

Problematizing Black Female Character As Mother Figure in Adaptation of
“The Curious Case Of Benjamin Button”

Indira Vita Ariesia

Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

Author Note

Author is student of English Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Jalan Ir. Sutami 36A, Surakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

This research examines how the movie “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” constructs the character of Queenie as mammy stereotype and the accounts of her presence in this adaptation. By applying the semiotic theory of Roland Barthes, this research analyzes mise-en-scene to examine the mammy stereotype as constructed in the character Queenie and to contextualize its analysis by looking at the history of slavery in America. Then, in order to find the account of Queenie’s presence, this research uses the adaptation theory of Linda Hutcheon. Thus, this research finds that the movie constructs mammy stereotype, that has been ingrained in the history of slavery in America, in the character Queenie through mise-en-scene, specifically in the figure behavior of Queenie. Moreover, the presence of Queenie in the movie challenges the stereotype by showing the significant role of mammy in a parent's abandonment of a white child. The presence of Queenie makes this movie as a process and a product based on Hutcheon’s adaptation theory. As her presence telling the story in variation and paying tribute to the short story, the movie represents Queenie to contest the short story point of view towards black, especially a black woman.

Keyword: adaptation, mammy stereotype, film and literature, black women

Problematizing Black Female Character as Mother Figure in Adaptation of
“The Curious Case Of Benjamin Button”

Following the birth of motion pictures in the 1910s, critics of representation in America has come from marginalized social groups based on what appears on the screen (Distelberg, 2015). The struggle from groups like Irish Americans, Jews, African Americans, women, Latinos, and gays has emerged to fight for their visibility on-screen whether it has fair representation or enforce their marginalization. In the 1980s, the number of scholars studying marginalized group representation on screen and mass media, both in past and present, has increased. However, the old age of marginalized groups representation issues or so-called stereotypes on screen seems to never vanish, especially to African America. Hollywood often represents African Americans as something out of the norms and considered to have a less leading role.

Along with African American stereotypes in general, African American women stereotypes come along. Misrepresentation towards African American women is all over American entertainment. Portrayals of African American women such as Mammy, Mulatta, or Jezebel appear in many Hollywood movies. According to Amber (1998), African American women appear to be on the bottom end of the social and economic hierarchy and their representation in the media is no more than giving discrimination and oppression. Nonetheless, the stereotype of African American women or black women on the screen of Hollywood movies is still going strong. One of the popular stereotypes is *Mammy*.

Mammy was born out of white supremacy imagination that puts black women in an inferior position (McDole, 2017). The existence of black women stereotypes such as mammy in the film industry has its objectives. By looking at The Myth of the Old South, it is possible to understand how America manifests the legacy of slavery through mammy (Atkinson, 2001). Mammy is a

mask that hides the horrific reality of slavery. Mammy is a slave who loves her masters and depicts slavery as a thing that is not so bad. Mammy as Black women representation becomes the most widely recognized representation (Wallace-Sanders, 2008).

As the presence of a black woman character in the film adaptation *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, this research aims to analyze the presence of Queenie, a black woman character who appears in the new form of cultural product. It takes decades until F. Scott Fitzgerald the short story of *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (1922) adapted to the big screen by David Fincher in 2008. Directed by David Fincher, this movie successfully achieves three awards out of thirteen nominees at Academic Award. As an adaptation, this movie is based on the original story. Telling about the story of Benjamin who has a condition of reverse aging, the movie has its own way to deliver the life of Benjamin. However, this adaptation has quite unexpected achievements. Based on the movie that is far from its fidelity to the original text, this movie manages to spoil the audience who probably have the desire to see the fidelity.

