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**A STUDY OF RACISM AND RACIAL DYSTOPIA IN THE 2023 MOVIE  
*THEY CLONED TYRONE***

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**Abstract**

Racism remains an unresolved issue, particularly in multicultural societies. Living in such diverse environments often leads to lower levels of tolerance due to differences in race, ethnicity, social class, and culture. Individuals who believe their race is superior are the main perpetrators of racism, exerting power and autonomy to discriminate against Black people and create societal inequalities. This research examines the levels of racism and the concept of racial dystopia as depicted in the 2023 film *They Cloned Tyrone*.

The study aims to identify the extent of racism and explore the connection between racism and racial dystopia. A descriptive qualitative method was employed, with data sourced from the movie *They Cloned Tyrone*, which was accessed online. The analysis draws on Benjamin Bowser's (2017) theory to assess the levels of racism, and Gregory Claeys' (2017) theory to identify elements of racial dystopia. The researcher served as the primary instrument, responsible for collecting, identifying, and analyzing the data.

The findings reveal that *They Cloned Tyrone* portrays three levels of racism: Cultural, Institutional, and Individual. The study explores how dystopian themes are used to underscore systemic racism, social injustice, and the marginalization of minority groups. By addressing these issues, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of racism and its relationship with dystopia in the context of race relations.

*Keywords: cultural level, dystopia, individual level, institutional level, racism, racial dystopia, social hierarchy, utopia.*

## Introduction

Racism is a well known issue in our society, especially in America, where it remains a topic of continuous discussion. It is defined as discriminatory actions against a specific group of people due to differences in physical characteristics (Anriadi et al., 2022). This behavior occurs when a particular race or group believes themselves to be superior to others. The prevalence of racism has been on the rise and continues to escalate in American society. The ongoing conflict between white and black people, marked by mutual oppression and discrimination, requires our attention as it affects each other's race, skin color, and culture. "Racism is the negative treatment by a superior group towards an inferior group because they believe their group has better conditions in many aspects such as economics, biology, and education" (Erik 1980). Moreover, racism can contribute to the creation of both utopian and dystopian societies by embedding discriminatory practices, policies, and norms within societal institutions. This can lead to systemic oppression, marginalization, and unequal access to resources and opportunities for certain racial groups, ultimately resulting in a dystopian reality where racial inequality is widespread and deeply rooted.

Before delving into the concept of dystopia, the researcher would like to clarify what is meant by utopia. According to (Moynan, 2000) utopia is a speculative vision of an ideal society that significantly differs from the current social order. It serves as a critique of the present, proposing alternative ways to organize human communities. Utopias are not rigid plans but rather dynamic processes of imagination and critique, engaging with the complexities of social, political, and cultural life.

<sup>4</sup> Dystopia, as defined by the Oxford Dictionary, is "an imagined place or state in which everything is unpleasant or bad, typically under a totalitarian regime." A racial dystopia refers to a speculative or fictional society marked by systemic oppression, discrimination, and segregation based on race. In such a society, individuals and groups are marginalized, oppressed, and persecuted solely because of their racial or ethnic background. Racial dystopia and racism are closely related, as both involve systems of oppression that systematically disadvantage certain racial or ethnic groups. In a racial dystopia, inequality is not merely a byproduct but a deliberate structural feature enforced by those in power. These dystopias often explore themes of control and power dynamics, where one group exerts dominance and authority over another. Many literary works delve into the concept of racial dystopia to provoke thought and discussion about the consequences of racism and the importance of striving for a more equitable society.

<sup>11</sup> *They Cloned Tyrone* is a 2023 American science fiction comedy mystery movie that related to this topic. This movie tells about the government (white people) cloning conspiracy that happen in a city named Glen in America which most of the black people lived there. The scientists were conducting experiments on poor, mostly black people, including the Glen tribe, so that the operation would go unnoticed and hopefully achieve peace in America. The researcher have several reasons why choice the movie *They Cloned Tyrone* as work that has to analyze. The first is the movie perfectly is the new movie that brings racism and racial dystopia issue. The second reason why the researcher chooses *They Cloned Tyrone* is the movie based on a true condition of the minority in America. Many movies talk about racism and racial dystopia in the world but *They Cloned Tyrone* movie is a movie based on direct condition and the movie can describe the situation perfectly. This thesis discuss about racism and racial dystopia in the movie. There were several previous studies that analyzed similar topic. There were still some gaps in these studies. For example, <sup>3</sup> *Levels of Racism as Portrayed In The Hobbit : The Battle Of Five Armies (2014), Warcraft (2016), and Gangs Of New York (2002) Films* (Dewani, 2023). (Atika & <sup>3</sup> Tarihoran, 2022) “An Analysis of Racism in the film of *The Green Mile* by Frank Darabont”. (Marina, <sup>10</sup> 2018) “Dystopian Characteristics in *The Giver* Novel by Lois Lowry”.

