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# Undergraduate Dissertation

## Trabajo Fin de Grado

*Get Out* (2017): Hollywood's Racial Representation  
in Post-Racial America

Author

Adrian Archie Labuena

Supervisor

Beatriz Oria Gómez

FACULTY OF ARTS  
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## Introduction

More than two thousand years have not been enough to achieve the complete elimination of an issue which all through human history has constituted one of the main reasons for conflicts and deaths: racism, George M. Fredrickson defines it as “the unreflective way to describe the hostile or negative feelings of one ethnic group or “people” toward another and the actions resulting from such attitudes” (13). This term can have different definitions depending on the person you ask to define it. However, this dissertation will not focus on defining this term, but on how it has been represented in cinema since its invention.

The issue of racism has led to the development of several filmic arguments which try to approach this topic from very different perspectives. But in fact, most of these racial-filmic designs, and especially those developed during the classical period of cinema, have contributed to create an image of underdevelopment and irrationality among the human species. This negative impression is driven by the traditional stereotyping of black individuals, as we will discuss during the following sections. Most of these negative cinematic images have been recurrently used by the Hollywood industry, thus contributing to the proliferation of the already existing racial prejudices. In addition, these intolerant messages have been conveyed in one of the countries where racial conflict has been more prevalent, the United States of America. A country in which all through its short history racism has been the reason for many social confrontations, and which is widely known for being the cradle of the greatest film industry.

The election of Barack Obama, the first African-American president of the United States in November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008, symbolized for many a great step towards racial equality

but, some years later, in January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017, with the rise to power of President Donald Trump all these advances seemed to collapse. The new Republican president's policies are suppressing the positive guidelines towards the treatment of racism that Barack Obama had worked for.

The election of Donald Trump coincided with the release of a new horror-thriller: *Get Out* (Jordan Peele, 2017). The main concerns of this director is the portrayal of interracial relationships in the American society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the consolidation of the concepts of "White Fragility" and "Racial Anxiety", coined by Robin DiAngelo (2011).

In this essay we will focus on the issue of racism and how Jordan Peele's *Get Out* gives a new filmic perspective on racism during the Trump Era. By means of the horror-thriller genre it exemplifies the constant fears which African-American people have to face every day when they walk by the streets of the United States. The film distances itself from the more relaxed treatments of racial issues during the Obama era and constitutes a more serious and threatening approach as a symptom of Trump's presidency, a period in which the ghosts of the past seem to re-emerge during the so-called "post-racial era", in a country conceived as one of the main world powers of current society.

In this film it is significant that an interracial relationship serves as a means for the construction of a horror story. Here Jordan Peele takes advantage of the current situation of the country to develop the topic of interracial relationships with a horror perspective, moving away from the romantic touch that some directors, as for example Jeff Nichols' in *Loving* (2016), had previously used to address that topic.

## Racism in the US: yesterday and today

Departing from the previously mentioned definition of racism, it is necessary to add the negative views and attitudes that a concrete group of people develops towards a different group which can either belong to the same society or not. This negative attitude can be due to physiological differences or physical conditions such as: the skin colour or different shapes of specific body parts; which can also be defined as an ethnical dissimilarity that may involve differences in blood and in the genetic composition. This is perceived as the primary cause for racism through history.

One of the countries of the world where this negative attitude from one ethnicity towards the other has had a greater impact all through its short history is the United States of America. In this country the first traces of racism are rooted in the colonization period, in which the white Anglo-Saxon colonizers arrived at this territory with the aim of imposing the European lifestyle and culture over the native tribes that were already living in the North American territory.

In addition, North American history has been deeply linked to another issue which has always been directly related to racism: slavery. The trade of African slaves to the new continent was first aimed to contribute and accelerate the creation and development of the new nation, once the European settlers had already established their colonies in the new territory. “The flux of enslaved African natives to the North American territory took place for the first time in the year 1619 with the arrival of the first slave-containing Dutch ship, which brought the twenty first slaves to the new nation” (“Slavery in America”). From this time and until the ending of the American Civil War (1865), together with the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation Act issued by President Abraham Lincoln

(1863), one of the greatest slave fluxes took place. It is estimated that only during the 18<sup>th</sup> century between 6 and 7 million of African slaves were imported to the United States.

