

ABSTRACT

The American Dream, which traditionally encompasses the right to a decent life and individual freedom regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, and social class, is explored in the context of a movie set against a history of slavery and racial injustice. Through Roland Barthes' semiotic approach that parses the meanings of denotation, connotation and myth, this research explores how the visual and narrative elements in Antebellum construct and deconstruct the ideals of the American Dream. The findings show that the film highlights how the right to a decent life, individual freedom, and happiness is often hindered by unjust social structures. The film also emphasizes that success and the means to achieve it are different for each individual, but the existing social system often does not support this. The film reveals that the American Dream is not always accessible to all individuals, especially those from minority groups. This research contributes to the study of film and popular culture by showing how the cinematic medium can be used to explore and critique ideological concepts such as the American Dream.

Keywords: Representation, Roland Barthes Semiotics, American Dream, Racism.