

# Film

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Analysis of *Far from Heaven* *Far from Heaven*, Todd Haynes' 2002 award-winning film is set in 1957 in the United States, in an oppressive and a conventional era. The film unrolls the tale of a 1950s housewife, Cathy Whitaker, living in suburban Connecticut, where she watches her once perfect life tears apart. Haynes presents his film in a similar style as 1955's *All That Heaven Allows* as well as *Imitation of Life*, 1959. In the scene where Cathy meets Raymond and ends their somehow blossoming relationship, Haynes exposes sophisticated societal issues like racism, gender roles, homophobia and societal stratification (Class). Haynes utilizes social issues like homophobia and racism, which remained mostly unspoken in many films of 1950s, from which he borrows and faces them head on. In the scene, it becomes apparent that it is even worse to be a black than gay. One cannot fail to acknowledge how the themes of racism and sexual orientation as well as gender role are implicitly expressed in this particular scene of the film. One evening when Frank decides to work late into the evening, when Cathy makes up her mind to bring his dinner at the office where he works, she finds him passionately kissing a fellow man. Frank then goes ahead to confess to have been through "problems" in his youthful days and consequently agrees to make an appointment for a conversion therapy. His relationship with Cathy hits a snag and damages beyond repair, which forces him to resort to alcohol. In the meantime, Cathy becomes cozy with Raymond. A neighbor sees Cathy with Raymond and spreads the vicious chitchat of Cathy's indecorous relationship. The rumor finally gets to Frank, who becomes irritated about the whole issue. Despite the fact that Cathy tries to defend her friendship with Raymond, she eventually puts a stop to it altogether.

Far from Heaven reflects the style used in many films of 1950s, particularly Douglas Sirk's. Haynes diligently developed and chose appropriate color palettes for all scenes in the film. He accentuates experience with color in various scenes, for instance, where Cathy, Eleanor and their acquaintances dress up in red, yellow, brown and green. He utilizes green color to illuminate prohibited and baffling scenes. This is evident when Frank goes to a gay bar and when Cathy visits a black dominated restaurant in the black environs. Haynes also utilizes shots and angles that reflect 1950s film epoch. Cinematographer, Edward Lachman developed the 1950s impression using similar form of lighting techniques and apparatus and also makes use of lens filters that are characteristic of 1950s melodrama. The film also features over-the-top theatrical conversation. Kelly Baker's sound features a lot of Foley to amplify the rustling sound of clothes and footsteps, which also epitomizes 1950s film sound technique. Haynes further exhibits feelings of alienation and clumsiness. This is achieved by focusing on particular characters longer than would make viewers to watch with ease, a method that was undoubtedly inspired by Fassbinder's film: Ali: Fear Eats the Soul. When Cathy drives through town, the car is filmed stationary as it moves and artificial background peers through the windows, evocative of ancient films. The lilac scarf that Cathy wears symbolizes race. When she absentmindedly replies Raymond, He emphasizes on the color of the scarf. From cinematographic context, Hayne displays techniques and art direction that Sirk never showed. In Sirk's time, displaying interracial desire was prohibited by Production Code of America (PCA). In the scene, Cathy falls for a black gardener, Raymond.

Haynes's *Far from Heaven* is one of the most popular films. Hayne exposes social decadents, which manifest in its central themes of racism and sexual orientation in the scene where Cathy is forced to end her forbidden relationship with Raymond. She has to end the relationship for the reason of Raymond belonging to a lower social-class black race. It portrays social identity labels as things that the society must live with.

#### Work Cited

*Far from Heaven*. Dir. Todd Haynes. Focus Features, 2002. DVD.