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Prompt One

“In reference to the film 12 Years a Slave (2013, Steve McQueen), write an essay on the film’s viewpoint regarding slavery in the Antebellum South. How did the system affect both male and female slaves and male and female slave owners?”

This is a rough draft, please edit when complete with intial draft

Whites are ruthless savages

In the film, we see many different aspects of the South’s perspective of slavery. The general sentiment towards Blacks is aggressive and are portrayed as degenerates. Our first example is in when the Solomon is abducted from his livelihood, he is told that he’s just a “nigger” and he needs to shed his old identity. Whites are conveyed as this overbearing, ruthless figure that takes what they want, only for their own betterment. This is later affirmed when Solomon engineers a solution to get from one side of the river to the other, outdoing the overseer. His achievement is taken as an insult to the overseer’s pride/ego, wherein Solomon had done it out of malice. Here we shown that whites strive to assert their dominance and arrogance to save face.

Relationship between Solomon and {Ford,Epps}

The relationship between Ford and Solomon seems to be as geniunely caring. Ford is never dismissive of Solomon’s thoughts when it comes to a better workflow or matters regarding tasks issued. Unfortunately, when Solomon attempts to tell Ford that he is actually a freed man, Ford gets agitated telling him he has no power over this matter. This aversion to helping someone in dire need attempts to symbolize the North’s disposition on slavery. It would be a costly debt to inherit and the reputation of Ford would be at stake. When Solomon is nearly killed during the lynching, he is exported to a

plantation of a ruthless man. Here it becomes more evident of what the South truly thought of Blacks. Epps would attempt to aggravate Solomon in bouts of drunkardness, wanting him to have a reason to beat him. There is a sadistic and evil side of Epps that is brought out and is truly reflective of how the South handled racial diversity.

Relationship between Patsey and {Epps,Mrs.Epps}

Once Solomon is sent to another plantation because of endangerment of his life, we can see more clearly how differently both sexes (slaves and masters) the relationships formed between one another. Patsey and Mr.Epps form a quid pro quo sexual relationship where Patsey and the other mistresses are given special privileges. In the short run, this helps out Patsey as she is able to a

ROADMAP

- Whites are ruthless savages
 - Take what they please
 - Submit to their rule
- Relationship between Patsey and Epps
 - How his wife treats Patsey
 - Sexual relationship to keep her from being beaten/on the good side of Epps
- Relationship between Solomon and Ford
 - As much as a Ford is a religious man, he still cannot call Solomon an equal
 - Connection between how the North felt about slavery
- Relationship between Solomon and Epps
 - Callous and provocative, hurting slaves gave Epps a way to unleash his demons
 - Drinking

GOAL : show the dichotomy between male slave to male slave owner's relationships, female to male and female to female

Rewrite

In the film, we see many different aspects of the South's perspective of slavery. The general sentiment towards Blacks is aggressive and are portrayed as degenerates. Our first example is in when the

Solomon is abducted from his livelihood, he is told that he's just a "nigger" and he needs to shed his old identity. Whites are conveyed as this overbearing, ruthless figure that takes what they want, only for their own betterment. This is later affirmed when Solomon engineers a solution to get from one side of the river to the other, outdoing the overseer. His achievement is taken as an insult to the overseer's pride/ego, wherein Solomon had done it out of malice. Here we shown that whites strive to assert their dominance and arrogance to save face.

White oppression is also evident when families are separated at auction. In the film, strictly speaking, female slaves seemed to be more affected with separation. This is portrayed when Eliza is stripped of her family and is constantly bawling. After the Civil War, the first thing emancipated slaves attempted to reunite with lost family members. When settlers were bringing slaves over to the New World, there was a disproportionate number of male slaves introduced rather than females. It was, in their eyes, more economically viable to have a strong male work force. Men of color were now seen as objects of work, rather than actual people. This can be seen in the movie where slaves are evaluated on the amount of crop they are able to cultivate. Ones that did better than the previous day are spared a lashing but those who do not are unfortunate and are forcefully coerced. Male slaves were more likely to die at the hand of exhaustion rather than malnutrition and disease than female slaves. Although they were treated as subhumans, female slaves still filled roles that white women refused to do such as cooking and laundry. Another advantage for