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INTERRACIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN HOLLYWOOD MOVIES
UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

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ABSTRACT

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This undergraduate thesis will focus on interracial relationships in movies which sets are based in the United States. The four movies that have been chosen are *Loving* (2016), *Free State of Jones* (2016), *Mississippi Masala* (1991) and *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967).

All three movies also show different relationships and different period of the time. While *Loving* and *Free State of Jones* focus on black-white relationship, the same as *Guess who's coming for dinner*, *Mississippi Masala* shows romance between African American and Indian American. These movies display also different time period from Civil War to 1970s where we can see representation of the controversial subject of interracial marriage, which historically had been illegal in most states of the United States in that time.

Based on the long history of interracial marriage as taboo in American society, this paper will focus on the evolution of interracial relationship from the 60s till the current time.

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner precisely addresses the contrasts between the older generation's conservative opposition and the younger generation's more liberal acknowledgment of miscegenation amid the late 1960s in the USA. However watching the movie nowadays, the audience can see how carefully the movie was made, to not outrage the American viewers, or at least to keep the indignation at the minimum. In the other movies, we can see the progress that was made not just in the technical aspect in cinematography but also in freedom of expression when the taboo of interracial marriages is not as extensive as it used to be.

Keywords: Interracial, relationships, Hollywood, movies, racism, slavery

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INTRODUCTION

Why do people tend to be attracted more to opposites? Would it be simpler if people had the tendency to be drawn to those whose personalities are more like our own? The first thing that people are aware of upon meeting somebody is their physical appearance, as much as one would rather not admit it, that is what decides if we perceive other people appealing or attractive. We are naturally attracted to people who are different from ourselves and therefore somewhat exciting. While security, wellbeing, closeness, and comfort are unquestionably part of the characteristics that describe all satisfying relationships, without a dose of excitement, passion, and adventure, security moves toward becoming fatigue, steadfastness progresses toward becoming lack of concern, closeness moves toward becoming claustrophobia, and solace moves toward becoming stagnation. As people continue to become familiar with each other, they start noticing other traits in a person's personality. The appearance can be opposite to them as well as their personality or cultural background. People might be captivated by contrasting life experience or the way a person sees the world around them. But what if it is not just their opposite personalities that attract them to each other? "The forbidden fruit tastes the sweetest," as this saying suggests, people tend to do things that are forbidden. It might not just be something that they are not allowed to do or something that is against their culture or religion, it might be even something that is banned by law.

Black slaves in the U.S. were brought to the country as the workforce. They were seen as a property and not as human beings. Burnham (1987) explains:

The courts wrote slaves out of the family law by declaring them to be of human being-innately and immutably immoral (therefore not legally marriageable), too dumb and childish to themselves parent (therefore incapable of childrearing), and sexually licentious (therefore unsuited to marriage and family bonds) (p. 189).

The first movie discussed, *Free State of Jones* (2016), depicts an interracial relationship between an enslaved black woman and a white man. Although this relationship was not banned by law, it was not fully supported by others. In the movie, the audience can observe an example of opposite attraction between the main characters. After slavery was abolished, and black people walked freely in America, romantic relationships between them and white people began to form. During this time, some of the anti-miscegenation laws were passed and relationships between black and white people became banned by

law. Although the laws forbid interracial marriages, it did not stop people from seeking them.

It was not just the law that kept interracial couples apart, but also their families that did not accept their children marrying outside their culture. The “Romeo and Juliet effect” was coined by Driscoll, Davis, and Lipetz (1972) when they discovered that couples who reported an increase in parental interference in their romantic relationship also evidenced an increase in love over the same 6-month period. This shows that the more parents prevent their children from being with their significant other, the more they will fall in love with them. The best example of this phenomenon can be observed in another movie discussed in this thesis, *Mississippi Masala* (1992), where a young couple is separated from their families only because of their cultural differences. The more they try to keep them away from each other, the more they want to be together. A similar example will be shown in another movie, *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner* (1967), where although the couple is attracted to one another’s different traits when their families discover their relationship and want to interfere, they are already madly in love.

This thesis will discuss four Hollywood movies that are based on interracial couples, their love, their families’ disapproval, overcoming the law and their journey together. The movies are shot in different time periods and were made in different years. Four interracial couples will be presented that faced obstacles and different fates in their journey for love. The movies demonstrate how interracial relationships were seen in a negative light during different time periods in American history.

The primary challenge all the couples had to face was the time period in which they lived. Nowadays, interracial relationships might not be seen as provocative or unconventional, but in the time that the movies were shot, or the period of time the movie takes place, it was not very common or acceptable in American society. Although we will be able to observe the difference in when the movie was made in a way that some topics that are shown in particular movie might not have been discussed if the movie was made in a period of time that the others were filmed.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1855, Henry Brueckner depicted the 1614 marriage of Pocahontas and John Rolfe in his painting *The Marriage of Pocahontas*. Pocahontas, a daughter of the chief of Powhatan Indian alliance, wed English tobacco grower John Rolfe in Jamestown, Virginia. The marriage guaranteed peace between the Jamestown pilgrims and the Powhatan Indians for quite a long while. A standout amongst those elements that lead individuals to wed outside of their aggregation may be a lopsided ratio of men and women inside an aggregation (Spickard, 1989). Also, when there are big, homogeneous groups, people are more averse to wed outside their faction. The most common phenomenon of interracial marriage during this period was between Native American women and white men for the purpose of the political alliance.

At first, European men went all through the American provinces, coming into contact with and wedding free Blacks, Whites, Native Americans, and individuals from different parts of the world. People believed that the new frontier America was a place where individuals from various backgrounds would meet up, intermarry, and have descendants who might be the "new Americans" (Spickard, 1989).

At the point when slavery replaced indentured servitude as the primary source of work in the upper districts of the South toward the end of the 17th century white people started to work in close contact with blacks. Anti-miscegenation laws – laws that prohibited wedding crosswise over racial lines – turned into an approach to draw a distinction between black and white; between enslaved and free people. Two of the first colonies, that decided to exercise that right, were the Chesapeake colonies - now Maryland and Virginia.

Both prior to and after the American Civil War, many individuals of the blended family line who "looked white" and were generally accepted as part of white society. State laws built up varying gauges of what was considered mixed race. For example, an 1822 Virginia law expressed that to be characterized as mulatto (that is, multi-racial), a man needed to have no less than one-quarter (one grandparent) African ancestry - to be defined as 'mulatto', a person had to have at least one-quarter African ancestry; this is the equivalent of one grandparent, (Rothman, 2003). This was a looser definition than the state's twentieth century "one-drop govern" under the 1924 Racial Integrity Act. This characterized a man as lawfully "hued" (dark) for order and legitimate purposes if the individual had any African family line. The term miscegenation was first used in 1863,

amid the American Civil War, by American writers to ruin the abolitionist development by stirring up controversy over the possibility of interracial marriage after the annulment of slavery (*Fredrickson, 1987*).

