

Deconstruction of Historical Facts In The Film 'Anne Boleyn' (2021)

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Abstract

The film Anne Boleyn (2021) recounts the historical narrative focusing on the tragic final years of Anne Boleyn, the Queen of England, from 1533 to 1536. However, controversy arose due to the inclusion of several black actors in roles deemed inconsistent with an accurate representation of a medieval-themed film portraying a non-fictional historical figure. This research aims to unveil the deconstruction strategies applied to historical facts in the 'Anne Boleyn' (2021). Data were gathered from literature and the film, and the analysis employed Derrida's textual deconstruction theory. The findings reveal film presents a narrative of deconstruction primarily through the practice of blackwashing, by casting a Black actress to portray the historically White figure of Anne Boleyn. This illustrates deconstructive elements characterized by fluidity in describing characters in an attempt to reinterpret history and expand interpretations of the past. Moreover, this narrative is not devoid of efforts to enhance the visibility of black representation in the film industry, particularly within Hollywood cinema.

Keywords: *Anne Boleyn (2021); Blackwashing; Derrida's Deconstruction; Film; History and Film.*

Abstrak

Film Anne Boleyn (2021) merupakan film yang mengangkat kisah sejarah yang berfokus pada akhir kehidupan Anne Boleyn, Ratu Inggris pada tahun 1533-1536. Namun pada rilisnya, film ini memicu kontroversi luas karena peran sejumlah aktor kulit hitam yang dinilai bukan representasi tepat bagi film dengan latar belakang abad pertengahan yang mengangkat tokoh non-fiksi bertema sejarah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap strategi dekonstruksi fakta sejarah yang dilakukan dalam film Anne Boleyn (2021). Data penelitian dikumpulkan melalui studi pustaka yang relevan dan analisis film Anne Boleyn (2021) melalui teori dekonstruksi teks Derrida. Hasil temuan menunjukkan bahwa film tersebut menghadirkan narasi dekonstruksi melalui praktik *blackwashing* dengan memilih aktris berkulit hitam sebagai tokoh Anne Boleyn yang berkulit putih. Narasi inilah yang menunjukkan narasi-narasi dekonstruktif dengan gejala fluiditas terhadap pemeran dan tokoh dalam film yang dilakukan sebagai upaya reinterpretasi sejarah sekaligus perluasan interpretasi terhadap sejarah. Selain itu, narasi ini juga tidak luput dari upaya-upaya untuk menghidupkan eksistensi ras kulit hitam dalam industri sinema, khususnya dalam sinema Hollywood.

Kata Kunci: *Anne Boleyn (2021); Blackwashing; Dekonstruksi Derrida; Film; Film dan Sejarah.*

INTRODUCTION

The advancement of technology has led to the dynamic growth of the film industry, marked by the emergence of creative and intriguing cinematic works. Filmmakers' creativity is manifested through fictional film scripts and the adaptation, organization, and transmediation of literary or historical stories. For them, films are not only a form of entertainment but also a medium to explore how society can shape and perceive historical narratives. According to Guynn (2006), when history is transformed

into media such as films, it becomes more engaging and vivid compared to historical texts, making history more accessible and understandable through audiovisual media.

The history of cinema is often influenced by the social and political context in which a film is produced. For instance, in studies on the representation of history in films, there is an argument that films can serve as tools for shaping national and collective identity, as seen in works that highlight themes of heroism and shared suffering in the context of World War II in Italy (Knittel, 2014). This demonstrates that films reflect history and actively shape narratives that can influence how society understands and remembers these events.

Films can also create spaces for dialogue and critical reflection on the past. In this context, new technologies such as virtual reality can create more immersive and interactive experiences, although they often fall into the trap of overly simplistic narratives (Kazlauskaitė, 2023). This indicates that while films can offer new perspectives on history, they can also reinforce uncritical narratives and overlook the complexities of historical events.

Production houses and online streaming platforms have frequently adopted historical narratives into films. One example of this phenomenon is the psychological thriller television series depicting the life of Anne Boleyn, an English queen. This drama series premiered on five British television channels from June 1-3, 2021. Written by Eve Hedderwick Turner and directed by historian Lynsey Miller, the series featured Jones as the executive producer. The cast includes Jodie Turner-Smith as Anne Boleyn, Mark Stanley as Henry VIII, Paapa Essiedu as George Boleyn, Barry Ward as Thomas Cromwell, Amanda Burton as Anne Shelton, Lola Petticrew as Jane Seymour, Thalissa Teixeira as Madge Shelton, Isabella Laughland as Elizabeth Browne, and Anna Brewster as Jane Boleyn.

