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Racism in US films: Two Current Examples

Bakalářská práce

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Anglický jazyk se zaměřením na vzdělávání

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedené
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Abstract

This bachelor's thesis deals with racism in American films and their depictions. This thesis is divided into four parts. The first part introduces the most important concepts related to the issue of racism that is relevant to this topic. The second section describes the historical events in the U.S. concerning racism. The third and fourth chapters separately analyze the depiction of racism in films *The Blind Side* and *The Hate U Give*. The main aim of this thesis is to investigate the differences in the portrayal of racism in these two films.

Introduction

This thesis deals with racism in American films, specifically, the portrayal of Afro-American racism in *The Blind Side* and *The Hate U Give* and its subsequent comparison. This thesis aims to define the concept of racism and analyze its interpretation in the films mentioned above. The methods used in this thesis are culture studies analysis and historical-biographical and the sources from which this work was drawn are books, articles, and films.

The first chapter of The Theory of Racism provides the terminology and definition of racism along with the term race. This chapter aims to briefly explain the terms racism and race to give the reader an idea of what these two terms mean and where he or she might encounter them and to form an opinion on the subject.

The second chapter, History of Racism, provides the reader with a brief overview of U.S. history and significant events related to racism.

The next chapters are devoted to an analysis of *The Blind Side* and situations related to racism as with the film *The Hate U Give*.

The last chapter is mainly devoted to the comparison of these two films. How they differ and how they are similar. The end of this thesis is devoted to an overall review of the whole work.

1 Theory of racism

The term "racism" has become a highly debated topic today. Surprising as it may be, it is only in modern society that we encounter the term "racism". (Dacík, 2000, p.34) The term "racism" is very often used without further thought to describe negative or hostile feelings of a particular ethnic group or nation. Sometimes this dislike for a particular group can even translate into violence and brutality that goes beyond the condescension and prejudice that is felt towards a particular group of citizens (Fredrickson, 2002, p.15). If we want to understand this term, we need to remember that the term "racism" refers to a particular social phenomenon or process that has developed and is developing alongside the development of a cultural society. Racism is seen as a negative occurrence that must be fought against because it fundamentally divides society and creates interpersonal relationships that, due to the poor education of the subject, are contrary to the Charter of Human Rights, especially the declarations that stand for the right to live in dignity, which applies to all people in the world (Dacík, 2000, p.34).

We must not forget that with the evolution of humanity, racism has always had a specific character that has changed throughout our history, but it has always had a political-ideological emphasis, as it provokes contradictions, hatred, and aggression, thanks to which inequalities between members of racial groups deepen (Dacík, 2000, p.35).

According to Oluo (2020, p.27), the definition of racism is firstly any prejudice against another person and their racial origin and secondly, any prejudice or opinion against a person and his or her racial origin that is empowered by a system of power is considered racism.

But we must remember that there is no given definition of racism as such. Racism can be viewed in two ways: a scientific theory and an ideology.

1.1 Race

The term race is as difficult to define as racism. The Encyclopedic Institute of the ČSAV (MČSE, V., 1987) states that a race is a group of people who share similar, hereditary characteristics that distinguish them from other races. The emergence of these races has been influenced by various environmental influences. With the discovery of this concept, a continuum of human-member population classification emerges, thanks to perceived differences (Dacík, 2000, p. 6). Kendi (2019, p. 35) also states that race can also be defined as A power structure of gathered or merged distinctions that live socially.

The modern conception of the term did not emerge until the eighteenth century when the term denoted basic human types that were classified by physical characteristics, particularly skin color (Fredrickson, 2003, p. 50).

The study of races falls under the so-called "ethnic anthropology", which can be understood as "the science of man", which falls under one of the oldest branches of anthropology. Thus, ethnic anthropology is a science that deals with the question and study of human races and researches their composition, origin, development, and peculiarities (Dacík, 2000, p. 10). Unfortunately, this thesis will not deal with this concept in more detail, as it is not a key topic for it.

1.2 Segregation

The term segregation can be defined as any act or process of separation or isolation of a race, ethnic group, or class that is practiced by forced or voluntary residence in some restricted area resulting in barriers to social contact with others, segregated educational facilities, or other discriminatory means (Merriam-Webster dictionary, 2009).

Segregation was enacted in the United States several times during the 18th and 19th centuries because of assumptions that blacks and whites were incapable of living together. (History.com Editors, 2009).

2 History of racism in the United States

This chapter consists of a few selected historical events that are very important and memorable to the African American race.

2.1 Beginnings of Slavery

With the rapidly growing North American colonies, there was a need to hire labor that would be very cheap. The European settlers were no longer interested in the poorer wage-earning Europeans, so in the early 17th century they opted for the easier way of hiring cheap labor, and this, unfortunately, led to the enslavement of Africans. After 1619, when the first 20 Africans were brought to Jamestown, slavery spread throughout the American colonies. Since many Americans became farmers and could not do the work themselves in those days, they tried to figure out a way to make the work easier, which is exactly why we place slavery in American history (O'Callaghan, 1990, p. 12-13).

Many northern states abolished slavery in the late 18th century. Unfortunately, in the South, where blacks held large populations and where they were needed to produce the crops (tobacco, cotton) necessary for the economy of the day, slavery did not see abolition.

The reason whites were enslaved by Africans (unfortunately, not just them) was that from the beginning they considered themselves a lower racial people, lower on the scale of being, lower than themselves, and even lower than the then numerous European indentured servants who worked for the settlers before them (Kendi, 2016, p. 38)

In the early 19th century, Congress prohibited the importation of new enslaved persons. Unfortunately, over the next 50 years, the number of enslaved persons in the U.S. nearly tripled (The History.com Editors, 2009).

2.2 Rise of the Cotton Industry

In 1810, the population of the United States of America was about 7.2 million, and roughly 1.5 million were covered by the "Declaration of Independence," which declared that all men were equal, which in practical terms was far from true (O'Callaghan, 1990, p. 44). Thomas Jefferson, who was the founder of the charter, owned several slaves himself, as did other leaders of the movement (O'Callaghan, 1990, p. 44).

Slavery was most widespread in the South of North America, where there was an economic crisis in the late 18th century. Tobacco was the most cultivated crop at the time, but because the land on which it was grown dried up and people could not find another product that made as much money as tobacco, it caused the price of enslaved people to drop as a result (History.com Editors, 2009). Around the same time, the textile industry in England was revolutionized by improvements in the cotton processing process, which slowly made the demand for American wool insatiable. However, the process of extracting cotton could not be sped up in any way, as the seeds had to be removed only by hand (History.com Editors, 2009).

In 1793, a young schoolteacher named Eli Whitney solved this problem of hand-picking cotton by inventing the cotton gin - a simple mechanized device that could be powered by hand or, for greater convenience, could be harnessed to a horse and could even be powered by water (O'Callaghan, 1990, p. 46). Whitney's invention made it easier to harvest cotton, thus increasing its cultivation. However, this also led to an increase in the number of enslaved blacks who had to operate machinery, plow the land and, to some extent, pick the cotton. This cotton production depended more and more on slaves every year (O'Callaghan, 1990, p. 46).

Not surprisingly, then, as this industry grew, so did the demand for cotton, and with it the demand for enslaved people, which inevitably led to the slave revolt we call the Fugitive Slave Act (History.com Editors, 2009). These were only precautions for slave owners who escaped, whether only from the owner or across state lines, where if the fugitive was caught, he had to be returned to his owner. It was also the case that if such a person was assisted in escaping, this assistance was considered a criminal offense (O'Callaghan, 1990, p. 45).

2.3 Slave Rebellion with Nat Turner

Nat Turner came from a plantation in Southampton and was the only one who could strike fear into white southerners throughout the history of the USA. In the summer of 1831, he led the only successful rebellion in U.S. history (Kendi, 2016, p. 172). Through his rebellion against his master, in which he killed his entire family and stole his guns and horses, he was able to continue raiding other plantations, freeing enslaved people (Kendi, 2016, p. 172). Kendi (2016, p.172) also states that Turner and a few of his fellow participants were convinced that this task was from God and therefore they had to fulfill it. Kendi (2016, p. 173) further states that blacks were described as submissive and non-resistant. However, if there was ever a case of resistance, whites in the South always took it as just another sign that blacks were just barbaric animals who should be locked up or enslaved.