In 1871, Representative Andrew King (a Democrat from Missouri) was the first government official in Congress to propose a change to make interracial marriage illicit across the nation. King proposed this revision since he anticipated that the Fourteenth Amendment, sanctioned in 1868 would give social liberties to the ex-slaves (the Freedmen) as a component of Reconstruction. From the late 1870s on, white Democrats recovered political power in the previous Confederate states and passed racial isolation laws controlling open offices, and laws and constitutions from 1890 to 1910 to accomplish the disfranchisement of blacks. Numerous poor whites were also disfranchised in these years; by changes to voter registration requirements that conflicted with them, for example, education tests, longer residency necessities and survey charges. The principal difficulties to such state laws were overruled by Supreme Court decisions which maintained state constitutions that viably disfranchised numerous. White Democratic-commanded lawmaking bodies continued passing Jim Crow laws that promoted segregation in public spaces and housing, and passed other prohibitive voting legislation.

In December 1912 and January 1913, Representative Seaborn Roddenbery (a Democrat from Georgia) again presented a proposition in the United States House of Representatives to forbid miscegenation in the U.S. Constitution and subsequently restrict interracial marriage across the country. Roddenbery's proposition was more extreme since it limited whites and "people of color" by applying the one-drop rule. In his proposed correction, anybody with "any hint of African or Negro blood" was restricted from wedding a white person. The rule of hypodescent was derived from the one-drop rule. This rule shows the way Americans characterize race as indicated by blood (*Fish, 2002*). It places race on a continuum, from most favored (White), through middle of the road groups (i.e. Asian, Native American) to the least prestigious (Black), and allows the status of a mixed-race child to the race of most reduced status, paying little mind to their physical appearance (*Fish, 2002*). In this manner, all future generations of one White and one Black individual are viewed as Black (*Fish, 2002*). Dr. Walter Plecker, an American physician and public health advocate of Virginia's Bureau of Vital Statistics, made the one-drop rule in 1924. But this one-drop rule made a special case for Native American parentage - for the most part since it was found that a recognized white family had tribal roots extending as far

back the children of Pocahontas. Along these lines, the one-drop rule determined that regardless of the possibility that a man was 1/16th or less Native American, they would, in any case, be viewed as white. Be that as it may, one drop of Negro (they utilized the expression "negro" until the point when it was supplanted by "dark" in the late 1960s) blood would make somebody dark.

The one-drop rule lead slighted the self-distinguishing proof both of individuals of generally European heritage who experienced childhood in white groups, and of individuals who were of blended race and recognized as American Indian. Throughout the hundreds of years, numerous Indian tribes in Virginia raised individuals of different ethnicities through marriage or reception and yet managed to retain their social identity. Associating blacks with attempting to "go" as Indians, Plecker requested records changed to arrange individuals just as dark or white, and requested workplaces to rename certain family surnames from Indian to dark. Jim Crow laws achieved their most prominent impact amid the decades from 1910 to 1930. Among them were hypodescent laws, characterizing as dark anybody with any dark lineage, or with a little bit of dark ancestry. Tennessee embraced a "one-drop" statute in 1910, and Louisiana soon took after. Following that precedent, Texas and Arkansas adopted similar statues in 1911, Mississippi in 1917, North Carolina in 1923, Virginia in 1924, Alabama and Georgia in 1927, and Oklahoma in 1931. During this same period, Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Utah held their old "blood part" statutes by law, yet corrected these portions (one-sixteenth, one-thirty-second) to be comparable to one-drop *de facto*. Before 1930, people of noticeable blended European and African family line were normally classified as mulatto, or in some cases as dark and infrequently as white, contingent upon appearance. Already, most states had restricted attempting to characterize heritage before "the fourth degree" (great-great grandparents).

On account of blended race American Indian and European relatives, the one-drop rule in Virginia was broadened just so far as those with more than one-sixteenth Indian blood. This was because of what was known as "the Pocahontas exception". Since numerous influential persuasive First Families of Virginia (FFV) claimed heritage from the American Indian Pocahontas and her significant other John Rolfe of the colonial period, the Virginia General Assembly proclaimed that an individual could be viewed as white if having close to one-sixteenth Indian "blood" (the equivalent of one great-great-grandparent).

Loving v. Virginia (1967) is a point of interest in social liberties choice of the United States Supreme Court, which negated laws precluding interracial marriage. The case was brought by Mildred Loving, a black woman, and Richard Loving, a white man, who had been sentenced to a year in jail in Virginia for wedding each other. At 18 years old, Mildred wound up pregnant. In June 1958, the couple made a trip to Washington, D.C. to wed, in this manner avoiding Virginia's Racial Integrity Act of 1924, which made marriage amongst whites and non-whites a crime. They came back to the residential community of Central Point, Virginia. Local police raided their home in the early morning hours of July 11, 1958, wanting to discover them engaging in sexual relations, given that interracial sex was then additionally illicit in Virginia. At the point when the officers found the Lovings sleeping in their bed, Mildred called attention to their marriage certificate on the room divider. They were told that it was not legitimate in Virginia.

The Lovings were charged under Section 20-58 of the Virginia Code, which disallowed interracial couples from being married out of state and afterward coming back to Virginia, and Section 20-59, which considered miscegenation as an unlawful offense, deserving of a jail sentence of between one and five years. On January 6, 1959, the Lovings pled guilty to cohabiting as man and wife, against the peace and dignity of the Commonwealth." They were sentenced to one year in jail, with the sentence suspended on the condition that the couple leaves Virginia and not return together for more than 25 years. After their conviction, the couple moved to the District of Columbia. Their marriage abused the state's anti-miscegenation statute, the Racial Integrity Act of 1924, which precluded the marriage between individuals designated "white" and individuals named "colored". The Supreme Court's consistent choice established that this denial was unlawful, overruling *Pace v. Alabama* (1883) and finishing all race-construct lawful confinements in light of marriage in the United States. As indicated by the 1924 Virginia Act to Preserve Racial Integrity, minorities could only wed other minorities. In any case, in light of the United States Constitution, this law infringed upon the Equal Protection and Due Process Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment, which eventually helped the Lovings win their case. In spite of the Supreme Court's decision, anti-miscegenation laws stayed on the books in a few states, in spite of the fact that the ruling had made them unenforceable. Judges in Alabama continued implementing that state's hostile to miscegenation statute until the point when the Nixon administration acquired a decision from a U.S. District Court in the United

States v. Britain in 1970. In 2000, Alabama became the last state to adjust its laws to adhere to the Supreme Court's decision.

ANALYSIS

Free State of Jones

Free State of Jones is a 2016 American Civil war film based on the life of Newton Knight and his outfit of rebels that refused to become part of the Confederacy in Jones County, Mississippi during the American Civil War. Jones County, Mississippi serves as the film's setting. Newton Knight was born in 1837 and disagreed with succession, saying that white yeomen farmers like him did not necessarily support slavery. Knight's succession from the secessionists came to be known as the legendary "Free State of Jones." At the beginning of the movie, the "twenty negro" law is mentioned. The law states:

"Provided, There is no white male adult not liable to do military duty engaged with such person in raising said stock; to secure the proper police of the country, one person, either as agent, owner or overseer on each plantation on which one white person is required to be kept by the laws or ordinances of any State, and on which there is no white male adult not liable to do military service, and in States having no such law, one person as agent, owner or overseer, on each plantation of twenty negroes, and on which there is no white male adult not liable to military service."

