These controlling images and stereotypes have been propagated in film and television shows like *Cops*, *Love and Hip Hop*, *The Upshaws*, *the Birth of a Nation*, etc. My research focuses on Black representation in the media. Drawing upon interviews with 12 Black college students from both predominantly white universities and historically Black institutions across North Carolina. This research explores the negative effects of how Black people are represented in white media. Each participant answered questions pertaining to the types of Black films shown to them growing and how they felt racism within the entertainment industry affected them. Participants expressed how violence and trauma were common in the films that viewed growing up. A few students said they related to the trauma displayed in the media but wished film industries produced Black stories that focused on success stories, without displaying trauma. Many participants described feeling as if the media felt Black Americans were only interesting if they were suffering. Further, my findings indicate that Black women feel more underrepresented than men and that participants felt Black men had more positively represented in the media than women. It is important we teach Black children at a young age to love themselves. That starts with displaying positive representation. As a future entertainer, gathering information around my intended audience helps me think of ways to better display Black content and how others would like to be represented. In today's society, the media is the most influential socialization agent in a child's life. Racial representation in the media is important because it makes people feel included and seen. My findings highlight the influential role of the media on Black identity development; all Black students discussed how violence and trauma depicted in the media informed how they made sense of being Black in America.

1. Introduction

How has the white media negatively affected Black college student's sense of self, both as children and young adults?

For centuries the narrative of African Americans has been told through White media. Minstrel shows, also called minstrelsy, was an American form of racist entertainment developed in the early 19th century. Each show consisted of comic skits, variety acts, dancing, and music performances that depicted people specifically of African descent. As society modernized, so did the ways in which blackface was portrayed. Not only was blackface in theaters, but it moved to the film industry. In the blockbuster movie *The Birth of a Nation*, blackface characters were seen as unscrupulous and rapists. The stereotypes were so powerful they became a recruiting tool for the Ku Klu Klan. African Americans protested the film's portrayals and its distorted take on the post-Civil War era, yet it continued to be popular

among white audiences (Clark, 2019). Racism influenced White arts in the United States. From cartoons, kitchen items, games and toys, the amount of prejudiced content produced within the 19th century is alarming.

Racist behavior stems from bad representation such as black face, stereotypical language and derogatory terms to diminish their image. Within representation through entertainment, viewers often mistake what is shown to them as real. **Perceiving Black People as fools, inhuman and worthless leaves a negative impact on their community. False advertisement, parodies, and public relations targeted towards Black Americans creates fear and hatred among its viewers. Many African Americans are murdered and forced into incarceration due to the image white media has created.**

As a black male studying mass communication, exploring this topic will give me an objective approach. One day I plan to entertain people in a way that shows Black Americans as confident, intelligent and beautiful. And advocate for character roles that show black men with vulnerability, rather than the stereotypical hetero black man who is a criminal or slave. It is extremely unfair to present my community as inhuman and push a narrative that can cause many people to belittle us (even ourselves). Not seeing positive representation of black people in the media can affect black children at a young age. If white media continues to control black representation, the self hate and negative depiction attached to the community can hurt future generations. The media is dominated by white males with false narratives.

In the industry nonconscious black entertainers often give into white producers false narratives for pay. Even in modern society entertainers and influencers still display themselves in stereotypical roles for fame. Those who contribute to the negative connotations, set us back as well. Similar to black entertainers, black writers have a responsibility in changing the narrative. White companies want stories about trauma, which sells, and if that writer can provide a good one, it gets displayed and the cycle of bad representation continues. We need more conscious writers and producers who believe in versatility and relativity.

I feel as if I am well-suited for this topic. As a Mass communication major and Africana studies minor, I know that African American history does not began at slavery and that besides the raisin in the sun, black films in the late 50s and early 60s were not all stereotypical. Exploring this topic allowed me to understand how many Black people see themselves in the media. Many Black people are aware of the lack of representation they have in shows and films. Within my research Black college student's sense of identity and personality is still questioned if it's being properly represented today. Attending an all white institution and learning about classic film, helped me further understand why my people were given minor roles in Hollywood. This country was built off of white supremacy, which means those who are white automatically have a head start. Their great grandfathers were able to invest in land and create content that benefited their community. No one cared about being inclusive or providing opportunities for those of color at the time. Even now certain professors do not mind displaying offensive content without trigger warnings due to the "ALL AMERICAN" quota of the film. Similar to directors, no one wants to listen to the marginalized, and because early Hollywood was not as progressive, it is still okay to present films that are stereotypical. Being in spaces that were not made for you creates a certain motivation to prove your oppressors wrong. It teaches you how to maneuver similar to them but with good intentions, if your passion is to save the world. Being black in white media should not be viewed as a crime, and creating positive representation for marginalized groups is not hard.

2. Background

Throughout my research I identified the misrepresentation placed on Black Americans in films. White production companies control the narratives of Black people. Production companies like Disney and 20th century studios, decide what films they will support, fund and produce. Oppression of black people is a narrative that repeatedly occurs. One cultural trauma in films is slavery. Ndounou suggests that constantly displaying trauma can mentally damage a person and that white film makers fail to acknowledge the issue.

2.1 Barriers

Social, finances and racial bias are barriers that keep Black Americans' representation from succeeding in films. Black professionals are underrepresented, and when it comes to the buying side, black distributors make up a small fraction in total. "Jobs in the industry often go to insiders' acquaintances or members of their extended networks, who tend to be overwhelmingly white and upper-class" (Dunn, Lyn, Onyeador and Zegeye, 2021). Many black students do not have the privilege or connections that will lead them to the career of their dreams. This social barrier allows white counterparts who are less experienced to take up space for those who are actually qualified.

Black writers and actors are not paid the same wage as their counterparts and the majority are not born into wealth. According to data from the Federal Reserve, in 1990, white households owned 90.7% of household wealth in the United States, whereas Black households owned 3.8% and Hispanic households owned 2.1%. These numbers have changed little over the past 30 years, with white households now owning 85.5% of wealth in 2019, and Black households owning 4.2% and Hispanic households owning 3.1%.

“Work in the industry also tends to be temporary and contract based, making it less accessible to those who do not have personal savings, an inheritance, or family money to fall back on” (Dunn, Lyn, Onyeador and Zegeye, 2021). This financial barrier makes it hard for black creators to live a sustainable lifestyle. And with Hollywood being known to not pay their black talent, makes it hard for them to move up in their careers and society.

The film and TV industry is disproportionately white which is why black talent and voices are overly powered. “Your average agent is a 50-year-old white guy ... who never had to stretch to see [himself] in other people or spaces” (Dunn, Lyn, Onyeador and Zegeye, 2021). Having white writers produce content based upon black culture is traumatizing and frustrating. It is disrespectful to black creators within those white companies to not get asked for their input. White men in particular should not be creating stories they can not personally relate to.

The system of racial hierarchy negatively left black directors and entertainers with little to no representation and credibility. “Under Hollywood Jim Crow, Black directors can achieve only an incomplete integration, one that is characterized by underrepresentation in the film industry core of major studios, big-budget films, tent-pole, blockbuster franchise movies' ” (Erigha, 2019). To legally place restrictions on black creators is disheartening. Many Black Americans were out cheated in their work due to these laws and customs. The power white creators have in Hollywood is seen as acceptable. These law barriers is unfortunately the product of different racial orders such as slavery, jim crow and mass incarceration.