It was only after this event that Virginians began to consider ending slavery, fearing for their own lives, which could end any day in these uprisings (Kendi, 2016, P. 173). Unfortunately, even many of these uprisings were of no avail, and landowners created pressure to tighten the laws on slave ownership. Not everyone was in favor of this proposal, however, hence the rifts that later resulted in the Civil War (History.com Editors, 2009).

2.4 Civil war and Emancipation

The Civil War broke out in the United States in 1861 because of long-standing tensions between northern and southern states over slavery, states' rights, and westward expansion (History.com Editors, 2009).

The major powers of American capitalism in the first half of the 19th century were two different socio-economic systems. They were opposed by the industrial and farming North and the slave-plantation South (Navrátil, 1984, p. 96). The acquisition of new territories in the western United States created favorable conditions for the development of the plantation industry. However, it was necessary to consider that crops (tobacco, cotton) were rapidly

draining the land, so a shift of plantations to the western areas was necessary (Navrátil, 1984, p. 96).

Around 4 million blacks lived in slave states at the time, and despite prohibitions, up to 25,000 slaves were transported from Africa and the West Indies annually until the Civil War (Navrátil, 1984, p. 96). Society in the southern states was as differentiated as in the northern states. Only one-fourth of the population was identified with the slave system, and along with the slaves there developed a class of free blacks, who, before the Civil War, numbered about a quarter of a million in the South, but in a lawless political position (Navrátil, 1984, p. 97).

The black slaves responded to this action with a series of rebellions, one of which was the rebellion led by Nat Turner, already mentioned in the previous chapter. The growing abolitionist movement and the differing views of the North and South on slavery began to raise concerns about the existence of slavery in America.

All these conflicts led to the outbreak of the Civil War between the North and the South when 11 states seceded from the then Union and formed the Confederacy. Even the views of Abraham Lincoln could not convince the population to abolish slavery. The idea of ending slavery had drifted away because the idea could not be supported by a larger part of the population, so the main idea was to keep the Union united (O'Callaghan, 1990, p. 51). However, in the summer of 1862, A. Lincoln concluded that the issue of slavery must not be "swept off the table. „On January 1st, 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, declaring that enslaved people living in any state would "henceforth and forever be free." This decision was only a war measure. Lincoln did not go so far as to free enslaved persons in border states that were loyal to the Union (Navrátil, 1984, p. 108).

On April 14, 1865, when the Union flag was raised over Fort Sumter, A. Lincoln was assassinated during a theatrical performance. (Navrátil, 1984, p. 110).

This war, which lasted from 1861 to 1865, also brought land reform and the abolition of slavery, and as an economic result, the unification of the internal market (Navrátil 1984, p. 110).

2.5 African Americans in WWII and Civil Right Act

In the USA, 1941 was a year marked by preparations for an armed confrontation with the enemy (Navrátil, 1984, p. 272). The United States became the main arms supplier to the countries that fought Hitler (O'Callaghan, 1990, p. 103). African Americans during World War II were prepared to fight for what President D. Roosevelt called the four freedoms, which were: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear (History.com Editors, 2009). White and black conscripts were divided into separate units to avoid unnecessary conflict. Thus, blacks had to fight racism even during World War II while trying to support U.S. war aims (History.com Editors, 2009).

During World War II, there were several African American heroes. The first to appear after the attack on Pearl Harbor was a young Navy stewardess on the U.S.S. West Virginia. The stewardess managed to carry wounded crewmembers to safety and then manned a machine gun emplacement herself, where she managed to shoot down several Japanese planes (History.com Editors, 2009). Another hero of African American descent was Benjamin O. Davis Jr. who later became a general in the 99th Squadron. This squadron was formed in the spring of 1943. Davis Jr. flew more than 3,000 missions and was a source of pride for many blacks (Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopedia, 2000). Despite these successes, overall achievements were slow, and black morale needed more such successes because they still faced discrimination.

It was not until Harry S. Truman took over from President D. Roosevelt after his death in 1945 that any changes began to happen. The thought of change came only after Truman became aware of the reports of discrimination that were circulating worldwide by the Russian media. These reports were simultaneously damaging both foreign policy and U.S. policy. The consequence of these reports was the "closing of doors" to entrepreneurs, especially those located in the US, in decolonizing non-white countries (Kendi, 2009, p. 352). The final integration of the armed forces occurred in 1948 by an executive order issued by President Truman, which, according to an article on the History.com website (History.com Editors, 2009), mandated "equal treatment and equal opportunity for all persons in the armed forces regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin."

To understand the civil rights movement, it is necessary to look a little back in history to see what the trigger was, what events led to the civil rights movement, and what was the

result afterward. The Civil Rights movement was galvanized to fight for justice and equality for African Americans. This movement took place primarily in the 1950s and 1960s. The leaders of this action were Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X and many others (History.com Editors, 2009).

Such a major trigger for blacks feeling oppressed was the Jim Crow era with its laws, which are a great example of institutional racism. Jim Crow was also considered the name behind the caste system that made it fundamentally difficult for African Americans to live their daily lives. This series of very harsh laws were, by any other means, directed only against blacks (Dr. Pilgrim, 2000). This system created by Jim Crow was based on beliefs such as that whites were superior to blacks in all important ways, which meant that they were superior in terms of intelligence, and civilized behavior and that sexual relations between blacks and whites would lead to miscegenation that could potentially destroy America. This system was so radical that anything that would have made the above activities equal would have led to social equality, which was unacceptable at the time, as the main goal was to keep blacks at the bottom rung of the racial hierarchy (Dr. Pilgrim, 2000). By the end of the 19th century, most southern states had laws requiring separate schools for black and white students. By 1900, persons of "colored skin" had to be separated from whites in railroad cars and depots, theaters, restaurants, hotels, barbershops, employment, and neighborhoods, which also functioned when a black family moved in, so many white families felt threatened, leading to their removal (History.com Editors, 2009).

For the civil rights movement to occur, history has recorded several events that were very disturbing, but unfortunately ineffective for the outbreak of this movement. One that is certainly worth mentioning is the murder of Emmet Till, which took place in 1955. The murder of this 14-year-old boy who was originally from Chicago was a warning to the entire country of the racial violence and injustice that was prevalent in the state of Mississippi. This event took place during his visit to his relatives when Emmet visited a small store with his cousins who provoked him to blow the whistle on Mrs. Carolyn Bryant who was manning the cash register. Her husband, Roy Bryant, and brother-in-law, J. W. Milam Tilla, kidnapped the boy after this incident, and after a brutal murder, threw the body into the Tallahatchie River. The news and the lawsuit built up young African Americans to join the civil rights movement as they feared that this situation could not only be repeated with their friends but that they could find themselves in the situation as well (Pierce, 2022).

The safety of black citizens was still very problematic. They had to be careful at every turn. It is mind-boggling that people could not even feel safe in their churches, thanks to the 1963 Birmingham bombing, which was carried out by the local Ku Klux Klan, whose actions injured 14 residents and killed 4 girls according to an article by Chelsea Parrot - Sheffer (2009). The city of Birmingham was a major site of protests, marches, and sit-ins at the time. Homemade bombs that were planted in Birmingham churches became so common that the city was sometimes nicknamed "Bombingham" (Parrot - Sheffer, 2009). The 16th street church in Birmingham, Alabama was one of the churches that oversaw the larger protests. The church was bombed during a Sunday service when this bombing was 3. in 11 days (Parrot - Sheffer, 2009). This event was unfortunately not the last, the city faced other smaller threats such as the church fires that took place throughout the southern area. According to Kendi (2019, p. 383), these murders that occurred in the city of Birmingham marked a massive backlash against the civil rights struggle and exposed the ugliness of American racism.

