

## Racial discrimination and the negative impact on african-american that reflected in the short film “jim”

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### ABSTRACT

Jim is a comedy short film in YouTube. This short film is produced by Chris Black. Jim short film talks about a young Black American boy named ‘Charles’, he experienced an implicit racism in his class. The main topic of this paper is the racism action towards the main character. The research problems of this paper are the levels of racism that experienced the Black American child and what is the negative impact of racism to Black American child that depicted by a differential opportunities that got by Charles. The theory that used in this paper is the theory levels of Racism by Camara Phyllis Jones. Camara Phyllis Jones defined racism as a structure of opportunity (education, housing, jobs, justice) also assigning value (worthy or unworthy, full of potential or full of menace) established on the social interpretation of race that made a disadvantage impact on the individual and communities victim, weaken the power of the all society by the waste of human source. For the methods that used is the descriptive qualitative methods. The goals of this paper are to know the levels of racism that experienced by the Black American child and to understand the negative impact of the racism. In this film Charles experienced a three levels of racism, specifically are the institutionalized, personally mediated, and internalized. The entire of the three levels of racism gives a negative impact to the Charles’s mental health and personality. On this paper the authors found that the racial discrimination that got by Charles made a several impact to Charles’s mental health and personality. It proves that a racial discrimination is giving a bad impact to the victim.

## 1. Introduction

It is well-known that every movie contains a main character. The audience’s eyes will be focused on the main character. On this film, the focus is on Charles or the main character that experienced a racism. According to Merriam-Webster, Racism is a belief where a race is the foundation matter of someone’s mindset and range, the diversity of racial also make an implicit dominance of a peculiar race. In the other hand, According to Vidal (1996), racism is frequently considered as the ultimate harsh move to other race. It can happen because of other race who think that their race is better than another. It is well known that African-American got a racism due to the color of their skin and the

cause of racism is mostly because of the skin color. As what Lori Tharps (2016) wrote in an article entitled *The Difference Between Racism and Colorism*, "In this country, because of deeply entrenched racism, we already know that dark skin is demonized and light skin wins the prize." From the explanation above, it is known that racism is a vicious action and it can happen to an individual or a group of other race. As for discrimination, According to Merriam-Webster, Discrimination is the act, practice, or an instance of discriminating categorically rather than individually. Racial discrimination is one of the problems that always happen in the US. The definition of Racial Discrimination based on the Equality Act 2010, is a condition during someone is treated unfairly because of their race, their perceived race or the race of someone they are allied with, it is considered race discrimination.

KFF reports in 2020, majority (71%) of Black American said that they are experienced a racial discrimination at the time of their lifetimes and almost half of them (48%) felt that their safeness and life was in risk because of their race. Not only that, Black Americans are also experienced of being denied for a job where they were qualified (40%) or refused of buy a house that they could buy for because of their race (26%). Regarding the interactions with law enforcement in the time of their lifetimes, 4 in 10 (41%) Black Americans said they are experienced blocked by a police officer because of their "color" and 1 in 5 Black adults American (21%), including 3 in 10 Black men being a victim of police violence. According to the data from the Pew Research Center that investigated people in a large amount of Americans and analyzed the prevalence of the discrimination that experienced by different racial groups. The result shown that a 75% Black Americans are experienced a racial discrimination. The data result is also shown that there is a large contrast of discrimination of minorities between the Black Americans, Hispanic and Asian. The report evaluates of 28.74% of less respect of courtesy for minorities and 23.53% for Whites. In our conservative estimate, 69.45% of Black Americans experienced a racial discrimination periodically in contrast to the 31.88% at the hand of Boutwell and its colleagues. Another variation are the prevalence values established for Asians (56.59% within our study correlated to 18.72%) and Hispanics (45.01% during our study correlated to 27.15%). (Boutwell et al, 2017)

