

Identifying Racism

In Nia DaCosta's Film *Candyman* (2021)

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Abstract

This research is an attempt to investigate and analyze the lore or theme in a movie that based on a theme of racism and how it is portrayed in modern society. The movie we are looking at are *Candyman* (2021) an urban legend horror movie directed by Nia DaCosta. Following the theory of David Bordwell (1993) and Ed Pincus (1996) on cinema and cinematic ideology, we can identify some nature of racism in the *Candyman* movie, but as based on the movie's horror genre of an urban legend these hints are very subtle and hard to determine if it is a hint of racism or not. Fortunately, through the theory of previous research, we were able to identify a portrayal of direct and subtle hint of racism within the film that has a connection with the story of the movie, also from one of the settings in the movie. We also included an explanation of some aspects in our findings to justify our suspicion of the essence of racism which present within the movie, hopefully this research could enable and help people better understand various things a movie can contain, directly or subtly.

Keywords: *African-American, Candyman, horror, racism, urban legend, subtleties.*

Introduction

A brief examination concludes that racism and discrimination does exist but in a different form, one example shows a racism in a form of an urban legend that does exist and often happened in the 1800s to every African-American in USA that they are always so close to being punished to death for various reasons. Several earlier films focused on racism such as *Get Out* (2017), written by Jordan Peele, and *The Hate U Give* (2018), a film based on the novel by Angie Thomas that concludes that the nature of racism exists in the form of a movie, it is either direct or subtle. The film *Candyman* (2021) that we have analyzed here is one of the examples of the subtle and direct combination of racism that exists in the film, but is also considered to be rarely seen in the subject of discrimination. Racism in film form was made into a horror film based on an urban legend and a contemporary film. In response to this observation, this article attempts to answer the following question:

How racial discrimination is portrayed in the movie?

Based from several movies we seen with the theme of action, science fiction, fantasy, and as innocent as comedy such as *Back to The Future* (1985), *Key & Peele* (2012), *Django Unchained* (2012), *Marvel's What If...?* Netflix Series (2021) gives us the impression the world is a versatile but fragile subject as a topic to be used in many forms. The similarity of these films is that they show the ability of the world that can change greatly by the small and great effort, and this idea is actually came from the maker or the director of the film whether it is to entertain the audience or to convey a subtle message hidden in the films purely created by the director's value. It is a straightforward message that the topic of a "modern world" is a versatile but fragile subject for discussion. Although, based on the "Modern World" we see nowadays even if it is as simple as expressing our opinions; how we feel; the life path we have chosen; or commenting on something that might dangerous on one side; but sympathetic to other people. Even more dangerous are those who judge others for how they look; how they think; and what they stand for.

Another vision to be discussed in here is the more advanced version of these conveyed messages, and the possibilities if people around the world did the same things for the greater good, one of this speculation is a "world peace". Based by the same type of films shown above, mixed with base definition from online source, and through help of the researcher's friend to analyze the concept of "world peace", the concept of world peace can be just an illusion if people do not see themselves that way, it is even more dangerous is that people only judge by something as simple as skin color or even worse is that background complexity still exists now. No one knows where, how or when racism and discrimination started, but fortunately, there are people around the world who are working to prevent this tragedy in all its forms.

Film is one of the media that tries to end racism and discrimination by projecting the actions of actors and actresses in the form of conveying a message from the director's ideas to the audience. Movies are so popular that they can create even more opportunities to spread their message to the world and hope that it can end racism and discrimination.

Candyman (2021) has a direct and subtle hint of racism within it, which is the reason why the researcher is aiming to analyze this particular film to point out where does these racism hint shown in the film, although the film itself does not particularly themed as film that tells a story about racism, but it is more of a horror film.