The many American uprisings that took place in the South during the 1950s gave the United States of America a new trajectory in terms of politics. In the struggle for freedom for black working-class people, African Americans had to make their gains, which depended on their activism in the cause. The Bus Boycott in the city of Montgomery was just such an early "wake-up call" (Ortiz, 2018, p. 140), with which one woman, Rosa Parks, is associated. O'Callaghan (1990) mentions an incident with Rosa Parks in particular when Rosa got on a bus in the town of Montgomery, Alabama, which was heavily segregated without anything. Under the laws of the time, which were supposed to separate blacks and whites in any situation, Rosa sat in the back of the bus, which was designated for black residents. As soon as the front of the bus became crowded and there was nowhere else to sit, the bus driver ordered her to make room. Rosa Parks refused to comply with his instructions, whereupon she was arrested for her actions. Other black residents of Montgomery supported this act. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was instrumental in convincing Rosa Parks to be released from jail.

Subsequently, a campaign to end segregation on bus transportation began, led by a young clergyman named Martin Luther King. Their strategy was to stop using or "boycott" public transportation. This boycott was ongoing for just over a year (O'Callaghan, 1990, p. 113). O'Callaghan (1990) further states that in 1956 the Supreme Court declared that segregation in mass transit was unconstitutional, therefore desegregation in transit was abolished. However, this boycott was significant in several senses. First and foremost, it is

considered one of the first mass protests in the history of the United States that was led for civil rights, and it also set the stage for other large-scale actions that took place outside of the court system that aimed to achieve just rights for African American citizens (History.com Editors, 2010). The second significant event was also when Martin Luther King became a national leader in the civil rights movement when he also solidified his commitment to nonviolent resistance (History.com Editors, 2010).

The peak of the civil rights movement was the massive 1963 protest in Washington, D.C., which was attended by over 200, 000 people, both black and white, who participated in this demonstration for racial equality (O'Callaghan, 1990, p. 113). At its most fundamental level, the law mentioned above was intended to provide the government with more power to protect citizens from discrimination because of their race, sex, or national origin. The Act also mandated the desegregation of all commonly used means of transportation or commonly used facilities. Additionally, the Act established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to ensure that minorities were protected in the workplace (History.com Editors, 2009). At the same time, Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech was delivered, which according to O'Callaghan (1990, p. 113) was watched by millions of American citizens via television screens. Martin L. King's words expressed his desire that one day this country could live in a state of belonging and equality between blacks and whites, where even children would not be judged based on differences in skin color but would be judged based on their character (O'Callaghan, 1990, p. 113).

Apparently at that time according to O'Callaghan (1990, p. 114) when John Kennedy was president blacks had his sympathies, hence he tried to create a plan for equal treatment of people of any race. Unfortunately, Kennedy did not see the law into effect because he was assassinated. His successor, Lyndon Johnson, included this bill as one of his first goals as president.

3 Racism in the United States today

The situation regarding racism as such has certainly changed in some way compared to the 20th century and the 21st century. However, sometimes we still encounter racism, whether it is in the news concerning the US, in the school environment or the work environment, or social life.

During the 1880s, blacks received recognition and great achievements in various fields, whether political, scientific, or relating to literature and linguistics, as well as in entertainment and sports. From this point on, blacks began to get involved in various fields, but not only blacks, but the white population also began to realize during these years that racism was a problem that should not persist.

However, a great example is the story of Oprah Winfrey, who managed to rise very high in her career despite a difficult childhood and a rough start. Winfrey specialized in television news and in 1984 she had the opportunity to take over a morning television talk show in Chicago, which allowed her to start her show 2 years later called *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, which became the most-watched show in history. Winfrey is best known for openly discussing a wide range of topics. Because of her popularity on all fronts, Winfrey was able to promote various works or projects. She especially promoted works by black women writers and started a film company that produced films based on novels. One of them is Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, which carries the message to never give up and always try to fight (Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopedia, 2000).

Another significant event was when in January 2009 Barack Obama was inaugurated as the 44th president of the United States. He was the first African American president to hold office (History.com, Editors). Barack Obama was not elected only once. He persisted in this position until 2017. Not only was Obama a great president, but he was also able to help many people who were struggling with the same problem/story of finding out information about their biracial identity (Obama, 1995).

The Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation, Inc. is a global organization operating in the US, UK, and Canada that aims to eradicate white supremacy, seeking to build local power to intervene in violence against black communities. The #BlackLivesMatter

movement itself was created in response to the murder of Trayvon Martin. His murder sparked nationwide protests.

#BlackLivesMatter is known in the context of the deaths of black civilians. The hashtag (#) was first used on Twitter in 2013. Over the next few years, there were many murders of black residents that caused great unrest. In 2016, Black Lives Matter brought more attention to the movement when San Francisco players took a knee during the anthem before a game, drawing attention to recent incidents of police brutality. And they were not alone, afterwards several other NFL players repeated the gesture.

Today it is very important to know about this issue, and even more important to have at least some awareness of what "racism" is. Another important element of this issue is having a conversation about this topic, as Oluo (2019) describes in her book *"So you want to talk about race"*. Some may be intimidated by this conversation or not know where to start. Racism as such is not going to disappear, there will always be some racism or cases, that deal with racism, but it is good to talk about this topic and try to understand it because anyone can encounter racism and should form their own opinion.

4 The portrayal of racism in *The Blind Side*

This chapter will look at the plot and scenes in which racism is depicted as being experienced by one of the main characters, Michael Oher, who is also nicknamed "Big Mike" and is portrayed by actor Quinton Aaron and his guardian family, the Tuohy. This film was based on a true story directed by John Lee Hancock and is set in the state of Tennessee.

This movie, as mentioned, the movie is set in the state of Tennessee. Michael Oher is recommended for admission to this school only because of his friend's father, who is applying for a spot at the school primarily for his son, whom he occasionally sleeps over since he has run away from every foster care situation. The physical education teacher with whom Michael's admission has been discussed tries to convince other members of the teaching staff to admit him despite his poor educational record because they see sporting potential in him. He convinces them at the expense of being a Christian school, because if they can't admit him based on his results, at least it's because it's the right thing to do (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 00:05:29 - 00:08:48).

Michael, therefore, attends the school where he was accepted but shows no effort to study or participate in other activities. He attends various sporting events where he then collects leftover food. Here he is noticed by Sean Tuohy but does not pay much attention to him. Next, his school performance is criticized by the faculty, whom they explain that Michael is not trying and is slow to speak, whereupon one of the teachers stands up for him and reads a text from a paper that Michael has written and thrown in the trash. The text expresses how he feels: 'I look around and I see white everywhere, white walls, white floors, and lots of white people. Michael does not feel at all comfortable at school and, most importantly, he does not feel like himself (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 00:12:57 – 00:13:59).

In the very next scene, Michael is walking through the school playground for smaller children, where he greets two little girls on a swing. However, they fear him and run away, whereupon a little boy from the Tuohy family named Sean Junior, better known as S.J., shows up and asks Michael to smile to let the girls know he's a friend next time. S.J. is then called to the car by Mrs. Tuohy, at which point he sees Michael for the first time and wonders who he is (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 00:14:07 – 00:15:04). Here we could see that Mike was being judged by his appearance and expression by two little girls, while he just said "hello", but then S.J.

appeared and without hesitation started talking to Mike. Right after this scene, Mike is told by the school principal that his father has died. Michael absorbs this news calmly on the outside but imagines situations from his childhood when he had to be removed from his mother's care with his brother, whom they separated. The director then asks him when he last saw his father, to which he replies that he does not remember (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 00:15:12 – 00:16:24).

Up next comes the key scene where Michael Oher meets the Tuohy family as they are driving home from their son S.J.'s school play and notice him walking on the side of the road in just a T-shirt as it rains outside. The family stops and asks him where he's going, whereupon Mike replies that to the school gym. The family then lets him continue, but Leigh Tuohy does not believe him, so she orders her husband to turn the vehicle around and drive closer to Mike. Leigh then asks Michael if he has a place to sleep tonight, to which Mike shakes his head that he has nowhere to sleep. Leigh then encourages him to get in their car and offers him a place to stay (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 00:19:11 – 00:20:58). However, after she prepares a place for him to sleep and she goes to lie down in her husband's bedroom, she has small doubts about stealing anything. She wakes up in the morning and goes to check on Michael, but he is gone. Leigh runs outside and sees Michael walking away down the driveway. She catches up with him and offers to spend Thanksgiving with them since she has no one or place to spend it with (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 00:21:40 - 00:24:48).