"Jim" short film is a short film by Chris Black, this film takes a place in a class of school, with the duration of 6 minutes the audiences will enjoy and understand the "implicit" racial discrimination that shown in the short film. In this film, it can be seen that Charles is the only black student in the classroom. From the beginning until the end of the film, Charles always showed his "desperate" face. It happened because he doesn't get a fair treatment as the other students since he's the only black student in his classroom. The rese is interested to analyze the racism that got by Charles. The research problem of this paper are the levels of racism that experienced the Black American child and what is the negative impact of racism to Black American child. In accordance to the research problem, the purpose of the studies are to know the levels of racism that experienced by the Black American child and to understand the negative impact of the racism.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Research Approach**

For the methodology that used in this paper is the descriptive qualitative method that focused to analyze the word in the dialog between the character of the film. As what Ashley Crossman (2020) wrote in an article entitled *an Overview of Qualitative Research Methods*, "Qualitative research is a type of social science research that collects and works with non-numerical data and that seeks to interpret meaning from

these data that help understand social life through the study of targeted populations or places.” So, the authors decided to use this kind of method in order to understand the racism treatment through the dialog from the short film.

## 2.2. Data Collection

This paper adopted two kind of data, there are the primary data and the secondary data. For the main data, the authors used a short film entitled *Jim* directed by Chris Black. The data taken from the dialog or the subtitle of the short film. For the secondary data, the authors adopted the previous study, journal that adopting a racism and racial discrimination as the major focus of their journal.

## 3. Theoretical Construct

For the theory that will be used, theory levels of Racism by Camara Phyllis Jones. Jones divided the levels of racism into 3 levels, there are Institutional Racism, Personally Mediated Racism and Internalized Racism.

The first place level of racism is Institutionalized racism. As what Jones (2000) wrote in a book entitled *Levels of Racism: theoretic framework and a gardener's tale*, “Institutionalized racism is defined as differential access to the goods, services, and opportunities of society by race. Institutionalized racism is normative, sometimes legalized, and often manifests as inherited disadvantage” (1212). Institutionalized racism is included in the institutions of custom, practice and law, so that no need to be identified perpetrator. This kind of racism frequently manifest itself in material context and capability access. Regarding to the material context, this racism including a contrasting access to the quality of education, sound housing, gainful employment appropriate medical facilities and a clean environment. While, for the access of power including contrasting access to information (as well as one’s own history), resources (as well as wealth and organizational infra structure) and voice (as well as voting rights representation in government and control of the media). A socio economic and race in United States is attached into each other because of its own history of contemporary structural factors that immortalized the historical injustices. In additional, in United States, Institutionalized racism is an association between socio economic and race.

The second level is Personally Mediated Racism. According to Jones (2000), personally mediated racism is “defined as prejudice and discrimination, where prejudice means differential assumptions about the abilities, motives, and intentions of others according to their race, and discrimination means differential actions toward others according to their race” (1212-1213). Personally Mediated Racism can be intentional as well as unintentional that including acts of commission as well as acts of omission. This racism manifest itself as lack of respect (as well as poor or no service, failure to communicate option), suspicion (as well as everyday avoidance, purse clutching, standing when there are empty seats on public transportation), devaluation (surprise at competence, stifling of aspirations), scapegoating.

Internalized racism is the last level of racism. Jones (2000) claims, "Internalized racism is defined as acceptance by members of the stigmatized races of negative messages about their own abilities and intrinsic worth" (1213). The characteristic of this racism is they are not trusting to other people who looks like them, but they also not trust their self. This racism manifests as an embracing of "whiteness" (such as use a hair straightener, bleaching cream, stratification by skin tone within communities of color, and "the white man's ice is colder" syndrome), self-devaluation (racial slurs as nicknames, rejection of ancestral culture and fratricide), resignation, helplessness, and hopelessness (as well as dropping out of school, failing to vote, and engaging in risky health practices).

Overall, in this paper the authors will discussed about the levels of racism that experienced by the main character of "Jim" Short Film and the negative impact of the racism using a theory levels of Racism by Camara Phyllis Jones.