3. Representation

The lack of representation throughout films developed a sense of black talent being overlooked. Birth of a Nation and Uncle Tom’s cabin historically limited black representation. When viewers see an all black cast they then tend to associate them with negative connotations and believe they are not marketable. “In an industry that uses racial markers to categorize and evaluate its products, films with predominantly black casts are often labeled ‘urban’ and, as a result, tend to fall outside the wide-release category” (Ndounou, 2014). Past films failed Black Americans to believe that they are not respected and interesting. Black is relatively seen as a genre, while white is not. This makes it hard for viewers to separate Black Americans talent from color. Cultural trauma significantly influenced representations of history in all media.

“Before the Golden Age, early 20th century films were rooted in Thomas Edison’s vision of an idealized White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, East Coast, upper-class elite, with caricatures of Blacks and other immigrants utilized for the purposes of amusement and othering (Thakore, 2016). Black representation to white audiences for years has always been for amusement. The misrepresentation of black people in the media started in film generations ago. The selling of harming the black body is Hollywood's favorite ideology to explore and produce.

The narrative of Black women being represented well in the media has been limited and diminished due to reality TV. “I think Black women risk more than anyone else by being on reality TV. I also think Black women potentially stand to gain more than anybody by being on

reality TV, depending on how we choose to use our platforms,” Williams said. ‘Black women are the most misunderstood beings in American society. And I think reality TV, for better or for worse, can be a great opportunity to inform what that looks like’ (Butler et al, 2021). Within reality TV, Black women are viewed as loud, violent and toxic. Being a part of a Reality TV series is one of the few opportunities black women get in the entertainment industry.

Similar to black women, black men are limited to the roles they can or are portrayed in film too. “Numerous examples of negative stereotypes of Black men in television, including that of the criminal, drug addict, dead-beat absentee father, and uneducated “Sambos,” who are fun-loving and the foolish ladies’ man with exaggerated speech and gait” (Stamps, 2020). The struggle of the black men and his narrative of causing harm towards others, is the ideology of a predator. Different depictions of black men are not represented in film. Many producers and film markers are not conscious about the negative they display. The idea of generalizing black women and men is a disadvantage for the black youth.

Black representation in cartoons influences the negative representation of black children at an early age. “Between 1928 and 1950, America’s premier animators-Walt Disney Corporation, Warner Bros., Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Merrie Melodies, Looney Tunes, and R.K.O. Radio Pictures-produced many cartoons that ridiculed the appearance, behavior, and intelligence of African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities” (Anti-Black Imagery, 2021) .

Children are not always aware of what is being displayed to them. Racist creators purposely try to harm the representation of black people, so their children can not succeed or beat societal oppression.

4. Stereotypes

Hollywood has a fascination with slavery films. Stereotypes within oppression films add to how society views black people in reality. In stereotypical films such as slavery, the abuse African Americans endured are not displayed. It is overpowered by the “happy go lucky” persona of the enslaved and not the savagery of the slave masters. Hollywood does its best at perceiving their wrongs for good or not at all. “The depictions of abuse and cruelty were limited, of course, by the medium and by what American society would accept at the time” (National Museum...,2018). Slavery to Hollywood is only viewed/ portrayed from a white western centric lens. Many of these films lack perspectives such as slave rebellions. And often show the enslaved as relatively happy and loyal servants. “Birth even made it seem like slaves enjoyed their lives and were happy in servitude” (National Museum...,2018). No one was happy about being enslaved, not even content. African Americans suffered and experienced rape. These narratives are one sided and portray weakness. Terms such as the mammy and Uncle Tom are subjective to servant behavior. Supporting the argument that black men and women are weak in the mind, so they rely on their white oppressor to think for them.

“When slavery ended these black men often used violence to dominate black women, which was a repetition of the strategies of control white slavemasters used. Some newly freed black men would take their wives to the barn to beat them as the white owner had done. Clearly, by the time slavery ended patriarchal masculinity had become an accepted ideal for most black men, an ideal that would be reinforced by twentieth-century norms (Hooks, 2004).” In black films, the use of domestic violence scenes are brutal. For Hollywood to increase the negative narrative of black men and women is disturbing. It creates fear amongst everyone, including those within the community. Typically black men's physiques are strong and large, which can come off intimidating to most people and women. With knowledge, the media focuses on the predator stigma which allows society to believe the images that are displayed. This is what also makes certain shows and movies marketable. And relating back to slavery, slave masters wanted the biggest and strongest slave on their plantation to maintain the fields. White-supremacist subjugation of the black male was deemed necessary to contain the dehumanized beast. Black masculinity is generally viewed as harmful. “Black males who reject racist sexist stereotypes must still cope with the imposition onto them of qualities that have no relation to their lived experience” (Hooks 2004). In conclusion, Black men have to live up to biased standards that may affect them mentally. Being a black man means you are a criminal with no good intentions. Although you never committed a crime before, your skin color gives people the assumption that you are a terrible human being.

Controlling images are designed to make racism, sexism, poverty, and other forms of social injustice appear to be natural, normal, and inevitable parts of everyday life. Black women are continuously categorized as the faithful, obedient domestic servant in media which stems from slavery. “By loving, nurturing, and caring for her White children and ‘family’ better than her own, the mammy symbolizes the dominant group’s perceptions of the ideal Black female relationship to elite White male power. Even though she may be well loved and may wield considerable authority in her White ‘family’ the mammy still knows her ‘place’ as obedient servant” (Hill-Collins, 2000). Black women are more than house workers and nannies. The sexism Hollywood has placed on black women through stereotypical images is classes. It portrays the lack of intelligence and independence. These women are objectified and viewed as inhuman. Not only are they overlooked but also unheard. The media has done a good job by trying to silence them. Whenever a black woman demands respect or voices their opinion. Society deceives them and expects them to be quiet as if they are not in a position to speak. While white women, if they speak up and advocate for themselves, they are viewed as a leader and bold. This plays into the stereotype of the angry black women as well. Black women should not be given derogatory labels for expressing themselves and viewed differently.

For centuries black people in media identity have been narrated by their oppressors. Without the appropriate connections and opportunities black creators do not have the ability to speak for their community. Black creators are also not paid as much as their white counterparts. Many laws restrict their credibility and representation. Hollywood's thought of having black positive representation is determined by the “market” which falsifies it as not realistic. Stereotypes placed upon black men and women stems from slavery. Both men and women are overly sexualized. Black men are not criminals and inherently violent. White men are known to commit savagery behavior but are not viewed as a threat. Black women are not obedient servants and obnoxiously loud. White women are not treated and viewed wrongfully as well for displaying certain characteristics. Society continues to fall into Hollywood’s hatred towards black people. Activists who along with others, are decolonizing the euro-centric perspective. Associating black Americans with negative connotations through controlling images is unfair. As our society evolves it is important that the stigma for Black Americans do as well.

Stereotyping black men as insensitive and aggressive is a narrative that has been placed upon them since the early 1800s. “Prior to the black power movement of the sixties, black men worked overtime to counter racist sexist stereotypes that represented them as beasts, monsters, demons. Indeed, many of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century racist sexist stereotypes attributed to black males are traits that are today considered to be the mark of psychopaths. One of those traits was a lack of emotional responsiveness. It has been described as a missing conscience” (Hooks, 2003). Targeting black men through the media by attacking their character leaves them with a bad representation. No matter how successful and respectful the black man is, he will always be seen as the antagonist. And labeling them as emotional responsiveness is society's responsibility.

5. Cultural Studies Theory Connection To Black People In Media

Within negative black representation in the media, there are a few mass communication theories that either influenced or go against the narrative. Theories such as uses and gratification, agenda setting and cultural studies are a few that come to mind. Within my research paper, I will focus solely on cultural studies theory. Cultural studies theory explores the power structure our media has that overpowers the marginalized.