The main consequence of this flux was that slaves had to live under precarious life conditions and treatment, until the American Civil War, a moment in which black slaves started to take a more active role in national affairs. They also took part in the conflict, which somehow started to remove them from the disdainful position in which the colonists had placed them. As a consequence of this, the previously stated Emancipation Proclamation Act was issued, something that at the same time did not imply the ending of the African Slavery period in the whole North American territory, but can be considered as a first step towards that equality aspiration for which thousands of African Slaves had given their lives for.

Shortly after the Emancipation Proclamation Act, which freed all person held as slave was passed, a set of rules called Jim Crow Laws (1876) was enacted, reinforcing the racial segregation and discrimination in the United States, especially in the southern states where racism was stronger. In the latter states the legislation of several laws had as main goal the disenfranchisement and segregation towards black individuals. This was supported by the legal system and police, and by some terrorist groups like the Ku Klux Klan which acted violently against black individuals. This situation of detachment prolonged in the United States until the passing in 1964 of the Civil Rights Act. After this event segregation came to be a fact of the darkest side of the history of this country (Stonaker, Shepard).

However, despite all the advancements that have been made, racism is still very present in contemporary society. Today racial segregation or African American exploitation does not exist anymore, but the Trump administration is trying to implement discriminatory measures, many of which are overtly racist. An example of this is Trump's

project to build a wall to separate Mexico from the USA. Signs of upfront racism are exposed almost every day in news reports where police brutality against African-American individuals is made evident, often leading to revolts and protests across the country.

## Representing racism in film

Since 1905, when Cinema arrived at the United States thanks to John Paul Harris and Harry Davis, the access to any stage of film production for African-American people has been limited. But in this area this impossibility was even stronger because the main objective of the first cinematic productions, as for example *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), was “to glorify white supremacy and influence cinema’s inscriptions on race” (Sung 249). Hence the main point of early stages of cinema was the amusement and entertainment of white society.

Partly, as a consequence of this restriction the evolution in the representation of African-American people in the history of cinema has run parallel to their social evolution, with a slow but steadily growing participation of black individuals in both contexts. When African-Americans started to be depicted in the first productions they followed stereotypical representations historically linked to the figure of the Negro, hence they were mainly represented as servants or labourers. Thus, in the early period of cinema the African-American ethnicity or any other minority group was portrayed from a white perspective and described as a never-changing race and profiled through binaries such as “good and bad, noble and savage, loyal and traitorous” (Hill 161).

Donald Bogle established that a five-sided image of the African-American individual was created during the classical cinema period to shape popular memory about slavery: the first image that we could find was that of the Negro portrayed as a lazy person and as a buffoon of society, this first stereotype is referred to as the “Coon”. Then we find the classical figure of a big-sized black woman who is in charge of taking care of white

children and house tasks, known as the “Mammy” stereotype. The black man can also be caricatured as a “Tom”, giving an image of African-Americans as docile and happily submissive individuals. Then we have the figure of the “Mulatto”, the unintended child of a white slaveholder and its black female slave. The last stereotype that we can find in the early cinema period was that of the “The Black Buck”, a physically superior black man who in a very rude and violent way breaks white men’s law and (cited in Pramaggiore, Wallis 322).

The five stereotypes of the classical period cited above had a common thread, these conceptions were represented following the blackface minstrel and the vaudeville traditional patterns in which black roles in films were developed by white actors who had black makeup on them , this carried two significant meanings: on the one hand it advocated for the traditional white supremacy in the United States; and in the other hand, it gave a poor representation of African-American individuals (Pramaggiore and Wallis 323). It should be pointed out that all these stereotypes were not exclusive to cinema, but film did play a paramount role in the popularization of all these negative and false stereotypes all around the world.