According to this law approved on April 21st, 1862, a person who owns at 20 black slaves can be excused from military duty. The majority of Confederate soldiers owned no slaves, so the "twenty Negro" law became extremely unpopular.

The main character of the movie is Newton Knight, a white farmer that serves as a battlefield medic in the Confederate Army. When he witnesses the tragic death of his young nephew, he decides to desert from the Army. The reasons soldiers left Confederate Army included poor equipment, lack of food, and leadership. Some acts of desertion have also been described as a form of political protest (Sheehan-Dean, 2015). Newton comes back to his wife informing her that he must leave her and his son behind. Sheehan-Dean (2015) claims that in December 1863 an act was passed that made it illegal for civilians to transport, feed, or shelter deserters. This also meant that if a family member encouraged the soldier to return home, they might be punished as well. After coming home, Newton finds out that his son is sick. He is desperate for medical help for his son and the only available help is Rachel, a black woman working as house slave at a plantation. Fortunately, Rachel saves Newton's son, for which Newton is extremely grateful. He tells Rachel that he does not have any money but gives her gold. Newton says to her: "Saving a

life ain't easy, yeah? And when you do, it's something special. Thank you" (0.23). Newton expresses his immense gratitude towards Rachel for saving his son's life. Rachel reminds him that she was loaned to him from a plantation on a pass. According to Henry (1916), enslaved people who traveled from one place to another were supposed to carry a pass signed by their owner. Those without such a pass could be arrested, jailed, and detained as a runaway. Newton is not expected to pay Rachel, a slave, any money or repay her for her service. Rachel, who is not accustomed to this type of behavior from a white man, is surprised by his kindness despite her status as a slave. Newton encounters Rachel again very soon after. He is badly bitten by a hound when he helps a family that is raided by the Confederate Army collecting taxes. According to Franch (2014), there was a tax-in-kind law presented as a tithe to the government that required farmers to give one-tenth of all their produce to Confederate officials. This act gave specific committees the right to seize livestock, slaves, provisions, and wagons for the Confederate Army and to determine the price of compensation, which meant that they were allowed to take as much as they thought was required and could leave a family without any goods at all.

Newton, injured, is taken to the swamps by a friend's black slave where he is supposed to wait for an unknown helper. He patiently waits until dark when Rachel arrives. She walks him through the swamps with which she seems to be very familiar. When they set eyes on the slaves' camp, "They runaways?" questions Newton, wondering if the slaves are hiding from the Confederate soldiers, to which Rachel replies, "Ain't you?" suggesting that Newton as a deserter from Confederate Army is now in much the same position as a slave. This displays the narrowing difference between Newton and the slaves, putting the white man on the same level as the black slave. Both of them are trying to survive and escape punishment. Newton's desertion placed him alongside black slaves as result of having the same objective, survival. Newton joins their company and successfully hides in the swamps. Shortly the fugitives are joined by others, both black and white. Newton can be observed not only helping black slaves prepare traps for Confederate soldiers and killing them, but he also helps Rachel with reading and trains her in shooting. Rachel secretly learned the skill of reading at her masters' home and Newton helps her to deepen her education. During her reading lessons, the romantic tension between Rachel and Newton can be observed when Newton patiently spells words for her. In an eye-opening scene, a conversation between Rachel and Newton takes place at night in which Rachel reveals the abuse and rape she experienced at the hands of her previous master. Newton is

clearly distraught by her revelation and Rachel tries to soothe him by showing him that she can finally read and starts reading the beginning of the Bible, demonstrating to Newton her ability to finally read without difficulties.

Newton proposes a plan to outsmart Confederate soldiers and their tax collection. He presents his plan to his soldiers: “We pick it clean, hide it away. We divide it amongst ourselves later on. Meanwhile, by the time they get down here, we done scattered” (0.57.). The Confederate soldiers arrive at the field and only find an old farmer without any supplies, thus, they cannot collect any taxes.

After a successful battle with the Confederate Army and securing their position as the Free State of Jones, Newton brings Rachel to a room with a big bed. As a black slave, Rachel has never experienced the luxury of sleeping in an actual bed. This gesture from Newton causes Rachel to be very emotional and she hugs him. The audience can observe another very touching scene between Newton and Rachel and their increasing feelings towards each other. Without the pressure of running for their lives, they can finally settle down and start a family together.

Right after they start their new life together, Newton’s wife, Serena, comes back to him due to her difficult situation. Both of their farms were burned down by Confederate soldiers and she has nowhere else to go. She is desperate and decides to find her husband along with their son. Rachel and Newton are not allowed to get married because of the anti-miscegenation laws. Many proslavery theorists were afraid of interracial marriages and according to *Fredrickson* (1987); it was because they were afraid of the degeneracy of the white race.

Perhaps due to his feeling of guilt, Newton greets her with open arms. After all, it is his desertion and resistance against the Confederate army that caused their farms and his family to be targeted. Serena seems to be reluctant to ask for aid from her estranged husband. She seems very uncomfortable with pleading for help although they are legally still married but no longer live together. During their conversation, Rachel appears with an offer of accommodation for Serena. As strange the scene seems, Serena accepts the offer with her son, and she decides to live with her former husband and his new partner. Serena can be seen helping with Newton’s new farm, aiding Rachel with the housework and even tending Newton and Rachel’s newborn son. It is very strange how calm and comfortable these two women look living next to each other. There is no misconduct or arguments

shown in the movie, which seems highly unlikely. Serena, Newton's wife, would probably not be so content living with her husband's black mistress and their son.

Their happy lives are interrupted by the rise of Ku Klux Klan. "From 1868 through the early 1870s the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) functioned as a loosely organized group of political and social terrorists" (Bryant, 2017). Their main goal was to intimidate black voters and white supporters of the Republican Party, which Newton and his soldiers openly were. The Ku Klux Klan spread fear amongst the former black slaves, and Rachel tries to convince Newton to leave their property and go up north to avoid the Klan and their members. The oppression of black men is increasing again in the Free State of Jones and many of them are experiencing lynching and public shaming. Rachel wants her son to be free and safe. For that reason, she wants to leave their farm and travel to North.

Throughout the entire movie, scenes from 1948 are interspaced between scenes from the Civil War era. There are scenes from a trial with one of Newton's descendants, Davis Knight. He is accused of being one-eighth black, and at that time he is considered black, and therefore could not legally marry his wife. Davis (1991) explains this rule by stating:

"In the South it became known as the "one-drop rule," meaning that a single drop of "black blood" makes a person a black. It is also known as the "one black ancestor rule," some courts have called it the "traceable amount rule," and anthropologists call it the "hypo-descent rule," meaning that racially mixed persons are assigned the status of the subordinate group."