5.1 Definition

Political activist Stuart Hall published his theory of cultural studies in 1983. Hall believed the mass media maintained the dominance of those already in positions of power... conversely, the media exploits the poor and powerless (Griffin, 2018). Cultural Studies has focused attention on how active media audiences counter dominant cultural messages in their consumption of popular culture (Tanner et al, 2009). The authors proceed virtually to reinvent Black urban sociology and thoroughly to reinterpret Black cultural studies. In doing so they challenge US census data and much of the sociology of race, as well as drawing on a wealth of intellectual, political, and popular cultural resources that explore the breadth and depth of Black peoplehood (Winant, 2019).

5.2 Application of Theory

Cultural Studies has sparked a great deal of subsequent research and numerous studies. Hegemonies, nonconscious black entertainers, rap culture and cultural prejudices towards black people influences their representation in media as one-sided.

5.3 Division

One factor as to why there is a lack of positive black representation in media is that there's not enough black writers, entertainers and directors. This hegemony adds to the lack of resources and funding black directors and producers do not have for certain projects. One study by Everett states, “The contextual lead-in brings us to BAMMs (black American media moguls) and how digital media technologies, especially the Internet and social media, helped propel them forward. The BAMB auteur Spike Lee led the way for black film and other media makers' participation in the emerging digital media ecosystem with his controversial film Bamboozled (2000). Seeking economic frugality, Lee primarily shot the film only on consumer-grade digital (MiniDV) camcorders. He calculated a trade-off between losing the film's high production values and the economic benefits of shooting with fifteen cameras at a time, given his modest budget” (Everett, 2014, p. 131). In the film industry there is no such thing as democratic pluralism for upcoming black talent. Success stories like Spike Lee's should be the discourse displayed for African American Representation, not trauma.

Over time the representation of black people changes. A study by Sieving states “Whereas the coverage of civil rights protests in the 1950s and 1960s typically cast police as the brutalizers, 1990s TV dramas idealized and encouraged an identification with the state power of the police” (Sieving, 2004, p. 59). The discursive formation of how many black people die in the presence or care of police officers is not always revealed. Still till this day Police are killing, pepper spraying, beating, water hosing, etc those who advocate for justice. This hegemony is not always exposed to our media, but the victims (black people) of police brutality are labeled the abusers.

5.4 Violent Culture

As a non black viewer, many people first see black people through the media. And oftentimes their culture is portrayed as violent, aggressive and uncivil. A study by Tanner states “This research compares representations of rap music with the self-reported criminal behavior and resistant attitudes of the music’s core audience” (Tanner et al, 2009, p. 693). To articulate and label rap music's core audience (black people) as self -reported criminals is offensive and not true. Many viewers are biased because of what is shown to them. Our source of news and other media platforms influences this violent narrative. “In addition, contemporaneous research on the media coverage of race and crime in Toronto newspapers carried out by Wortley (2002), found black people disproportionately portrayed in a narrow range of roles and activities (principally those involving crime, sports and entertainment) than members of other racial and ethnic groups; and when featured in crime stories, depicted primarily as offenders” (Tanner et al, 2009, p. 699). The ideologies of black people being limited to their roles in the media should not consist of crime and violence. The individualism of the western perception of black people is society's fault.

White media pursuing violence through TV to black youths strips away their innocence. Societies economic determinism continues to profit off of trauma and feed younger generations oppression. What white companies fail to acknowledge is how programming negatively towards children leaves a long term effect. The discourse of what is displayed to children should be kept censored and them being exposed to violence or stereotypical images should be off limits. Squires study states that, “But beyond going down memory lane (fun for someone who woke up on Saturdays to watch Fat Albert and his friends), these chapters provide language and analysis that go well beyond the ‘positive or negative’ debate about black representation, giving us fresh looks at people, ideologies, and positions that have often been dismissed as ‘stereotypes’ needing no further investigation” (Squires, 2014, p. 166). White ethnocentrism leads them to believe that stereotypical Black people are the only representation black people need. While black ethnocentrism believes that the people within their culture are all different.

Mass As a result of negative representation of black people is fear and mass incarceration. Torres states “The disparity becomes more pronounced when the two categories are combined, revealing a racially based class disparity in imprisonment: black Americans from the low social classes are much more incarcerated than white people from any social class. This is ubiquitous in the world, which clearly suggests that racial and class inequalities in the prison population are a pervasive phenomenon” (Tiago et al, 2019, p. 2). Other factors such as the 13th amendment and slavery plays a role in this hegemony as well. American history and media has proven that being black is a crime itself, and the images that are displayed proves it. This study looks at how mass incarceration of blacks plays a role in other ideologies. “Individual ideologies and belief systems are based on the social norms of the groups with which the person identifies, such that individual views are largely a reflection of the group norms that have been internalized by the individual” (Tiago et al, 2019, p. 3).

5.5 Cultural Studies Critic

Cultural studies theory recognizes the power structure in media. One criticism identified is the dominant communication paradigm. In listening to Rap: Cultures..., it states “media audiences counter dominant cultural messages in their consumption of popular culture” (Tanner, 2009, p. 695). This dominant communication paradigm comes from white companies, specifically white males. Quantitative perspective is another criticism I noticed within my study. As much bad representation black people have in the media, it makes sense as to why they're heavily incarcerated. In black people are convicted more..., Tiago states “Black and poor people are disproportionately more convicted of crimes for which judges assign longer sentences so they are strikingly overrepresented in the prison population. For instance, in the USA, black Americans are incarcerated at a rate of more than five times that of whites” (Tiago et al, 2019, p. 1). And the last criticism I observed within my studies is the qualitative perspective. Throughout my applications there is a barrier put in place to limit black people's success and character. “Black film production, exhibition, distribution, aesthetics, politics, audiences, and economics over time were difficult either to deny or to fully co-opt or assimilate” (Everett, 2014, p. 130).

6. Methodology

The purpose of my research was to display the media effects of discrimination towards black representation. Black college students were able to identify the disadvantages they had growing up in TV shows and films. The results of not having positive black representation in film during their childhood developed self hate, hysteria towards black people and systematic oppression. The film and TV industry is disproportionately white which is why black talent and voices are overly powered. “Your average agent is a 50-year-old white guy ... who never had to stretch to see [himself] in other people or spaces” (Dunn, Lyn, Onyeador and Zegeye, 2021).

For my analytical approach I used grounded theory. With this theory I was able to conduct interviews and produce field notes. Each participant had the opportunity to disregard any question and ask to be removed from the study. The interviews took place via zoom and in-person depending on the student's institution. The interviewees duration was thirty to ninety minutes long. Every participant's identity was anonymous and transcribed. I converted their identity to the black cartoon characters many of them claimed they watched growing up. Once information was collected and recorded, I destroyed all evidence by trashing and deleting previous content.

With the data I collected from the twelve participants, I easily attain the similarities and differences amongst every student's view on black representation. Their data seeked responses such as them naming their favorite black entertainer/writer, show/film, thoughts of their gender identity representation in film plus more. All participants proved that white media has purposely disadvantage black representation throughout their childhood and partial adulthood. My study was supported. And my research question, “How has the white media negatively affected Black college student's sense of self, both as children and young adults? Was answered through their responses due to them providing their causes and effects of what they as an black audience may have wanted or needed.

My proposed method was well-suited for my research question. For the interview questions, they all were open ended. This explained and helped identify the negative effects from their perspective. The interviewee's responses lead the study.