Process of adaptation should thus be seen as a massive investment (financial and Beginning to Theorize Adaptation psychic) in the desire to repeat particular acts of consumption within a form of representation [film, in this case] that discourages such a repetition. (Ellis, 1982, pp. 4-5) The movie adaptation of *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* has changed all the narrative elements from the short story, such as characters, plot, point of view, setting, etc. (Saksono, 2014). In this movie, Fincher presents several “bittersweet artistic ruminations in growing pains” through Benjamin’s lifetime from World War I through World War II and the 1960s (Tyree, 2009). Moreover, this movie shows a series of tragedies through national history from the scene of Mr. Gateaux, a clockmaker, that symbolizes his dream of resurrecting his son who dies in World War I to the death of Daisy while Katrina storm hit New Orleans.

In the short story, the setting is in the 19th century-Baltimore while in the movie is in New Orleans in the 20th century after the first world war. According to Joseph (2018), the change of place in this movie happens due to television tax credit law that provides a deduction for movie production in 2002 (Joseph, 2018). This discount is one of the concerns, based on the needs of the movie industry to look at the financial aspect (Corrigan, 2007). Therefore, there is always a financial aspect that makes the adaptation movie to produce a gap between the story in literary work and adaptation movie. As John Ellis (1982) said:

Despite the tax incentive, there is other explanation of why the movie's setting changes over to New Orleans. New Orleans, as a setting in the movie, adds the atmosphere of Katrina storm which has a metaphor meaning in the film as stated by Eric Roth, the screenwriter, in the exclusive interview at *collider.com*. "Katrina in the movie represents the death that everyone knows will come", stated by Roth (Weintraub, 2008). In other words, not only the financial aspect that changes the place and time settings but also the relation of the place with the present social condition or events, in which it relates to the focus of this paper whether the presence of Queenie, the added black women character, happens because of the present social condition or just for entertainment itself.

In his short story, Fitzgerald focuses on Benjamin's life story with his father and there are not many women or other races except the "white" in the story. On the other hand, the movie presents a black women character who has a quite important role in the story line. Not only in the beginning of the movie, this black women character also appears in whole story of the movie. Fincher also makes this black women character takes care of abandoned Benjamin, the main character, while in the short story he lives with his father. Based on that, this research attempts to analyze the presence of black women in the movie adaptation and the account of Queenie presence

in the movie, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* which is unfortunately absent in the short story. It is an attempt to understand the significance of the the presence of mommy in the life of Benjamin.

Method

This research is descriptive qualitative research. By using one of the capacities in qualitative research, this research discusses how things work in particular contexts (Mason, 2002). This research takes the movie adaptation of the short story of *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* as the source of the primary data and the short story with the same title for the secondary data. It begins from reading the short story to understand the narrative and then analyzing the *mise-en-scene* in the movie, especially on the construction of the narrative and the figure behavior of Queenie and Benjamin. Thus, the data are chosen purposively to reach the goal of this research.

In analyzing the data, this research applies an adaptation theory by Linda Hutcheon. By using this method, this research can comparatively identify a text-based issue broadened to a variety of media (Hutcheon, 2006). This research focuses on analyzing the presence of black women as mother figure and the significance of her presence in the narrative of the movie. To understand the significance of her presence in the movie, the identity of Black woman as the mother figure in the movie, it needs to compare the narrative of both the short story and the movie and contextualize it in African-American history, especially the mammy stereotype. In analyzing the mammy stereotype, this research uses semiotic theory of Roland Barthes to analyze both the *mise-scene* and the narrative of the movie to understand the motives of black women's presence as a mommy figure in the movie which is absent in the short story.

Finding and Discussion

1. The significance Role of Mammy

Queenie is one of the characters added to the movie adaptation. She appears as a person who accepts an odd condition of Benjamin while his father decides to abandon him. The presence of Queenie is as odd as Benjamin's condition in its unique way to be identified. The movie presents the character of Queenie as the mother figure of an abandoned Benjamin through her kind, loving, and caring personality. She takes a quite huge role in the movie as the movie presents her as a very supporting figure to Benjamin. Queenie's characterization at the beginning of the movie is very unique to be the judge as a mammy due to her characterization as a person in charge of the nursing house. However, her personality signifies her as a mother figure with unconditional love for a child, in this case, is Benjamin.