Although Davis appears white and to the average person and he does not appear to have black blood in him, due to the evidence of Newton Knight residing with Rachel, he is found guilty according to the one-drop rule and his marriage is ruled illegitimate.

Loving

Loving is a 2016 British-American authentic show film which recounts the tale of Richard and Mildred Loving, the offending parties in the 1967 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Loving v. Virginia*. This was one of the most important cases considering interracial relationships in the United States of America. During that time, Virginia was one of the states where interracial relationships were banned and couples that broke this law could face jail time. According to Karthikeyan and Chin (2002), all anti-miscegenation laws restricted the marriage of whites and non-white individuals, principally blacks, however frequently additionally Native Americans and Asians. In many states, anti-miscegenation laws also criminalized cohabitation and sex between whites and non-whites.

“I’m pregnant” (0.01). These are the first words of the movie said by Mildred Jeter. She and her soon-to-be husband Richard Loving are at the center of this drama. Richard is a white construction worker in Caroline County, Virginia where he meets and falls in love with a black woman, Mildred Jeter. Virginia was one of the states that still maintained anti-miscegenation laws.

According to Woodson (1918) in 1630 in the state of Virginia, a man named Hugh Davis was ordered to be whipped by reason of him lying with a black woman. Although according to Ballagh and Tyler (1895), they wrote: “In 1662 the colony imposed double fines for fornication with a Negro, but did not restrict inter-marriage until 1691” (p.72). Even more than 300 years later similar laws were still intact in Virginia. Virginia passed the Racial Integrity Act in 1924 that was supposed to preserve racial integrity and required all residents of Virginia to register their racial identities (Wallenstein, 1994).

At the beginning of the movie, the audience can see a clearly pregnant Mildred. At that time she is not married to Richard. Both of them are in love and Mildred’s family does not seem to be against their relationship. Richards seems to have a good relationship with Mildred’s family and friends. Richard takes Mildred to a nearby field for a romantic date where Richard says: “I bought it. This whole acre” (0.06). Right after, he asks her if she will marry him. Mildred is very excited about this news and runs to tell her sister, Garner Jeter. She is happy for her sister as well as worried that Mildred might have to leave her beloved family behind. No indications have been made by this point, but everyone knows it is forbidden for an interracial couple to get married in Virginia. Richard comes up with a plan to get married in Washington D.C., where interracial marriages are legal. Woodard (2012) argues although the United States officially has 51 states, it is a federation of ten

nations—the Deep South, Greater Appalachia, the Left Coast, the Midlands, New France, New Netherland, El Norte, Tidewater, the Far West, and Yankeedom. These nations' territories do not correspond to U.S. state boundaries. Most of the states of “Deep South” banned interracial marriages. According to Anelle (1967), Virginia belonged to 12 states in that category. Along with Virginia, there were Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and West Virginia.

Mildred's family is not happy with her going all the way there to get married, to which she replies: “Richard said there would be less red tape in Washington. That's all” (0.11). By stating this, it seems like Mildred was not aware of the reason they went to Washington and Richard's excuse was that there will be less paperwork involved. Their relationship seems to be accepted by almost everyone around them, except for a few strange stares from white men at the local car race competition and a black woman at the grocery store.

The concerns start with a Sheriff's Deputy Brooks who has been asking for Richard. One night, the police raid the Lovings' house asking: “What're you doing in bed with that woman” (0.16). Implying that even sex between whites and people of color is forbidden. To which Mildred replies that she is Richard's wife and the policeman says: “That's no good here” (0.17). In the eyes of the law in Virginia, their marriage certificate obtained in Washington is invalid. They are arrested and stay in a jail overnight. The police imprison pregnant Mildred and leave her there for even longer period of time than Richard. This shows the lack of empathy from the police force towards a black woman even when she is heavily pregnant. After Richard leaves the jail he tries to figure out who told on them but in such a small community with so many people that could be against them, it could be anyone. Meanwhile, Sheriff Brooks tries to talk sense to Richard. He says:

All you over there in Central Point don't know up from down. All mixed up. Part Cherokee, Rappahannock, part nigger, part white. Blood don't know what it wants to be. You just got born in the wrong place, is all. (0.24)

The audience can see clear disgust from Brooks who does not support mixing of races. He feels that all of the races living near one other give them the temptation to mingle together. Brooks continues with his speech about how each race is supposed to be made only for each other: “That's God's law. He made a sparrow a sparrow and a robin a robin. They're different for a reason” (0.25). He compares the races to kinds of birds, implying that each

race is a different breed to him. After bailing Mildred out of jail, she and Richard face difficult a decision. Their lawyer, Frank Beazley, advises them to plead guilty to their charge which makes Mildred extremely distraught. She does not feel like she did anything wrong and it is hard for her to even say the word “guilty” at loud. She only whispers it after she is being asked by the judge and she stares steadily down to the ground. The judge then delivers the verdict:

The court does accept the plea of guilty and fixed the punishment of both accused at one year in jail. The court does suspend said sentence for the period of 25 years, upon the provision that both the accused leave Caroline County and the State of Virginia at once. And do not return together at the same time to said county and state for a period of 25 years. (0.35)

The Lovings move to Washington D.C. to stay with a Mildred’s friends. This decision makes Mildred’s family very upset as well Mildred herself. Richard does not seem to have many strong relationships with his family or friends in Virginia. The only information the viewers have about his parents is that his father used to work for a black man and his mother works as a midwife. However, Mildred has very strong ties to people at home. She also likes the country life where everything is slow-paced and much safer than in the city. With the birth of her child approaching, Mildred grows more concerned about who is going to deliver her first-born child. She mentions to Richard that she always thought it would be his mother and he agrees to take Mildred to her back to Caroline County. This act would be the violation of their probation. Shortly after coming back to Central Point, Mildred gives birth to a baby boy, Sidney. After delivering the baby, Richard’s mother raises concerns about her son marrying Mildred and says to him: “You never should have married that girl” (0.50). She continues telling him that although she likes Mildred, she thinks it was bad decision on her son’s part to marry her. The morning after the birth, the police come to Lovings’ house looking for the couple. They are brought in front of the judge right after their arrest and before they can hear the date of their sentencing, their previous lawyer, Mr. Beazley appears in the court. Fortunately, the judge decides not to press charges and the Lovings receive a warning from their lawyer to never come back because they might not get so lucky a second time.