The participation of African-American as backstage crew was insignificant during the earliest stages of cinema. The development of historical events led to a controlled growth of their participation in cinema until 1964, when the Civil Rights Act was issued, an event that contributed to the progressive shift in the Hollywood industry, but “until the 1970s the film industry denied African-Americans membership in technical guilds and the lack of economic base in the industry prevented African-Americans from directing Hollywood films” (Pramaggiore, Wallis 325). Nevertheless, it did not bring the ending of racial misrepresentation: the main problem was that films dealing with the issue of race produced in Hollywood treated this topic from a white perspective. Therefore, the

message had to be adjusted for the audiences it was addressed to, and the African-American participants had to adapt their discourses and performances to address a white viewership.

The constant readjustment of the narrative message and performance did not allow a full development of the renewed and breaking ideas about racism which were being developed in black independent cinemas, but the problem for this new industry was that the average attendance to its theatres was reduced in comparison with the audience of the Hollywood playhouses. In addition, “from the 1920’s through the 1940’s, major American studios attracted the most talented black stage actors” (Reid 13).

The representation of race on screen has been approached differently depending on the current social moment of the films’ release. For instance, *Guess who is coming to Dinner* (1967), an important allusion to *Get Out* reflects the changing period of the United States’ society after the passing of the Civil Rights Act. In this film, the issue of interracial relationships is portrayed through a mixture of comedy and drama. By contrast, the film that serves as the case study of this essay portrays the same scenario but through the horror-thriller genre, a significant change which will be analysed in the following section as a product of the Trump era.

## ***Get Out: African-American portrayal in “post-racial” America***

Jordan Peele's *Get Out* narrates how Chris (Daniel Kaluuya) agrees to meet the family of his girlfriend, Rose (Allison Williams). At first he is afraid of being rejected because of his skin colour. During the first moments in the Armitages' house Chris' expectations about being rejected seem to disappear, as he meets a kind and caring family, which does not place value on the colour of his skin. But things start to get worse because of their strange behaviour, and the celebration of a disconcerting party in the house. As the weekend progresses, and a series of events take place Chris discovers a denouement that goes beyond his first expectations.

Jordan Peele's main intention with *Get Out* was to reflect what implies to be black in a white world. He wanted the audience of this film to experience the common fears of black individuals in the United States (“Jordan Peele on a really terrifying monster: Racism”). These fears emerge in the tricky moment of meeting for the first time a girlfriend's parents, a real source of terror for many couples, in this case to make matters worse we are presented an interracial relationship where the black boyfriend is going to meet the family of his white girlfriend, a family which at the same time is not aware of the fact that he is black.

All of these fears seem to disappear during the first moments of the film, in which we are presented with the Armitages, who give the impression of being a modern family with post-racial values offering a warm welcome to Chris. There appears to be no trace of racism in this family until the moment that Dean Armitage (Bradley Whitford), Rose's father, makes certain strange comments. Underneath this liberal look that the Armitage

family seem to embody, we can find an undercover racism which parallels the attitude of a large part of the society of this country.

The story is set in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a period in which racism is assumed to have been overcome. In fact nothing could be further from reality because nowadays racism is not over, it has just evolved. Some conservative white families still hold the archaic view of the African-American individuals as mere animals or objects which they can use as they wish. Envy is also a traditional characteristic of this 21<sup>st</sup> century racism, an envy which comes from the long-lasting presumed black physical superiority, which can be traced back in the early stages of cinema to the figure of “The Black Buck” above mentioned, and which contrasts with the assumed white intellectual superiority. This traditional racism has evolved in one specific aspect, especially in this country: now white racists hide this racism under a hypocrite mask, they pretend to be members of a modern society where racism is assumed to be a matter of the past, but in fact they still hold these archaic family traditions and values regarding the black community.