This series portrays the life of Anne Boleyn during the reign of King Henry VIII in the 16th century. Anne Boleyn, King Henry VIII's second wife and Queen Elizabeth I's mother, is depicted as an intelligent and ambitious woman determined to prove herself as powerful and influential. She used her relationship with the king to advocate for women's rights, including equal access to education for both genders. However, her efforts were short-lived, as she failed to produce a male heir for the king. She was accused of treason, incest, and being a queen possessed by demons, leading to her execution by beheading at the Tower of London (Lopez, 2021).

The drama "Anne Boleyn" (2021) sparked controversy, particularly regarding the casting of Jodie Turner-Smith, a black British actress of Jamaican descent, as Anne Boleyn. Many argued that this represented a distortion of history, as Anne Boleyn was a historical figure, not fictional, and accused the production of engaging in "blackwashing." Blackwashing, a form of racebending, involves altering the race or ethnicity of a character in a work (Fu, 2015). In this case, blackwashing refers to the casting of a black actor to portray a historically white figure. In contrast, whitewashing refers to the portrayal of non-white characters by white actors.

The historical representation of Anne Boleyn has been a subject of fascination and various interpretations for centuries, depicted in contradictory ways: as a victim or predator, a reformist or a cynic (Russo, 2020a, 2020c). Anne Boleyn's portrayal has evolved alongside cultural and societal changes, often reflecting contemporary issues and values, such as proto-feminism and post-feminism (Russo, 2019, 2020b).

The casting of a black actress as Anne Boleyn can be considered part of a broader trend in modern media to reframe historical narratives to reflect contemporary social and cultural dynamics. This approach aligns with the growing popularity of counterfactual narratives and transgeneric fiction that explore alternative histories and identities (Russo, 2020b). Critics argue that casting a black actress as Anne Boleyn can distort historical accuracy and cultural representation. This criticism stems from the belief that such casting choices may obscure the historical context and the true significance of the

characters and events being portrayed (Perakslis, 2020), and may lead to accusations of historical revisionism, where the past is reinterpreted or altered to serve contemporary purposes (Diefenderfer, 2018; Olaiya, 2020).

The film *"Anne Boleyn"* (2021) reflects the contemporary societal shift toward greater inclusivity and representation in media. It highlights the ongoing dialogue about race, identity, and historical representation in popular culture. By reimagining historical figures with actors from diverse racial backgrounds, filmmakers can challenge traditional narratives and offer new perspectives on well-known stories (Bucciferro, 2021).

Blackwashing in films aims to enhance diversity, but it can also be subject to criticism. Some argue that it may lead to tokenism or superficial diversity, where the inclusion of Black characters does not necessarily result in meaningful representation or address the underlying issues of racial inequality (Nwonka, 2021). Additionally, there are concerns that blackwashing might obscure the need for authentically original stories (Gregory, 2012).

Previous studies have examined similar phenomena. For instance, Scott & Paprocki (2023) analyzed the casting of black actors to represent Greco-Roman goddesses in modern films by Disney, using an interactional feminist narrative approach (Deborah Lyons' concept) and media awareness to critique representations in film and television. Their findings revealed that casting black actors as Greek goddesses challenges the traditional conceptualization of "whiteness" in Greco-Roman narratives. Similarly, Smith (2021) compared whitewashing and blackwashing from societal perspectives, concluding that blackwashing serves as a stepping stone for increasing black representation in Hollywood, albeit not always considered a wise choice. Despite these contributions, no research has specifically addressed blackwashing as a discourse for deconstructing historical facts.

By analyzing the film's portrayal of history, it becomes evident that there is a shift in meaning regarding the symbolism of Anne Boleyn and other characters. Historically perceived as white, these figures are reimagined in the film adaptation, challenging collective perceptions. This notion aligns with Derrida's theory, characterized by ideas that seek to reverse, question, and reconstruct traditional meanings.