Mildred decides--after some advice from a family friend--to write to Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy for help, who served as a United States Senator at that time. Surprisingly, Mildred hears back from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which

offers to aid them. The ACLU was formed under the leadership of Roger Baldwin, Crystal Eastman, and Albert DeSilver. According to Barnett (2011), the ACLU helps with issues including racial justice, women's rights, immigrants' rights, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) rights to privacy, drug law reform, free speech, and religion. The lawyer who tackles the Lovings' case is Bernard Cohen. He overwhelms Mildred with the fact that the ACLU will take their case for free. Mr. Cohen suggests that they need to take their case to the Supreme Court. In order to accomplish this, they have to present the Lovings' case in front of a judge again, but it would have to be in a 60-day period. However, that timeframe has already passed a long time ago. Cohen proposes the following plan: "My suggestion would be for the two of you to return to Caroline County, get rearrested, and then we will have an avenue for our appeal" (1.08). He suggests that the Lovings need to go back to Caroline County to violate their probation and thus their case would be presented in court again. Richard and Mildred are visibly unsure about this plan though it is their son's accident, who gets hit by a car, which changes their mind. Mildred decides not to raise her kids in the city anymore and that she wants to return home.

The Lovings move back to Virginia waiting for their trial. In the meantime, Bernard Cohen asks for help from constitutional law expert Phil Hirschkop. Cohen presents his case to Hirschkop:

The ACLU referred me to this case concerning an interracial couple that was married in D.C. They were arrested for living together in Virginia, and the judge suspended their sentence under order that they leave the state for 25 years. I filed a motion to vacate the judgment with Judge Bazile, the original trial judge in Caroline County, but he's stonewalling me. Of course, the ACLU sees this... and I agree... as a potential contender to repeal the anti-miscegenation laws nationwide. (1.21)

He suggests that through the Lovings' case, he could overturn similar anti-miscegenation laws across the nation. In order to accomplish that, he needs help from a constitutional lawyer. Hirschkop agrees to help him, although he raises concerns about how badly this case could transform.

After the judge rules against Lovings again, they have the chance to appeal to the state court, and even if the state court rules against them, they can then appeal to the Supreme Court. The Lovings also get an offer from Life magazine to be profiled in one of their editions. The photographer Grey Villet was the one who captured pictures of Richard

and Mildred Lovings. Most of the photos from civil-rights movement only depicted violence and anger, but the pictures taken by Villet displayed a passionate family and love between two people of different races. Due to this publicity, the Lovings' case increased significance in American society.

The state court rules against the Lovings' case, and they know they will be heading to Supreme Court. Even though Richard says to news reporters that they will be going back to Washington D.C., he stays with his family in Virginia. Richard does not feel safe even at his home, where he finds a brick in his car and he is even followed by a strange car while going back to his house. He feels nervous and paranoid and he is obviously agitated even more by new reporters' presence at his house. Cohen comes back to Lovings' house to bring them the news that their case will be presented at the Supreme Court. Richard is stubborn about not wanting to go to the trial. Although when Cohen asks him what message he wants to say to the Supreme Court justices, he replies: "You tell the judge that I love my wife" (1.47).

The Supreme Court unanimously holds that law prohibiting interracial marriages is unconstitutional. Cohan wins the case with his following ending speech: "Mr. Chief Justice, may it please the court? What is the danger to the state of Virginia of interracial marriage? What is the state of danger to the people of interracial marriage? Marriage is a fundamental right" (1.49).

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner

One of the first and more controversial depictions of an interracial relationship is undoubtedly in a movie "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner". This contentious movie was released in 1967, the year of the Supreme Court ruling that anti-miscegenation laws were unconstitutional.

No other movie of this time portrayed interracial relationships or marriage in a positive light. The director Stanley Kramer's spin was to take a social taboo and turned it into an old-fashioned comedy with a hint of drama.

Kramer tested Southern white by featuring a kiss between John Prentice, a Yale-taught specialist, compassionate, and his white fiancée Joanna Drayton. Although the only kiss Prentice and Joanna share is visible in the rear-view mirror. That would make the kiss one of the first ever portrayed on American television, even though it is believed that a 1968 scene of Star Trek, "Plato's Stepchildren", which initially circulated on November 22, 1968, is frequently alluded to as the first interracial kiss on American TV.

Kramer depicted John Prentice as a perfect groom-to-be. He is respectable physician with good manners and helping children in Africa in his free time. Some even could call him the golden future son-in-law. His perfect demeanor and behavior throughout the movie could be accused of being an unrealistic portrayal of a black man. The character of John Prentice seems to have an advantage of being a perfect son-in-law. He has good education, position and he is very well mannered. The only issue, and the central matter of this movie, is his race. If Joanna's parents didn't meet him in person, they would probably be more than delight to let their daughter to get married to this outstanding American citizen.

Surprisingly during the whole movie, no one is amazed by the fact that John Prentice is 14 years older than his future wife, which shows how much the concerned parents are blinded by the fact that their future son-in-law is a man of color. The only one who asks about Joanna's age is Mr. Prentice when John calls him. Mr. Prentice asks: "How old is she? - She's only 23, Dad" "Twenty-three, that's good" (0.13). John's father shows approval of his future daughter-in-law, though at this point he assumes that she is a woman of color. Only Joanna's father might be the only one who could be concerned by the fact that John was already married once and even had a child who died with his mother in a car accident. None of these other thorny issues are brought up during the movie and they are only mentioned briefly when Prentice is introducing himself. It seems that filmmakers

decided to portray Prentice as a stable family man and doctor for purpose of showing that even a perfect black man with secured position can have troubles of pursuing a white woman.

Besides their age difference, the couple only spent 10 days together before they decided they wanted to get married. They only spent 10 days together when they met on vacation in Hawaii. That is something that would definitely bewilder parents in this day and age. According to Wheeler (2010), he states that the U.S. Census Bureau (2001) compared the average age gap and percentages for remarriages from the period of 1960 to 1989. From 1965, the percentage of couples greater than five years apart ranged from a low of 37.1 percent in the period of 1965 to 1969 to a high of 41.6 percent in the period of 1975 to 1979.

Throughout the movie, there is noticeable usage of John Prentice's doctoral degree. Very frequently he is addressed by the title of a doctor which can be an exhibition of courtesy or an endeavor of immoderate example of belittling by overuse of John's degree. This can show their surprise how someone like John, a man of color, can even obtain such education. Joanna's father even displays astonishment how a son of a black mailman would be able to achieve such accomplishment. However, it might be just the display of courtesy by using his proper title. Soon after meeting Joanna's parents, John tells them following:

“There's something you both ought to know. I made a decision. Joanna doesn't know about it and she shouldn't. Joanna thinks that our future is settled but there is no real commitment. Up to now, nothing is settled at all. Unless you two approve, there won't be any marriage.” (0.27)

John suggests that unless Mr. and Mrs. Drayton absolutely agree with their marriage, they will not get married. John wants to have both parents approval to marry their daughter to continue their relationship.