### **The archaic vision of African-Americans in the 21st century**

The archaic image that some white segments of the US society still hold towards African-Americans is present all through the film and this is apparent in the stereotyped representation of the black community. Through these representations, together with some implicit information, this film manages to construct a critical message towards the still racist North American society that presumes to be in a post-racial era, where freedom and equality reign supreme. In fact, some of these “modern” members of the white community still regard African American individuals as simple animals without basic

Civil Rights, or as objects which they can employ at their wish in order to achieve their own goals.

Throughout the film, the figure of the deer in *Get Out* plays a crucial role in the constant animalization of the black community, which is reflected in Chris's persona. This can be seen in one of the opening scenes, in which we witness the knocking down of a deer by the car driven by Rose and Chris in their way to the Armitages' home. In the next scene we are shown the suffering of the animal after the incident with the car, which is associated by means of editing with Chris, who also suffers while witnessing this scene. As we will discover later in the film, this reminds him of the death of his mother, who died on a roadside after a car accident.

The image of the deer will turn to be a crucial source of symbolism throughout the film, an animal that has always kept a space in the mansions of traditional white hunters who kept the dissected head of the hunted deer as a trophy, an animal who also suffers at the cruel hands of the white man, paralleling this way the brutalities suffered by the Negroes, another defenceless race that has all through history been a victim of white supremacy. There is a concrete scene in which Chris is tied to the couch just in front of the dissected head of the deer. In this image both victims stare at each other while deprived of their freedom. This scene plays a crucial role drawing a traditional parallel between the African-American individual and an animal.



**Fig. 1.** Chris faces his animal counterpart in the Armitage mansion (1h13'12'')

The distinction between black and white individuals can be first noticed during the opening scene of the movie. In this scene we are presented with Andre Hayworth (Keith Stanfield) walking down a dark street when a strikingly bright white car driven by a white man approaches and hijacks him. This scene offers two formal aspects which are relevant for the conveyance of the racial message of this movie. The first is the contrast between the two individuals in this street: the black man moving on foot, a rudimentary transportation medium, and the white man driving a brand-new car, a more advanced and sophisticated means of transport. It is necessary to briefly mention the colour of this car, it is a bright white vehicle that plays a crucial role in the emphasis on the notion of whiteness and white superiority.

This scene also presents another significant formal choice: the music that is being played in the car and which serves as the musical background for the highjacking. The extra-diegetic song that we hear in this scene is *Run Rabbit Run* (by Noel Gay and Ralph Butler), a joyful song which does not fit with a brutal scene like this where a highjacking is

taking place. This song was released during the World War II period, and ironically was meant to poke fun at the German troops, hence having a song like this at such a moment distances the spectator from the truculence of the scene and confuses them about the way it should be read.

Once in the Armitages' home, we see that they have two black servants, which reinforces the archaic vision of some members of white North-American society, who in the 21<sup>st</sup> century still regard black individuals as servants of the white race. Chris tries to find support on them, the only African-Americans in this space, but the only thing he obtains from them is a feeling of indifference caused by the brainwashing to which this white family has submitted them. The two black servants who in a certain way are portrayed according to the traditional stereotypes of "The Coon" and "The Mommy" can also be understood as an allusion to the archaic portrayal of black individuals during the early Hollywood stages.

The historical arrogance of white individuals towards African-Americans can be observed in different scenes. The latter have always been deprived of their freedom and their roots and imprisoned. In this film we see a new form of imprisonment. Here by means of hypnosis and surgery black individuals are deprived of their liberty and see their life reduced to mere spectatorship. They can only observe what happens to them and their bodies, but they do not have the possibility of mending that situation. The impotence that black people have traditionally suffered is symbolically recreated in a concrete scene. When Chris is hypnotized by Missy Armitage (Catherine Keener) we see the way he falls in a hole of darkness, which metaphorically can signify the imaginary orifice where black people have been historically thrown once they become a possession of white slaveholders who deprive them from freedom. Inside this hole they just can contemplate how their lives go by, but it is impossible to do anything to change their destiny. Both

Missy and Dean Armitage embody this control of white society over African-American people: both of them have access to the unconscious of black people either by means of hypnosis or surgery. In this way, they are able to manipulate these individuals and take control of what is beneath, which makes reference to the historical manipulation and control of whites in western societies.