Historically, Mammy is a character appeared in the plantation slavery (Wallace-Sanders, 2008). She is a character known as a domestic helper who cooks, nurse the baby, and all-around domestic help. At first, this character refers to *a negro nurse or baby nurse*, instead of *mammy*. Mammy is a figure depicted as a loving and nurturing character to the white children and the white mistresses (Mcdole, 2017). She appears as a non-threatening, even a good mother to the white child or a perfect slave. Then, her role is close to hospitality, food, unconditional love, and comfort of the white people (Atkinson, 2001).

Queenie is presented as a person in charge or more likely as head of the servant in the nursing house. She is known as a character that is close to hospitality, food, unconditional love, and comfort of the elders that is shown as white people. Then, the figure of a perfect slave is shown in the way Queenie taking care of the elders in the nursing house. However, she is framed as a



Picture 1

very important figure in the life of Benjamin that is identified as a white child. She is presented as a good supporting mother to Benjamin as she is always trying to find the cure for Benjamin's odd condition.

The scene of Queenie taking Benjamin to the church and expecting him to be healed is to strengthen the unconditional love of Queenie for Benjamin. In this scene, Picture 1, Queenie appears as a very supportive mother. She never gives up to look after Benjamin and is always eager to give the best life for him. Even though, his biological father and people around her are very pessimistic in his condition.

Queenie's characterization in the movie is very odd to be judged as a mammy figure. Her role as a servant in the nursing house might depict her as a mammy who is a perfect slave that is close to the white child. However, looking at how Queenie finds Benjamin, Benjamin is clearly not her master's child. Then, Queenie is the one who decides to take care of Benjamin even some people against her decision. Queenie's characterization as a mother appears stronger in her relationship with Benjamin.

2. A Glass Ceiling

The movie depicts Queenie as a mother figure to the abandoned Benjamin towards unconditional love. However, the movie shows a glass ceiling between Benjamin and Queenie through Queenie's characterization as a servant in the nursing house. Looking at the way Queenie serving the elders and Benjamin in the nursing house, the movie depicts Queenie as a perfect servant that signifies mammy stereotype.

First, looking at the way Queenie dressing up in most of the scenes in the movie, she always dresses up in the attire of a servant in the nursing house. The way she dresses up from the beginning of the movie gives her a silhouette like she is weight more than she is. Mammy stereotype projects as overweight women who has a role as an ambiguous caregiver for children (Mcdole, 2017). Even though Queenie cannot be categorized as an overweight woman, but her appearance is not as skinny as if compares to the white women's character of Daisy, Benjamin's love. Additionally, the stereotype of mammy with traditional overweight stature may no longer exist, yet the role is the same (Amber, 1998).

Then, scenes of Benjamin explaining the routines in the nursing house signifies the role of Queenie in Benjamin's life as mammy stereotype. Even though, the movie shows the unconditional love of Queenie as a black woman, she has a different stratification class with Benjamin that is presented as white. Skin color stratification has manifested in the United States since the era of slavery (Herring et al., 2004). It is not a new phenomenon that skin tone plays a significant role in America. Light skin tone considers as higher in status than dark skin tone. The movie presents Queenie as a good mother figure with unconditional love, however, her significant role of mammy as a perfect servant is also shown. By that, the movie shows a glass ceiling as a barrier to differentiate Benjamin as white and Queenie as black.

There is no explanation that tells Benjamin as part of the house routines. However, the way this movie exposes Benjamin and Queenie signifies that there is a glass ceiling between Queenie and Benjamin. Then, by the scene of Queenie bathing Benjamin with a camera that is back and forth shooting Ms. Wagner and them, signifies Benjamin as part of the elderly that must be taken care of rather than a child of Queenie.

