Roma

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Roma

The movie, Roma is directed by a Mexican director, Alfonso Cuarón. The movie depicts Mexico City in the early 1970s. The story of Roma centers on a young indigenous woman, working as a maid for a middle-class white family which is about to break. The movie depicts the character of Cleo who is the maid of the house and her employers are unable of doing anything without her.

The movie portrays Cleo as a maid who wakes up the children in the morning and puts them to bed at night. She works from dawn until dust doing house chores. She has to serve the meals, clean the dog droppings and washes loads of laundry.

The movie further depicts the relationship between the employers and Cleo. It depicts the suffering of Cleo as a black indigenous maid and as a woman. The movie also connects the miseries of Cleo to the sufferings of her employer lady Sofia.

# Intersections between Class and Gender in Roma

The movie depicts an indigenous black woman as a maid who works for a white middle class family, living in Mexico City in the 70s. The Movie portrays Cleo as more than just a maid. The maid is considered as a part of a family as she is allowed to go on family trips. At the same time, Cleo is also reminded of her social status by her employer when they ask her to turn off the lights of her room and sleep in the servant quarter.

The movie depicts that Cleo is being exploited in both ways i.e. for being a poor maid and a woman. The employer of Cleo is a lady who has a different social class than Cleo. Although she exploits her maid but she herself is being exploited by her husband, who leaves her along with her four children. However, Sofia scolds Cleo out of anger for her husband. Since Sofia cannot dominate her husband so she takes her anger out on Cleo who is of lower social status. Sofia is also shown being sympathetic to Cleo when she gets pregnant and her boyfriend leaves her. At this point, Sofia is portrayed feeling the pain of Cleo because Sofia herself had suffered betrayal of her husband.

The movie depicts the sensitivities of the role of Cleo both as a maid and a woman. The sensitivities of Sofia as an employer and a woman are also depicted in the movie. Cleo is exploited for being a maid by Sofia and is sympathized by her for being a woman who has been cheated on. Sofia is both exploited and loved (Leonard, n.d.).

Cleo is shown as both an insider who is regarded as part of the family, and also as an outsider. She is supposed to clean the house, carry the luggage, and cook meals. She is taken for granted and also cherished at the same time. She works for a middle class family which is both loving and occasionally hostile. It’s a family that expects a pregnant maid to shift luggage for them and is also high-handed.

Roma is not a mere illustration of the class conflict rather it also links to the gender roles of its character which often collide with the former. Francis says that the movie Roma depicts that the social caricature of the Mexican middle class is based on the exploitation of the poor Indigenous or mestiza women (Francis, 2019)

# Similarities and Differences between Sofia and Cleo

The highlighted difference between the characters of Sofia and Cleo in the movie is of their social classes. Sofia is a middle-class woman, who lives in the city with her mother in a big house, two maids to work, and a car. She has an entirely different lifestyle than that of Cleo who is a poor village woman and works as a maid from dawn till dusk doing all kinds of house chores.

Another major difference between Cleo and Sofia is their racial origins. Cleo is a black indigenous woman with Latin origin, whereas, Sofia is of white race and English origin. Cleo lives far away from her family, whereas, Sofia lives with her mother. Sofia sleeps in the servant quarter where she is not allowed to turn on lights at night, whereas, Sofia owns the whole house and sleeps in her bedroom. Sofia is exploits, whereas, Cleo is the one being exploited.

The bonding behaviors of Cleo and Sofia also differ because Cleo loved the children selflessly. The scene at the beach where two kids were moved by the ocean currents and Cleo jumped in to save the kids shows that even though she could not swim, she had selfless love for the kids. At the same scene of the movie Sofia reveals to Cleo that she did not want her have her own child. This shows that Sofia loved Cleo selfishly. She did not want to share Cleo with her own children.

Sofia had to exert her powers and authority upon Cleo, whereas, Cleo had no one to confide in. When Sofia was beaten by her husband, she rebuked Cleo out of frustration caused by her husband, whereas, Cleo was unable to exert any powers or anger upon anyone. Sofia was exploited by her husband on the basis of gender, whereas, Cleo is exploited in both ways, for being a woman and a poor low status being.

However, the shared characterizations of Sofia and Cleo were their womanhood, love for children, and the exploitation they faced for being women. Sofia and Cleo got cheated by the fathers of their children and were left to live on their own, with an additional responsibility of the children. Cleo was cheated on by her boyfriend who left her pregnant, whereas, Sofia was cheated on by her husband who left her for some other woman.

# References

Francis, M. (2019). Roma: A Bibliography. *Film Quarterly*, *72*(4), 61–62.

Leonard, K. (n.d.). *BCM 113*.