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Orcs Lives Matter: Representation of African Americans in Bright Film

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Abstract

Race is a sensitive topic in the United States, especially dealing with African Americans. Seeing everything that African Americans had undergone in history and still go through today, it is clear how representation of African Americans needed to be threaded lightly upon. That is why this research is necessary, because the film to analyze here implicitly showing the messages that discrimination still exists in America. Moreover, this research explores the way Orcs are portrayed in the Bright film and how those portrayals reflect the ideology of the text. The qualitative research method is used to help answering the research questions on how Orcs are represented in Bright and how representations reflect the ideology of the text. Additionally, Hall's representation and ideology theories are applied in the process to provide an insight into the research problems. The research found that Orcs in Bright are constructed in a very like ways as African Americans since they are portrayed as the designated bad guys, targets for animalization and victims of police brutality which match the image of African Americans in American society. These portrayals of Orcs leads to the discussion of Orcs' poor social standing in society in comparison to other races in the film and in result reflects the ideology the text tries to convey that is black inferiority, as shown by the way the American system and society treated them. Overall, this research can be used as a reference for researches on representation of African Americans and racial allegories in literature.

Keywords: *Black Inferiority, Orcs in Bright Film, Representation of African Americans, Representation & Ideology*

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Introduction

“Orc”, an imaginary race of humanoid creatures described as squat, broad, flat-nosed, sallow-skinned, with wide mouths and slant eyes that is brought into modern usage by the writings of J. R. R. Tolkien, is no longer an unfamiliar race in the contemporary world of fantasy genre. These creatures are often depicted as monstrous, barbaric, and heinous beings. Orcs originated from The Lord of the Rings trilogy, they were invented by Tolkien himself to represent “the faceless soldiers of the enemy” while incorporating a metaphor of

corruption and spiritual downfall into their construction (Martinez, 2011). Putting aside their stereotyped roles, Orcs can be a medium of representation by the authors.

Authors often integrate their own ideology and beliefs into their works as a way to express his opinions and this is exactly what Tolkien implemented into his story; He wants to create a binary opposition between Elves and Orcs to be a representation of light and dark or good and evil (Rearick, 2004). However, this way of expressing one's thought is not limited to only books; films can also be used to put across these messages.

One of the films that adopted Orcs into them is Netflix's *Bright*. It tells the story of two cops – a Human and an Orc – that is involved in a chase with bad people for a magic wand that has immense power that can change the world. David Ayer as the director in this 2017 film raised the issue of racism and discrimination in the form of heterogeneous American society where races are no longer simply between different colors of humans, but other humanoid races also. Orcs in *Bright* film are portrayed to be a race that people discriminated against. They were often antagonized and criminalized based solely on stereotypes stapled onto them. In American society, a prevalent representation of crime is that it is inordinately committed by young African American men, hence the familiarity American society has with the image of a young African American man as a violent, dangerous hooligan. To make it worse, this image is exacerbated and perpetuated by the stereotypes that are going around. Barlow in Welch points out that these perceptions about the presumed racial identity of criminals may be so ingrained in public consciousness that race is no longer needed to be specifically mentioned for a connection to be made between the two because it seems that "talking about crime is talking about race" (Welch, 2007b). Hawkins in Welch also adds that the impression that crime is a problem unduly attributable to African Americans is not a completely new phenomenon. In fact, according to Drummond and Russell, throughout American history, Blacks have always been perpetually stereotyped as criminals (Welch, 2007a). From this instance alone, we can see the familiarity between the portrayal of Orcs and African Americans, that is, Orcs are discriminated in a very like ways as African Americans were. *Bright* film can be used as a medium in conveying a message, critic, or ideology since, to put it into Young's words, representations of black people are always thought to hold a specific meaning since these representations are always filled with symbolism (Young, 1995).