The reconstruction of stable and straightforward historical narratives in the *"Anne Boleyn"* film aligns with Derrida's deconstruction framework, a method of philosophical and literary analysis that involves questioning and dismantling fundamental oppositions, revealing them as constructions rather than inherent truths (Soltani, 2022). This study employs Derrida's deconstruction theory to uncover how iterability and the reinterpretation of reconstructed meanings are presented in the film. Additionally, it seeks to analyze the narrative deconstruction of historical facts depicted in the film.

Derrida's deconstruction emphasizes marginal elements, in contrast to Western structuralism and philosophy focusing on centrality (logocentrism). Derrida says a text inherently conceals or suppresses certain aspects (Ritzer, 2004). This perspective leads to plural truths, where events are interpreted diversely. Meaning is perpetually deferred, described by Derrida as "signifier of signifier," indicating an endless chain of signification (Piliang, 2012).

Differance, a key concept in Derrida's framework, highlights language's instability. From this perspective, language is constituted by differences that delay coherence, preventing it from attaining a stable or permanent status. Derrida posits that language is dynamic, continuously "in motion" through differences and deferrals. Meaning depends on these differences and is perpetually postponed due to the interrelations of signs in space and time. Hence, absolute meaning remains unattainable, with signification constantly marked by dissemination and undecidability (Ungkang, 2013).

Simm (1999) outlines three assumptions underlying Derrida's deconstruction: (1) language is inherently marked by instability and infinite meaning; (2) this instability precludes any analytical

method from claiming dominance over textual interpretation; (3) textual interpretation becomes a boundless activity, akin to play rather than traditional analysis. Through difference, Derrida reveals contradictions within language: (1) the perpetual interplay of differences and deferrals among signs, (2) the insufficiency of signs necessitating supplementation, (3) the dissemination of meanings, and (4) the undecidability of words' meanings. Textual meaning is temporally and spatially contingent, with no transcendental signifier capable of anchoring interpretation (Ungkang, 2013).

Texts and discourses play pivotal roles in shaping and reproducing racism. Simultaneously, they serve as instruments to critique and resist racial practices. Deborah (2015) describes racism as a complex social phenomenon involving attitudes, actions, processes, and power imbalances rooted in hierarchical social relations and resulting discrimination. Race is a social construct, with no biological evidence linking race to human behavior or cognitive abilities Deborah (2015). Stuart Hall, in "Race: The Floating Signifier" (1997), argues that "white elites constructed race" as a discourse in the 19th century to assert their superiority over black populations. Concurrently, race has been used to deny marginalized groups access to critical resources, employment, and political rights. Conversely, some targeted groups have adopted and inverted the concept of race to forge positive self-identities and advocate for political autonomy and equality (Mecheril & Scherschel, 2009).

Racism, encompassing discriminatory practices and processes, is deeply intertwined with discourse. Deborah (2015) identifies the following dynamics: (1) natural and cultural differences are marked, stereotyped, and polarized to construct homogenous communities (naturalization of cultural differences) and (2) these differences are linked with immutable social, cultural, or mental characteristics, creating a hierarchy that justifies power imbalances and exclusion.

In the realm of cinema, racism has long been evident. Hollywood films frequently employ the concept of "blackness," highlighting the portrayal of black individuals and communities. Guerrero (1993) identifies three categories of black representation in films: behavioral, intellectual, and emotional. In the behavioral category, black characters are often depicted as comedic, entertaining, athletic, or criminal, lacking civility or foresight. In the intellectual category, black individuals are portrayed as less intelligent than their white counterparts, driven by emotion rather than logic. Meanwhile, in the emotional category, Black characters are shown as doubtful and expressive, unlike restrained white characters.

However, in "Anne Boleyn" (2021), discourse critiques and opposes these racialized practices. The casting of a black actress as Anne Boleyn symbolizes anti-racism, challenging traditional narratives within the film industry.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach to analyze and interpret the film *Anne Boleyn*. Such an approach is deemed appropriate as understanding films necessitates a subjective, textual-contextual framework (Kartika, 2021). A subjective descriptive approach with interpretative analysis is adopted, wherein the researcher interprets data findings by examining their functions and roles in relation to other aspects. This interpretative analysis aligns with the perspectives of several scholars, thereby establishing it as a qualitative method (Hikmat, 2011).