In the routines that are explained by Benjamin, there is no such an explanation of an intimate relationship between Benjamin and Queenie like mother and son that strengthens the glass ceiling. Furthermore, there is a scene of Benjamin sitting down with the elders in the afternoon, continuing the explanation of the house routines. At this point, the stereotype of Queenie as a mammy shows up in the movie. As the mammy is close to hospitality, food, unconditional love, and comfort of white people (Atkinson, 2001). In the case of the relationship between Benjamin and Queenie, it is obvious that Queenie provides him hospitality, food, and unconditional love that is just like things that Queenie provides to the other elders who live in the nursing house. Then, once again, the movie shows Queenie's unconditional love to Benjamin within her role as mammy.

There is always "a glass ceiling" between Benjamin and Queenie. Hereinafter as Benjamin grew up, he decides to move out of the nursing house and works as a sailor. Then, a few years later, he comes back to the nursing house. He stays in the nursing house for a while that he gets to stay in the room upstairs just like the elders. At the moment when Benjamin coming back, Queenie looks very excited to see Benjamin again while Benjamin doesn't show the same excitement, only slightly smiling face from Benjamin when he hugs Queenie.

The interesting moment when Benjamin enters the nursing house is the appearance of a young black woman, dressing like Queenie with a servant attire and an apron, approaching Benjamin and Queenie, asking about who Benjamin is. Then, Queenie tells her that he is her brother. This scene of Picture 2 looks normal, but it signifies the stereotype of mammy in Queenie's character. According to Atkinson (2001), a child mammy is an acceptable concept and this child is already born to serve. At this point, the daughter of Queenie signifies as a mammy



Picture2

daughter that becomes one of the servants in the nursing house or the descendent of Queenie as mammy. The existence of her daughter strengthens the mammy stereotype in the character Queenie. Queenie introduces Benjamin as her daughter's brother which gives confusion to her daughter that supports a glass ceiling between them. As Benjamin in his life is free to work outside the nursing house without anyone telling him not to go, even Queenie, while the daughter of Queenie automatically becomes a servant in the nursing house.

Historically, a slave woman is taken from her family to work as a domestic servant in the Southern plantation (Harris, 2011). Then, she is forced to nurse white babies while their own infants subsisted on sugar cane. A slave woman characterized as mammy is not a volunteer that wants to do the job to take care of the white child. Mammy stereotype in history appears as a stereotype that exists as a mask of the realities of slavery that is prevalent in popular culture. Mammy even pictures as a person that is absent of sexual desire.

Then, the presence of Queenie's daughter in the movie is one of the big questions about whether Queenie is a mammy or not. Queenie's daughter appears as a servant in the nursing house and there is no scene of Queenie taking care of her daughter. However, the presence of Queenie shows that she has a desire to have sexual intercourse. The movie also presents her relationship with the other servant even though there is no scene showing them getting married. There is only a scene of her announcing her pregnancy.

3. The Missing Father

The relationship between Benjamin and his father is also one of the supports in a way to read Queenie as a mammy stereotype. Benjamin's father in the movie has abandoned him on his first day in the world, yet the movie shows that there is a pretty well bond between Benjamin and his father. Even though, the movie presents their bond in such an interesting way.

There is a scene when it is thanksgiving when Benjamin states, "*on thanksgiving 1930, I met a person that changed my life forever*". The interesting thing is that the scene might refer to him and Daisy, as it is the first day they met. On the other hand, instead of shooting a picture of Daisy after Benjamin's dialogue, the camera shoots his father across the street having an eye to eye contact with him. This scene signifies Benjamin's father as a person who changes his life instead of Daisy. There is a meaningful sight in the eye of Benjamin as the camera shoots his face in a close-up angle depicts that on that day, there is family comes to visit him which is his father.