The research will be using Hall's representation theory in order to see how Orcs' portrayals are presented in such a way that it can be said that they are a representation of African Americans. Within the representation, the users of language can reveal the meaning even reconstructed it (Rosida & Saputri, 2019). This research also aims to discover the ideology Ayer wants to express behind his portrayal of Orcs through *Bright*. On an additional note, the term African American is used in this research because this film specifically molds its portrayal of Orcs to fit with the stigma of black people in American society. Based on the background and focus of the study, the article intends to identify the following question: How does the representation of Orcs as African Americans reflect the ideology of the text?

Method

The method used is the descriptive qualitative approach by applying Stuart Hall theory of representation and ideology inside *Bright* Film. Kirk and Miller in (Santosa, 2015) assert that qualitative research is a particular tradition in social sciences or humanities that fundamentally depends on human observations in their own region and relates to these people in their language and terminology. Additionally, qualitative research method commonly comprises contents analysis, discourse analysis, and naturalistic research (Farkhan, 2011). Through representation, it enables researcher to see text and context through visual and

verbal language (Rosida & Wulansari, 2017). Therefore, in accordance to the aforementioned definition, this research would be based on data taken from the film, text-books, journals, and other online resources in pursuance of several articles related to the representation of African Americans.

Result and Discussion

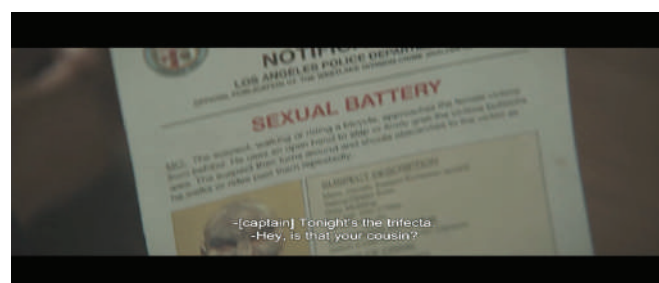
Bright depicts Orcs in a very particular way that is familiar in our minds. It can be easily pointed out that there exists an undeniable sense of familiarity in the way the Orcs are portrayed that are recognizable in American society. In answering the research questions of how Orcs are portrayed in the film and how those portrayals reflect the ideology of the text, this section will comprise four parts: Representation and Ideology, African Americans, Portrayal of Orcs in Bright, and Ideology.

Portrayal of Orcs in *Bright*

Bright film brings forth a *Lord of the Rings* spin-off into the setting of Los Angeles. Orcs is one of the nine humanoid races that exist in Bright's universe, the other eight are Elves, Centaurs, Dwarves, Brezzik, Giants, Goblins, Panahu, and Ogres. Though it seems like a heterogeneous society, the society does not treat minorities well, especially Orcs. These portrayals of Orcs create an association in our minds to make a connection between Orcs and a race that exists in real life, African Americans. This connection is caused by the way Orcs are constructed in *Bright* that it can be said to be a representation of African Americans. Orcs in *Bright* are portrayed as follows.

Orcs as the Designated Bad Guys

Orcs in Bright are presented to be a misjudged race that are prejudiced as bad because of the actions of some of the members of their community and thus made them the designated bad guys whenever bad scenarios occurred. (Rosida & Rejeki, 2017) said that the difference of race, ethnicity, class lead to the discrimination. The form of discrimination could be in misjudgment. One of the reasons is the perception that they are dangerous. Stuart Hall breaks down the role of representation in images, and highlights culture's central role in representation. Indeed, Orcs were created by Tolkien as villainous creatures in the *Lord of the Rings* universe, however, in the film Bright which was set in America this image of Orcs seems to have been shaped in a way that it can be said as a representation of African Americans. American culture positions the figure of Orcs in the film who are misunderstood and prejudiced against by society based on some of their members' actions to be a reflection of what African Americans are subjected to in real life. One of these constructed images in the film is that the image of Orcs as the designated bad guys.



Picture 1

A pamphlet of a sexual battery case with an Orc as the suspect. (Bright 00:15:48)

The screenshot above shows one of the actions that some members of Orcs community had done which influenced others' image of Orcs to be dangerous. Another example of Orcs committing crimes can also be seen in the scene below.