Two very open and hostile displays of disapprovals can be seen during the movie. One of them is the early scene with Hilary, who is a white employee of Mrs. Drayton at her art gallery. She is the first character who interacts with the interracial couple and the audience can see her open and unveiled disapproval of their relationship. Due to her later interaction in the Drayton's' house, when she voices her opinion, the character of Joanna's mother is displayed by her action of firing Hilary after her racist outburst. She tries to act polite in front of the couple but the moment she is left alone with Mrs. Drayton she starts

voicing her opinion about the interracial couple: "I knew something was up, but this? What are you going to do?" (0.49). Mrs. Drayton has harsh and firm response for Hilary outburst: "It's not that I don't want to know you, it's just that we're not the sort of people that you can afford to associate with. Don't speak, Hilary, just go" (0.50). The second is the frenzy of Tillie, the black maid of Draytons', who also displays her criticism of interracial marriage and presents to audience that not only the white people can be against interracial marriages and thus racist. Not only the tension between the races itself can be observed but also between the people of color as well. The Draytons' black maid, Tillie, is even more shocked by the choice of her employer's husband because she suspects that he is attempting to raised himself by marrying a white woman. She has been caring for Joanna for her whole life and she is concern because she suspects that John might be just using her for his own benefit. She raises her concern to John himself:

"You may think you're fooling these folks, but you ain't fooling me. You're a smooth-talking, smart-ass niggers out for all you can get with all that other trouble-making nonsense. I brought up that child, and ain't nobody gonna harm her. As long as you're here, I'm watching. You read me, boy? You bring trouble, you'll know what "black power" means!" (0.58)

Joanna seems very oblivious to the fact that she wants to marry a man of color which is not acceptable in her time and age. During the whole movie she seems to live in completely different world in which the people around her, even her parents and fiancée are trying to explain to her the downsides of her future marriage. Nevertheless, she is determined to stand by her decision of marrying her black fiancée. She is very positive character who doesn't realize or accept the drawbacks of interracial marriage for her, her future husband nor her future children and the obstacles they will have to encounter. She seems very naive and not being able to see clearly why her parents are so concerned for her and her soon-to-be husband. She has a conversation with her mother after Mr. and Mrs. Prentice's arrival where she seems very child-like and light-hearted about the whole situation. She says: "When John's father saw that I was white, I thought he'd faint" (01.34), to what her mother replies: "What about your own father?" (01.34.). Joanna say: "Yes. That was funny, wasn't it? Mom, isn't this thrilling? Aren't you just...?" (01.34). Joanna seems already excited about the plans about wedding while she has no idea about the promise that John gave to her parents at the beginning of the movie.

Another melodrama starts when John's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Prentice, arrive on the scene. Notwithstanding John's hesitance, Joanna demands that his father and mother likewise be welcome to supper. Absolutely oblivious to the fact that their future daughter in law is indeed a white girl, as they assumed that their son would marry a girl of color, they are hesitated at first to accept the invitation. In the same manner, as when Joanna's parents met her fiancée, John's parents display obvious shock and understandable confusion about their relationship.

Be that as it may, their presence prompts two troublesome scenes. The first happens when John (who has been unfailingly considerate and respectful to his father in law) puts his own father into a tough situation and addresses him about his marriage issue. The "Negro father", similar to the white one, father, isn't ready for interracial marriage. In this scene John says to his father: "Dad. You're my father. I'm your son. I love you. I always have and I always will. But you think of yourself as a colored man. I think of myself as a man." (1.32)

This speech doesn't seem consistent with John's character elsewhere in the film where he is being polite and considerate in response to the others, showing his true feelings about the whole situation. He can finally express himself to a person who he knows for his whole life. John needs to look calm and stable in front of his future in-laws; contrarily he can be himself in front of his parents.

The second conflicted scene is similar to the previous one. John's mom addresses Joanna's father, informing him that if he truly forbid the marriage it indicates he has not considered the couple are really in love. Joanna's father has effectively weathered every single other contention, however this one disturbs him. After a long stretch of thought, he consents to the marriage.

For such as controversial movie, it was welcomed by mostly warm and positive reviews. A. D. Murphy (1967) wrote: "Story ends on an upbeat note, leaving audiences not only entertained but with many a new thought on how they would face similar situations. Almost every familiar racial prejudice is brought up and, if not demolished, at least illuminated in detail to spark definite word of mouth. Certain Dixie areas may not dig the film, sight-unseen, but it is big enough, and important enough, to command screen time in those regions."

As said, the movie would probably not be for everyone. In time when in some states the interracial relationships were taboo not so long ago not all people were interested seeing a

movie about racial issue. Especially because this issue was portrayed so lightly in this movie.

Mississippi Masala

The film starts in Uganda where the family of an Indian lawyer lives in comfort until the dictator Idi Amin expropriates their property and forces leave the country. “Idi Amin was one of the most brutal military dictators to wield power in post-independence Africa” (Keatley, 2003). The audience find out from the following radio sequence: “Today, the last of the Asians who have been forced to leave the country will have done so in order to pave the way for the indigenous people of Uganda to control the economy” (0.1). A lawyer, Jay, his wife, Kinnu, and their only daughter, Mina, are forced to leave the country. Jay gave an interview to BBC stating that Idi Amin is evil. By this act he put a target on his back and placed him and his family in danger. According to Patel (1972) there were approximately 80,000 individuals of South Asian descent living in Uganda, of whom 23,000 had had their applications for citizenship both processed and accepted. As Jay being one of those citizens of Uganda that thought of the country as a permanent home, he is very distressed by the fact he has to leave his beloved country. His little daughter Mina appears as an Indian girl but she knows Swahili as well as the language of her parents, Hindi. The film critic Roger Ebert (1992) writes:

It was racism, of course, that brought the Indians to Africa in the first place, to build the railroads, and racism that kicked them out. And it was racism that brought Africans to America. But to be a victim of the racism of others does not inoculate anyone against the prejudice that can grow in their own hearts.

Jay might have gone through racism himself but as it is shown in the movie, it does not mean that a person who goes through some traumatic experience will be more empathic in the same situation to other people.

After spending some time in United Kingdom, Jay and his family settle down in Greenwood, Mississippi. Their extended family has bought a chain of roadside motels there and Jay’s family joins their business. Mina grows up into a beautiful Indian woman who seems to adapt to American culture pretty quickly. As a result of being exposed to English and American culture at early age, we cannot hear an accent in her speech. On the other hand, some of her relatives are not able to properly speak English. Nina’s family is uncomfortable in local community. When Nina is arguing with one of her relatives, she causes a car accident hitting a van of Demetrius Williams, a young local African-American carpet cleaner. They exchange numbers and addresses because of the insurance, though Mina is obviously interested in Demetrius.

Meantime, in spite of the progression of time, Jay can't deal with his sudden departure from his home country and can't completely grasp the American way of life. He writes a letter to Uganda in which it tries to express his love for his country that he considers his home and he wants to obtain back his property that was taken from him during Amin's regime.

Honorable Sirs: This is in reference to my lawsuit, number 2089 filed in the high court at Kampala, dated 30 December 1985 for restoration of my property. I was born in Uganda and Uganda has been my home a country to which I had the utmost loyalty and love until I was forcibly and illegally expelled by General Idi Amin. (0.19)

Mina's parents are trying to get her married to an Indian man, even when they are living in USA; they want Mina to stay true to her culture. As Jay's friends tell him: "In Uganda, you're the champion defender of blacks but the same blacks kicked him out" (0.39). Stating that during his career in Uganda, Jay was a lawyer, while in USA he is just an owner of a motel. To this Jay says: "Cruelty has no color" (0.39).

