Uncovering Racial Ideologies in Media

Based on lecture by Dr. Charise Pimentel, Texas State University

Today we are going to practice the tools of narrative analysis, paying particular attention to the ways that the white savior troupe is used in the media to mask other social and institutional harms. We will first learn about the narrative analysis tools you will use to analyze media. Then we will practice applying them to portions of [the movie, *The Blind Side*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gvqj_Tk_kuM)*.*

All things are texts to be read and understood (making sense of the world). Power relations are remade through readings of texts, and those power relations constantly privilege certain groups.

# Narrative Analysis Tools

Narrative analysis tools give us a way to think about the story that shared by an author/producer (not just in the movie sense). As you learn about the narrative analysis tools below, take notes as you think about how these tools are used to shape the way people “read” the world, and who benefits from those readings. These notes will help you connect the tools to different images around the classroom and to your significance statement and reflection.

Perspective: whose perspective, view or side, is being shown

Character Development: ways that the audience becomes connected to the main character

Omission: when things are intentionally left absent from the narrative

Distortion: when things are not accurately or objectively shared about events, places, or characters in the narrative

Decontextualization: presentation of an event, situation, or place which removes the context (surrounding information that is necessary to truly understand it)

Cinematography: lighting, distance, gaze (where the actor/subject is looking), etc. which help convey a mood or message

Black/brown exceptionalism: character of color is presented as an exception to stereotypes about their racial/ethnic/linguistic group

# Purpose, Significance Statements, So What?

Because the purpose of our narrative analysis today is to unpack racial ideologies, we will focus on the significance question: how do these tools reinforce racism in the movie The Blind Side and ultimately our society?

Carefully examine the movie trailer using the narrative analysis tools we have discussed above. Jot down notes about examples that you see in [the trailer](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gvqj_Tk_kuM) of powerful, significant uses of these tools. We will be analyzing several images around the class to create our reflection + significance statements.

# Preparing Your Reflection

(Practice your reading skills to identify key information in the text below. Highlight or underline what you need to do for this assignment.

Take a picture of the image you chose with your phone. You will need to add this to your assignment. Then briefly explain the narrative tool that you are using to analyze your chosen image. Next, explain the image as it relates to your analysis: describe key details of the images (these details will help your reader understand the narrative analysis you will be doing; for example, I might describe the way that Sandra Bullock’s character is presented as wearing light colored clothing, has light hair, and appears to have light shining on her while she is in the dark housing development, surrounded by African American men with dark skin, dark hair, and dark clothing in order to talk about how cinematography is used to present Bullock’s character as pure, angelic, clean, or good in contrast to Michael Orr’s childhood home). Finally, conclude with a strong significance statement telling your reader why the narrative analysis is important to “reading” this film, and what conclusions related to race can be drawn about the film and the society which received it so well (remember this was a critically acclaimed, award-winning movie).