Picture 2

An Orc with a gun getting ready to shoot a police on duty. (Bright 00:02:47)

The scene above happened at the beginning of the film when an Orc suddenly came out of a store and just shoot Ward out of blue when he was on duty as a cop. This action is one of the many examples of how one Orc's actions influence others' perception of the Orc race as a whole. Some of the Orcs in the film were indeed portrayed doing crimes however in some other scenes in the film there are other races who committed worse crimes yet everyone seems to turn a blind eye to this fact and rather choose to focus on Orcs and put the blame on Orcs and therefore set the role for Orcs as the designated bad guys.

The bad image of Orcs portrayed in the film of them committing crimes catalyzes the fear for Orcs and creates a stigma that Orcs are dangerous in the society. This problem is shown in Bright and can be seen in several scenes and dialogues between characters when they express their negative emotions and prejudices against Orcs without even having gotten to know them. For example the dialogue between Ward and his wife expresses Ward's wife's fear for Orcs because of the prejudice she holds against Orcs that they are bad and dangerous people.

[Ward and his wife at breakfast when a video came up about Jakoby, the Orc cop]

Wife: This is shock trauma at its finest [sighs heavily]

Ward: I don't want this guy at my car either.

Wife: Baby, I don't want you to get shot again

Ward: Five years, I'm gonna retire. But I can't f*ck up my pension. All right? I mean, that's my f*cking worst nightmare.

Wife: You know what my worst nightmare is? It's them wheeling you in when I'm at work. That's my nightmare. (Bright 04:50-04:52)

Ward and his wife shared a conversation at breakfast when suddenly a video came up discussing about the first Orc who became a cop, Nick Jakoby. After this, Ward's wife's whole expression changed and worry started to show on her face. Her statement that she does not want Ward to get shot again implicates that she thinks that if Ward works alongside an Orc he will get shot and this indicates that she thinks of Orcs to be dangerous to be around with, disregarding the fact that Jakoby has nothing to do with Ward's shooting. The statement shows that she generalizes all Orcs to be bad and dangerous.

Another dialogue where Orcs are prejudiced against as dangerous is the dialogue Ward shared with his daughter, Sophia, below.

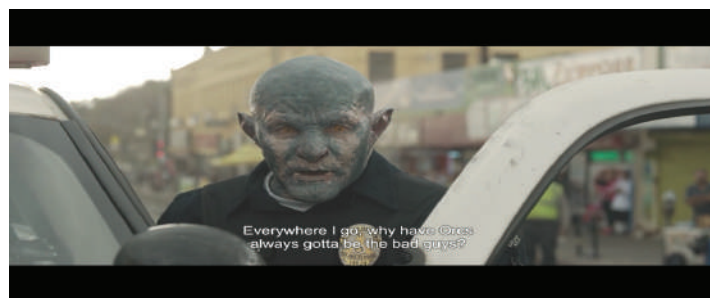
[Ward dropping off his daughter at her grandma's house on the way to work]
 Ward: ... What's up? What's happening? What's up? Why you sad? What happened?
 Sophia: I don't want you to die.
 Ward: I'm not gonna die, what are you– what you talking about?
 Sophia: Mom said Nick's gonna get you killed.
 Ward: [stammers] I don't know why she said... Nick is not gonna get me killed, alright?
 Sophia: Why do you have to be a policeman? Everybody hates policemen. (*Bright* 00:09:00)

In the dialogue shared between Ward and Sophia above, Ward was dropping Sophia off at her grandma's house when Ward noticed that Sophia had something to say. Sophia then expresses her fear for his father's safety because he has to work side by side with Jakoby, an Orc. This serves as evidence that Orcs' image in the society is seen as dangerous that even Jakoby, a cop, is not immune to this image besides the fact that a cop's duty is, in fact, protecting people.

The image of Orcs as dangerous is also upheld by the other cops in the LAPD. In one of the scenes when Ward got back from his leave because of his shooting incident, some cops gathered around him in the LAPD locker room to talk about Jakoby.