In the meantime Demetrius owns his own carpet cleaning company and in his youth he provides for himself and helping his old father. Even when he has an honest job, he is still frowned upon by white people who hire his services. He is called "the good one" (0.25) by a lady at the restaurant where his father, Mr. Williams, works. Even after the years of slavery age, the Westcott (1982) in his article says:

Black occupational status improved somewhat during the 1970's, as proportionately more blacks moved into white-collar jobs, although few penetrated the higher salaried professional and managerial positions. In fact, the black-to-white earnings differential was unchanged for professional and technical workers between 1973 and 1980, and, even more importantly, black earnings relative to those of whites fell in the fast-growing clerical field. (p. 37)

Kinnu is trying to find a good Indian husband for her daughter. She wants Mina to marry Harry Patel. According to Kinnu he is the perfect Indian partner for her daughter. Even other Indian mothers in their community are interested in Harry for their daughters. Mina's family is not considered highly valued in their community. One of the Indian members says following about them: "You can be dark and have money, or you can be fair and have no money. But you can't be dark and have no money and expect to get Harry Patel" (0.28). The hard financial situation in Mina's family makes her less valuable for

marriage. Maybe if she was white, she could have a chance but being a woman of color and coming from poor family, in her Indian community, no one will want to marry her.

Harry, who knows Mina from local community, takes Mina to a party to a black club where she meets with Demetrius again. After Mina's date night, her mother has conversation with her, trying to convince her to go out more. She wants her to blend with her Indian community more while being oblivious that is not Mina's interest. She says to her: "I keep telling you go out more. Meet people" (0.40). However by people, her mother means Indian people. Although their beginning is a little bit rocky, Mina seems to be more interested in Demetrius than he is interested in her. She tries to advance the relationship and even when he does not remember her from their accident and he seems distracted by other women, Mina remains undetermined and after some time, he agrees to take her for a dinner with his family. It might seem strange, Demetrius does not seem very interested in Mina at the beginning but very quickly he changes his mind and even takes Mina to his grandfather's birthday which seems impulsive decision.

Mina is aware that her parents will not allow her to date a black man and she keeps their relationship secret. During one of their dates she explains to Demetrius where she is from and she calls herself "a mix Masala" (0.49). According to Mina, Masala is "a bunch of hot spices" (0.50). Meaning that Mina is of Indian descent, but she has never actually been there, while she grew up in Uganda, lived in United Kingdom and now she is in USA, making her a mix of all kinds of different cultures.

The couple chooses to spend a romantic weekend together in Biloxi, where they are spotted by individuals from the Indian community. Jay is insulted and embarrassed, and restricts Mina from ever dating Demetrius. Mina is confronted not only with backlash from her family and Indian community but also dislike from the Black community. Demetrius has to face criticism from his own family, the Indian community and even white people who refuse to hire him for a job. His father expresses his disappointment in him while his mother tries to support him. She says: "You and the rest of them want him to know his place and stay in it. But the days of slavery, they over, Williben" (1.22). She indicates that the slavery is banned but at the same time Demetrius' own family tries to keep him in place, the same way it would be in time of slavery.

Demetrius confronts Jay who says to Demetrius: "Mina is free to love anyone, to live as she chooses. I respect her freedom. That does not absolve me of my responsibility as her father" (1.27). Jay wants freedom for Mina but at the same time feels he must

encouraged his daughter to reach a high social status in Indian culture, indicating that Demetrius is not good enough for her. In the flashback, Jay can be observed to live through racism himself. He thought of himself as Ugandan, which caused him being called traitor by fellow Indian but also he never was fully accepted by Ugandan people. This experience might be a reason for him to believe that his Indian daughter should be only with an Indian man and stay within her own culture so she does not have live through the same prejudices as her father did. Jay decides that he wants to go back to Uganda. His plea was heard and he gets hearing to consider his property claim. It is also opportunity for him to take Mina away from Demetrius. When Mina hears about her father decision, she takes her car and leaves to see Demetrius to tell him goodbye. Although during their conversation they decide that they want to live and run away together resulting in Mina calling her parents to say goodbye to them over the phone.

Ebert (1992), in his review, wrote:

What we are dealing with is more than a transplanted version of “Romeo and Juliet.” Both the black and Indian characters (and certainly the local whites, who are not much of a factor in this movie) have a vast and comfortable lack of curiosity about other races; they prefer to think of them in stereotypes, and have no desire to meet them as individuals. When the Indian woman and the black man meet and fall in love, everyone on all sides falls obediently into place to condemn their relationship.

As Ebert says, this movie shows interracial issue in very simplistic way, though also in Hollywood style. The audience can experience romance, drama and a little bit of comedy.

COMPARISON

As Ebert (1992) calls the Mississippi Masala couple a “Romeo and Juliet” type of relationship, the audience can also observe a similar pattern in the other movies discussed. Racial prejudice establishes the scenery for the couples that want to be together, but something or someone is standing in their way. The biggest battle with the legal system can be observed in *Loving* (2016), as the movie’s plot is centered around one of the most controversial cases of anti-miscegenation laws. Although *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner* (1967) is set right after the infamous case, no one discusses or comments on the legality of their marriage. The movie takes place in San Francisco, California, where according to Lenhardt (2008), on October 1, 1948, the California Supreme Court found the state’s anti-miscegenation law unconstitutional under the Fourteenth Amendment in the case *Perez v. Sharp*. The case was brought by an interracial couple in California prior to the Lovings’ case. Thus, Joanna and John’s marriage was legal in California for several years before the movie’s release. In *Free State of Jones* (2016) the couple had the fewest obstacles from the legal perspective. During slavery in the U.S., black people were seen as only working power. It was not unusual for a white man to have relationship with a black woman. A romantic relationship was not supported but also not banned. There was nothing unusual about a black woman being sexually abused by her master, and so no one would question Newton Knight’s proximity with Rachel, a black slave.

However, the movie’s portrayal of Newton Knight’s relationship with his wife, Serena, was unusual. During the movie, it was never mentioned that they would get divorced, but Newton still advanced his relationship with Rachel and started living with her. Serena was very quick to move to their home after she got herself into a difficult situation and decided to search for her husband. “He openly lived with Rachel and with his white wife,” Bynum (2016) says. “He saw to it that Rachel and all of the children inherited property, he never denied them publicly”. As this polygamous relationship would have been seen as controversial in 1862, the movie was filmed in 2016 when the topic of polygamy might be more acceptable to the audience than it would have been in, for example, 1967. In comparison, *Loving* was also filmed in 2016, where the story was told without any added sensation that might attract an audience or cause astonishment. On the other hand, *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner* was filmed in 1967, when interracial marriage was a sensitive topic and the director Stanley Kramer had the difficult job to tell a story

about a controversial topic during a sensitive time period. Needless to say, he did an astonishing job by portraying it in light manner.