Data collection in this study was conducted using two techniques: (1) observation and analysis of the film *Anne Boleyn* and (2) a literature review from relevant studies. The observation and film analysis were carried out by carefully and repeatedly watching *Anne Boleyn* to identify narratives that exhibit deconstructive elements. The observation applied in this study was non-participant, meaning that the researcher did not directly engage in the activities being observed (Ihsana et al., 2024; Romera, 2015). During the observation process, detailed notes were taken to record and highlight narratives relevant to the research focus. Meanwhile, the literature review was conducted to strengthen the

analysis related to deconstruction theory, film studies, blackwashing, Black identity, discourse, gender, and power, as well as previous studies that examined *Anne Boleyn* or representations of Black and white figures within a national context. This review aimed to provide a strong theoretical and conceptual foundation while also supporting the interpretation of the film's data findings.

The analysis followed the minimal stages of deconstruction as outlined by (Ungkang, 2013): (1) text reconstruction, in which the researcher examining the film internally to uncover the underlying structures hidden beneath the main narrative; (2) deconstruction, where the researcher identifies contamination or interdependence to dismantle binary oppositions within the text, including historically tracing the elements embedded in them; and (3) reinscription, where the researcher recontextualizes the analysis results by offering new interpretations of the film's findings, thereby opening space for new meanings and perspectives.

Thus, the applied method implicitly functions to reveal hidden meanings behind the film's narrative and visual constructions. This approach enables the researcher to observe how gender and power discourses are both reproduced and contested through cinematic representation, resulting in a deeper and more critical understanding of the film text.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Social Conditions of Black Americans

The Era of Slavery

Racial conflict is a dark chapter in the history of African Americans in the United States. Beginning with the era of slavery, French historian Fernand Braudel documented that slavery was endemic in Africa and a routine part of daily life. The forms of slavery varied across societies, including palace slaves, war captives, household slaves, industrial slaves, and slaves for trade. With the dominance of European trade over Arab routes in the 15th century, Spain initiated transcontinental slave trading from Africa to North America. This trade, known as the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, was institutionalized through the *Asiento de Negros*, a Spanish monopoly on African slave trading. Slavery emerged to meet the demand for labour in households, agriculture, and plantations. Enslaved individuals were regarded as property and subjected to lifelong servitude without rights or freedom. Over time, this practice expanded into various economic sectors, including mining (Eskelner et al., 2021).

The Reconstruction Era

The practice of slavery consciously became one of the triggers for the Civil War (1861–1865) between the northern and southern United States. The abolition of slavery began in Chile in 1811 and continued as a political issue in the 1850s, involving debates over the expansion of slavery westward, which was opposed by northern states. The strong Whig Party collapsed, giving way to the Republican Party, which was dedicated to ending slavery. 1863 President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, and by 1865, northern states began abolishing slavery. These events marked the beginning of African Americans gaining freedom and equal social rights as citizens (Eskelner et al., 2021). Following Lincoln's tenure, Andrew Johnson's presidency saw former slaves officially recognized as citizens with the right to vote.

The Civil Rights Era

Despite the enactment of the Civil Rights Act, racial discrimination persisted in white society against African Americans. This discrimination spurred the emergence of civil rights movements led by African American activists during the 1950s and 1960s. These movements featured marches, campaigns, and speeches by figures like Martin Luther King Jr. and other Black activists, protesting the injustices faced by African Americans. The Civil Rights Movement, spearheaded by Malcolm X, fought

for legal equality and civil rights for Black Americans (Malik & Darmawan, 2017). These efforts culminated in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 under the administration of John F. Kennedy, which outlawed racial discrimination and secured voting rights (Jahro, 2023).

The Post-Civil Rights Era

The significant legislative changes did not immediately result in full equality for African Americans. Social and economic disparities persisted, and instances of police misconduct against Black civilians were evident. This backdrop fueled the emergence of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement during President Obama's administration in 2013. BLM aimed to end police violence and address the injustices experienced by Black Americans through protests, social media campaigns, and political advocacy. Notable incidents include the killing of Trayvon Martin and, in 2020, the death of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man who died after a white Minneapolis police officer knelt on his neck for several minutes despite Floyd repeatedly stating that he could not breathe (Vanessa & Selvie, 2022).

In response to entrenched racism, President Obama also sought to enact new laws prohibiting racist language and attacks against minorities in all federal regulations. For example, individuals of Asian descent were to be referred to as Asian Americans instead of Orientals, Black Americans were to be called African Americans instead of Negroes, and Native Americans were to be recognized as such instead of Indian Americans (Jahro, 2023).

