

Abstract

The topic of this thesis is a description of the social problem of discrimination of Afro-Americans in the USA with a focus on the reflection of racism in films. To introduce the social problem the thesis considers itself with such terms as race or ethnocentrism. It focuses on stereotypes, discrimination and prejudice and on their forms and their ways of formation and reproduction. It shows the impact of racism on Afro-Americans and on American society as a whole and it uses theories of secondary deviation, stigmatization and self-fulfilling prophecy to describe the impact. The thesis presents the main events of American racial history and it introduces the spheres of institutional racism – housing, education, employment, legal justice and media and political representation. The second part of this thesis focuses on specific area of media discrimination – on film. It describes historical development and changes of Afro-American characters and topics in film throughout the 20th century. It presents three films to illustrate particular historical film periods. It explores this evolution in relation to political, social, cultural, technological and especially economic changes. On one hand this thesis perceives film as a mirror of the society, on the other hand it presents film as a potential tool for shifting the opinion of society. Last but not least it considers itself with specific type of black film that tries to draw audience's attention to the problem of lasting racism in the USA.