From this scene, the movie starts to show a more intimate relationship between Benjamin and his father. Followed by a scene of Benjamin having lunch with the elders and their family, once again, this movie depicts Queenie as mammy. He sits on the table with Daisy and her grandmother. He even dresses up like the other elders while Queenie serves lunch for the elders and him. However, Queenie dresses up like a servant in a black dress and a white apron. There are

contrasts of an intimate relationship between Benjamin with his father and Benjamin with Queenie that this movie shows in those scenes.

In the movie, a tragic story about his father, a man who has lost his wife while giving birth to an unwanted unusual child at the beginning dramatizes what can be called a disaster to the family. This movie is one of a kind that uses parental abandonment in the storyline. The condition of father abandonment is told by the bitterness of losing his mom while childbirth gives some tragedy to the life of Benjamin. Then, the father comes back, to tell the truth. This movie presents the father abandonment in a unique way which refers to the common narrative. Unlike the movie “Blind Side” that shows parental abandonment of the black child and presents a white figure as a savior. This movie adaptation adds Queenie, a black female character, as a savior in Benjamin’s life.

Benjamin's father appears to be a successful white man who owns a big company and has a good reputation to take care of and the loss of his love makes an illusion of the tragedy of abandoning a child seems could be forgiven. Then, the existence of Queenie replaces the loss of family that Benjamin experiences makes everything seems to be normal. Queenie, as a woman struggles to have a child, is a perfect figure to replace the family that once abandoned Benjamin. Her existence gives as much love for Benjamin in his abandonment. Even though there is no such an intimate relationship between Benjamin and Queenie in the movie, Queenie is a savior in Benjamin’s life as she is successful in rising Benjamin to be a man with respect.

4. The Presence of Black Woman Character as a Process of Appropriation in Adaptation.

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button movie as an adaptation text cannot easily define as an adaptation. According to the adaptation theory of Linda Hutcheon, adaptation has a complicated definition as she uses it as the process and the product. Hutcheon has stated, “As a product, an

adaptation can be given a formal definition, but as a process--of creation and reception--other aspects have to be considered". Hutcheon also points out that "adaptation is repetition, but repetition without replication". In the case of *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, the movie adaptation clearly shows its relation to the previous work as they share the same idea of a story of a man who ages backward.

However, the movie adaption shows the story from a different point of view that can define it as a formal entity or a product because it is an announced and extensive transposition of the short story. As Hutcheon said "texts are said to be mosaics of citations that are visible and invisible, heard and silent; they are always already written and read. So, too, are adaptations, but with the added proviso that they are also acknowledged as adaptations of *specific texts*." Then, the movie adaptation can be studied as a "formal entity or a product". By that, this movie adaptation defines as an independent text by being in a different form of cultural product.

In the case of this film adaptation, a multi-track medium, which is a movie, adapts a single-track medium which is a short story. This adaptation not only plays in written and spoken but also with *mise-en-scene*. Then, this research automatically finds that this adaptation considers as different and independent from the origin text. As the existence of film adaptation has the same reason as the existence of literature, which is to tell a story, the differences can be seen through how the story is being told (Rodríguez, 2009). As in the movie, the story is being told differently through Queenie, a black women character.

The presence of the newly added character, Queenie, in the adaptation movie of *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* changes the point of view of this story. As an adaptation movie, the presence of Queenie could be also categorized as a process. According to Hutcheon's adaptation theory, "an adaptation as a process is an appropriation and salvaging while trying to

give new meaning to the text.” Then, the presence of Queenie is an appropriation to the movie adaptation as a form of popular culture where Black is included, especially black women.

The existence of the black women character in the short story is nowhere to be found. However, the movie presents this character as one of the important characters for the main character. Queenie appears to be the one that accepts Benjamin in his odd condition while his biological father decides to abandon him. Benjamin also calls her “mama” from the beginning of the movie to the end of it. However, as this research mentions in the previous part, this character identifies as a mammy stereotype. Even, she takes a huge part in the movie as a figure that most likely portrays as a mother for Benjamin.