Pollard: He got away because Jakoby let him. What happens next? What happens the next time this pig motherf***** makes a cop suck-start his f*****ing 12-gauge? Only this time it's Brown, or it's Hicks, or it's f*****ing me. How you gonna feel Ward? Cause that sh*t is on you. (*Bright* 00:13:38-00:15:27)

This dialogue shows Pollard's fear of Orcs and implicates that he sees Orcs as dangerous by assuming that Jakoby will shoot him and other cops in the future. From the dialogue above and the previous ones, it is clear the constructed image of Orcs in the film is that of a race who is misjudged by the society which always sees them as the bad guy. In another scene Jakoby can be seen saying that Orcs are always being seen as the bad guys regardless of the fact that they did nothing wrong.



Picture 3

Nick Jakoby on duty as a cop. (Bright 00:20:48)

Jakoby's statement on minute 00:20:48 illustrates the main issue Orcs face in *Bright* and that is being seen as the bad guys everywhere they go. This fact seems to conveniently match the portrayal of African Americans with Orcs in *Bright*.

This is similar to what happened to African Americans in American society. In a society, the issue of racism can catalyze another issue which will be so ingrained in the people's mind that will last for a long time and will be hard to eradicate; that issue is stereotypes. Stereotyping happens when some would associate certain traits, behavior, or attributes to a specific group of people or in racism's case, to a race. Stereotypes create prejudices in peo-

ple's minds toward a certain race which, in the case of black people, are more often than not has negative association in the public's mind.

In American society, a prevalent representation of crime is mainly committed by young African American men and this creates a familiarity in the American society's minds that the image of a young African American man is that of a violent, dangerous hooligan (Welch, 2007b). According to Drummond and Russell, historically speaking, African Americans have always been perpetually stereotyped as criminals throughout American history (Welch, 2007a). Randall Kennedy, as cited by (Welch, 2007a) in her book, points out that the reputation of African Americans in America has been tainted by the beliefs that African Americans have an inclination to commit crime. This belief, Kennedy explains, can be traced back to the time of the enslavement of Africans in America. Although the association of crime with African Americans may have existed for some time, Mauer explains that it was not until the 1970s and early 1980s that stereotype of the young African American man evolved from a petty thief or rapist into a heinous criminal predator or, as Katheryn Russell (2002) has argued, is the widely recognized "criminal blackman."

Furthermore, both races have often been portrayed as physically threatening what with both races having the same robust physique. This similarity shared by both races adds to the argument that Orcs are indeed a representation of African Americans in *Bright*.

Still, some might argue that if there are stigmas around Orcs in society that they are dangerous then how can Jakoby as an Orc get hired as a cop? There are several dialogues in the film where it is inferred that Jakoby was a mere diversity hire as institutions commonly must have representations of each race in society in its body. This is also one of the reasons the higher-ups cannot discharge Jakoby unilaterally despite many complaints from racist cops about them not wanting to work with an Orc. This shows that stigmas does not really affect institutional decisions in the film but still proves the existence of this issue as racist co-workers of Jakoby still thinks of him as dangerous and refuse to partner up with him. The fact that Jakoby is the only Orc cop in the whole country also serves as a proof that if it were not for this policy they would undeniably not allow him to work as a law enforcement.

Orcs as Targets for Animalization

Animalization, according to (Mills et al., 2016) in their essay, is one of the widespread elements of racist dehumanization along with bacterialization. The two are closely related to the labelling of others with the language of contamination and disease since animals are often the cause of some diseases like ebola, bird flu, rabies, etc. So by referring a member of a group as an animal means that they dehumanize that person to be a lesser being than them.

Animalization of Orcs in *Bright* can be seen in several scenes where the characters referred Orcs as pigs in an insulting and derogatory manner. This action by using animalistic slur of pigs can be analyzed through representation theory's perspective seeing that a particular phrasing is used in the construction of Orcs in the film. Representation is the production of meanings through language and by using this particular phrasing of animalistic slur we can analyze what the film is trying to construct for Orcs' image in the film.

