

The issue of creolization in the film "detroit" directed by katherine bigelow

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Creolization is the process in which Creole cultures emerge in the New World. As a result of colonization, there was a mixture among people of indigenous America (Native Americans), West African and European descent, which came to be understood as Creolization. The mixing of people brought a cultural mixing which ultimately led to the formation of new identities. Furthermore, creolization occurs when participants select cultural elements that may become part of, or inherited culture. Robin Cohen, the Director of the International Migration Institute at Oxford University, states that creolization is a condition in which the formation of new identities and inherited culture evolve to become different from those they possessed in the original cultures. The term creolization was understood to be a distinction between those individuals born in the " Old World" versus the New World. As a consequence to slavery and the different power relations between different races creolization became synonymous with Creole, often of which was used to distinguish the master and the slave. The word Creole was also used to distinguish those Afro-descendants who were born in the New World in comparison to the African-born slaves. Mufwene.

Looking at how these identities, as stated above, are problematized through notions such as creolization, I will look at the film *Detroit* (2017), directed by Katherine Bigelow. The film follows the events in Detroit on July 23rd 1967, where rioting and civil unrest tore through the city of Detroit, ultimately leading to the biggest riot America has ever seen. At first glance the film is about the riot, instigated by a police raid on a private party celebrating the return of two black soldiers from Vietnam, however, Bigelow creates a metaphor for how racism works in contemporary society. The film comments

on how white men with a badge seem to have the authority to exact a revolting degree of brutality on people of color, while also protecting themselves with an established system of corruption and prejudice.

The film opens with a history lesson, animating Jacob Lawrence's paintings of the "great migration", as seen below, to recount the movement of African Americans from the rural south to the industrialised cities of the north. Here, poverty-ridden urban ghettos offer a life where equality is "an illusion" and that change is "inevitable".

It then transforms into a recreation of how the riots got started. Police raided an unlicensed club in the black part of Detroit, and tensions in the street erupted into civil unrest, looting and violence that lasted for days. We see the first few days of the riots and the police force's efforts to try and contain the violence as much as possible, with one young police officer named Krauss shooting a fleeing man from the back and, after pleading self-defense, he gets away with shooting an unarmed (black) man.

Detroit makes it clear how hard it was for the police to figure out how to handle the situation, especially the younger police officers who saw black people not as fellow citizens, but as "them". This prevailing sense of otherness is obvious in the black characters, but barely noticeable to even the white characters who believe themselves not to be racist. This is seen in the film through the theatre where white people would go to listen to Motown groups.

The use of the medium (film) to depict a real life event, I believe, enhances the conceptual and emotional relevance, because, many of the themes depicted in the film are issues that we are still trying to address in today's society. Black males and females are still being marginalised, especially in America with movements such as black live matter. Being able to see how police officers struggled to control a situation that got out of hand and knowing that they still struggle with that today and being able to see the racial tensions that have sparked from years of being marginalised against, enhances the film conceptually and emotionally. Wilkinson (2017) Detroit, about one of the biggest riots in US history, is hard to watch. That's a good thing.

In conclusion, although new identities and inherited culture evolve to become different from those they possessed in the original cultures AKA "Old World", these identities and inherited cultures can be problematized due to the different power relations between different races.