Overall, the social conditions of Black individuals in America face highly complex challenges. Social mobility, particularly in the realms of education, employment, and homeownership, is significantly influenced by racial and class stigma (Hardaway & McLoyd, 2009). For example, unemployment rates are higher in the workforce, jobs are often unstable, and wages are lower. Similarly, in access to healthcare and the quality of care received, significant disparities are experienced (Noonan et al., 2016).

The Discourse of Historical Fact Deconstruction in *Anne Boleyn* (2021) Casting in *Anne Boleyn* (2021)



Figure 1: Anne Boleyn Portrait
(Adapted from: Hever Castle, 2015)



Figure 2: Anne Boleyn in "Anne Boleyn (2013)" Film
(Adapted from Leishman, 2021)

Based on Figure 1 above, it can be explained that the portrait of Anne Boleyn depicts the historical figure of Anne Boleyn, the second wife of King Henry VIII of England, who has traditionally been represented as a white noblewoman from 16th-century England. This image represents the historical visual construction that has long served as a reference in various artworks and historical films about England.

Meanwhile, Figure 2 shows the representation of Anne Boleyn in the film *Anne Boleyn* (2021), portrayed by Jodie Turner-Smith, a Black actress, Paapa Essiedu as George Boleyn (Anne's brother), and Thalissa Teixeira as Madge Shelton (Anne's cousin). The casting choice sparked controversy and was associated with the concept of blackwashing the practice of casting Black actors to portray historical figures who have traditionally been depicted as white. The comparison between Figure 1 and Figure 2 demonstrates a significant shift in both visual and ideological representations of racial and historical identity. This practice also challenges traditional binary perspectives regarding race, identity, and historical legitimacy within visual media.

Anne Boleyn was the daughter of Thomas Boleyn and Elizabeth Howard, Norfolk aristocrats, and spent her life in an upper-class educational and social environment (Williams, 1971). Her image has been immortalized in portraits, such as those archived in the National Portrait Gallery in London, where she is depicted as having white skin, a long neck, wide lips, and captivating dark eyes.

However, some arguments suggest otherwise. George Wyatt, in his book *Life of Queen Anne Boleyn* (Hachimi, 2022), wrote that Anne was "taken at that time to have a beauty not so whitely as clear and fresh above all we may esteem, which appeared much more excellent by her favour passing sweet and cheerful." This indicates that in the context of English society at the time, Anne Boleyn did not possess the pale complexion associated with the idealized "English rose." Similarly, Ives cited Venetian diplomat Francesco Sanuto's description of Anne as "not one of the most handsome women in the world; she is of middling stature, swarthy complexion, long neck, wide mouth, bosom not much raised" (Hachimi, 2022). These descriptions suggest that Anne Boleyn had a darker complexion than the average Englishwoman of her era.

The portrait of Anne Boleyn has also been a subject of debate due to the use of cosmetics and the social significance of "whiteness" in England at the time. Allen-Flanagan (2020) argued that whiteness functioned as a symbol of power and racial dominance in both England and America. Additionally, a proclamation from the English Privy Council in 1596 mandated that royal portraits depict queens as "beautiful [sic] and magnanimous," emphasizing their divine blessing (Allen-Flanagan, 2020). Although this directive was formally enforced during Queen Elizabeth I's reign, earlier portraits, including those of Anne Boleyn, may have been similarly idealized.

In *Anne Boleyn* (2021), the role of Anne Boleyn was portrayed by Jodie Turner-Smith, a British actress of Jamaican descent. Turner-Smith's dark complexion led to widespread controversy (Ibekwe, 2021; Sales, 2021; Solly, 2021). Previously, Anne Boleyn had been portrayed by other actresses of non-white heritage, such as Merle Oberon in *The Private Life of Henry VIII* (1933). According to *The Guardian*, Oberon was of Anglo-Indian descent, and her lighter skin tone was further lightened by the use of mercury-based whitening cosmetics (Lawrence, 2023). The controversy surrounding Turner-Smith's portrayal primarily revolved around perceptions that she did not visually align with traditional representations of Anne Boleyn, thereby challenging historical and cultural expectations of authenticity.