There are several distinctions between this research and previous studies. First, (Dewani's, 2023) research focused on describing the levels of racism. Second, (Atika & Tarihoran, 2022) study concentrated on analyzing different types of racism, and lastly, (Marina, 2018) work focused on examining dystopian characteristics. Additionally, differences in research gaps and theoretical approaches set this analysis apart from earlier studies. This research aims to offer a fresh perspective, encouraging readers to avoid becoming racist toward anyone. People who are treated unfairly often do not simply accept such treatment; they may fight back or harbor resentment toward those who have wronged them. Literary works serve as reminders that racism and racial dystopia do not originate from the environment but begin within ourselves, rooted in how we think about and judge others.

Based on the research background, the researcher has identified the following questions:

1. What levels of racism are portrayed in the movie?
2. How does racism contribute to the existence of racial dystopia?

The researcher aims to enhance the knowledge of readers, particularly students in the English Department, about the study of racism as depicted in the movie, focusing on how American white people perpetuate racism against Black people. <sup>7</sup> The findings of this research are expected to serve as a valuable reference for future researchers interested in exploring similar topics.

## Review of Literature

<sup>3</sup> Racism is an ideology of racial domination where the perceived biological superiority or cultural attributes of one racial group are used to justify the inferior social position of other racial groups (Wilson, 1999). While some may view racism as a historical issue confined to past conflicts between white and Black communities in America, closer examination reveals ongoing instances of racial oppression and discrimination. Such actions harm individuals based on race, skin color, or culture, damaging their identities. Racism in America continues to persist and grow, evident in the unfair treatment of Black people, a minority group, by the predominantly white government. This occurs when certain races or groups believe themselves to be superior to others.

Based on (Bowser, 2017) theory, racism is divided into three levels: Cultural Level, Institutional Level, and Individual Level.

### 1. Cultural Level

The cultural level of racism has a long history, similar to the individual and institutional levels, and is fundamental to all forms of racism. It sets the plans and structures for how the institutional level operates, with the goal of maintaining <sup>1</sup> white dominance and measuring success through white privilege. This cultural framework is passed down through generations and forms a crucial part of white racial identity. The cultural level, which assumes white supremacy and Black inferiority, precedes and creates the conditions for institutional <sup>1</sup> racism. Without these racist cultural scripts, institutional expressions of racism would not manifest.

### 2. Institutional Level

The institutional level encompasses <sup>8</sup> established laws, customs, and practices that systematically produce and reflect racial inequities in American society (James M. Jones, 1972) This level is crucial for perpetuating white privilege and dominance, and it reinforces the cultural level. Institutional racism maintains its impact across generations and influences <sup>1</sup> individual expressions of racism. While cultural racism is a necessary precondition for individual racism, its effects are mediated through institutional practices. For instance, while the legal right to a trial by a jury of one's peers is widely recognized, individuals from Black or other ethnic minority backgrounds often do not receive such trials. The American judicial system operates under assumptions of cultural and racial uniformity. Institutions, created and controlled

by white individuals, impose various "qualifications" that hinder progress in education, labor, and business for minority groups.

### 3. Individual Level

Individual acts of racism constitute the third level of racism (Shah, 2008). To their credit, activists recognized that for most whites the motivation of individual acts of racism was not innate, it was highly varied and conditional. (Williams, 1975). Where racial prejudice was not the norm and acts of racism were not tolerated, only a small minority of whites were still compelled to act out racism. It is hypothesized that this small group did so primarily out of some psychological and personality disorder. Most white Americans who were racist were malleable, were taught racism, and therefore, could be untaught. Cultural racism regulates the intensity and frequency of individual acts of racism by the extent to which institutional racism has been deployed. If institutional racism is increasingly deployed, acts of individual racism will increase. If institutional racism is poorly deployed, individual acts will have little reinforcement.

### 4. Utopia vs. Dystopia

Utopia refers to an ideal place or state that embodies perfection, particularly in terms of law, government, and social conditions (Napier, 1996). It represents a society that is considered close to perfect, where everything functions harmoniously. Dystopia, on the other hand, was introduced as the antonym of utopia by John Stuart Mill in a parliamentary speech in 1868. While utopia denotes a good place, dystopia refers to a bad or undesirable place. Booker (1994) describes dystopia as a term that encompasses imaginative depictions of societies, emphasizing the negative or problematic aspects of what might otherwise be seen as an ideal society. The primary aim of dystopian works is to frighten readers and make them aware that outcomes can be either positive or negative, depending on moral, social responses, and the nature of society itself (Claeys, 2017). Both utopia and dystopia seek to address and alter the social order at a fundamental, systemic level. They focus on root causes and propose revolutionary solutions. These concepts are not merely theoretical ways of imagining the future or the past but also practical approaches through which individuals or groups historically situated seek to reimagine and transform their present into a plausible future.