As the literature review that helped to arrange this paper as follows, the first research is from Yusrina Rahmatillah, Singgih Daru Kuncara, Nasrullah, English Literature Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences in 2020. It discussed about *The Reflection of Racism toward African American in Selma Movie*.

The conclusion of this paper is known that there are three level of racism that appeared in the movie. The institutionalized racism, personally mediated racism gave a positive impact to African American people, meanwhile the internalized gave a negative impact.

The second research comes from James Madula, Singgih Daru Kuncara, Chris Asanti, English Department, Faculty of Cultural Studies Mulawarman University in 2017. It discussed about *The Rebellion Against Racism and Discrimination in The Movies Rise of The Planet of The Apes and Dawn of The Planet of The Apes*.

The authors found out that there are few racism and discrimination treatment toward the main character of the movie. The racism treatments that got by Apes is categorized as individual-interpersonal racism and systemic institution racism, that's also the causes that makes Apes rebel to Humans.

#### **4. Findings and Discussion**

##### **1. Level of Racism**

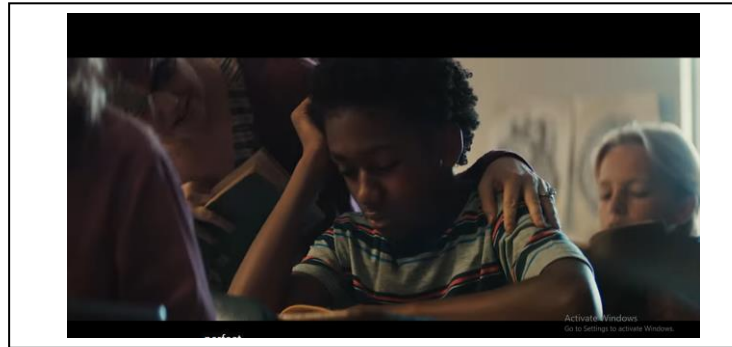
###### **1.1 Institutionalized Racism**

In *Jim* short film, the authors found a few scene and dialog that shown a racism. Institutionalized racism's characteristic is a condition where contains a dissimilarity in an opportunity, goods, service. For the Institutionalized racism can be seen in the scene where Charles doesn't get a fair opportunity as the other students to read *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* book. It can be seen from a few dialog as follows:

a. Teacher: "Sarah perfect, Charles continue."

Charles: "**Miss Watson's big N, named Jim.**"

Teacher: “Thank you.” (02:23 – 02:30 / *Jim*)



**Fig. 1** Charles doesn't get a fair opportunity as the other students

b. Joseph: “Jim was monstrous proud about it and he got so he wouldn't hardly notice”

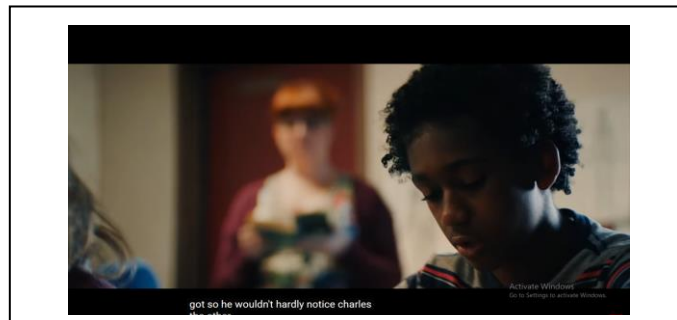
Teacher: “Charles”

Charles: “**the other N**”

Teacher: “Continue, Charles”

Charles: “**N**”

Teacher: “Stop” (03:06 – 03:17 / *Jim*)



**Fig. 2** Charles doesn't get a fair opportunity as the other students

In the scene that contains the dialog above, all of the students are take turns to read the book. It can be seen that Charles only get the opportunity to read the book when there's a sentence that has the N-word, after the sentence that contains a N-word ended, the teacher quickly changes over to the other students. Charles never gets a chance to read the sentences as long as the other students. On the b dialog, Charles only gets a chance to read the N-word without reading or finishing the rest sentences. This kind of treatment not only happen once or twice, but it is frequently happened, it can be seen from Charles's gesture and expression that looks like lazy when the teacher said that they will read *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* book. They start to read from the chapter two since they have finished read the chapter one and all of the N-word in chapter one was read by Charles, based on the review of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* book, there are around 200 N-word. Charles only have a chance to read all of the N-word and he will do it for around 200 times.