Man 1: Jakoby kicked loose that Pigskin f*** who blasted you. Do the math. (*Bright* 00:23:54-00:24:11)

In the scene above, two Internal Affairs officers came to Ward to persuade him into making Jakoby confess that he was indeed involved in Ward's shooting. During the conversation, one of the officers referred the Orc who shot Ward as "Pigskin f***er" which, according to the aforementioned definition of Orlando and Saab in the previous discussion, can be categorized into a slur since this term has a contemptuous tone to it and is meant to degrade

Orcs as animals simply because of their race In the scene above, two Internal Affairs officers came to Ward to persuade him into making Jakoby confess that he was indeed involved in Ward's shooting. During the conversation, one of the officers referred the Orc who shot Ward as "Pigskin f***er" which, according to the aforementioned definition of Orlando and Saab in the previous discussion, can be categorized into a slur since this term has a contemptuous tone to it and is meant to degrade Orcs as animals simply because of their race.

Internal Affairs Officer: Some pigskin piece of sh*t puts a load of buckshot into your trauma plate. Sh*thead foot-bails, Jakoby pursues... corners his a**hole in, what, a dead-end alley? (*Bright* 00:23:54 – 00:24:11)

Still in the same conversation, the man again refers an Orc as a "pigskin piece of sh*t". This racist name-calling by using slurs occurs in several scenes and here is another example of it on the scene when Pollard suggested Ward to write a letter so Jakoby can be moved or fired from their police department.

Pollard: He got away 'cause Jakoby let him. What happens next? What happens the next time this pig motherf*cker makes a cop suck-start his f*cking 12-gauge? Only this time, it's Brown, or it's Hicks, or it's f*cking me. How you gonna feel, Ward? 'Cause that sh*t's on you. (*Bright* 00:14:28)

This animalistic slur varying from pig to pigskin to pigface and often followed with swear words occurs from time to time in the film and while every single one of the scenes is important to note, they all convey the same thing and that is that Orcs are animalized by the society as pigs. What makes all these name-callsings important to note is the usage of animals as a slur for Orcs which is called Animalization. As Beaudine et al. (2017) explained in his journal, derogatory name-calling could be an outset for a class discussion concerning stereotypes and interracial or intercultural relations, this means that by constructing a race in the film that is discriminated against using a derogatory animalistic slur inferred that there are interracial and intercultural relations problems in the American society in the *Bright* universe.

Name-calling using slurs based on their racial profile is an act of racism and also happens to be a problem African Americans face regularly. Simianization is defined by (Panaitiu, 2020) as the depiction of members of a group as non-human primates. This dehumanization takes a specific form in the case of the African American community. Simianization captures a range of behaviors ranging from merely depicting individuals or groups as non-human primates to actually believing that they are of lesser kind than humans. Consequently, this facilitates and extenuates the partial or total denial of the minority's political and even human rights, and justifies symbolic and physical acts of violence and even genocide (Smith & Panaitiu, 2016). According to Danforth, dehumanization become more prevalent when the racial status quo is compromised (Danforth, 1995). Dehumanization as a psychological mechanism also highlights a blind spot of sorts in our understanding of both the relationship between in-group and out-group attitudes, as well as the notion of whiteness as its own identity, necessarily constructed by opposition.

In the discussion of the dehumanization of racial minorities, using simian slurs is also denying them full humanity and bestializing them. Simianization by referring African Americans verbally as primates is called slurs. Slurs are defined by (Orlando & Saab, 2020) as expressions that are associated with the expression of a contemptuous attitude concerning a group of people identified in terms of its origin or descent, race, sexual orientation, ethnica or religion, gender, etc. These expressions are typically used in name-calling and are meant

to insult someone in a derogatory manner.

