

The representation of racism in *Till* (2022) Film by Chinonye Chukwu

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ABSTRAK

Salah satu permasalahan sosial yang sering muncul adalah rasisme. Rasisme adalah ketidakadilan terhadap ras lain. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini membahas tentang representasi rasisme dalam film *Till* (2022) karya Chinonye Chukwu. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan tingkat rasisme menggunakan teori Jones dan dampak emosional rasisme menggunakan teori Rosenblat dalam film *Till* yang dialami Mamie Till sebagai tokoh utama. Peneliti juga menggunakan metode kualitatif, pendekatan sosiologi, dan analisis data Mikos. Dalam penelitian tersebut, peneliti menemukan bahwa Mamie Till mengalami tiga tingkat rasisme. Rasisme terlembaga pertama yang dialami Mamie adalah perbedaan akses terhadap layanan dan peluang. Kedua, rasisme yang dimediasi secara pribadi muncul sebagai kurangnya rasa hormat, dehumanisasi, diskriminasi, prasangka, kambing hitam, dan tindakan kelalaian. Ketiga, rasisme yang terinternalisasi dalam diri Mamie adalah sikap pasrah. Rasisme yang dialami Mamie membuatnya merasakan dampak emosional dari rasisme. Yang pertama adalah kesedihan, berupa rasa sakit emosional, mempengaruhi fungsi individu, dan kesedihan. Berikutnya adalah kemarahan, berupa kemarahan yang hebat. Penghinaan yang terakhir, berupa direndahkan dan didiskreditkan

Kata kunci: Rasisme, karakter, dampak emosional rasisme, tingkat rasisme

ABSTRACT

Racism is a prevalent social issue that frequently manifests in various forms of injustice directed towards different racial groups. This research discusses the representation of racism in the film *Till* (2022), directed by Chinonye Chukwu. This research aims to describe the levels of racism as framed by Jones' theory, as well as to explore the emotional impacts of racism as articulated by Rosenblat's theory, particularly as experienced by Mamie Till, the film's central character. Utilizing a qualitative approach alongside a sociological perspective and Mikos data analysis, the researchers discovered that Mamie Till faced three different tiers of racism throughout the study. The initial form of institutionalized racism encountered by Mamie was characterized by unequal access to services and opportunities. Subsequently, personally mediated racism manifested through a lack of respect, dehumanization, discrimination, prejudice, scapegoating, and acts of omission. Finally, Mamie's experience of internalized racism was reflected in her sense of resignation. The racism that Mamie encountered profoundly affected her emotionally. Initially, she experienced grief, characterized by emotional distress that impaired her ability to function and led to feelings of sadness. Following this, she felt an overwhelming sense of rage, manifesting as intense anger. Finally, she endured humiliation, which left her feeling demeaned and discredited.

Keywords: Racism, character, the emotional impact of racism, the level of racism

A. INTRODUCTION

In the United States, racism is a social issue that often occurs. The presence of racial inequalities, coupled with negative stereotypes and derogatory labels that target specific racial

groups, fosters an atmosphere of suspicion and discomfort. As a result, such an environment may compel individuals to perpetrate acts of racism against marginalized racial groups. Furthermore, the disparate treatment imposed by society fosters racist behaviors, wherein the dominant group, typically represented by white individuals, receives preferential treatment compared to the minority group, often identified as black individuals. In their work, Neville and Pieterse (2009, pp 159-174) also highlight the detrimental effects of racial discrimination on the lives of Black Americans, emphasizing that "Racial discrimination manifests in people of colour being denied access to resources, opportunities and the power to define reality."

A significant number of authors engage with the topic of racism in their literary works. One prominent example is the film *Till*, directed by Chinonye Chukwu and released in 2022, which tells the poignant true story of Mamie Till's pursuit of justice for her son, Emmett Till, who was brutally lynched. This research aims to analyze the various levels of racism through the lens of Jones' theory, as well as the emotional consequences of racism as outlined by Rosenblat's theory, particularly as they pertain to Mamie's experiences in the film. The researchers hope that this paper will contribute to the broader understanding of racism in literary contexts and enhance public awareness of its impacts on victims, thereby promoting collaborative efforts to cultivate a more just and healthy society.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Race and Racism

Race or human classification is a term used to distinguish a group of people by their characteristics. According to Santos et al., race is a word with various meanings but generally describes a group of people who share morphological characteristics (122). People with the same morphological characteristics will form one racial group. Globally, differences between races often cause interracial problems such as racism. According to Giddens, the term "racist" refers to a person who holds the belief that some individuals are inherently superior or inferior based on their racial characteristics (493). This perspective leads to a hierarchical relationship between races, resulting in the dominance of one race over others. As a consequence, the dominant race tends to exhibit a patronizing demeanor towards those of different racial backgrounds.