Mrs. Tuohy then asks if Mike likes to shop. Mike looks at her with a look of incomprehension and Leigh explains that the next day they will go shopping together for some clothes. The next day comes, and Michael and Leigh have a conversation in the car, while Mike is explaining that he has clothes and does not need any, to which Leigh replies that Mike should tell her where he has clothes and that they will go and get them, but Mike refuses to answer. Leigh then stops and tries to understand how his life works and who takes care of Mike. He still refuses to answer, whereupon Leigh challenges him to tell her at least one thing she needs to know. As mentioned, Michael is also nicknamed "Big Mike", so Leigh is asked not to call him that because he does not like it when people call him that. After that, there is a scene where Michael takes Leigh to the other side of town, where there are black ghettos but also poor neighborhoods. Mike tells her to stay in the car. He approaches the house where his biological mother used to live but sees a government eviction notice on the door and realizes that his mother has moved elsewhere while Leigh waits in the car, listening to the rude insinuations about her person from the black residents of the neighborhood. Michael subsequently returns to the car, and they go clothes shopping together (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 00:27:17 – 00:31:35).

The next day, Mrs. Tuohy meets her friends for lunch. She raises the question of whether any of them have ever visited the opposite part of the city she had the opportunity to visit. It should be noted that these women live a life above the norm, so their comments on the question Leigh are not surprising. Her friends replied that it would be dangerous to visit such a neighborhood and they could get hurt, to which one of the objects that it could hurt her reputation, which is perhaps the director's way of making it seem as if this type of person is a superior class. Kendi (2019, p. 151) describes this phenomenon as class racism, which is the racialization of classes and the promotion of the politics of racial capitalism that is directed against those racial classes. In layman's terms, any prejudice or discrimination is based on social class. Her friend wonders about her interest in the area, so she thinks it's some type of project that would make Leigh money. Leigh realizes how they feel about her looking after Michael, so she says nothing further (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 00:33:27 – 00:34:14). In their work, Qingya and Xiaojia (2020) describe "Heroes" or "saviors" who convey the idea of Western society that suggests these white men are the embodiment of kindness and justice and thus can help certain people in different situations or directly help them escape from suffering, including Michael. In this way, the audience is presented with an unwilling view of whites as "angels" and saviors. These values are often conveyed by Hollywood in films, which is implied in this scene.

Leigh must do some paperwork in case something happens to Michael since he is practically living with them now, but she learns that the tests the state conducts in 8th grade show a high percentage of protective instincts about Mike. Leigh uses this information later in the film (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 00:35:16).

In the film, is also seen the preparation for Christmas, with the Tuohy family taking a family photo, which they then send to all their friends and family. The Tuohy family invites Michael to take a photo with them as well, whereupon a family relative calls and comments on the presence of Michael in the photo. She refers to him as a "colored boy" which refers to his skin color (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 00:43:24 – 00:44:51). This phrase according to Oluo (2019, p. 15) is referred to as racist as the comment was made to a person of color. Whatever a person of color finds racist is automatically considered racist. In the film, not much weight was given to this comment and the Tuohy family rather brushed it off with a quick shrug.

Again, there is a situation in the film where Leigh is having lunch with her girlfriends, and they joke about how Mike looked next to her. There are comments like, "He looked like King Kong next to you," which refers to the monkey/gorilla, which is the name black people are often called. Another comment is that Leigh's husband could lose several restaurants in the

chains he owns because of her actions, letting Mike live with them. Whereupon the statement is made that Leigh might as well adopt Mike. Leigh begins to explain that Michael will soon be eighteen years old, therefore adoption is unnecessary. Everyone realizes what Leigh is up to and looks at her in amazement, wondering if she means it. One of their friends asks if Leigh is about "white guilt," which writer Jagoo in her article (2020) describes as awareness and recognition of unearned racial privilege, or the recognition of racist attitudes or behaviors, not only of one's person but of others. White privilege goes hand in hand with this when her friend mentions this comment. White citizens in some US states have certain privileges in different spheres, so there are inequalities for blacks where they may have less pay, they may be judged more quickly based on their skin color, they may even be sentenced to longer prison terms than a white person would be, for example. Leigh begins to defend Michael and herself by responding to all these comments by saying that she does not need them to approve of her decisions, only to respect them because the fact that Mike lives with them has opened her eyes in a way (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 00:44:48 – 00:45:56).

In the next scene, Leigh is having a conversation with her daughter Collins, where she asks her if it bothers her that Mike is staying with them. Collins replies that she does not mind, she just does not like the comments that her classmates make about Michael at school. This scene is followed by a scene in the library where Mike comes to study. Michael looks like he would like to sit with someone, but from the looks of the others, he decides that he would be better off sitting alone. Collins is also in the library and notices this and without hesitation goes to sit with Michael. He wonders for a moment, but Collins just replies that they study together at home too. Collins, by this act, has made it clear to everyone else that people of color should not be judged on this basis (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 00:46:46 – 00:48:48).

We also see a scene in the film where Leigh revisits a neighborhood on the other side of town looking for Michael's mother to ask if it's okay for her to become his guardian. His biological mother does not care but points out to Leigh that Mike has never lasted long in any foster home, always seeking it out to be with his mother. Leigh, however, is undeterred in her comments from adopting Leigh is not deterred from adopting him by her remarks, but the reason for her visit had another subtext; Leigh is trying to find out Michael's real surname so that she can adopt him, as this has not been possible so far (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 00:57:44-1:00:11). In a follow-up scene, the whole Tuohy family gets together and asks Michael if he would like to be part of their family by becoming his guardian. Michael is surprised because he already considered himself a member of the family (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 1:00:36 – 01:01:06). Michael

is given a new car by the Tuohy family, along with his driver's license. In the film, there is a situation where Mike is driving to town with SJ and they get into a car accident, in which Mike's quick maneuver strikes his arm in front of a firing airbag so that SJ is not injured. SJ should not be sitting in the front seat with his weight and height. Leigh quickly arrives at the scene, no one is seriously hurt, but Mike feels very guilty because he blames himself. Leigh then notices his bloody hand and it all makes sense to her that if Mike had not stopped the airbag, SJ could have had far more serious injuries (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 1:03:58 – 01:05:31).

Fast forward, Mike joins the football team and starts training for his first game. However, the coach is having trouble communicating with Michael, so in one scene we see Leigh storm onto the football practice field and try to explain the game to Mike in a way that is simplified and easier for him to understand. She explains the game to him using the parable of the family to make him act like he wants to protect his family, which is now the Tuohy family. Michael then understands the game and performs excellently and is unstoppable. Leigh used the information she got from the counselor at the school regarding the tests the pupils were doing. Michael scored high on the protection instinct, which Leigh used in explaining the game, and Mike also used it during the car crash which has already been mentioned here (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 1:06:12 – 01:08:57).

The film gets to the part where the football team plays their first game with Michael. The whole family has come to support him in the stands, except for Collins, who is a cheerleader. As soon as the team runs onto the football field, there is a comment in the audience directed at Michael that it's not fair that "Big Black Bear" is playing for the team, which seems to be a reference to his skin color and his stature. In the past, blacks appeared in circuses, but in the early 19th century it was a rather dangerous place for them, as they were often indistinguishable from animals. An example would be the Muse Brothers who were albino black brothers kidnapped from their mother by a bounty hunter and forced to perform in a circus (Sawari, 2017). But these were not the only comments that were directed at Michael. As the saying goes "the apple does not fall far from the tree", which is why we also hear abuse from the boy who is the son of the man who made the comments in the audience. He is trying to upset Michael with these comments in the first place, and to some extent, he is succeeding. Until Leigh steps in when she tries to reach the coach on his cell phone. He refuses the help, but eventually listens to her and translates what Leigh said to Mike over the phone, which works immediately and Michael's team wins. It is also crucial to add that Mike "pushed" the player who provoked him to the bus. He defended his players too well. That's how he made his name

in the movie, so to speak (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 1:10:20-1:18:28). Furthermore, in the film, many American football scouts try to recruit Michael for their college team because they were captivated by his abilities. But for Michael to be accepted at all, he must improve his grades at school (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 1:19:50- 1:23:50). Here comes the scene where Leigh seeks out Mike for tutoring. A tutor who was not hired at the school applied for the job because she was not religious enough for them. She wonders why there is so much pressure on Mike, and Leigh explains that if Mike improves his grades, he has a chance to get a sports scholarship. A key, but not so significant, piece of information is mentioned here, which comes out towards the end of the film. The tutor asks if Mike is considering Ole Miss, which is the University of Mississippi, the prestigious college where both Leigh and her husband attended. It is not as apparent here, but it seems that Leigh already has a plan for Mike, but he does not know it yet (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 1:24:04 – 1:25:00).