I collected data through technology. I have friends across the UNC system who attend historically black colleges and predominantly white institutions. I contacted potential participants through email, text and instagram. I also created an informative flier that I promoted through email and instagram. I invested in a recorder, held virtually interviews on zoom and with the request/ comfortability of the black students who attend the same University as me, met them at a location of their choosing. The outcome I received from this study was eye opening and fun to do.

7. Findings

7.1 Colorism In Media

Throughout my findings, I acquired more information regarding colorism within the black community from women than men. Colorism affects women more and the insecurity of being a darker woman has a long lasting impact mentally.

When asked if they believe racism within the entertainment industry affected them, many agreed that Disney played a role in this. “I definitely think so. Like I didn't see people that look like me as like love interests in movies. Or if they did they were light skinned and like things like that. So like, definitely, it had an impact on me. I was like, I don't look like these girls, you know? Or like people that did look like me. They have been perpetuating like a stereotype”, Princess Tiana says. Entertainment companies not portraying darker skin women as beautiful and worthy is unfair. The discrimination darker women face, creates unnecessary competition amongst the women within the community. Princess Tiana implies, “Yeah, um definitely like I noticed it even in the stuff that I like like I mentioned like the proud family earlier. There's like one like a dark skinned character and she's like, loud and obnoxious and like things like that. Just like these negative stereotypes that people like attached to us just because they watch these things on film. I think it's still a problem. That's why I think I can't really identify with a lot of things now.” As the interview continued, many of the women I interviewed who were darker, all mentioned how they do not feel represented and that it is hard to find their place. Princess Tiana continued to speak on the problems darker women face when it comes to opportunity in film and always being replaced by a biracial character.

Many black girls grew up hating their skin color and could not understand why they were being pinned against each other. Penny said “And you added Disney did not you .Um, I think racism kind of played a huge role in my life yes mainly because, you know, I'm thinking back to, you know, how I kind of wanted to, you know, have my skin lighter, you know, in middle school, and things of that nature. And you know, I think the back side of racism is colorism of

what I experienced was still hand in hand to the same. So yeah, it definitely affected me. And this is mainly because how, you know, a lot of black people are portrayed in the media, it's always that like, token light skin girl in the movies, you know, and then, you know, they had the secondary character, which is, you know, the darker skinned girl and you notice this in a lot of, you know, black movies. One of the movies that Spike Lee produced? I can't recall school days? And he actually does, you know, develop a you know, a storyline delving into you know, colorism and things of that nature and you know, how to affect it. A lot of people and he just had this you know, this token black girl and this token black girl and of course, she was light skin, in a sorority or whatever, and how she was going against like the dark, darker girls and in a movie they had this scene where you know, they were fighting each other. And then the light skinned girl called the dark skinned girl like I think nappy headed or whatever and then the dark skinned girl call her like, I don't know I think I just I think she may have called her something derogatory to like, towards you know, light skinned people and I can't remember what it was but you know, they were just going back and forth and and fights and conflicts and just going back to how that you know, how racism is like the backhand of what colorism is the backend of racism and how it affected me you know, growing up I guess just how the media were was portrayed, you know, everything you would see was a light skinned girl and then the secondary character was dark skin and in the secondary character it was always like put down or pushed aside or even you know, jokes on and examples are if you seen martin his girlfriend was Gina." Colorism stems from slavery with the separation of the house negro (light skin) and field negro (darker skin). Young black girls should not be taught their differences. And black people who are producers, should not be influencing the stereotype. Penny continues to imply, "BET because, you know, it featured a lot of black movies, but through those black movies, it always had colorism".

Another finding regarding colorism was interesting to me. To interview 12 black college students, I did not consider black representation in Caribbeans until this study. Black Dynamite said, "Um, colorism is more colorism in the Caribbean is more so handled internally, it's not really displayed too much. I mean, there is the sort of the stereotype with black men like you know, the dark skinned black man is going to be tough, like, in Luke Cage. You know, Luke Cage, he's dark skinned. He's bulletproof. tough as hell. And that's sort of where I like, or like to talk about black genetics. Um, how black people are superior athletes, not a lot of that tends to be centralized especially, especially again, with Jamaicans and their athletics and their achievements and track and field as a national team. Yeah." Black people across the world are generalized as one. This is not only a problem in America but worldwide.

In my findings with women and men who encounter colorism, the advantages and different perspectives of the darker and lighter skin tone changes among gender. Huey states "I feel like there's two sides, they perceive dark skin. Dark men, dark skin men as like, as dangerous or strong. Sometimes you have like, or like, just like, attractive, too. And also sense of like, being a thug, and then you have light skinned men where it's viewed as emotional. Like, always, like always, I'm in my feelings perspective. Yeah." This is interesting because for darker skin men, they are held to a higher standard than women and vice versa for lighter skin men and women.

7.2 The Importance Of Empowering Black Women

Throughout all my findings, unanimously every participant agreed and expressed how black women in particular should and need to be held on a pedestal. When asked about how Black Women are perceived, Smokey said "less of a stereotypical angry black woman. I really want that to go immediately. I just want them to be seen for like literally the Queen's that they are like they're very smart. They're very powerful. You see a lot of them in different positions that a lot of people don't usually go for like doctors, a lot of doctors are black women. A lot of black women are CEOs. I want them to be seen in those like really high positions of power. Like, I want them to be seen as they know what they're doing. They're not pushovers. They're not animals, they're human beings. And they're here, and probably the people that have the most impact on the world and being completely honest. So that's what I would want them to be seen as... because they're human beings, they just like every other. gender and race, they have feelings, really, um, everyone should be represented in a good light, but black women especially because if we're being if we're being completely honest, this world was basically built off of them. So um, we're just, we should probably do a better job of like, giving them their proper tins, because yeah, it was just built, it was just built off of them. So we should do a better job." Black women are overlooked and not well represented. Portraying black women as someone who can be loved, is loved and influential, shows them that they are appreciative. Films should not only be for entertainment but also informative.

Many black people argue how black women are not credited and well respected. Many tackle their relationship with relatives and friends that are black women and how they impacted them. Riley says "I guess mainly cuz black women is, you know, the reason that I'm alive, you know, like, at the of the day. Like, I do love black women, and I respect them alot. And I know definitely a while ago, I didn't, I didn't see them in that light, just because of personal reasons. But you know, after realizing that later on, you know, and even today, I just feel like, there's something different about

black women that we all need to understand and respect, just because like they've been through so much. I mean, I just gotta love the, I guess, drive and passion for them to keep going on, even though they've been treated this way.” Black women to black people are the foundation and core of families, many argue how they deserve to be more respected than men.

7.3 Black Men Are Perceived Better Than Black Women

In my findings, many people agree that black men are perceived better than women.

Many also mentioned the many black male role models in Hollywood that have impacted them. Penny said “Wow. I have to think on this one. I think the media, you know, kind of portrays black men and black men a little better. And I just think that I'm thinking about, you know, the TV films, and then I've watched, you know, the Tyler Perry's you know, the Chadwick Boseman movies and things like that. And I think a lot of his black men had strong roles, like Denzel Washington and Will Smith. Whenever I think of those black men, I think of strong black men that are great actors. And, you know, like, Will Smith with the pursuit of happiness. And, you know, I think of, Morgan Freeman and things of that nature, and I think they do a damn well good job at portraying black men, but of course, I think that, you know, they need to portray, like a younger meet, I mean, a younger set of audience of black men too. But then again, it is, you know, some networks that do portray black men as, you know, like, gang member, stuff like that, but it's like, it's like it's not as common as it was before you know, but whenever I think of a black man, I think it was strong. Black man that is doing his shit like, I don't really think of them in any type of way. Like, I guess that's just me and just how I see black men. I just don't see anyway. And they actually kind of portrayed him a little better than, you know, white man. Just a teeny bit.” This finding made me question black women in Hollywood. Are these women not choosing roles that support them or there's no positive out there for them?