The double-faced nature of the North American society is conveyed in a concrete shot of the film in which we see how Chris is affected because of a sudden event concerning Andre Hayworth (now Logan Rey), who as we discover later is the African-American hijacked at the beginning of the film and is now under the effects of the Armitage's therapy. Thanks to a flashing light Andre briefly recovers his real identity and urges Chris to get out of this house, a message which makes reference to the title of the film. In this scene the former is sadly sitting on the sofa surrounded by white people, who keep their jovial attitude as if nothing had happened. This scene draws a clear parallel with current North American society: no event involving a black person implies a substantial reason to worry, as long as a white individual is not involved in a cruel event like this, there is no reason to pay attention or try to do something to change it. In this scene it is only Rose who apparently appears to be worried among the rest of white individuals, but in fact she is faking her worry, which may symbolize the hypocrisy of North American society.



Fig 2. Chris being comforted by Rose while the rest of the guests maintain their jovial attitude (57'28'')

Returning to the scene in which Chris is being hypnotized by Missy Armitage, the director uses a zoom while he is in the armchair, which allows him to frame Chris from a wide shot to a close-up. As the camera approaches Chris, the tears flow from his eyes, we can witness from a very close perspective his suffering while remembering a hidden, traumatic event of his life. As the camera zooms into his face, the spectator has a double feeling, on the one hand the viewer experiences Chris suffering and also suffers with him reaching a state of empathy with the character, until we reach the point in which we feel his own suffering, an experience that is caused by the white man's hand. On the other hand by means of this zooming technique and focalisation we are placed on the side of the perpetrator of this pain, and as we get closer to Chris we adopt Missy's perspective, how she is taking control over him. Sound effects are crucial in this scene, here Peel avoids the traditional visual hypnosis pattern and uses the teaspoon's sound, while stirring up the tea, to complete the hypnosis process. In this way we can experience the historical pleasure that the white race has experienced while submitting and causing pain to the black race.

## The “Prejudice-free” mentality of North American Society

The ideology of some white layers of North American society during the 21<sup>st</sup> century is still sustained by the postulates established by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, first in *The Origin of Species* developed by Charles Darwin and later in *Social Darwinism* developed by Herbert Spencer. Charles Darwin defended that “only the fittest individuals of a society are the ones who will survive, and the weakest ones must be sacrificed in order for the fittest to survive” (*The Origin of Species*) and it is the maintenance of this traditional mentality that Jordan Peele wants to portray in *Get Out* (Zinoman).

Through the history of the US, the country has had the capacity of bringing together the two most divergent races on a large scale, this relationship has evolved little by little to a more optimistic reality, but as stated above, many problems and moral prejudices have stunted this relationship. The arrival of Obama to the White House appeared to improve the racial prejudice, and the arrival of the “post-racial era”, but nothing could be further from reality, partially due to the coming to power of Donald Trump. The arrival of the new Republican President seemed to reinvigorate the seemingly disappeared racial prejudices during President Obama’s presidency, reflecting in this way the fallacy of the “post-racial era”. Jordan Peele stated that “the main aim in *Get Out* was to set out and expose “the lie” of a post-racial America” (Zinoman), hence the main aim of the movie is to fight against the lie that America had become a post-racial country since the arrival of President Barack Obama .

This comes into play in different scenes of the movie: the first example comes at the beginning of the film when Rose mentions the fact that her parents voted for Obama in the two legislatures and would have voted him for the third time if it had been possible, a fact that is also mentioned by Dean Armitage in one of his conversations with Chris

while trying to earn his trust. This scene establishes a clear parallelism with some layers of the US society, they had a black president and most of them were apparently proud of having voted for him in a public context, while at the same time they kept racial prejudices in a more private space.