### 5. Racial dystopia

Racial dystopia refers to a speculative or fictional society marked by systemic oppression, discrimination, and segregation based on race. In such a society,

individuals or groups are marginalized, oppressed, and persecuted solely due to their racial or ethnic background. According to (Maria Karafilis, 2015), racial dystopia involves analyzing resistance to a seemingly timeless utopian vision, which, in reality, is built upon concealing, reinterpreting, and romanticizing acts of violence against indigenous peoples. It argues for recognizing the historically specific nature of these issues.

Many literary works, including movies and poems, explore the theme of racial dystopia to provoke thought and discussion about the consequences of racism and the importance of striving for a more equitable society. Racial dystopia is presented as a fictional concept but reflects the real conditions of contemporary American society.

## 6. Synopsis

*They Cloned Tyrone*, directed by Juel Taylor in 2023, centers on a conspiracy involving the government (predominantly white people) and cloning in a suburban city called Glen, where most of the residents are Black. The movie follows Fontaine, a drug addict, along with his friends Slick Charles and Yo-Yo, as they uncover and attempt to dismantle the cloning conspiracy targeting Black individuals. The conspiracy involves using Black people as experimental subjects and cloning them to create a uniform mindset aimed at achieving peace in America. After a determined effort alongside other Black residents, Fontaine successfully halts the experiments, liberates the victims, and eliminates the lead scientist responsible for the operation. The residents of Glen celebrate their newfound freedom and continue their lives without further conspiracies.

## Methodology

To systematically gather and analyze information, the researcher employs a qualitative research method for this study. Unlike quantitative research, which focuses on numerical data, qualitative research deals with descriptive data. According to (Creswell, 2009), qualitative research is an approach aimed at exploring and understanding the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to social or human phenomena. This research process involves formulating emerging questions and procedures, collecting data in the participants' natural settings, analyzing data inductively to build general themes from specific details, and interpreting the meaning of the data. The final report is flexible in structure. Thus, qualitative research is well-suited for an in-depth examination of phenomena. In this study, it is used to thoroughly describe

and analyze institutional racism and racial dystopia as depicted in the movie *They Cloned Tyrone*.

## Findings and Discussion

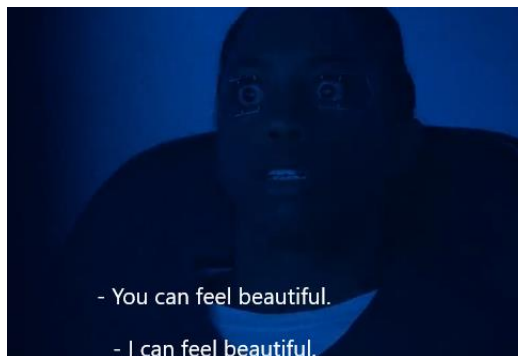
### 1. Institutional level

#### Datum 1 : 01:08:40-01:08:55

Nixon : “We’ve got a choice to make and the way I see it, you’ve only got 2 option. Option 1, Chester here kills you. Option 2, you do nothing, you go back to your regular lives. Do what you do best. Look the other way I gotta say option 2 sound pretty fantastic”.

The statement above was spoken by Nixon as a white who intimidate Fontaine and all the blacks to not disturbed their experiment. He gave a choice to make the blacks keep silent and continue their own work or the whites will kill them. This datum shows how institutional level of racism was spread on the movie and create a inequality which those with power could do anything they wanted in order to keep the social hierarchy by create a policy and unfairly treatment to the minority by normalize racist behavior against the blacks.

### 2. Cultural level



On the scene above shows a real prove about cultural level of racism because it shows there was a black girl who become a subject experiment of beauty standart in

**Figure 1 : A black girl become one of the experiments victims in the experimental lab** America, which the whites made a standart in society that the most beauty woman is those with white skin and straight hair. Of course the blacks woman who had a dark skin and curly hair are not have a beauty privilege in society and always had a cultural racist treatment.



### 3. Individual Level

**Datum 1 : 01:07:51-01:08:02**

Nixon : “<sup>2</sup> a country constantly at war with itself, no common ground, no dialogue, no peace. If we’re all on the same page. Then we’re not ripping each other’s heads off and all of this has a chance to work and that’s what we strive for keeping the US united”.

The statement above were spoken by Nixon as one of the white experimenter who thought that their country were isn’t a perfect country because it always had a war with itself, and still spread a racist behaviour. Those statement maybe only could become Nixon’s personal thought and wouldn’t really happen in real life if all the whites and blacks could accept each other differences, tolerate each other especially their differences in race. Sometimes individual racist could happen from personal superior feeling about other race’s inferior and spread hate in society until it become a normal things and being normalize in society.