The other example of the Institutionalized racism is can be seen by the dialog between Charles and Jessie as follows:

c. Jessie: "What did you do?"

Charles: "I don't know" (01:38 – 01:40 / *Jim*)



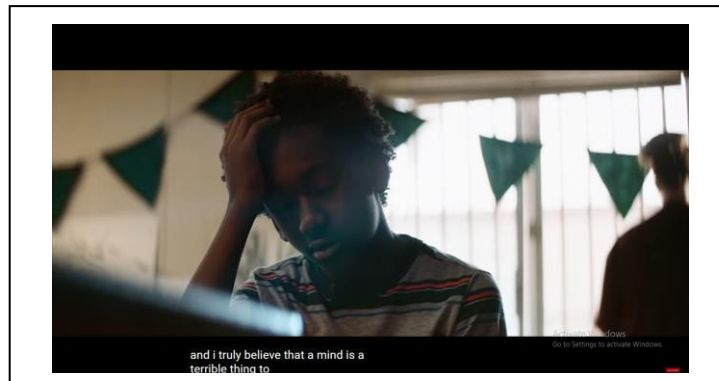
**Fig. 3** Charles doesn't get a fair opportunity as the other students

In the beginning of the short film, where the teacher and Charles have a talk in the class just by two of them during the break time and it looks like it is not the first time of both of them talk about the same topic since Charles memorize all of the words that coming out from his teacher's mouth. He even can imitate the words. So, it seems like Charles doesn't get an opportunity to enjoy his break time since it frequently happened. It strengthened by Jessie's expression where it is showing that this incident is not the first time happened and Charles's expression also showing that he's tired of getting that treatment. As the explanation of internalized racism above, there's an inequality of opportunity that happened to Charles as an African-American people or the only black people in the class.

### 1.2 Personally Mediated Racism

Personally mediated racism refers to lack of respect such as failure to communicate options. In *Jim* short film, there are many scenes where it showed the failure to communicate options between the teacher and Charles.

Teacher: I want your mother- I want your mama to be proud of you and **I'm going to do whatever it takes to mold you into a leader because the top school in America would benefit from having people like you** and I truly believe that a mind is terrible thing to waste. (0:56 – 01:15 / *Jim*)



**Fig. 4** Failure to communicate options between the teacher and Charles

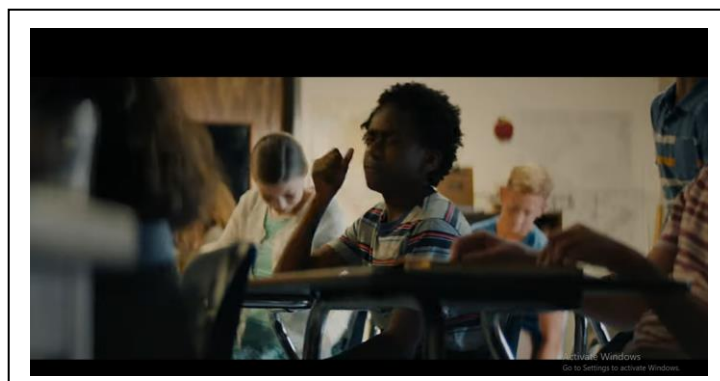
From the dialog above, it is analyzed as a personally mediated racism since the teacher wants to communicate options to make Charles as a leader, but it seems like Charles doesn't have an interest to be a leader. It is also not the first time the teacher said that, it can be seen from Charles that memorize the word that came from the teacher's mouth. The teacher frequently said that in order to persuade Charles to be a leader, but it failed. From the explanation above, this kind of treatment is shown as a Personally mediated racism since there's a failure to communicate options treatment.