The phenomenon of dehumanizing African Americans by depicting and or referring to them as apes, monkey or gorillas often times is exacerbated by the media during times of heightened inter-racial tensions and conflict. This depiction serves to give a correlation of African Americans with the image of either childlike beings who are in need of paternalism or seeing the group as a dangerous, aggressive, and a morally corrupting force. Panaitiu further explains that on the relation between dehumanization and race scholars argue that dehumanization occurs as a psychological distancing mechanism to justify lack of empathy or even violence, both symbolic and physical towards member of a group. This further reinforces the seriousness of racial resentment against African Americans in American society.

This shows that both American societies in the film and real life share the same problem which can reinforce the argument that Orcs are indeed a representation of African Americans since films are often used as a medium for bringing up an existing issue in societies and by shining a light on the issue of dehumanization of minorities in *Bright* adds to the argument that the film is indeed trying to represent the racial issues in America, in *Bright's* case, the dehumanization of African American race.

It needs to be highlighted, however, that in reality, pigskin or pigs in general is an American slur to call the cops in America but this does not seem to apply in *Bright's* "reality" since it is used as a derogatory term for Orcs in order to insult their skin, characteristic, and ethnicity. Similar treatments are also received by African Americans what with them often being referred to and represented as primates.

Both Orcs and African Americans are insulted as animals, African Americans as monkeys and Orcs as pigs. This similar labelling of others with the language of contamination and disease by referring Orcs as pigs and African Americans as primates in America means that American society dehumanizes both Orcs and African Americans by putting Orcs and African Americans on the same level as pigs and primates. This goes to show that these two are related and deliberately portrayed this way to be a representation of African-American race in *Bright* universe.

Orcs as Victims of Police Brutality

One of the crucial problems that America faces is racial violence and *Bright* is one of the many American films that shine light on this issue. There are small details indicating the existence of racial violence in the form of police brutality happening in *Bright* universe. One of the examples of these little details is a shot of a mural at the beginning of the film.



Picture 4

A mural by the side of the road of an Orc being beaten by police officers. (Bright 00:01:38)

Murals as one of the many forms of a text is a medium of representation which contains a message that the author tries to convey. The mural above conveys the message of a problem happening in the American society in *Bright* universe, police brutality. An image

of an orc lying face down with a bloody face on the ground while his hands are tied behind his back with two men dressed in police uniforms and holding weapons kicking the Orc all the while a white-skinned Elf woman taking a selfie happily and indifferently when a racial violence was occurring behind her is a testament of this issue. The fact that the scene itself only shows this mural in passing serves as a symbolism of how society is indifferent toward police brutality and seems to turn a blind eye to this issue. This particular shot in the film can lead to a discussion of systemic racism in law enforcements and serves as an evidence that there exists an underlying issue in American society of police brutality in *Bright*.



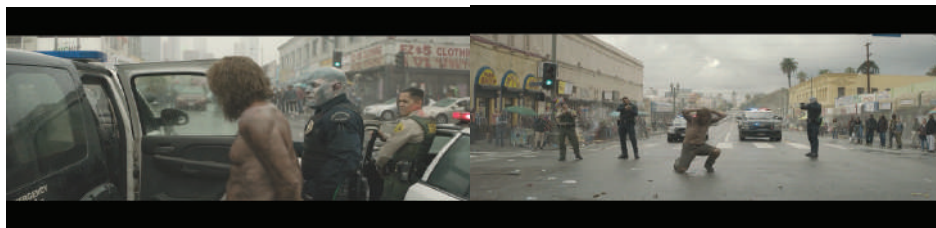
Picture 5



Picture 6

An Orc being assaulted by cops on the side of the road. (Bright 00:19:02 – 00:19:09)

Another shot that depicts police brutality is the scene above. Though not much spotlight is shone on on this scene since there is no monologue or even reference to this scene by other characters. Though not discussed about and only played in the background, this shot plays a big part in the construction of Orcs as African Americans as this scene has a significant yet subtle detail that can be analyzed. The scene above depicts an Orc being beaten up by cops while being held down to the ground, and if closely observed, we can see that the Orc is harmless as he does not hold any weapons on him as his hands are both on the ground. This scene is in contrast with the scene below.