When asked about the perception of black men changing, Oscar said, “I will say yeah. Because of some of the movies that I have seen. They're mainly men in suits and ties going to work, stuff like that.” The perception of black men has changed over time and I found it interesting that many women believe that over men.

7.4 The Importance Of The Authentic Black Man

Many college students argued how the authentic black men are not being properly represented. Many express how they want their selves viewed or black men generally. When asked about the representation they would like to see of black men in the media, Princess Tiana said “I'd like to see more positive representation as I see, I want to see like black boy joy, you know, I want to see things like that... To me? It's just like black men being able to like to be themselves authentically.” Many people are aware of the one sided narrative that is portrayed.

Static Shock says “Maybe more of just personality diversity, more plotline diversity. You know, not everyone likes sports, not around like skiing movies, not everyone likes them. Political dramas. Again, but still love to see that kind of fair fuller type of vibe for black protagonists of any gender. Like, we need movies like that, where we're not just constantly having relationship drama, or are dealing with police brutality, or are dealing with like, I mean, I guess there's people who need this like cheesy romance movies, but I don't you know, this was the show at trailers with like, who's gonna watch this? Who is this for?” Black people want real stories, sports and politics is not what everyone enjoys. And besides of his sexuality, every black man should have the opportunity of seeing themselves being authentically displayed.

7.5 The Urge Of Being Viewed As Normal

Many black students expressed how they wish they were viewed as normal. Many feel as if they are overly generalized and wish to be viewed as a human being. “I like to see some more stuff like Isaa Rae where like, it's like awkward black women or just more like different types of like, black women because we're just like, you know, everyone else, you know, I mean, we have a similar dimension to us. So I just want to see more of that”, said Princess Tiana. Due to what is displayed, many people do not believe the black community as a whole is versatile.

“I would make a film about young adults, more than likely of color. Living everyday life and going through actual life experiences, not storylines just to keep the plot interesting. Very straight to the point about life and it's reality” says Trixie. In findings, participants elaborated on the purposes of having black films that teach them about life.

Being black and queer in peace is a privilege many participants ask for. Smoky said, “They're very kind hearted individuals. Um, this goes for queer people in general, but for black queer people, because I know that in the black community, there is an internal struggle with that within the community as a whole. So they are very, very smart, very,

like, they carry all the qualities of an amazing person, there's absolutely nothing wrong with them. And the way that I would want to see them represented are or would be as there aren't many other ways other than like what I described before, but um just kind of, and, okay, so the way that they advocate for themselves, let's let's start there, the way that they advocate for themselves, very, very inspiring. That is how I would want them to be represented. They're very powerful people, I would want them to be represented as powerful people, they advocate for themselves as very influential people, because they are very influential people, and I want other people to be able to see that. So whether it be in different books, maybe even children's books to instill it in kids. Or it could be in different documentaries, or it could be in different shows. I know like there's a show called pose that basically focuses on the entire black trans community and that entire influence on the entertainment industry as a whole, like I want them to be able to be seen as people who have made significant like prints on our society, because they have so I want other people to I want them to be notarized. Like You I want them to be known for that." Many black queer black are tired of being isolated by peers and society because of who they love. Our media has the opportunity to teach others and children the importance of respect and making others feel comfortable.

7.6 The Depiction Of Black People

In my findings, many black college students recalled the same stereotypes labeled to them that were placed upon their ancestors years ago. When asked about the portrayal of black women, Princess Tiana says, "I think oftentimes are over sexualized. And I also think there's like these four archetypes often like the Jezebel stereotype. There's like the mammy stereotype and just things like that. It's very stereotypical." For the jezebel stereotype, only two out of ten students mentioned that. It is sad to see how the negative stereotypes born from the 1800s are still occurring in the 21st century.

Many black students argued that black producers and companies like BET and Tyler Perry fed into the stereotypical narratives and is one the reason why black representation is behind. Trixie said "Depending on the character, personalities could range from extremely ghetto or what most would consider "upket". Madea was always on the side of being the stereotypical black woman who is loud and aggressive, obviously only used for comedic purposes."

7.7 Socially Engineered: Racism In Entertainment

When asked about a black animated film that was shown to you as a child? No one could name one. The majority only saw animated shows and the common two everyone named and saw was the Proud Family (Disney) and The Boondocks (Adult swim). The proud family was about a black suburban teenage girl who went on adventures with friends. While the boondocks displayed foul language and were often violent. Many men and women claim that these shows were relatable.

For centuries, the act of racism has been either hidden or widely exposed. Throughout my findings many participants touched on what racism in film looked like to them. Many had no clue as to what racism in entertainment looked like. "It's extremely important to me because I should feel comfortable, like watching stuff on TV. And I feel like other people have that privilege. And like, sometimes I don't, like everyone else thinks like something super funny. And then I end up watching it. I'm like, they're shitting on me, you know what I mean? So like, I think it's super important." Because of societies history of misleading people into thinking that discrimination or slavery is over. Microaggressions occur and the ignorance of people not being consciously aware of the black experience continues.

"Yes. Entertainment companies like Disney had black shows at one point and then, one day, it was all gone", said Number 5. For entertainment companies to have the privilege of displaying black content or not is a disadvantage for those who identify physically with the content. As children and human beings, everyone wants to see them represented. Number 5 also touched on how the perception of black queer people is whitewashed and one sided. Many others also expressed how white queer people over powers being black and queer.

Smokey states, "Um, when I started watching them early on, I didn't think too much about it. But as I got older, like, probably at the age of nine, or 10, that's when I kind of started to realize the whole like, stereotypical idea of living in the projects and poverty, especially from like, the good times show. Um, and then aside from that, I used to watch like, other white shows, like all the other older white shows that will put that in perspective, like, if white shows consistently talked about how they felt about or not, like, consistently, but sometimes they would talk about how they felt about like, different minorities. Then if I would watch a black show, I'll be like, Well, why is this why is this the case? So it kind of made me feel a little I don't want to say angry, but it was me the wrong way. Because I felt like and I still feel like we're so much more than that." In my findings it seems as if racism in films became more hidden than blunt throughout the years. Because white influencers had a head start at life and film, it is easier for them to

produce hidden messages. “Yeah, it definitely is. It did have it sometimes it still does. have an influence on the entertainment industry and a lot of different sectors. Um, for example, the movie Snow White. That movie and I was just talking with my parents about this the other day, that movie, like her entire name was Snow White. So it's like, portraying this person that is, um, like, white prim and proper, and then like, you have a bunch of other differences, you didn't really have that many. Like, like I said, In the beginning, you didn't really have that many black animated things that you could really look at. I mean, later on, we had Princess Tiana and those types of things. But, um, to begin with, there were a lot of white characters. And if there were black characters, they were probably if I'm remembering correctly, or maybe it's like a current animation that I've seen, but I remember that there was a black character that turned into a frog. Um, so it's not as prevalent as it was. But to answer your question, Disney definitely took part in that for a while. Um, I can't necessarily speak for universal because I haven't seen too many universal films. But um, I know that Disney since that was a really, really big kids show. I know that that had a lot of impact on how people thought for a long time” said Smoky. Disney's goal as a kids network is to empower, protect innocence and create imagination for its viewers. Many adults today are confessing how Disney channel isolated them out.

