

Slave and crossing the river: postcolonial critique assignment

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As a postcolonial United States absconded from the political, cultural and economic ways of Great Britain, imperialism remained as a consequence of the human colonialism of slavery. Steve Unseen's adaptation of *12 Years a Slave* depicts the legacy of slavery and racism, and its relation to the African American Diaspora. Through the collapse of identity and white prevalence, *12 Years a Slave* subverts order and chaos in postcolonial America with efforts to decolonize the mind.

The film offers an autobiographical account of a freed black man, Solomon Northup (Chattel Superior), who -in 1841- is kidnapped after being enticed with a job offer, and sold into slavery. Through Northup inexplicable trudges, Macaque provides a striking glimpse into a painful chapter of American's history, which was shaped and influenced by former colonial powers.

Although *12 Years a Slave* imparts a 19th century narrative, Macaque manipulates the archetype to depict the justifications of slavery through colonialism, and the detached lens of his postcolonial subaltern protagonist, Solomon Northup.

Needless to say, the director offers an account of imperialist tropes and rationalized fantasies; still, we can render Unseen's film as a postcolonial canon, since it offers a moment of reflection on the troubled story and identity of Blacks from a colonial context. Although the movie focuses primarily on African American studies, it nonetheless proves to be postcolonial, despite Ashcroft belief that the two fields "are vastly different disciplines" (KBPS 151).

Both share the goal of destabilize racial hierarchies, and exploiting power relationships between the colonizer/colonized and master/slave (which can be examined through colonial discourse). Thus, discrimination and racism towards black slaves in the United States and diasporas individuals (as a result of colonialism) become synonymous through the theory of neocolonialism. Under these resistances, *12 Years a Slave* and Carry Phillips' *Crossing the River* come to be one in the same through their want to reclaim and recover ethnic identity, and decolonize those internalized mindsets.

In both Unseen's adaptation and Phillips' novel, slaves are depicted as capital incarnate, or living debts and impersonal obligations that were foisted upon them by their status as commercial objects. One of the major plantation and slave owners in the film, Edwin Peps (played by Michael Absconder), can be seen as an extension of James Hamilton in " *Crossing the River*". Each man in his " God-fearing' mentality personify the notion of commercial attachment, which essentially allows him to participate in the slave trade while maintaining a Christian belief.

Thus, slavery became justified solely through the idea that it was a means for capital enterprise. Throughout *12 Years a Slave*, the diversity of characters is conveyed through Salmon's rather detached outlook, which inevitably fails him in his attempts to stereotypically classify slave proprietors as rogues, and the slaves uniformly as heroes. While this is actually a good thing, it allowed Macaque to subtly hint that the institution of slavery made masters and plantation overseers abusive and indifferent to human suffering.

Subsequently, this notion parallels Phillips underlying argument of unconscious bigotry throughout *Crossing the River*. Each unrelated chapter alludes to the idea that men were not fundamentally cruel, and instead, was born into systems in which they had no control. The behaviors and conducts of the collective group shaped peoples perceptions of the right and wrong practiced. Over time, those notions became so deeply etched in the mind that no rational evidence to contrary could unlearn said inscriptions, i. E. Hamiltonians disregard for slaves as equal humans, Edwards naivety in “The Pagan Coast,” etc.

By the same token, Phillips characters mimic the same detachment as Solomon Northup; their inability to recognize the situation at large shows the multinational Diaspora through generations, and renders them as mere sketches of real people. However, *Unseen's* adaptation consequently offers juxtaposition to Phillips novel; the former gives a narrative perspective of the slave, whereas the former looks at history from a different angle, through the prism of those normally written out of the stories (or viewed as the culprit).

In any case, both the film and novel mutually agree upon the idea that bigotry as inscribed in the culture, not the person. With this being said, we can kick at *12 Years a Slave* as an anti-conquest film, despite the fact that it actively employs the Us-Them binary (i. E. The white vs.. The black; the master vs.. The slave). Nevertheless, Solomon resists the culture of the colonizer, regardless of the inflicted violence.

While Northup is mercilessly beaten into denial of his freedom, slave owners revoke his identity by changing his name to Plat Although he has been

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ascribed a new identification, Northup voices the fact that his name is Solomon throughout the movie. In efforts to decolonize his mind, he rejects the binary and upsets white prevalence by expressing his freedom. 12 Years a Slave ultimately demonstrates that the complexity of slavery lies in the fact that the consequences of it live longer than the persons involved in it do, much like that of "West. In both cases, the notion of slavery manifests from the traditional definition of the institutional practices of buying and selling people, to having an excessive dependence on something that hold one captive (i. E. Jockey's marriage to Len vs.. Edwin Peps marriage to his Mistress). Through Northup narrative and Phillips' characters taking on efferent forms of gender, age, and race, we come to see how slavery was oppressive to all persons.

Consequently, colonialism and slavery had the ability to affect the colonized people and its colonizers. Regardless, Macaque forces the viewer to sit through the 2 hours and 13 minutes entirely (unlike a book which one is able to put down at any time). He confronts the audience with the most disturbing of scenes and leaves an impression unbearable to the heart. Alternatively, reading subjects one to employ their own imagination; the events put forth become constructions of the mind, and the receptions between readers vary.