The Discourse of Deconstruction

The binary opposition between Black and white skin tones is a defining characteristic in the deconstruction presented in *Anne Boleyn* (2021). The creators consciously adopted "identity-conscious casting" (Ibekwe, 2021), positioning their decision as a deliberate act of deconstruction. According to *The New York Times*, Faye Ward, one of the executive producers of *Anne Boleyn* (2021), stated that Jodie Turner-Smith was chosen as the actress who could best represent Anne Boleyn's character while also surprising audiences. Ward acknowledged that this casting choice was part of an effort to "reset" societal expectations surrounding Anne Boleyn (Ibekwe, 2021). This deliberate dismantling of preexisting constructs to introduce new ones aligns with deconstructionist principles, inevitably stirring public controversy.

In an article published by *The Daily Telegraph*, Swain (2021) described the casting of Turner-Smith as a "pretty cynical solution," suggesting it was merely a gimmick designed to generate public debate. Similarly, on AMC+'s YouTube channel, where *Anne Boleyn* (2021) was released, netizens expressed their opposition:

"It would be OK if this was a fictitious story, but it's not. It's actual history, and we all know who Anne B was and what she looked like."

This practice is not new in Hollywood. For instance, the series *Bridgerton* (2020) featured Black actors in a narrative set in the 19th-century British aristocracy. However, while *Bridgerton* is entirely fictional, *Anne Boleyn* reinterprets a historical figure, intensifying societal contradictions.

The phenomenon of "racebending," where the race or ethnicity of characters is altered in adaptations (Fu, 2015), has been a longstanding trend in Hollywood. Earlier examples include *The Last Airbender* (2010), *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* (2010), and *Ghost in the Shell* (2017), all of which employed white actors in roles originally depicting characters of color. Berger (2005) argued that whiteness is a marker of hegemony in American cultural norms. At the time, such "whitewashing" practices were often justified by limited opportunities for minority actors, compounded by implicit biases and industry connections (Chong, 2016). This normalization of whiteness has extended across media, including comics, literature, films, television, and video games (Dietrich, 2013; Hughey, 2010; Nama, 2010).

Anne Boleyn (2021) reverses this initial construct, challenging the trend of whitewashing by introducing "blackwashing" through its controversial casting choices. According to Otele (2021), a professor of slavery history at the University of Bristol, the series emerged at a time when Britain was grappling with its colonial past. Otele suggested that the film's release created opportunities for Black actors, particularly African Americans, who have historically faced limited access to prominent roles in Hollywood (Otele, 2021).

The film was released on AMC+, a video-on-demand streaming service with a limited geographical reach. The decision to release it in the United States, a nation with a long and fraught racial history, was significant. Since the Civil Rights era, racial issues have remained a pressing topic in the U.S., especially following the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2013 and the global attention drawn by the murder of George Floyd in 2020 (Mir & Zanoni, 2021). In this context, *Anne*

Boleyn (2021) may symbolize a broader struggle for racial equality, countering Hollywood's entrenched practice of whitewashing with its blackwashing approach. This trend has extended to other works, including *Cinderella* (2021), *The Little Mermaid* (2023), *Spider-Man: Across the Universe* (2023), and *Snow White* (2024), where traditionally white characters were portrayed by Black actors.

CONCLUSION

Anne Boleyn (2021) introduces a deconstructive narrative highlighting identity's fluidity in casting historical figures. This fluidity reflects a broader understanding of identity as not fixed or constrained by racial or physical attributes. Instead, casting a black actress signals a shift in historical narratives and challenges conventional perceptions of who is suitable to portray historical figures. Blackwashing, or the portrayal of historical figures by black actors, transcends mere visual changes. It signifies a value shift in historical narratives, encouraging a reinterpretation of traditional histories often perceived as absolute truths. By presenting alternative representations, blackwashing fosters critical engagement with established narratives.

Moreover, blackwashing demonstrates that the portrayal of historical figures involves more than physical resemblance. It encompasses qualities such as acting skills and the ability to capture the essence of a character. Thus, casting black actors in historical roles represents a step toward greater diversity and inclusivity in historical representation, creating space for broader and deeper interpretations of cultural heritage. Although this study has uncovered the deconstruction of historical narratives and the racial issues involved in the film's production, it has several limitations that future research can address. Subsequent studies could extend this by analyzing patterns of racial elements in casting and production within Hollywood cinema or other major film industries. Alternatively, they could apply different discourse analysis theories to provide new perspectives, or examine other historical films to enrich the literature and research on historical cinema.

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