Picture 7



Picture 8

A white man being arrested by the police after a radical sermon in the middle of the street. (Bright 00:21:17 – 00:21:40)

These two scenes juxtapose each other as both show two persons getting apprehended by the police but shows two completely different treatments. The orc was harmless meanwhile the white man was holding a weapon and yet the Orc was the one who was beaten by not one but three cops until his face was covered in blood. These scenes indirectly show a racial bias applied by the police which matches with the reality of racial bias in justice between white people and African Americans in American society.

More severe application of the law is also applied to African Americans and for this reason African Americans are stopped by the police, arrested and imprisoned in a highly significant number that is out of proportion to their general numbers. Racial profiling is practiced widely by the police which causes African Americans to be arrested or charged only for minor offenses because of the assumption of engaging in more serious criminal activity. There is ample evidence pointing that African Americans are stopped by the police for minor motoring offenses because of that assumption, this leads to a term called 'Driving While Black'.

On police brutality, (Alsutany, 2015), an associate professor in the Department of American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California (USC), claimed that in American cultural paradigm exists a simplistic equation maintaining that good people are well-intentioned and are therefore not racist; bad people are ill-intentioned and are therefore racist. So if white Police officers committed police brutality resulting in the death of African Americans are considered “good people” by their friends, families, and colleagues, their actions cannot be deemed racist. She later explains that such conclusion focuses solely on intent and overlooks how members of the police have been shaped and influenced by the pre-existing notions of African American men as threatening and how such cultural imagery has, in turn, structured racialized violence.

Jakoby: And the troops are coming. Jacked-up humans with guns looking for an Orc who'd shot a cop. You think that kid had a chance? They would've dropped him on the spot, so I did the right thing. (*Bright* 00:40:32)

Not only images in the film, dialogues are also proven to be important in the construction of Orcs as African Americans. In one of the dialogues between Jakoby and Ward, Ward's statement “*And the troops are coming. Jacked-up humans with guns looking for an Orc who'd shot a cop*” infers that cops would gladly charge and arrest Orcs and the next statement “*You think that kid had a chance? They would've dropped him on the spot*” is an inferential to how Orcs would not have a chance in fighting back because Orcs have always been the black sheep in the society. This is a very realistic representation of what is happening with African Americans. The Driving while Black thing is one of the many exhibits of how African Americans would be blamed for the smallest thing and how authorities would not bat an eye in committing violence against African Americans that resulted in the loss of lives of African Americans.

This problem arises a movement called Black Lives Matter that was specifically created to condemn the losses of many lives of African Americans in the United States and the fact that they are deserving of the same basic human rights given to white Americans. The whole purpose of Black Lives Matter is to emphasize how African Americans' lives did not “matter” as much as white lives before that movement started. The movement is a vindication of life and of human rights of African Americans which white supremacists saw as an imposition above their lives and privileges.

Ideology

Ideology in a text is an elusive thing that needs to be discerned in a careful manner. Uncovering the ideology of a text is to try to read between the lines to find something that is hidden behind a text; in short, to find the ideology of African Americans' representation in *Bright* is to see it in a way that goes beyond the text itself by adding other contexts into consideration in order to see what is hidden behind the portrayal of Orcs that is constructed the way *Bright* has constructed them to be. Ideology examines the fashion in which different kinds of ideas influence the minds of the masses and consequently metamorphose into a material force, in other words ideology is a notion that influences a society's way of thinking and consequently it is applied by the members of the society. In *Bright* what influences the way the society act is a racist and discriminatory conception towards Orcs. This leads to a material force that is racial violence towards Orcs that is, as Alsutany mentioned, intended to dehumanize the target which is the Orcs. This action of dehumanizing a certain race infers that the perpetrator sees their target as inferior to them and this feeling of superiority can be traced back to a societal class and status discussion.