7.8 The Reality Of Being Black

To be born in a country where you are not accepted because of the color of your skin, is frustrating. Many college students touched on personal experiences and the treatment they received due to the media's negative portrayal. When asked how it makes you feel to see the way black women are being treated, Princess Tiana said “doesn't make me feel good? Because I wish like black women were more humanized because we are human. And I think a lot of times I will like to watch these things. See these stereotypes and treat me accordingly.” The media is powerful and technology is at its all time peak. Which means there's an unlimited amount of access to negative material targeted towards black people.

In reality no one knows what being black is unless you're black. “Um with the entire, with the entire thing we have with police brutality, it's been going on the past few years, I just... it's very hard to put into words. Um I, it's kind of like the same thing with women, I really don't think that we're doing a good job. Um, we're seeing as violet monsters, and if we're comparing that to like how we were seeing in the days of slavery, the days of slavery, they thought of black people as a whole as beasts. And I feel like, that's kind of what we're resorting back to. If I'm being, if I'm being real. Um, so I. Yeah, that's, that's a loaded question. But I don't think that black men are portrayed in a good way either”, said number 5. No one knows what it is like to be a black man. Black people in general should not see themselves as the problem. Majority of my participants said the media views black men as either criminals or hood. Smoky continues to say, “as a young black male who is growing up. There are times where it does make me feel like there's, like, not one sense of hope that I could have. Um, like, I know that. Especially with, um, when the protests happened in Charlotte in 2016. Um, I was like, wow, like, with everything, like when things were getting so ramped up, and they're still very ramped up today. But there was a point in time, like, during those riots, I was like, What in the world? Like, if this happened to him when he was only like, in his 40s, like, this could be me. And I'm only 13. Like, my life could be gone tomorrow. And I just feel like people wouldn't necessarily care. I'm not like people that are close to me. That's not what I mean. But like people who don't even know me that will probably see that on the news as just another statistic, they would just like to breeze over it. Um nowadays, I'm a lot more optimistic and hopeful. So now I handle it a lot better. But for a long time, I was like, there is not really much that I can do at this point?” To be so young with thoughts and questions about how long you will live is not normal but is the reality. For a system that claims to serve and protect, depending on the skin tone, that statement is biased.

7.9 Protecting Our Youth

Many participants within my findings mention the urge of protecting our youth from white media. The cycle of teaching black kids to hate themselves must come to an end. Princess Tiana stated, “It's important to me, I guess, like, obviously, like the impact that it has on like black men, or just like I think about like my nephew specifically, or just like my future kids. Like, I want them to be able to watch TV and not think something negatively of themselves. Like, my nephew came up to me. And he's like, man, like black people are vicious, because of what he saw in his life, I'm vicious. It's like, No, you are not, you know, you're not vicious. This is what the media is trying to tell you. And that's just not okay. That's not who you are. And I feel like, if he did see more positive representations, he'd know, that's not who he is. And we wouldn't even have to have these conversations. Like, you know who you are. That's not who you are.” Kids are known to copy everything they see on TV. Everything they watch should be censored and if black people are being represented. The youth should see them in a positive light.

Many believe positive representation is important because children need good role models. Number 5 states “Positive Representation is important because it is a major influential component to how the younger generation sees themselves within the world.” In order to keep a functional society functioning we must show our youth all the opportunities that are available for them to become successful.

7.10 The Connection With Family & Past Generations In Films

In my findings, students touched on what our parents and older generations experienced in film and how there is still little to no change. “Wait, no, let me take that back. Some of the shows that I watched were good times, the Jeffersons, The Cosby Show, Amen. So those were like 70s and 80s. Um, there were, it was mainly centered around black families, but especially the show, like good times, that show was based on a permanent struggle. So in a way I can see it is stereotypical, because it's like, okay, when does the struggle end? Like, when do you get out of this and to something better, you know, um, but in other shows, it kind of shows a different side to that, like, if you're looking at shows like The Cosby Show, for example, or a different world, or Living Single, maybe even some of those shows, it kind of talks about it, the setting is more of in a more of a prosperous space than if you're like comparing it to shows like good times. So it's, it was a 50/50 now that I'm thinking about it, some of them were some of them were not” said Smokey. Many shows in the 20th century were more family oriented but the most notable shows like “Good Times”, peaked due to the show's storyline around the black struggle. Many college students explained how when certain black films are displayed, they often try to detach themselves and family from roles that do not relate to them. Smokey continues to say “I tend to empathize with the black women in my family most of the time. So whenever I see something about black women that's negative, I'm like, wow, they could really be talking about my mom, or they could be talking about my sister, or they could be talking about my aunt or my cousins. Like, like, they consistently have that target. And then in turn, that kind of makes me feel really bad because it's like, again, they're great, amazing individuals with limitless capabilities. So, um, it probably would be one of the few things that actually does make me angry. Whatever, I do see something that's like a really bad mis representation.” Black families deserve to have more than one dynamic. The singular dynamic is unfair. The perception of black toxic masculinity is a genetic trait that is passed down from generations. Smokey said “so within the black community, I feel like for black men in particular, there's a problem with toxic masculinity. Um, I, for black men in particular, I don't want them to be seen in that light. But that I know, that's also something internally, because I know like, through a lot of black families, there has been the role passed down as to like You are the protector of your family, you're the provider of your family. This is what you're supposed to do. This is how you're supposed to act. This is what you're supposed to be doing for your occupation. This is how you're supposed to be like around your friends is how you're supposed to, you know, live your life. Like that should not really be the case at all, because I know a lot of people live different lives. Um, so that is, that's definitely one thing. But also, along with that, I want us to be seen as caring individuals. Because on the flip side of the machoism is actually like, in a lot of guys, I've actually seen it's like, impact, like, they have a sense of empathy. Just not a lot of people see it just because of I guess, sometimes it could be the environment that they're around or it could be the way that they were like, the way that they were told to handle certain things emotionally. Um, so yeah, I probably want to see them as definitive, but also with but also not without sensitivity, if that makes sense. Like they can coexist.” Many participants touched on how black cis and queer men are not taught to express themselves within the community. To not be taught to express yourself at all and not even having the opportunity to see a black man cry on TV, is not normal. All humans have emotions and all people have a way of expressing it.

Many participants argued how black shows and films only show hetero parents, and that it's not relateable. Riley stated “Um, yeah, it makes me feel good. Like, at least how things are going, I notice it's probably not going as fast as people would like. But I just think like, you know, I have a black mom, two black moms. So I probably like they don't. They probably, you know, were raised in a system where they were seen as angry or seen as, like, I'm unagreeable, or, like, they're, they need to be tough because they're black women. But I feel pretty good about where we are now. But I know, we could definitely do better.” Queer voices in black family dynamics is important. Every black person is different their experiences as well.

7.11 Changing Our Narrative

As my findings continued, many students came up with solutions that will change the perception of the community. Princess Tiana mentioned “I think we should have more black writers. I feel like that would help fill in some of the gaps because like, if someone's in the writing room, and like they read that they could like look over before I'm like

watching it and like, that's a little strange. You know?" Hiring black talent to produce black talent sounds more realistic than having white writers speak for the marginalized.