In the following minutes of the film, we see Mike trying to improve his school performance with the help of the tutor and accepting one college offer after another. SJ helps him with this. In one scene, a scout from the University of Mississippi, the already mentioned Ole Miss, comes in and tries to convince Michael to play for the university. Only, before he even starts talking to Michael, Leigh gives him suggestions on what to say and what not to say in front of him, which results in some light manipulation. Michael is leaning towards the University of Tennessee, so he does not take the offer from the University of Mississippi too seriously. The highlight of said "manipulation" is a story from the tutor who tells Michael about the University of Tennessee, how they are working with the FBI, and that they are storing the remaining body parts under the playground. However, we do not see in the film if it was Leigh's intention for the tutor to tell him this story or if it was her initiative. This situation may also imply that Michael is not that well educated and had a very bad childhood, constantly running away from his foster families. Therefore, he was unable to fully disclose this intention to convince him of where he should play. It follows, then, that Mike pledges himself to Ole Miss University, under a minor manipulation that he has unfortunately not yet realized (*The Blind Side*, 2009,1:26:26 - 1:32:56).

Thanks to his improved grades, Michael will graduate and have a fresh start at Ole Miss, but unfortunately, he was approached by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), who had some questions for him. The reason Mike was called in for an interview was because of his still underwhelming grade-point average (GPA), but it also examined his decision to

attend and represent Ole Miss. In the film, Mike is very confused by these questions, at the beginning of the conversation, but soon realizes that his decision was not based on his preferences, but on his foster parents and a tutor who also studied at this university, which is only known in this scene when Mike is questioned. Mike cannot withstand this assault and leaves the room. Leigh waits for him outside and as soon as they meet, Mike accuses her of manipulating him. Leigh has no way to defend herself because everything Michael has said is true, so she angrily walks away, and no one knows where. (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 1:37:57 - 1:40:40). In the very next scene, however, we see Leigh questioning her conscience and realizing that she had not asked Michael where he wanted to go to college, and she understood the NCAA's suspicions (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 1:43:39 – 01:44:53). Michael then visits the other side of the city where he comes from and tries to find his mother. He meets one of the local drug dealers who offers him to come in for a beer and they can talk. Michael accepts the offer and follows him inside, where he sits down and listens to the others talking amongst themselves. The dealer starts making snide remarks about Leigh and her daughter, and Michael can't stand it because despite what happened between them, he still likes them. This starts a little fight between Mike and the dealer, they must be pulled apart. Mike knows that any talk from a man who lives on that level is not worth it and walks away, realizing that he is been given a second chance with Tuohy's family and that he never wants to end up like this. (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 1:45:18 - 1:48:50).

Leigh sets out to find Michael and as one of the last places, she visits the neighborhood where Michael was the night before. She runs into the dealer, and he starts threatening her and Michael right after Leigh has taken it upon herself to leave. Leigh turns back to him and defends Michael, saying that he is her son now and that she will defend him as her child and threatens him for carrying a gun, which is not entirely true, but she was trying to intimidate him with it. Leigh then gets a call from Michael who calls her to tell her where he is, and she then comes to get him. They then have a conversation about his past. Leigh does not understand how he could have gotten out of the situation he was in the night before because it was an escalated fight with guns. Mike reveals what his mother used to say to him when she was doing drugs. She always told him to close his eyes and stay calm, that the bad stuff would go away in a minute, and that's exactly what he did in that situation because he knew it could get much worse. Of course, they also discuss whether Mike even wants to play football when he's been manipulated into it a bit, he nods yes, whereupon Leigh suggests he go play for the University of Tennessee, which he originally wanted to play for, but since his foster parents' dislike that varsity team, they forced

Ole Miss on him. Leigh subsequently promises to support his decision, and that she should have done so from the start. (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 1:49:18 – 1:53:22).

Unfortunately, Mike must go back to the NCAA for a hearing because he bailed. The interviewer asks him again why his family wants him to go to Ole Miss, whereupon Mike replies that she's only asked his family's opinion and has not asked him yet. He replies that he wants to go to this university because his family members went to this university, so the University of Tennessee will have to spare Michael because he finally decided to go to Ole Miss. The final scene of the film only shows the Tuohy family saying goodbye to Michael on the university campus. Mike is grateful to everyone for accepting him into their family and plans to continue to represent it (*The Blind Side*, 2009, 1:53:30 - 1:56:25).

5 The portrayal of racism in *The Hate U Give*

Directed by George Tillman Jr., "*The Hate You Give*" has the same title as the novel on which this film was based. The author of this book is Angie Thomas, and the book was published in 2017 the movie followed the very next year, 2018. This story is based on real events when in 2009, police officers shot an unarmed black man named Oscar Grant in Oakland, California.

Starr Carter, who is the main character in this film, is a black teenager who is adept at code-switching between the black community in Garden Heights and the prep school in the flamboyantly white and affluent Williamson neighborhood where her siblings also attend. The film is thus set in Garden Heights, an inner-city neighborhood that is fictional but matches the Georgetown neighborhood of Jackson, Mississippi. We first meet Star in a scene where the whole family is sitting around a table and their stern-talking father, Maverick, is teaching his children what they should do when they are pulled over by a police officer in the car, they are riding in. He describes how they should remain calm, put their hands on the dashboard and do what the officer tells them to do. If they drop something, they are to disregard it and stay in the position he explained at the beginning. He explains to them that this is how they must behave in case they are stopped by a police officer and no other way because it is dangerous for them (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 0:02:11)

The story then shifts to a time when Starr is a 16-year-old teenager. The scene begins at her home, where she is getting ready for school and talking about Garden Heights, where you always must be on guard. The scene then moves to her school in the Williamson neighborhood. With her school friends, the old lady is careful to use proper English and watches her tone of voice lest someone call her an "angry black girl." However, when Starr talks to her friends in Garden Heights, she exclusively uses slang and ghetto language. Starr understands that the only way to solve the dilemma she has is to keep the two worlds separate and not even try to combine them (Ugo, 2022). She utters the line about herself, I hate myself for doing this, implying that she does not feel like herself. Starr plays basketball for the school team, where she has a couple of teammates, whom she is close to and enjoys spending time with and finds love with her white classmate named Chris (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, :00:03:17-00:09:39).

The next scene moves back to Garden Heights, where a so-called "house party" takes place in a house. Starr feels comfortable here, but not sure she quite belongs. Her friend Kenya invited her here. In the first few minutes of this scene, Starr's other side comes out. Her vocabulary has changed, she uses harsher words and even vulgar words. She and her friend Kenya, whom she came here with, get into a little argument, which is interrupted by a few people who start teasing Starr about how she is not used to this type of party and that she is more used to the ones her white classmates' throw, but she does not object, probably because she agrees. Kenya goes to settle a dispute with a girl from her school and leaves Starr alone. However, Starr is not left alone for long, as her friend and first love Khalil has arrived at the party. They carry on a conversation for a while and Starr notices what he is wearing, which is expensive clothes, and jewelers, which is unusual for the kind of background he comes from. Starr assumes that Khalil works for a dealer in this town, but before he can ask him about it, a fight breaks out in the house, where gunshots are heard. Everyone makes a run for it. Starr gets into a car with Khalil, and they drive off to somewhere safe (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 13:14 - 19:26).

Khalil and Starr are walking around the city talking and listening to music. Khalil introduces the phrase: Thug life, which Starr does not understand, and Khalil explains it (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 19:27). Phrase thug life is used for a person who came from nothing and built themselves up to be something. THUG stands for "The Hate U Give". This phrase is commonly misinterpreted to mean "criminal life," which is not as mentioned above (Slang Dictionary, 2012).