The issue of smoking is also relevant. Smoking is regarded by the Armitage family as harmful. During the first half of the film they make constant allusions to how noxious it is for Chris' health and also for society, alleging that tobacco is a major cause for disease and death. This fact is significant if we relate it with the false morality of some layers of the white North American population, who just see the mote in their brother's eye, but they do not see some of their racial prejudices as old-fashioned and as detrimental to society, instead they just focus on irrelevant issues, as it is the case of Chris' addiction to tobacco. The way the Armitage family think about smoking may lead us to think that this problem is a matter of inferior people, and for a racist white family like the Armitage black individuals are this kind of people. Coincidentally Chris is a black guy, who in their view is an inferior being, he is the only one who smokes among all the characters, and it is the false will to help him give this addiction up which allows the Armitages access his mind in order to manipulate it at their will.

Jordan Peele brings back the widely used technique of the long take in a certain moment of the film which looks like an audition for a TV contest. It takes place during the annual party where all the candidates for Chris' body evaluate his physical conditions in order to check if his body is what they are looking for. In a first approach they seem to be interested in getting to know him, but what they are actually doing is testing him in order to know if he suits their expectations. During the flow of this long take we have the impression that Chris is having the same conversation with the same people and as we are not able to realize the cuts that the director makes thanks to the digital technology of

today, we can only appreciate it because as the long take goes on we are shown different characters engaged in a similar conversation with Chris. The use of this technique is meant on the one hand to create a certain kind of continuity and a connection between the different conversations and the mentality of all the white guests of the party. On the other hand, the use of this long take is also trying to convey the hypocrisy of that society, they seem to glorify Chris but in fact they are checking whether he fulfils their expectations and needs.

The slow-motion technique also helps convey the double-faced attitude of the North American society. This slow-motion camera movement focuses on the way Chris is going after the party back into the Armitage's house under the watchful eye and hypocrite smile of some of the guests of the party, who at the same time have been bidding to get hold of his body. They seem to be happy for Chris' return, but they - unlike us the viewers - are aware of what will happen next, they look at him with joy in their eyes notwithstanding all the atrocities they know that Chris will have to go through. They all have spent the day glorifying him and feigning interest about his life, and now that they know that he is taking his last steps they just observe it with pleasure. Ironically this slow-motion scene is accompanied by the chords of a ukulele, which has traditionally been used in the Hawaii islands in a jovial attitude and this scene is nothing but jovial. In this way, the scene parallels the opening one, when André is kidnapped to the sound of an incongruously happy song that - now we realize - is meant to convey the victimizers' point of view.



Fig. 3. Dean and Missy watch over Chris carefully (1h03'16'')

## **White intellectual superiority versus black physical superiority**

There is a belief among some members of the middle and upper classes of the white North American society that they are one step above the rest of ethnicities that cohabit with them, which at the same time works as the basis of racism. They consider themselves the ones destined to reach the American Dream, because they think of themselves to be intellectually superior to the rest. Hence thanks to their hard work and their aptitudes they see themselves as the ones entitled to the right of pursuing the American Dream, and this can only be achieved, as Social Darwinism states, by means of “the sacrifice of the weakest and less intellectual individuals of society”, which from their point of view are the rest of minorities, among which we find the African-American race. But among this “superior” race there has always been a physical inferiority complex regarding especially male African-American individuals who traditionally have been portrayed in cinema according to the Black Buck stereotype, which somehow reflects the anxiety defined by John Hill of “white individual’s towards black sexuality and physique when they are interpreted according to the Black Buck stereotype” (Hill 163).

*Get Out* tries to show how the white individual by means of their supposed intellectual superiority - tries to break that barrier by literally appropriating the black, “most developed” physical conditions. This inferiority complex is first made palpable during the scene in which Dean shows Chris a picture of his father defeated by a black runner in an Olympic race under the watchful eye of Adolf Hitler, an event that constituted a lifelong unfinished business in his father's life.