Many participants are aware of the contribution their ancestors brought to this country and how that should be represented more. Smoky said "I feel like, for me, personally, a lot of the black men that I have spoken to including the UMOJA group here at the school, I've seen that a lot of black men have a lot of things to bring to the table. But I just don't think that a lot of the time, I don't really think that we've had the courage to say anything, just because of the way that everything has been recently. Um, I think that it's important to represent them as humans and not violent people, just because of the way that some of the things that we have done, have been revolutionary in terms of like, if you think of like music, there's Stevie, and there's Michael, and there's so many other people do is the entire genre of rap and hip hop, um, that goes for women as well. But for men in particular. There's like, all those sectors, um, a lot of the books that I've written. And I don't know, just our place in history as well, we haven't been portrayed in the best light at all, if we're looking across that entire span. So aside from like, the things that we can do, the people that we are, I feel like, if we were represented better, and we should be represented by that, we'd be able to really make a positive impact on a lot of the spaces that we're in." Black people are aware of their self worth and capabilities, why white media and other populations are not?

7.12 Pose & Moonlight: Thinking Queer

Two findings that I found interesting was the limitations of black queer movies and not including black queer women into the discussion about being black and queer. When asked about movies that identify with participants and what changes they would like to see for black queer people? Majority recalled Pose and Moonlight. Pose is about life in the 1980s for black trans women and Moonlight focuses on a underprivileged black man who makes a way for himself and is gay. This was interesting because similar to black cisgender women feeling underrepresented, but black trans men and queer women are too. Many people did not acknowledge black queer women struggles. This was interesting because the black queer women I interviewed did not touch on their experience or struggles as well, just black gay men.

Trixie said "Currently, my favorite black entertainer is a rapper named Lil NasX. I like him a lot because I adore black men who are comfortable in their own skin and aren't scared to express themselves even if it contradicts what is expected of them". Along with Trixie, others view black queer men as more expressive than cisgender men.

Smokey said "I feel like we are just getting around to doing that. Um, Lil NASX is a great example. Um, he's a very, very successful rapper who's doing amazing things for the black queer community and a lot of black rap a lot, or at least to me, a lot of black rap has exhibited toxic, like, behaviors of toxic masculinity. Um, so I don't think that it's, I don't think that the representation is where it needs to be, again, because I said, we've just gotten around to that. It's always been a thing. And people have always fought for it. But I really don't think that they have been getting the type of treatment that they deserve, or the type of representation that they deserve, just because people refuse to accept change. And they refuse to accept that people are who they are, and that they love who they love, and they just don't see it that way. So I don't think that they're being represented at all. And when they're, when they are trying to get their foot in the door, they're automatically being ostracized for it, and they're like being reprimanded just for being who they are, which is not acceptable." Although to some this statement is true, no one brought up Queen Latifah, who carried hip hop and black film for a while and created opportunities for black people and women. Or Willow Smith who has made the idealization of being comfortable in who you are as a black queer woman since the age of eleven.

When thinking queer, many black people mainly associate black queer with black gay men, because of what is taught and displayed to them. Penny said "I think they, you know, portrayed them as flamboyant, and, you know, always doing too much. And, I guess it kind of, you know, puts in my mind, a kind of stereotype, you know, and I just think that, you know, through them showing them that being flamboyant, it's kind of sad that, you know, even through my day to day, it's like, okay, this is in my. It's like, through television, it goes through your subconscious, like, oh, you see a gay person, like oh they might be flamboyant, or this type of way. And so I think they, they really have, like, just one set, you know, character of, you know, traits of what they give to, you know, a queer person, you know, it's either like, they're like, the second like, or the. The really like, the, like, the character does not really notice but like, like a third character, so if you like, watch any movies, where it's like, friend groups, is it like three characters, the gay person, is like, the last storyline or, like a person that is just like, you know, it's flamboyant, or just makes everybody laughs or just like, oh, yeah, I'm gay. Like, I think it's like, it's, it's, it's different types of gay people. It's not it's gay people that are, you know, just, you know, fit into what people think a gay person is. And so, you know, whenever I watch, you know, queer, you know, movies or shows, it's like, okay, like, why are they doing this to queer people? I know, some queer people, you know, like my roommate, who doesn't even really, you know, act as flamboyant, or,

you know, friends that I had it, don't even act like that. And it's like, okay. The way you're portraying gay people is a little weird. And that's how I feel.”

Many black people associated “coming out” with black men. The attitude of wanting more men than women to identified as gay and talks about their sexuality, was a bit alarming. Oscar said “Because if any, like black men, they try to hide it or not. And I feel like if they’re more in expressing it, and then there’s other people that are still hiding their identity, like men they can see other men doing it and be like, oh, okay, now I can be able to express how I feel and stuff like that.” What about black queer women? What about having representation for them as well?

7.13 Acceptance

For black queer participants many argued the urgency of wanting to feel accepted by their own community. And how accepting black queer people will make the black community more stronger. Smoky said “That doesn't make me feel good at all. Because I know a few, a few close friends, especially a few black friends that are a part of that community. And it's just like, it's the same thing that I go through, like, when I'm seeing things about black women that are with my mom or black men that I that could be about my dad or about me even like, that's about them, like, I really hope that they are doing okay, and the situation. But at the same time, it's like, Why can't people just leave them alone? Like, they are their own people, just because it has been doesn't mean that it is like, like, Get with the program, things are changing, they're moving rapidly to keep up. But, um, again, people don't really want to accept it. And it is kind of aggravating actually.” People within the black community are not supportive of the LGBTQ+ community. The struggles of dealing with sexuality and racism is a battle that most of my participants touched on.

“I want black queer people to know or feel like they have a home within the black community by not just being a straight man or a straight woman, because I know like, even just being bisexual within the black community is interesting in itself. And like a lot of older people think is weird or different, especially if it's a bisexual man. And it's like a whole nother thing of like, you're not a real man and things like that, so” said Riley. Older generations were taught to never seek same relationship, this push back is the reason for all the hatred that is placed up black queer people today. No one needs to be excluded.

7.14 Self-Reflection

During my recent interviews, many participants explained how they never thought about how they were represented in films, many could not answer questions like “what identifies with you” and “what type of content would you create if you had the opportunity”.

Many college students reflect on the entertainment industry of what their childhood could have been or what was missing. Princess Tiana says, “I wish I saw. Like, I guess like cartoons or just like white people cartoon shows with like black characters. I feel like sometimes, like, there was just like, one specific genre, but I'd love to see sci-fi cartoons with like black characters and things like that. So I definitely wish there was more variety.” Not all black people are the same. Many of us share an interest beyond fashion and music. Interest such as science and math is not only limited to non-blacks and whites. Black people want to see themselves reflected in all aspects.

“Sometimes empowered and encouraged, but often jarred and insecure... We have a lot of work to do within the industry” said Number 5. Growing through adolescence no one should feel left out or uneasy.

Smokey says, “Um, with everything that's going on right now social and politically and economically, even, there are a lot more things that I see that um, continuously like to really like, try and grab and hold. So that show in particular shows how that's making me feel kind of like the weighing scale is kind of going more towards current issues rather than how the shows are making me feel I understand what necessarily it's talking about. But um, I'm in the process of trying to stay educated about everything that's happening right now. So in the back of my mind, I would say it still definitely rubs me the wrong way. But I don't think about it as much just because of everything else that's happening.” It's interesting to learn that many black people can not process what has been done to them in the past because besides being discriminated against in the media, they have other issues to worry about as far as police brutality and other hate crimes.

8. Discussion And Conclusion

As a result of black people not being properly represented in Media, children are being taught to hate themselves. Black women in particular proved that they wanted lighter skin and felt unpretty. Black boys are taught that they are violent and emotionally unavailable. And black queer people feel isolated within their own community. White media has white washed this generation of college students into believing that what was displayed to them while they were young was normal. From slavery to now, black individuals do not feel supported by society. White media continues to make it hard for black individuals to succeed, others outside of both the black and white community fear black people because of their notable narrative. Many black people have claimed that they are treated a certain way because of what is displayed. Black people as a whole feel isolated.

