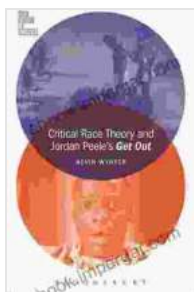


Critical Race Theory and Jordan Peele's "Get Out": Film Theory in Practice

Released in 2017, Jordan Peele's directorial debut "Get Out" quickly became a critical and commercial success, garnering widespread acclaim for its incisive social commentary and groundbreaking exploration of race in America. Through a careful examination of Peele's film, this article aims to demonstrate how Critical Race Theory (CRT) can serve as a valuable framework for analyzing and understanding the film's complex and nuanced exploration of racial identity, power dynamics, and the insidious nature of systemic racism.

Critical Race Theory: A Primer

Developed in the late 20th century by legal scholars of color, CRT emerged as a critique of mainstream liberal approaches to understanding race and racism. At its core, CRT challenges the notion that race is a natural or biological category, arguing instead that it is a social construct used to justify and perpetuate inequality.



Critical Race Theory and Jordan Peele's Get Out (Film Theory in Practice) by Kevin Wynter

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
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Print length : 215 pages



One of the key tenets of CRT is its focus on intersectionality, recognizing that individuals' experiences of race are shaped by other factors such as gender, class, and sexuality. CRT also emphasizes the role of power in shaping racial dynamics, highlighting how racism operates not only through overt acts of discrimination but also through more subtle and insidious forms of oppression.

"Get Out": A Film Through the Lens of CRT

Peele's "Get Out" provides a rich and fertile ground for applying CRT principles. The film's protagonist, Chris Washington (Daniel Kaluuya), a young black man, visits the home of his white girlfriend, Rose Armitage (Allison Williams), for the first time. Initially welcomed by Rose's seemingly progressive family, Chris gradually begins to notice strange and unsettling occurrences that raise concerns about their true intentions.

Through the lens of CRT, "Get Out" can be seen as a powerful allegory of the ways in which white supremacy operates in contemporary America. The Armitage family, with their seemingly liberal and welcoming demeanor, represent a façade of racial tolerance that masks a deeper-seated commitment to maintaining white privilege.

The film's exploration of the concept of "the Sunken Place" is particularly revealing in this regard. Used to describe the mental and emotional state of subjugation experienced by black characters, the Sunken Place symbolizes the psychological toll of systemic racism. Through this metaphor, Peele

vividly illustrates how racism can strip individuals of their agency and autonomy.

The Role of Representation and Stereotypes

Peele's film also sheds light on the powerful role of representation and stereotypes in shaping racial perceptions. The Armitage family's view of Chris as a physically fit and athletic young man perpetuates the stereotype of the "strong black body," a trope that has historically been used to both fetishize and dehumanize black people.

Conversely, the film's depiction of Chris's friend Rod Williams (Lil Rel Howery) as a loud, boisterous, and ultimately expendable character reinforces the negative stereotype of the "angry black man." By juxtaposing these two distinct representations, Peele challenges viewers to question the ways in which stereotypes are used to justify and maintain racial hierarchies.

Jordan Peele's "Get Out" stands as a testament to the power of film as a medium for social commentary. Through its nuanced exploration of race and racism, the film provides a valuable opportunity to apply the principles of Critical Race Theory. By examining the film's characters, themes, and narrative structure through this lens, we gain a deeper understanding of the complex and insidious ways in which systemic racism operates in society.

As a work of horror, "Get Out" not only unsettles its audience but also forces them to confront uncomfortable truths about the persistence of racism in America. By harnessing the power of storytelling, Peele creates a visceral and thought-provoking experience that both entertains and

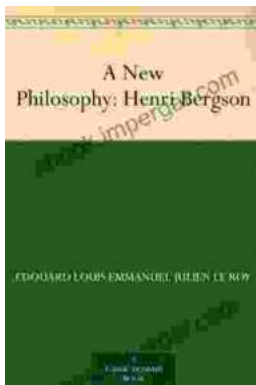
educates, leaving an enduring legacy that will continue to shape conversations about race for years to come.



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