Queenie appears as a black woman who raises a white kid in a nursing house. A nursing house is a place where Queenie works as a servant for the elders who are whites. By that, the way Queenie treats Benjamin is as caring, loving, and nurturing the same as she treats the elder. In the case of Queenie and Benjamin, the action of loving, caring, and nurturing signifies the mammy stereotype.

Mammy stereotype has been developed since the era of slavery and manifested the legacy of slavery in popular culture through its mainstream product. Mammy falls under suspicion as a mask of the horrific reality of slavery. She is known as a character who loves and cares for the white children of his master. According to Mcdule (2012), “Overweight, docile and asexual, the mammy maintains the role and archetype of a good mother to white children as well as the perfect slave”. Over time, mammy is developed as a loyal and fearless protector for her white family. Mammy is a fictional character that appears in the slavery plantation has neglected.

This research finds that the character Queenie carries the mammy stereotype in the movie. However, this research finds that the mammy character in the movie is far from the stereotypical

images of mammy that glorifies mammy as a perfect loyal slave. As in the movie, Benjamin happens as an abandoned child rather than her master's children. Then, the movie shows that Queenie is the one that initiates to take care of Benjamin which depicts her as a savior to Benjamin who is white. She voluntarily takes care of him and decides to be a good mother figure for Benjamin while his father abandons him. Her character shows his father's disability to raise Benjamin in his odd condition and her the capability as black women to raise Benjamin, a white child.

Then, her presence in the movie depicts the way popular culture shows “the promises of inclusion set against the tradition of exclusion.” (Boyd, 2008). Meaning that her presence in the movie adaptation might be seen as an attempt of black inclusion in the mainstream culture within the stereotypical images that have been an issue in the mainstream film. In the history of popular culture, black women images have been depicted far from the actual identities, yet it is more about how whites imagine black women (Boyd, 2008). It has been a long struggle for black women to be presented in the movie without stereotypical images that have been popular in popular culture.

However, Queenie in this film adaptation brings the attempt of black women to be presented in popular culture. As there is a huge gap between the short story and the movie adaptation, the appropriation emerges due to the development of mainstream art and culture. Adaptation as a process is always a double process of interpreting and re-creating something new (Hutcheon, 2006).

Then, to pay tribute to the adapted text, adaptation tends to contest the aesthetic and political values to the adapted text. The presence of Queenie in the adaptation is one of the things that indicate the way of this movie paying tribute to the short story. Based on the part of his father

showing the odd Benjamin in public, the short story reflects the rejection towards black as depicted in the situation:

“People would stop to speak to him, and what was he going to say? He would have to introduce this—this septuagenarian: "This is my son, born early this morning." And then the old man would gather his blanket around him and they would plod on, past the bustling stores, the slave market—for a dark instant Mr. Button wished passionately that his son was black—past the luxurious houses of the residential district, past the home for the aged...”

In this scene, the short story shows how Mr. Button, Benjamin’s father, wishes his son to be black because of his odd condition. This signifies that the short story considers black as the other and the tradition of black rejection emerges in the short story. Then, the setting of the short story mostly focuses on Benjamin and his father which are white men.

On the contrary, the movie shows more characters with various backgrounds in Benjamin’s life. Those characters in the movie show their acceptance of Benjamin in his odd condition. Queenie is the key character that opens up Benjamin’s life to be accepted in the broader society, unlike the short story. Benjamin’s life in the short story limits around his relationship with his father and rejection. The presence of Queenie in the movie is a set of black inclusion that brings different images of black in popular culture, especially black women. She might be depicted as mammy, however, through her character as a good mother to a white child, Benjamin, rather than a perfect slave. The acceptance of odd Benjamin through the presence of character Queenie as a black woman shows how successful Queenie is in raising Benjamin.