Then they stop for a moment and talk. You can see the affection on both sides, and they reminisce about their childhood, in which they largely lived together. It all leads to them eventually kissing, despite Starr having a boyfriend. Eventually, they agree to continue driving, with Khalil driving Starr home. After they drive off for a while, they see the red and blue lights of a police car in the rear-view mirror, whereupon they must pull over. Starr immediately does as her father taught her and puts her hands on the dashboard so that they can be seen and orders Khalil to do the same. However, he initially refuses, knowing that they have done nothing wrong, but eventually, Starr obeys. The officer approaches his car and asks him to roll down the window and then asks him to produce his driver's license. Instead of producing his license, Khalil asks the cop what he needs it for because after all, they did not do anything. The debate continues and Khalil refuses to produce his driver's license, so the police officer asks him to get out of the car. Starr quickly pulls out her phone because she wanted to get proof, but the officer

asks her to put the phone down and she obeys. You can see the great fear in her expression. The officer will search Khalil to see if he has any weapons or drugs on him. Khalil hands over his driver's license and the officer walks to his car so he can check the license to see if it is valid. He orders Khalil to keep his hands on the roof of the car and not to move. Starr starts looking for her phone so she can record everything but can't find it. Khalil leans into the car and asks her if she is okay. However, Starr orders him to go back to his seat because he might be in trouble, but Khalil takes it lightly and disobeys her. He leans into the car and takes a comb in his hand and combs through his hair when at that moment shots are fired, and Khalil falls to the ground. Starr runs out of the car to help him, but the police officer handcuffs her and sits her next to the car. Starr pleads with the policeman to help Khalil, but he pays no attention to her and looks for the supposed weapon, which however is a comb, which he then sees on the ground and figures it all out. Starr tries to communicate with Khalil, but he succumbs to his injuries before the ambulance arrives (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 00:24:49 – 00:29:04). Oluo (2020, p. 81) describes in her book that in situations such as these, evidence and witnesses are the only defense against police brutality. She also briefly describes here how she was stopped by a police officer in this way and before he could reach her, she managed to send a message to her family that she had just been stopped by the police. The message is sent for one reason only, and that is to make her family and friends aware if anything were to happen, just as it did to Khalil in *The Hate U Give* (2018).

Starr is then taken to the police station, where they question her about what happened that night. Her mother is sitting with her, and her father is also at the station. Starr is asked questions about Khalil, what kind of life he led and what he did for a living but is not asked about the events that took place. This upsets Starr when a policeman, who happens to be her uncle, interrupts the questioning, and takes her away. (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 29:12-32:27)

A few scenes later, there is a memorial event for Khalil, hosted by his mother. Starr then has a conversation with her, where he reveals that Khalil did indeed sell drugs for a local dealer whom they refer to as King. Starr's uncle also shows up to offer his condolences to Khalil's mother. Subsequently, Starr, her mother, and her father go outside the house with her uncle and have a conversation about how to deal with the act that was carried out by the policeman who killed Khalil. Unfortunately, nothing has happened so far, and Starr will have to testify, which her mother does not like because this way everyone will know that she witnessed the event and will have a target on her back, both from the media and from the dealers in Garden Heights (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 00:34:41 – 00:38:29).

Starr tries to keep calm at school and act as if nothing happened. News of Khalil's death is broadcast in the ghetto, and it is also said that a witness will have to appear before a grand jury, which Starr is naturally afraid of. At that moment, Kenya, her friend, is with her and knows that Starr is the witness. The scene shifts to the street, where Kenya asks Starr what she's going to do and if she'll stand up for Khalil. However, they are interrupted by an approaching car driven by King, who is Kenya's father, and he orders them to get in. Starr refuses, but King is insistent and offers her a ride to Starr's father's shop. King knows that Starr has witnessed a murder and tries to somehow explain to her that he sympathizes with her, having experienced countless such situations. But he also makes it clear in his way that he's watching her. When they pull up in front of the store, Father Starr goes to sit in King's car, where they have a conversation that is about King's business. King is afraid that he might be exposed by this investigation and could be put in custody. King wanted to make it clear that if there is a problem, he will have to act in his favor, whereupon Maverick responds the same (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 00:38:30 – 00:44:44).

Khalil's funeral follows, which is very difficult for Starr. April O'Frah, who works for a firm that works for justice for the black population, also attends the funeral. Right at the funeral, she mentions the information, the police are not going to arrest the officer for the crime he committed, despite there being a witness. April tries to bring attention to this situation because this situation is repeated, where police brutality is used, where innocent lives are lost, whereupon the crowd becomes loud in approval. (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 00:49:44 – 00:53:59) To quote community organizer Shamell Bell, "It is impossible to be unarmed when our blackness is a weapon to be feared" (Gradesaver, 2018). He then invites everyone to participate in a silent march to the police station after the service (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 00:54: 00 – 00:54:41).

Unfortunately, the peaceful march to the police station was not so peaceful. Garden Heights was dominated by the emotions of everyone who attended the march. It's all being broadcast live on TV news, which they are watching at Starr's home. Her boyfriend is also watching the news and immediately calls her to see if they are okay, unfortunately, their conversation is interrupted by a knock on the door. Maverick goes to the door and looks to see whom it is before opening it. April O'Frah is standing at their door, hoping to talk to Starr. April tries to explain to her that Starr needs her to speak for Khalil, in the sense of going to court and trying to clear his name. However, her mother is against it because she is afraid that Starr might be in danger and April understands that she should be on her way out. But then Starr starts

telling a story about her 10-year-old friend who was shot in the ghetto while the kids were playing basketball. A car pulled up and a hand was extended, and three shots rang out, and unfortunately one of them was fatal to her friend. Starr remained silent before that because she knew who did it. Unfortunately, Starr was afraid to talk about it because she might get in trouble, but after the incident with Khalil, she decided not to keep quiet anymore. However, she is afraid to go public and to the media and talk openly about what happened, so April will offer her legal help in case she decides to start talking about it all (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 00:57: 18 - 01:03:20).

The next day, Starr is walking to school as normal when he sees his classmates running through the halls cheering that their school has been canceled. Starr is surprised, whereupon her friend replies that it is because of some protest going on in town. At that moment, they meet another friend of theirs, who puts a paper in her hands that has Khalil's picture on it. Starr knows which one is beating but tries to keep her cool and not let on that she knows anything about the situation. Starr, of course, expresses her opinion that she simply thinks the protest is not a reason to cancel school, but her friends contradict her and take the situation lightly. They then find themselves outside the school, where all the students are celebrating the fact that they do not have to be in school, and occasionally some #BlackLivesMatter banners can be spotted. Starr is very worried about this because no one has any idea what this is about. She then leaves (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 01:03:29 - 01:05:12).

After this incident, Starr decides to defend Khalil's name because she does not like how the situation is being downplayed and used for others' benefit. Starr then goes for an interview, which is subsequently televised. However, the questions start to be more directed at Khalil's life and his job, which as mentioned was selling drugs, and the interview starts to go in a different direction than Starr and April wanted. But Starr will not stop there and reveals what gang Khalil worked for, this of course is heard by King who is watching the interview. The reporter who is interviewing Starr asks more and more questions that have nothing to do with the topic when Starr interrupts her and asks her why she is only asking about Khalil's life when this whole issue is about the shooting of an innocent young man by a police officer. The reporter asks her one last question, and that is what Starr would tell Officer One-fifteen. Starr answers whether Officer One-fifteen regrets not shooting her outright as well, alluding to the fact that there might not be a grand jury trial (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 01:07:20 - 01:09:32). Starr often refers to the policeman in the film as just One-fifteen, because that's the number of the badge the policeman was wearing on his uniform when he arrested Khalil along with Starr, and she

often refers to him that way for two reasons. She was taught to always remember the badge number because she was told about juvenile age police officers. The second reason she does not want to call him by his proper name is that Starr is refusing to make him human or sympathize with him (Ugo, 2022).

In the next scene, Starr is with one of her friends. They spend time together in front of the television playing video games, but one of their friends notices that Starr is absent in spirit and turns off the television. She tries to figure out what's bothering Starr, but she snaps at every answer. They go back to watching TV, where they broadcast a news report about a police officer named Brian Macintosh, also called One-fifteen. On the TV, a line is said that the policeman has received death threats, whereupon one of their friends replies that it's terrible and that she feels sorry for the family going through this. Starr registers this and is devastated by it because they both have different opinions on the situation and Starr has no way to resolve the situation, so she starts to leave but her friend stops her. Only Starr is very frustrated and does not want to talk about anything further. During another brief conversation, they get into a small argument, with Starr asking one of them a question that indirectly labels her a racist, which causes the girl to leave (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 01:16:39 – 01:19:50).