### 1.3 Internalized Racism

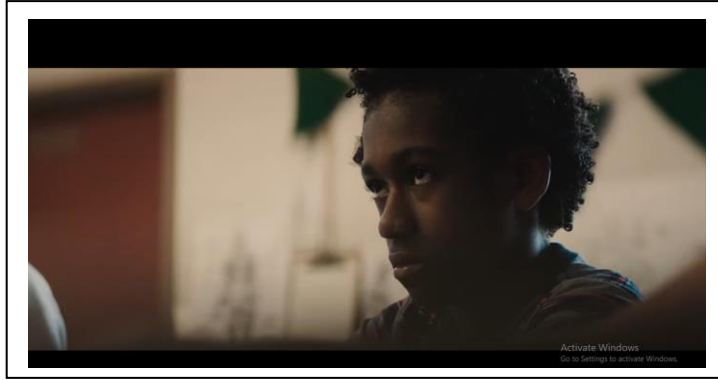
Internalized racism manifest as an enfolding of helplessness or hopelessness. Charles showed too many sign or expression of helplessness or hopelessness in this short film and he frequently sighing when the teacher talked to him or when he got a turn to read the book. There is a few dialog in the short film that showed Charles's helplessness:

a. Teacher: "Let's all take out our books"

Charles: "F\*\*\*\*" (01:44 – 01:55 / *Jim*)



**Fig. 5** Charles showed an expression of helplessness or hopelessness



**Fig. 6** Charles showed an expression of helplessness or hopelessness

In the dialog above, the teacher gives an order to the students to take out all of their *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* book, at the moment of this happened, it showed Charles's expression that looked hopelessness, he even cursing while all of the people in the class take out the book. The cameramen also make a close shoot to Charles's expression where he stares at his teacher with the desperate looks.

b. Principal Finn: "Everyone, this is Principal Finn, Janitor Jim please report to the multi-purpose room to begin cleaning"

\*scene Janitor Jim begin cleaning\*

Teacher: "Charles, finish us out."

Charles: "**Actually, nah, I'm not gonna read this.**"

Teacher: "What? Okay, well, thank you Charles." (05:02 – 05:23 / *Jim*)



**Fig. 7** Charles showed an expression of helplessness or hopelessness

On the dialog above, in the scene after the announcement by Principal Finn and Janitor Jim begin to clean, Charles gets up from his sit and take a closer step to Janitor Jim while looking at him and he remember the words that came out from his teacher when she said, "despite your situation, still come to the school every day with a smile on your face" and the scene filled by the scene where Charles took a group photo with all of his classmate and teacher, Charles take a glance at all of his classmate that was smiling to the camera and Charles is the only one who doesn't smile in the photo, his face look desperate. Once, he saw a Janitor Jim, he greets him with a smile and Janitor Jim smile back at him. After that, the teacher asked Charles to finish the rest but he refuses.



Janitor Jim reminds him of Jim in the *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* book where the main character of that book named Jim and a black people, Janitor Jim working hard yet he still manages to smiles at him.

It can be concluded that this internalized racism treatment happened many time through Charles's expression of frequently sighing, take a deep breath, and the dialog above where Charles refuses to read the rest sentence is the peak or the climax where he couldn't hold it anymore. After Charles refused to read the rest sentences, the teacher also doesn't have any option and decided to end the reading activity because Charles is the only Black Americans while the rest students is white and they couldn't read N-word. The dialog that came out from Charles is the expression of hopelessness and helplessness since he just gets a turn to read every sentence that containing N-word.