It is also important to note that Ward who is played by Will Smith in the film is not

treated as badly as Orcs in the film even though he is an actual African American in the film. He was accepted as part of the human race and still be treated with respect in *Bright's* American society, unlike Orcs. However, examining his character in the film we can also see that he is married to a white woman. This detail in the film can be the reason why he is treated as equals, which implies that African Americans can only be seen as equal or can get accepted in the society if they marry whites. Furthermore, unlike Ward character who is accepted in the society there is not much info on other African Americans in the film since only a few of them were shown and none of them play a significant role.

Delving further into the portrayals of Orcs in the film, there are also some details in the film that can be deemed necessary in the process of uncovering the text's ideology, the position of Orcs in the society. There are some details in some scenes and even dialogue where it infers Orcs' low position in society.



Picture 9. *Orcs working as cleaners. (Bright 00:02:02)*

In some scenes, Orcs can be seen doing blue-collar jobs that are very contrasting with the jobs other races have. Orcs are depicted as cleaners, chauffeurs, and gang members meanwhile elves for instance, are portrayed as people of high position in a job and socialites who is busy spending their money on shopping.

[Upon seeing Jakoby walked by at the police station]

Kandomere: An Orc with a badge. Incredible.

Montehugh: That's some sh*t you don't see every day. Like an Elf with a mop.
(*Bright 00:26:35*)

On minute 00:26:35 Kandomere, an Elf, mentioned that an Orc with a badge is a very uncommon thing which his partner, Montehugh, later added with his statement that it is almost as impossible as an Elf with a mop. It needs to be noted that after his observation he uses a comparison between an Orc and an Elf upon seeing the oddity of an Orc working as a police officer. Describing the oddity of an Orc wearing a badge to be the same as an Elf with a mop implies that there is a huge gap in social stratum between Orcs and Elves; Interpreting this statement, we can conclude Orcs' societal status and class in the society.

The film depicts Orcs as a lower class race which even having a job as a cop which is not one of the most prestigious jobs in class and status is even deemed too high for them. This says a lot about the positioning of Orcs in the society and a red thread can be drawn between Orcs' societal class and the racial violence issue that they are faced with as racial violence is an act of racial supremacy intended to establish its perpetrator's dominance over its target.

In answering the question of how all these representations of Orcs reflect the ideology of the text, it is necessary to look back on all the representations of Orcs in the film as the previous sub-chapter has discussed; in *Bright*, Orcs are portrayed as the designated bad guys, targets of animalization, and victims of police brutality, examining all these represen-

tations it can be concluded that Orcs is indeed a representation of African Americans as they share plenty of similarities with African Americans in real life. All these representations of Orcs put together and added with Orcs' positioning in societal class conceives the ideology of black inferiority.

This ideology is a result of the film's display of systemic racism and racial inequality against Orcs that is so embedded in the society that Orcs are seen to be helpless against the system that treated them badly as Orcs are not seen to have fought against the system even once in the film. This reflects the problem of systemic racism that American society is in and the way that African Americans have to fight daily for basic human rights. The film also perfectly showcases the root of the problem and that is how white supremacy in society is still a thing and how it results in African Americans being seen as the inferior race by the racist American society, as shown in the way the American society dehumanized and victimized Orcs in the film. This combined with the fact that a real race is allegorized as a monster-like race reinforces the conclusion that the ideology the text tries to convey is that of black inferiority. This portrayal of African Americans as Orcs also works as an example of how the racist American society sees African Americans, dangerous, evil, beastly and monster-like.

Conclusion

The film shows how systematic racism is still a prevalent issue in the seemingly progressive present American society and how systematic racism and racial supremacy play a major role in the oppression and discrimination of minority. This film is an example of how Hollywood still sees African Americans as 'monsters' through their thinly veiled racist stereotypical portrayal of African Americans in their films and serves as a reflection of racist American society. Furthermore, the allegorical representation of African Americans as Orcs in *Bright* only goes to show the way racist American society sees African Americans, dangerous, evil and monster-like.

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