Next up is the school dance, which Starr plans to go to with her boyfriend. She arrives at the prom alone and experiences stares from her classmates. This is because they have all made up their minds that Starr is the witness in the Khalil shooting case. Chris is waiting for her at the door with a reproachful look. They sit down in the limo that her boyfriend ordered for this evening and have a conversation about what Starr is going through. Chris argues that Starr should have told him what was going on, that he would have understood, whereupon Starr replies that he did not. Chris does not understand what Starr must go through every day, how he must change his personality when she is here at school and then at Garden Heights. Chris responds by telling her that he does not distinguish skin color though, that all people are human despite their color. But Starr replies that it is a problem if he can't see her blackness because that is her identity, her culture, whereupon Chris replies that he is aware of all that and respects it (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 01:22:33 – 01:25:56). Many African writers (Anyanwu 1983, Falola 2016, & Dickson, 1985) agree that when one speaks of culture as such, it is a complex entity that is embodied by the African - American both in the community and in the lifelong process. Knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, and customs are considered African culture and cannot be ignored.

Chris then drives Starr and her brother Seven home. He insisted because he wanted to meet her father. When they arrive home, her father thinks Chris is just the chauffeur, but Maverick's wife leads him astray. Maverick then asks Starr who she is, whereupon she replies that Chris is her boyfriend. Starr's mother suggests that Chris go home, as surely everyone must be tired. Maverick then has a conversation with Starr about her boyfriend, saying several times that he is white and that it is likely that daughters usually choose someone who is like her father, which is not true in this case, at least in Maverick's early judgment, which Starr leads him astray from. Everything clears up, but this moment is interrupted by a few shots through the window. No one is hurt, but Maverick looks for his gun and goes outside the house. Unfortunately, he did not catch the culprit. These shots were a warning to Starr to be cautious of what she reveals about Garden Heights to the grand jury, specifically about the local drug gang. Maverick then drives the whole family to see his uncle in a safer neighborhood and goes back to the house with his son, Eleven, in case King returns (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 01:28:35 – 01:33:43).

The next morning, Uncle has a conversation with Starr about the incident. She tells him that she does not understand why he must go before a grand jury to decide if there will be a trial because she believes the guilt is clear and it's Officer One-Fifteen's fault. Her uncle then explains to her what all goes on in a police officer's head when he stops someone like that, for a roadside check. He explains to her what all a police officer must consider in a situation to properly evaluate what is going on. He further explains to her that when a police officer searches a suspicious person and asks him to stand still, but the person disobeys and starts, for example, to open the door or lean into the car, the officers assume that he is reaching for a weapon. Starr asks his uncle to put himself in the same situation, but to just imagine that he is in a white neighborhood and that he has stopped a man in a suit, asking him if he would also shoot or if he would yell for him to put his hands up. The uncle replies that he would shout his hands up. She then asks him if he can hear himself, which he has just answered, but he only replies that they live in a very complicated world, whereupon Starr angrily walks away (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 01:34:06 - 01:36:41). Picking up on the story by Oluo (2018, p.81-84) which has already been mentioned, it also describes a situation where the young writer, Oluo, was stopped by the police in her car when she was only sixteen and when asked for her vehicle documents, she quickly rushed into the glove compartment when the police officer shouted at her to stop immediately. The officer then lectured her that she must never do anything in front of a police officer without first announcing out loud what she was about to do because this was a very unpleasant way to get shot, she then explained. Later in this chapter, she describes how she can

never be sure whether it was prejudice against her race, or whether it was just a coincidence that she was stopped. The situation thus implies, that often only black residents are targeted, across the country, meaning in the US, in every neighborhood, people of color are disproportionately criminalized.

The next scene is where Starr is at school. Her friend Hailey comes to see her, but Starr makes no eye contact or conversation. She starts referring to the shooting of Khalil and sides with the police officer who thought the comb Khalil was holding was a gun. At that moment, Starr pulls the comb out of Hailey's side pocket on her backpack and starts threatening Hailey with it and yelling at her not to move, trying to create the situation that happened during the shooting. Hailey lies on the ground crying and Starr decides to leave when she runs into Chris. He takes her to the car when Starr has a tantrum, and then she gets a text message from her friend Kenya, from Garden Heights, asking her to come to get her brother Seven because King beat him up. Chris goes with her, they pick up Seven and drive him to the hospital, but they run into a protest. Everyone on the street shouts, "Right for Khalil". No one in the car understands what is going on until they look at the phone and find out that the grand jury has ruled in favor of the policeman and has no recourse (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 01:39:06 – 01:45:17).

The protest continues and Starr cannot stand it and at one point gets out of the car and runs out into the street among the protesters. They all run after her. Starr feels that she must attend the protest, that it is her duty. She arranges with Chris to take her friend Kenya and her sister somewhere safe and the injured Seven stays with Starr. The protest stretches through the streets and even the young children take part. By the time the protest march turns the corner onto the next street, the police are ready to intervene and block the street. A policeman calls on everyone to disperse the protest, but this does not happen. April is also in the parade and starts to rally the crowd. Starr seeks her out and April asks if she's ready to use her "gun," meaning her account of what happened. Starr climbs onto the car and grabs a megaphone and leads the speech. She confesses to everyone that she witnessed this tragedy. She encourages everyone to fight for the justice that is theirs. This protest is no longer just about Khalil's death, but about equality for all citizens (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 1:45:51 – 1:51:35). Then Starr states, "Everyone wants to talk about how Khalil died. This is not about how Khalil died. This is about how he lived. Khalil lived! His life mattered!" (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 1:51:41). She then repeats this phrase that Khalil lived, and his life mattered several times until the police officer orders their separation, which unfortunately does not take place again, and the police are forced to intervene.

Starr is outraged and tries to stay, but the police create pressure and are forced to use tear gas, causing Starr and Seven to retreat somewhere safe. After a few minutes of trying to find some sort of escape route, a car pulls up in front of them, from which a man asks if the Mavericks are children. They reply that they are, and the men offer a helping hand and load them into the back of their pick-up truck. Starr asks them to drive them to their father's store. Starr runs out of the truck and opens the store. The men run inside looking for milk because it helps with the tear gas. They then pour it on both Starr and Seven's faces to relieve the pain in their eyes that was caused by the tear gas. When the car drives away, the shot shows Lord and one of his men waiting outside the store. His companion moves away, and King remains in place. Starr and Seven are sitting in the store listening to messages from Starr's mother when the door opens and the man who was with King sets the store on fire. They both try to escape through the back entrance, but it is locked. Starr tries to break through the door since Seven is injured but fails. The fire is spotted by other businessmen on that street, and they run to the store to see what's going on. They see Starr and Seven trying to get out. Just then, Maverick arrives and unlocks the back door. King is still watching the whole situation (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 01:52:39 – 01:58:16).

King runs to the store, having warned Maverick several times that something like this would happen. Maverick has a gun tucked into his belt, but before he can get to King, Sekani, Maverick's youngest son, manages to pull it out from under his belt and point it in King's direction. He yells for his father to leave him alone. The police arrive on the scene. Starr sees the officers running out of the car, guns in hand. No one moves. Starr explains that what is happening is the result of hatred, Sekani is a little boy who is not to blame for anything and probably does not even understand it yet, but hatred made him act this way. But then he says that it's not just his hatred, but their shared hatred, and he wants to break the cycle by having Starr raise his hands above his head and slowly stand in front of Sekani. Sekani puts his gun down and so do the officers (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 01:58:48 – 02:00:47).

King was subsequently arrested for the fire based on witnesses who saw what happened that evening. Things have straightened out in the Carter family. So did the school, except for his friendship with Hailey. Starr does not want a one-sided friendship when he has real friends. The final scene is in Khalil's room when Starr came to visit his mother and she offered to take anything she wanted from the room. Starr takes his magic wand, which they used to play magic with when they were little. Starr will never forget Khalil and will never stop being who he is

and will never stop keeping quiet. Eventually, she decides not to have two faces anymore and decides to be just one Starr (*The Hate U Give*, 2018, 02:01:58 – 02:05:58).