### 4. Racial dystopia



**Figure 2 : Customers used the experimental hair cream**

On the scene above shows the salon staff applies the hair cream to their customer and made their customer had a desperate feeling without they know that those hair cream are one of the result of the white experiment who could create a desperate effect and could manipulating feeling and emotion to the user. The effect can be seen 45 second after the hair cream was applied, it could be seen on the figure when the black woman tell the salon staff about her family condition but then she turned become emotionally desperated while telling it because of the effect of the hair cream. It clearly shows the practice of racial dystopia in real life in many sector with the black people as the target. It teach us how racial dystopia are very detrimental others because they can lost their human rights control actually to them who become a minority.

## Discussion

The research findings indicate each level of racism are connected each other, there are cultural level, institutional level and individual level. Cultural level of racism serves as the foundation for the functioning of institutional racism in American society. Institutions are designed to follow cultural patterns, and through institutional racism, these cultural biases are put into practice across generations. This, in turn, reinforces personal beliefs in racial hierarchies and justifies individual actions to uphold them, contributing to individual racism. The data highlighted how racism truly operates in the United States.

Racism can also contribute to the creation of a racial dystopia, drawing on Claeys' theory of dystopia, which suggests a fearful future marked by chaos and destruction. From both literary and historical perspectives, dystopia is often associated with the "failed utopia" of twentieth-century totalitarianism, typically characterized by extreme coercion, inequality, imprisonment, and slavery. Racism plays a role in such systems, as both involve oppressive structures that systematically disadvantage certain racial or ethnic groups. In a racial dystopia, inequality is not merely an unintended consequence but a deliberate, entrenched feature upheld by those in power.

The research on racism and racial dystopia in *They Cloned Tyrone* applied Benjamin Bowser's (2017) framework, identifying eleven instances of racism across three levels: institutional, cultural, and individual. This categorization aligns with Dewani's (2023) study, which similarly classifies racism into institutionalized, personally mediated, and internalized forms, further validating Bowser's approach. Atika and Tarihoran (2022) also support these findings, recognizing internalized, interpersonal, and institutional racism, where interpersonal overlaps with Bowser's individual level, adding depth to the personal aspects of racism. Gregory Claeys' (2017) theory of racial dystopia was used to highlight ten dystopian elements in the film, complementing Marina's (2018) broader categories of corporate, bureaucratic, technological, and philosophical control. Marina's research broadens the understanding of dystopian themes, while Claeys' focus on racial dystopia offers a specific lens that enhances the movie's portrayal of racial domination and oppression.

## Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the research findings and discussion, several conclusions can be drawn. *They Cloned Tyrone*, when analyzed through the frameworks of Benjamin Bowser and Gregory Claeys, offers a detailed portrayal of racial issues that strongly resonate with real life

experiences. The film's focus on institutional racism level, reflects how real world systems such as education, criminal justice, and employment can systematically disadvantage marginalized groups. Cultural racism level in the movie mirrors how societal stereotypes and norms perpetuate prejudice, similar to the way these biases influence people's everyday interactions. The last is individual racism level in the movie depict personal biases and discriminatory actions, which, though less frequent, contribute to the broader problem of racial discrimination. The examples of racial dystopia in the movie provide a stark depiction of extreme racial injustice, paralleling the harsh consequences of systemic and cultural racism in reality. These findings underscore the importance of addressing racism at all levels institutional, cultural, and individual in order to combat ongoing racial inequalities and strive for a more equitable society.

The powerful depiction of racism and racial dystopia in *They Cloned Tyrone* serves as a stark reminder of the widespread racial injustices in our society. By clearly portraying the effects of institutional, cultural, and individual racism, the film emphasizes the urgent need for comprehensive action to address these systemic issues. The dramatic representation of racial dystopia highlights the dire consequences of allowing such discrimination to persist unchecked. As viewers, we are urged to see these problems not as mere fiction but as real-world challenges that require our immediate attention and action. Tackling racism in all its forms—whether through policy reform, cultural transformation, or personal reflection is crucial to building a more just and equitable society. The movies message compels us to confront and dismantle the structures and attitudes that uphold racial inequality, reinforcing the importance of striving for a future grounded in fairness and respect.

Based on the findings of this research, future researchers interested in exploring the same field are encouraged to study racism in greater depth, as it encompasses complex meanings and various forms that require a nuanced understanding. <sup>9</sup> It is hoped that this study can serve as a reference for future work, helping to address any gaps or limitations identified. Lastly, this research is not without its imperfections, and constructive criticism and suggestions are welcomed to contribute to more refined and comprehensive future studies.

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