The inferiority complex of the white race is also depicted during the above mentioned “casting-like scene” in the annual party when Chris receives nothing but compliments such as “you are a beast or you could be a beast” which allude to his physical

characteristics and attributes, compliments which at the same time strongly denote the desire of white individuals to obtain these attributes, which they have been deprived from.

On the other side of that inferiority complex we find the supposed intellectual superiority of the white individuals. Thanks to the medical improvements created by the intellect of the Armitage family, they manage to enlarge the life of a white individual and create a kind of superior being that condenses the developed intellect of the white man and the physical advantages which the white man thinks that the African-American holds in his body. This deeply relates to the concept of a superior race coined by the Nazis, an individual who is by nature superior to the rest and who embodies perfection because he or she condenses the physical and intellectual privileges in one body. But at the same time, it contradicts the Nazi ideology because this perfect individual comes from the mixture of two races and they supported the idea of a single and pure race.

During the hypnosis scene and once Chris is totally hypnotized, Peele shows him falling into a darkness well. In this scene the only source of light that is perceived is that emitted by Missy. This moment can be understood as the impossibility of the black man of creating light, hence the African-American individual cannot achieve any life goal by himself if not helped by the light of the white individuals. Therefore, as the only source for advancement of the black race comes given by the white race it is inferred that in terms of intellect the white individual is superior to the black individual, and as Social Darwinism states only the fittest individuals will advance, and in this film the fittest one is the white man, while the black race will be destined to disappear.



Fig. 4. Chris falling into the darkness during the hypnosis session (35'25'')

The film tries to strip down this white intellectual superiority by showing some of the weaknesses it has. Everything changes thanks to the emergence of a flashing light that has the power to destroy everything the white man, in this case the Armitage family, has been working on for so long. This flash can be considered as a symbol of African-American historical rebellion and intellect, a rebellion which at the same time is suffocated by means of violence and mental violation. This draws a parallel with the brutalities the white race has displayed over the black race in order to suffocate the rebellions of African-Americans in their pursuit of liberation and equality.

Paradoxically, and with the aim to create a dramatic and unpredictable ending to the film it turns to be the black intellect what eventually is in charge of resolving the conflict. In this case this intellect does not come from Chris, but from Rod Williams (Lil Rel Howery), who manages to unmask the plot becoming the real hero of the film. Conspicuously, our black hero comes driving a white car. This can be interpreted as a message that asks for equality among races: only by interracial cooperation and by eliminating racial prejudices will North American society advance. Hence the moral

superiority of some layers of the North American society is denounced in the film, sending the message that no race is superior to others in any field.

## Conclusion

When Obama won the primaries in 2008, a new feeling started to take over the society of the United States, the election of the first black president seemed to announce that the nation had finally reached a post-racial era where racial prejudices and inequality seemed just to be a matter of the past. But the Republican victory in the elections of 2017, in which a racist businessman obtained the majority of votes, implied a step backwards in the struggle for a nation free of racial issues and inequality.

Since its opening scene, *Get Out* underlines the overwhelming power of the white side of North American society as well as the collateral inequities that this excess of power creates even in private spaces. The director creates a horror story out of the first meeting of a black man with his parents-in-law, who belong to the opposite race. The intention is to point out the social struggles that black individuals have to face in their daily life and how an ordinary event like this can turn into a horror scene in the Trump era.

Thus what the analysis of this film has revealed is that in the North American society of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century racial prejudices cannot be disregarded yet, and that it is necessary to work unilaterally towards a society in which social accomplishments are not taken for granted. The film's symbolism and filming techniques make reference to a current reality of in the US, and this reality is nothing else but the archaic vision of the white side of part of a society which still retains the racial anxieties of the past and embodies a stereotyped vision full of prejudices and hate towards racial minorities.

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