Well-mannered and educated Dr. John Prentice contrasts with Mississippi Masala's main male character Demetrius Williams. John's character is absolutely flawless and is a perfect future son-in-law. Ebert (1968) describes him almost comically: "He is a noble, rich, intelligent, handsome, ethical medical expert who serves on United Nations committees when he's not hurrying off to Africa, Asia, Switzerland and all those other places where his genius is required". By contrast, Demetrius seems very young, unsure about what he wants, and seems unconvincing to the audience that he is someone who owns a business. While the male characters seem to be on the opposite sides, the main female characters have some similar traits. Joanna Drayton (*Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*) and Mina (*Mississippi Masala*) are both very naive and light-hearted characters. They both decided to be with a man they love, and nothing can stand in their way. They do not listen to their families' concerns and they do not seem to care if their family will accept their choice of partner or not. However, both Demetrius and John care about their families' opinion of their relationships as well as the point of view of their spouses' families. While Mina and Joanna are portrayed as strong-headed young ladies, the main female character from *Free State of Jones* is overshadowed by the main male character. Rachel, the brave black slave who ran away from her masters after years of abuse, cannot be seen furiously fighting for her relationship, perhaps because it is not required of her, but she also very calmly accept another woman in her home, who is her current partner's wife. As someone who has gone through a lot pain and unfairness, one would expect her character to be more vocal and express her feelings, which the audience cannot observe. The main character of *Loving*, Mildred, appears more like Rachel, although she is fiercer character. In comparison to her male counterpart, Richard, who seems to be very laid-back and not very bother about the situation that is going around him. Collin (2017) says the following about their characters:

Richard is fundamentally ill at ease with his relationship's gathering significance – his small eyes bright with tension, his considerable physical bulk turned in on itself. So it's Mildred who gradually takes control, both in court and in front of the cameras.

Mildred is the center of the whole movie and her character makes the audience forget that there is her husband with whom she is fighting against this ill fate. Probably even her sister Garner is more involved in solving Lovings' issues than Richard.

The families and parents play a large role in the couples' decisions about the future of their relationship. One of the biggest roles is considered the Draytons' (*Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*). John Prentice makes it clear at the beginning movie that without their absolute approval, there will not be any wedding. Although it does not seem that the relationship is an issue for Draytons' but the short period of time they have to make a decision. It might be their high education and decorum that made them seemed not very much against the relationship of their daughter. On the other hand, in *Mississippi Masala*, the parents are the ones who are the most against their children's relationship. Mina's father, Jay, is the most vocal about the interracial relationship. It seems bizarre as Jay himself is of Indian descent that lived in Uganda his whole life. It might be his experience with racism in Uganda that made him not trust black people. However, he also faced racism from his own people for being too friendly with black people. This makes Jay a very interesting character and the audience can observe his internal fight to let his daughter be free, which is something his ancestors could not do, and to protect her from the backlash and racism that she might experience. Overall, Jay is only a protective father that is trying to do the best for his family. The audience can observe that same protectiveness from John Prentice's mother. She says to Joanna's father:

What happens to men when they grow old? Why do they forget everything? I believe those two young people need each other, like they need the air to breathe in. Anybody can see that by just looking at them. But you and my husband, you might as well be blind men. (1.29, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*)

Mrs. Prentice blames the men's forgetfulness on their lack of empathy for the young couple. Ebert (1968) says that Mr. Drayton is immune to all other arguments, but it seems that Mrs. Prentice's argument that he has forgotten what it means to be in love is the one that makes him change his mind and agree to the marriage. The parents in the other movies, such as in *Free State of Jones* and *Loving*, seem almost absent or they do not play significant role in their children's life.

CONCLUSION

In this day and age, it is not common that love or being loved by someone of a different race is an issue. However, interracial couples throughout history had to face much more difficult fate than the current generation. In general, Hollywood and movies have always portrayed romance movies with a little bit of drama and some obstacles for the main characters in their journey to be with the love of their lives. Hollywood loves underdogs that must go through a rough journey to get to their destination. And what better romantic couples with issues they have to overcome than interracial couples? They have the issues that other couples have but with some added ones. They must overcome not only their fate but also their social position or their families' prejudices.

In all the movies discussed in this thesis, one can observe the "Romeo and Juliet effect" as the couples must overcome interference from the outside world. For the couples in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* and *Mississippi Masala*, it was their families, for those in *Free State of Jones* and *Loving* it was the historic period that forbid their love. All the characters, no matter their color or race, had to go through some difficulties to be with their loved ones. No matter what period of time or which race, they all faced some kind of racism in their journey. *Mississippi Masala* might be seen as the oddest one because this couple was the only one that consisted of both colored partners, but at the same time, it might be the most accurate example of the Romeo and Juliet effect. The movie also shows that it is not always the white family that is against interracial marriage but even a family of color might disapprove of their children's spouses because they are also from a different culture than their children.

Interracial couples face many difficulties in their love and their relationships might be even stronger because they know that if they are together, they will have to face not only their surroundings' disapproval but also the disapproval of their families. In all four movies, it was their surroundings that were against their relationship, be it their families, their friends or the law.

The major purpose of this thesis was to show different interpretations of interracial couples in Hollywood movies. As shown, there are different perceptions of interracial couples in the movies throughout different periods of time. One characteristic all of the movies have in common is the happy ending. Hollywood romance movies are known to have happy endings, and these four movies are no exceptions. The biggest influence in all

four movies was the year in which they were filmed. The directors had to cope with the audience to whom they would present the movie.

Finally, I came to the conclusion that no matter what time the story took place in; interracial couples have always faced disapproval from their surroundings and families. The interpretations of all four movies were adapted to the time period in which the movies were filmed more than to the time in which the stories were set. The more contemporary movies showed the couples and the reality of their time period, while the older movies were more customized to the audience to whom they were presented. Many more examples of interracial couples can be found throughout Hollywood history, but I decided to choose the ones that I believe represent wider scale. This is only my opinion and it might be viewed by someone else in a different light.

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SUMMARY IN CZECH

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměří na mezirasové vztahy v Hollywoodských filmech. Čtyři filmy, které byly vybrány, jsou Loving (2016), Free State of Jones (2016), Mississippi Masala (1991) a Guess Who's Coming to Dinner (1967).

Všechny tři filmy také ukazují různé mezirasové vztahy a různá časová období. Zatímco Free State of Jones se soustředí na vztah mezi černoškou a bělochem, stejně jako Guess Who's Coming to Dinner, Mississippi Masala ukazuje romanci mezi Afro-Američanem a indickou Američankou. Tyto filmy zobrazují také odlišné časové období od občanské války až do sedmdesátých let 19. století, kdy vidíme reprezentaci kontroverzního tématu mezirasového manželství, které byl historicky nezákonný ve většině států Spojených států té doby.

Na základě dlouhé historie mezirasového manželství jako tabu v americké společnosti se tento příspěvek soustředí na jejich vývoj.