To be an adult in your early 20s and to name TV shows or films you wish displayed black people is heartbreaking. Finding out that there were no animated movies black children could watch in the early 2000s is unbelievable. To learn that when black people watch black films it is hard for them to identify with the characters. And seeing an actress play a struggling black mom, crazy black grandmother and having an absent black father is frustrating. There is no transparency within black people in the media.

Consciously being aware of the lack of representation displayed to black people forced upon by white media. The idea of educating and reminding African Americans of being oppressed keeps their narrative limited. It has been proven that black trauma sells and the idea of perceiving blacks in a more positive light is not interesting. Those who argue against this are not black and many of those who are black and have the opportunity to change the narrative often don't. Having nonconscious black writers and entertainers are the ongoing problems black people face. Nonconscious writers and entertainers fail to realize the downfall future generations experience by this.

Black queer and cisgender women are the most underrepresented people in the media. Black women claim that black men are perceived to be seen and held to a higher standard than them. Many black women see themselves as normal and interesting. Black women are knowledgeable of their worth but are taught to embrace it. Many people mistake their emotions and excitement as aggressive and loud which is unfair to them. Black people want to be in charge of their own narratives and films. Black people want to be heard but not seen as a secondary option in films. Separating their character traits from race is what they ask for. And black cisgender and queer men want the privilege of being viewed as an emotional human. Society and generations before have limited that compatibility of doing so.

Rather its more black queer films or animation, black people need a variety.

Black college students were socially engineered into believing that the stereotypes and language placed upon them was normal. If I had the opportunity to expand my research, I would look into interviewing all generations of black people. From ages 18 to 73, comparing and contrasting the differences each child experienced with black representation on TV. I would understand where the line between disapproving same sex relationship draw with age. And identify how older generations were blind by hidden racism as well.

Mass incarceration among black people are the results of being negatively displayed in the media. And people thinking your only contribution to American society has become normal.

My research proves that black people want and deserve more in representation and society. Black people should have more representation than labor working and animals. Black people have a lot to offer and there is an audience for more black perspectives. As a future entertainer and film producer, I will use the suggestions and feedback of what is needed for more representation to impact my youth. The content I will produce will advocate and empower the community to do more. Because a functional society without black people, is not actually a functional society without its creators.

9. References

1. ANTI-BLACK IMAGERY - JIM CROW MUSEUM - FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

In-text: ("Anti-Black Imagery - Jim Crow Museum - Ferris State University", 2021)

Your Bibliography: Anti-Black Imagery - Jim Crow Museum - Ferris State University. (2021). Retrieved 8 December 2021, from <https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/antiblack/>

2. CLARK, A.

How the History of Blackface Is Rooted in Racism

In-text: (Clark, 2021)

Your Bibliography: Clark, A. (2021). How the History of Blackface Is Rooted in Racism. Retrieved 8 December 2021, from <https://www.history.com/news/blackface-history-racism-origins>

3. DE LIMA, T. J. S., PEREIRA, C. R., ROSAS TORRES, A. R., CUNHA DE SOUZA, L. E. AND ALBUQUERQUE, I. M.

Black people are convicted more for being black than for being poor: The role of social norms and cultural prejudice on biased racial judgments

In-text: (de Lima, Pereira, Rosas Torres, Cunha de Souza & Albuquerque, 2019)

Your Bibliography: de Lima, T., Pereira, C., Rosas Torres, A., Cunha de Souza, L., & Albuquerque, I. (2019). Black people are convicted more for being black than for being poor: The role of social norms and cultural prejudice on biased racial judgments. Retrieved 8 December 2021, from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0222874>

4. EVERETT, A.

Black Film, New Media Industries, and BAMMs (Black American Media Moguls) in the Digital Media Ecology

In-text: (Everett, 2014)

Your Bibliography: Everett, A. (2014). Black Film, New Media Industries, and BAMMs (Black American Media Moguls) in the Digital Media Ecology. Retrieved 8 December 2021, from <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/550095>

5. GRIFFIN, E., LEDBETTER, A. AND SPARKS, G.

First Look At Communication Theory

In-text: (Griffin, Ledbetter & Sparks, 2018)

Your Bibliography: Griffin, E., Ledbetter, A., & Sparks, G. (2018). *First Look At Communication Theory* (10th ed.). New York.

6. HOOKS, B.

We Real Cool

In-text: (hooks, 2003)

Your Bibliography: hooks, b. (2003). We Real Cool. Retrieved 8 December 2021, from

7. SIEVING, C.

Black, White, and in Color: Television and Black Civil Rights. *Film Quarterly*

In-text: (Sieving, 2004)

Your Bibliography: Sieving, C. (2004). Black, White, and in Color: Television and Black Civil Rights. *Film Quarterly*. Retrieved 8 December 2021, from <http://0-search.proquest.com.wncln.wncln.org/scholarly-journals/black-white-color-television-civil-rights/docview/212282507/se-2?accountid=8388>

8. SQUIRES, C.

Watching While Black: Centering the Television of Black Audiences

In-text: (Squires, 2014)

Your Bibliography: Squires, C. (2014). Watching While Black: Centering the Television of Black Audiences. Retrieved 8 December 2021, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5hj68h>

9. TANNER, J., ASBRIDGE, M. AND WORTLEY, S.

Listening to Rap: Cultures of Crime, Cultures of Resistance. *Social Forces*

In-text: (Tanner, Asbridge & Wortley, 2009)

Your Bibliography: Tanner, J., Asbridge, M., & Wortley, S. (2009). Listening to Rap: Cultures of Crime, Cultures of Resistance. *Social Forces*. Retrieved 8 December 2021, from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/sof.0.0271>

10. THAKORE, B. K.

On the Origin of White Hollywood: The Racialized Space of the U.S. Film Industry - Bhoomi K. Thakore, 2020

In-text: (Thakore, 2021)

Your Bibliography: Thakore, B. (2021). On the Origin of White Hollywood: The Racialized Space of the U.S. Film Industry - Bhoomi K. Thakore, 2020. Retrieved 8 December 2021, from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0002764220975085>

11. WHITE PEOPLE OWN 86% OF WEALTH AND MAKE UP 60% OF THE POPULATION - USAFACTS

In-text: ("White people own 86% of wealth and make up 60% of the population - USAFacts", 2021)
Your Bibliography: White people own 86% of wealth and make up 60% of the population - USAFacts. (2021). Retrieved 8 December 2021, from https://usafacts.org/articles/white-people-own-86-wealth-despite-making-60-population/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=ND-Race&gclid=CjwKCAiA7dKMBhBCEiwAO_crFAT6C_iyrUrIcis75HfTjHAjuIR5VvVV-VPFtviynXxbNzpNorpL_hoC4nIQAvD_BwE

12. WINANT, H.

Notes on chocolate cities. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*

In-text: (Winant, 2019)

Your Bibliography: Winant, H. (2019). Notes on chocolate cities. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. Retrieved 8 December 2021, from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2019.1536276>

13. YAHR, E. AND BUTLER, B.

What does reality TV owe Black women?

In-text: (Yahr & Butler, 2021)

Your Bibliography: Yahr, E., & Butler, B. (2021). What does reality TV owe Black women?. Retrieved 8 December 2021, from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/arts-entertainment/interactive/2021/black-women-reality-tv/>