Conclusion

Queenie’s presence in the movie brings a different setting and puts a different background to the story. She is not just an added character that Fincher, the director, put in the movie in

purposes to dramatize the plot. The depiction of Queenie as a mother figure, in fact, signifies her as a stereotype of Mammy. Mammy stereotype is shown in the film by Queenie's character relationship with Benjamin, the main character that is a white man. In this point of view, this research analyzes Queenie's behavior through a scene to scene supported by other components in the film. This research analyzes her appearance in the film, other's character relationships with Benjamin especially with his father, setting of place and background music. Based on analyzing those components, this research finds that there is "a glass ceiling" that separates Benjamin and Queenie that depicts Queenie as his servant rather than a mother for Benjamin that signifies her as mammy stereotype. However, Queenie carries a good mother character within her mammy stereotype. Queenie's presence, that brings new characters and broadens Benjamin's interaction in the movie, is a product of adaptation that fills the gaps in the short story and the movie. Her presence produces a new point of view to the movie that shows the life of a white boy raised by black women that makes the movie as independent as the short story. The movie attempts to bring out the mother figure, that appears as a black female character, is successful.

This movie adaptation is already an adaptation as it changes the form of cultural product. This movie repeats the short story in variation. Thus, this research finds that this movie is a product according to the Hutcheon theory as it tells a story of a man who ages backward with a different point of view. Then, in order to pay tribute to the adapted text, the movie adaptation presents Queenie character, as a black woman in the life of Benjamin, instead of a white man as it is shown by the short story. As an adaptation, this movie is not only a product but also a process because of the presence of a black woman character as an appropriation to the new cultural form. As blacks take a huge role in affecting popular culture, the appearance of Queenie is one of the attempts for them to define themselves in "the promises of inclusion set against the tradition of rejection".

Mammy stereotype has been developed as a legacy of slavery in popular culture. This movie as an adaptation is successful to define Queenie as mammy stereotype through a good mother characterization without the shadow of enslaved black women in the plantation.

References

- Amber, V. (1998). *Anatomy of an image: Portraits of african american women in Hollywood cinema* (Order No. 9933938). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (304490537). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/304490537?accountid=17242>
- Atkinson, Y. K. (2001). *Mammy, how I love ya, how I love ya: The mammy figure in American history, literature, and popular culture* (Order No. 3017345). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (304692852). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/304692852?accountid=17242>
- Barthes, R., Lavers, A., & Smith, C. (1968). *Elements of semiology*. New York: Hill and Wang
- Barthes, R., & Heath, S. (1997). *Image, music, text*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Bouzida, F. (2014). The semiology analysis in Media Studies: Roland Barthes approach. *Proceedings of SOCIOINT14- International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities*, (pp. 1001-1007). Istanbul.
- Boyd, T. (2008). *African Americans and popular culture*. Westport, Conn: Praeger
- Corrigan, T. (2007). *Literature on screen, a history: In the gap*. In D. Cartmell & I. Whelehan (Eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen* (pp. 29-44). New York: Cambridge University Press. [10.1017/CCOL0521849624.003]
- Cotter, D. A., Hermnes, J. M., Ovadia, S., & Venneman, R., (2001). The glass ceiling effect. *Social Forces*, 80, 655-681.
- Distelberg, B. J. (2015). *Visibility matters: The pursuit of american belonging in an age of moving images* (Order No. 3663476). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