## 2. Negative Impact of Racism

Racism can give many impact to the victim, it can be a positive impact or negative impact depends on the action of the racism, but the positive impact is rarely happened. In most cases, a racism gives a negative impact towards the victim, same as on this film. Charles, the victim of the racism is got a negative impact especially for his emotional and mental health, some of them are such as racial trauma, post trauma stress disorder, and anxiety. The symptoms of the impact above are seen in Charles. Charles is a stolid Black American boy, in the whole of the film it can be seen that he's rarely talk to someone except someone talk to him first, even when his friend tried to talk to him, he just answered it short, he looks like avoiding to interacting with everyone in his class. He is also avoiding in taking opportunities and feeling disconnect from the other people. This kind of mental health problem normally happen to someone who suffering with a racism.

This kind of treatment also affected to his personality, he becomes a person who never smile and keeping a distance between his friend or his teacher. During the movie, we never see him smile at all even when the teacher praised him. He looks like tired with all of those treatment that he got but did not want to share what he feels. He only smile when he met Janitor Jim and it is because Janitor Jim also a black people same as him and probably they are experiencing a same thing.

The impact of the racial discrimination on this film is only the negative impact, there's no positive impact since it made Charles becomes a person with private personality and suffering with his mental health. The worst condition is Charles is the only one black people in his class and nobody can back up or got his back. A positive impact of racial discrimination is rarely happened, however in the most cases it will leave a traumatic, a pain for the victim. The negative impact can affect their personality and mental health. All of the impact needs to be taking care of their self or the closest relation since it can lead to a worst accident such as suicide.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the authors found a racism treatment in *Jim* short film and also observe the racism treatment based on the three level of racism theory. The three level of racism that found in the short film are the institutionalized racism, personally mediated racism, and internalized racism. The authors can conclude that Charles are experiencing all of those three levels of racism. The racism that experienced by Charles is can be known as an "implicit" racism since the racism is through the rare actions, in this short film is through a turns of the students to read a book where Charles only gets a chance to read when the sentences contains a N-word. Based on the supported literature that used in this paper, this racial discrimination that experienced by Charles gives a negative impact to him, as what the authors see on the film it can be seen that there is no positive impact, instead of positive impact, it gave a negative impact especially to Charles's mental health and personality. Charles becomes an introvert person where he does not like to talk to anyone in his class including his teacher, whenever someone try to talk to him, he replies it with a short sentence. He also like to seclude himself. This kind of actions are the proof of the negative impact that he got after experienced a racial discrimination.

As for the definition of racism by Camara Phyllis Jones where she stated that racism is also can be from the differential opportunity that got by the victim, same as that happened in the "Jim" Short Film. In this Short Film, Charles does not experience a physical racism, but he is experiencing an "implicit" verbal racism and also got a racial discrimination through the differential opportunity, goods, and service which categorized as the "Institutionalized Racism". He experienced a lack of respect such as failure to communicate options that indicated as the "Personally Mediated Racism". Charles also frequently showed the expression of helplessness and hopelessness that counted as the "Internalized Racism".

From the studies above, the authors found that the number of racial discrimination action to the Black American Child is still high. It is commonly known that America has a few social movements that against a racism, racial discrimination, and racial inequity, such as "Black Live Matter". Unfortunately, this movement is can be said that was not success since the racial discrimination is still frequently happened in the American.

However, a racial discrimination will make the victim got a trauma. From the observation above, it concluded that Charles has a symptom of racial trauma, post trauma stress disorder, and anxiety. A few studied showed that a negative mental health condition above are frequently linked to a racial discrimination. A racial discrimination declared that have a crucial role in post trauma stress disorder. This negative mental health condition is need to be handled by the professional but as we can see, it seems that people around Charles especially the teacher are not aware and know that Charles experienced a few negative health condition.

It is concluded that Charles are suffering by the racial discrimination that he got. An "implicit" racial discrimination that got by Charles made a negative impact which can affected to his current condition or in the future. However, racial discrimination should be stopped in any condition, a Black American child have their right to get treated equally as

the other white students. In order to achieve it, all of the elements in America should work together, from the government and citizen.

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