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to compare the portrayal of racism in two American films, *The Blind Side* and *The Hate U Give*. The main objective of this thesis was to find similarities and differences between the films, which was accomplished.

The first part of the thesis explains important concepts related to racism. It is important to familiarize yourself with these concepts for a better understanding of this issue. The chapter briefly summarizes concepts such as race and segregation that are inherent in this thesis.

The next chapter, the history of racism chapter was intended to give the reader an outline of the development of racism in the United States of America and to mention the most important historical events for the black population in America.

The last two chapters were mainly devoted to the analysis of the films, where the main scenes in which racism was depicted and the plot of the whole film were analyzed. Here the expectation was to find the same or similar or different situations concerning racism. The films have a nine-year difference between them when they were made, so there is a slight difference in the scenes concerning racism. Films are set in different states in America, they are given insight into two areas, with the first film, *The Blind Side* is set in a white affluent neighborhood and *The Hate U Give* being set more in a black neighborhood. The first film depicts the story of Michael Oher, a homeless and traumatized boy who became a famous football player, thanks to the family who took custody of him. The second film is based on the book, with Starr Carter as the main character, who lives a "double life" and tries to figure out how to reconcile the two. This film is also more concerned with the theme of police brutality, which is very high and recurring in some American states, whereas *The Blind Side* has more of a message of inclusion, the benefits of hard work, and the importance of family. Both films feature prejudice against people of color and their position in a society that condemns them.

Overall, both films feature scenes related to racism that is seen in the everyday lives of African American citizens. African American people who came to America years ago have been fighting for equality ever since, even though laws were changed years ago, (demonstrated in chapter 2) still, these people face discrimination and prejudice which then leads to racism. In summary, racism has been, is, and will be an issue because people will not stop having prejudices against people.

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The Blind Side. 2009. [film] Directed by John Lee Hancock

The Hate You Give. 2018. [film] Directed by George Tillman Jr.

Resumé

Tato práce se zabývá tématem rasismus v Amerických filmech, se dvěma konkrétními příklady a je dále rozdělena do 4 hlavních kapitol.

První kapitola stručně popisuje pojmy spojené s touto problematikou, které je dobré znát pro lepší orientaci v tomto tématu.

Druhá kapitola nabídne čtenáři náhled do historických událostí v Americe, které se týkaly rasismus, a jsou také důležitými událostmi pro Afroamerické občany, které jsou například: začátky otroctví v USA, občanská válka a emancipace, a především boj za rovnoprávnost, kde jsou zmíněny důležité události, které se staly právě pro tento boj za rovná občanská práva. V poslední podkapitole se nachází krátké shrnutí dnešní situace v Americe a pár známých jmen, které jsou pro mnohé velkým vzorem.

Třetí kapitola se věnuje vyobrazení rasismus ve filmu *The Blind Side* z roku 2009, který je režíroval John Lee Hancock. Tento film je situován ve státě Tennessee a byl natočen podle pravdivého příběhu Michaela Ohera, který je chudý a bez domova. Příběh se odehrává převážně v bělošské čtvrti, kdy si Michaela všimne jedna matka z rodiny Tuohy a rozhodne se Michaela pečovat a zajistit mu dobré zázemí pro život, které doposud neměl. Mike díky svému vzrůstu a schopnostem má velký předpoklad k tomu stát se výborným fotbalovým hráčem, bohužel jeho školní výsledky jsou nedostačující, a proto se mu Leigh Tuohy, kterou hraje Sandra Bullock, snaží pomoci. Mike se potýká s předsudky vůči jeho vzrůstu a barvě pleti, to však neplatí v říší fotbalu. Ovšem náhlá žádost o opatrovnictví a jiné okolnosti, donutí určité osoby z asociace fotbalové ligy pro univerzity tato skutečnost zajímat a začne se tato situace vyšetřovat, zda nemá ještě nějaký jiný význam. Film prezentuje téma začlenění, výhody tvrdé práce a význam rodiny s prvky rasismu, jelikož Mike žije s bělošskou rodinou, což není časté.

Ve čtvrté kapitole se čtenář dočte o dalším filmu, který tato práce rozebírá a je to film *The Hate U Give*. Film je z roku 2018 a režisérem je George Tillman Jr. a má knižní předlohu od spisovatelky Angie Thomas. Film pojednává o šestnácti leté teenagerce Starr Carterové, která vede dvojitý život. Film je posazen do fiktivního ghetta ve státě Mississippi, kde Starr bydlí se svou rodinou, ale školu navštěvuje ve vedlejší čtvrti, která je ve filmu popisována jako bohatá bělošská čtvrť, kde se vám nemůže nic stát. Starr se stane svědkem vraždy svého dobrého kamaráda Khalila, který byl zastřelen neprávem. Hlavní hrdinka v sobě bojuje se sporem, zda

mluvit, nebo mlčet o událostech v televizi, kterým byla svědkem, protože se jedná o její bezpečí a bezpečí její rodiny, z důvodů, kdy by mohli být ohroženi místním gangem, pro který Khalil pracoval. Starr se nakonec rozhodne mluvit a čelí s rodinou několika nepříjemným útokům od gangu, za to, že promluvila o události v televizi. Nakonec musí Starr předstoupit před velkou porotu, kde se rozhodne, jestli policistu, který spáchal tento čin potrestají nebo ho nechají bez viny. Bohužel je policista zbaven viny a ve městě se strhne veliký protest, který už není úplně tak o Khalilovi, jako o policejní brutalitě páchané na černých obyvatelích. Film zkoumá, jak společnost využívá stereotypy o černoších k ospravedlnění násilí a rasismu vůči nim.

V poslední kapitole se nachází shrnutí všech předešlých kapitol a také se zde nachází porovnání filmů. Zde je zmíněn rozdíl let mezi filmy, tudíž problematika rasismu se posunula dále a některé scény jsou mírnějšího rázu a některé jsou spíše realistické. Každý z filmů ukazuje život v jiné části města. První film se spíše odehrává v bělošské čtvrti a místy je viděno ghetto, kdežto u druhého filmu vidíme pravý opak. V obou filmech jsou ukázány předsudky vůči barevným lidem a jejich postavení ve společnosti, která je odsuzuje.

Metody použité v této práci je teoretická analýza kulturních věd a historicko-biografická analýza a prameny, ze kterých bylo čerpáno, představují knihy, články a filmy. Hlavními prameny byly zejména knihy o americké historii a také mnoho článků spojené s touto problematikou. Poslední metoda, užitá v této práci, byla samotná analýza filmů, kde hlavním zdrojem byl film samotný a dále jiné studie, týkající se tohoto tématu.

ANOTACE

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Název práce:	Rasismus v Amerických filmech: Dva současné příklady
Název v angličtině:	Racism in US films: Two Current Examples
Anotace práce:	Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá problematikou rasismu v Amerických filmech. Cílem práce je porovnat tyto jevy. Práce je rozdělena do čtyř kapitol. První kapitola se zabývá pojmy spojeným s rasismem. Druhá kapitola se věnuje historii rasismu v USA. Následně třetí kapitola se zabývá vyobrazením rasismu ve filmu <i>The Blind Side</i> a čtvrtá kapitola se zabývá vyobrazením rasismu ve filmu <i>The Hate U Give</i> .
Klíčová slova:	Rasismus, rasismus v USA, americké filmy, <i>The Blind Side</i> , <i>The Hate U Give</i>
Anotace v angličtině:	This bachelor thesis deals with the issue of racism in American films. The thesis aims to compare these phenomena. The thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter deals with the concepts associated with racism. The second chapter deals with the history of racism in the USA. Subsequently, the third chapter deals with the depiction of racism in the film <i>The Blind Side</i> and the fourth chapter deals with the depiction of racism in the film <i>The Hate U Give</i> .
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Racism, racism in the USA, US films, <i>The Blind Side</i> , <i>The Hate U Give</i>
Přílohy k závěrečné práci:	
Rozsah práce:	32
Jazyk práce	Angličtina