- (1701281990). Retrieved from
<https://search.proquest.com/docview/1701281990?accountid=17242>
- Dulock, H. L. (1993). Research design: Descriptive research. *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing*, 10(4), 154–157. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104345429301000406>
- Fincher, D. (Director). (2008). *The curious case of Benjamin Button* [Motion Picture].
- Fiske, J. (1982). *Introduction to communication studies*. London: Fontana.
- Fitzgerald, F. S., (1922). *The curious case of Benjamin Button*. USA: Feedbooks. Retrieved from
<http://www.feedbooks.com>
- Fluck, W. (Ed.). (2003). *Theories of American culture, theories of American studies* (Vol. 19). Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Gates, P. (2004). Always a partner in crime: Black masculinity in the Hollywood Detective Film. *Journal of Popular Film and Television*. 32. 20-29. 10.3200/JPFT.32.1.20-30.
- Gilman, S. L. (1985). *Difference and pathology: Stereotypes of sexuality, race, and madness*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Harris-Perry, M. V. (2011). *Sister Citizen: Shame, stereotype, and Black women in America*. New Haven: Yale University. Dent. New York: First New Press, 1998. Print.
- Herring, C., Keith, V., & Horton, H. D. (2004). *Skin deep: How race and complexion matter in the "color-blind" era*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press
- Hutcheon, L. (2006). *A Theory of Adaptation*. New York: Routledge. Retrieved from
<http://www.routledge-ny.com>
- Joseph, R. G. (2018). *Playing the big easy: A history of New Orleans in film and television* (Order No. 10871506). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2058017980). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/2058017980?accountid=17242>

Kuklick, B. (1972). Myth and Symbol in American Studies. *American Quarterly*, 24(4), 435-450.

doi:10.2307/2711683

Love, D. (2014). Mammy depictions in Film: Effects on African American Women's perceptions, Beliefs, and Eating Behaviors. *McNair Scholars Journal* , 57-68.

Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching (Second Edition)*. London: SAGE Publications .

McDole, A. (2017). *Mammy representations in the 21st century* (Order No. 10682365). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2019887765). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/2019887765?accountid=1724>

McFarlane, B. (1996). *Novel to film: An introduction to the theory of adaptation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

McLennan, R. (2014). Aging, adaptation, and the curious cases of benjamin button. *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 42(4), 635-648. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1624972658?accountid=17242>

McLuhan, M. (1964). *Understanding media: The extensions of man*. New York: McGraw-Hill

Moses, C. (n.d.). American Studies: An Annotated Bibliography. In *What Is American Studies?* (pp. 16-52).

Parkhurst, J. W., (1938). The Role of the Black Mammy in the Plantation Household. *Journal of Negro History*, 23(3), 349-369

Ross, S. D. (2011). *Images that Injure: Pictorial Stereotypes in the Media*. Santa Barbara: Praeger.

Saksono, S. (2014). Transforming the narrative elements from the Fitzgerald into Fincher's The curious case of Benjamin Button. *LINGUA: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa dan Sastra*. 9. 10.18860/ling.v9i1.2556.

- Shaw, H. B. (1990). *Perspectives of Black popular culture*. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press.
- Stangor, C. (1996). *Stereotypes and Stereotyping*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Tecucianu, D. (2014). Fiction to Film: The everlasting existence on fidelity. *Research And Science Today*, 177-182.
- Turner, P. (1994). *Ceramic uncles and celluloid mummies: Black images and their influence on culture*. California: Anchor Books .
- Versluys, E. (2014). *Stereotypes of African American women in US television: analysis of scandal and Hawthorne*. Ghent : University of Ghent,.
- Villarejo, A. (2013). *Film Studies: The basics*. London: Routledge.
- Wallace-Sanders, K. (2008). *Mammy: A century of race, gender, and Southern memory*
- Weintraub, S. '. (2008, December 26). *Screenwriter Eric Roth exclusive interview – The curious case Of Benjamin Button*. Retrieved From [Http://Collider.Com:Http://Collider.Com/Screenwriter-Eric-Roth-Exclusive-Interview-The-Curious-Case-Of-Benjamin-Button/](http://Collider.Com:Http://Collider.Com/Screenwriter-Eric-Roth-Exclusive-Interview-The-Curious-Case-Of-Benjamin-Button/)
- What is American Studies?* (n.d.). Retrieved from Dickinson College: https://www.dickinson.edu/info/20090/american_studies/682/what_is_american_studies
- Wise, G. (1979). "Paradigm Dramas" in *American Studies: A cultural and institutional history of the movement*. *American Quarterly*, 293-337.