2. Levels of Racism

The concept of racism in society can be categorized into three levels: institutional racism, personally mediated racism, and internalized racism. This framework was established by Jones (1212 – 1215).

a. Institutionalized Racism

The first level of racism is institutionalized racism. Jones (1212) points out that institutionalized racism is characterized by the unequal access to societal goods, services, and opportunities that varies by race. This type of racism is often seen as normative, may be supported by legal structures, and frequently manifests as a continuation of inherited disadvantages. According to the statement, this type of racism is fundamentally linked to systemic inequalities that affect the accessibility of needs, services, and opportunities based on race, resulting in preferential treatment for one racial group over another. In addition, Jones (1212) emphasizes that this issue is reflected in both material conditions and the distribution of

power. Material conditions involve access to quality education, reliable housing, fruitful employment, suitable healthcare services, and a clean living environment. Meanwhile, access to power is characterized by unequal opportunities to obtain information and to have one's voice heard.

b. Personally Mediated Racism

At this level of racism, individuals are directly confronting the phenomenon of racism itself. According to Jones, personally mediated racism is characterized by prejudice and discrimination (1212). This type of racism involves varying assumptions and behaviors directed at another person based on their racial identity. In other words, it is a negative attitude against others because of environmental influence and misconceptions. According to Jones (1213), such racism may be either intentional or unintentional, encompassing both acts of commission and acts of omission. It is expressed through various forms, including a lack of respect (evidenced by inadequate service or failure to present options), suspicion (manifested in behaviors such as heightened vigilance by shopkeepers, avoidance in daily interactions, crossing the street to avoid others, clutching purses, and choosing to stand in public transport when seats are available), devaluation (reflected in surprise at individuals' competence and the suppression of their aspirations), scapegoating (as seen in incidents like the Rosewood event, the Charles Stuart case, and the Susan Smith case), and dehumanization (illustrated by instances of police brutality, abusive sterilizations, and hate crimes).

c. Internalized Racism

This racism influences human's mindset towards racism. As articulated by Jones, racism can be understood as the acceptance by members of stigmatized racial groups of detrimental beliefs about their skills and intrinsic worth (1213). The previous statement delineates that internalized racism refers to an individual's conscious and subconscious acceptance of biases, stereotypes, and prejudices perpetuated by other racial groups. This phenomenon is evident in various forms, such as the adoption of Eurocentric beauty standards (e.g., the use of hair straighteners and skin-lightening products), the hierarchical categorization of skin tones within communities of color, and the belief that "the white man is colder." Additionally, it encompasses self-deprecation, as seen in the use of racial slurs as terms of endearment, the rejection of one's cultural heritage, and intra-community violence. Furthermore, it leads to feelings of resignation, helplessness, and despair, which may manifest in behaviors such as school dropout rates, low voter participation, and engagement in detrimental health practices. The extent of internalized racism can lead individuals to experience self-doubt and to accept negative stereotypes associated with their racial identity, fostering a belief in the superiority of white individuals. Such stereotypes can further perpetuate misconceptions among people of color, particularly affecting the perceptions of black individuals regarding their own community.

3. The Emotional Impacts of Racism

The influence of racism on society and individuals is profound. Experiencing racism firsthand or observing a loved one endure such discrimination can have significant emotional impacts for a person. This text is artfully packaged, providing detailed and nuanced illustrations of the emotional effect that racism takes on individuals and its repercussions within family dynamics (Rosenblatt 53). It aims to raise awareness about the adverse effects of racism on

emotional well-being. According to Rosenblatt, the emotional consequences distinctly outline how racism impacts both individuals and their families. Thus, the emotional fallout of racism includes experiences of rage, anger, and humiliation (53).

a. Grief

Racism inflicts considerable suffering on its victims, especially when it leads to the tragic loss of life. The sorrow endured by Black families in these situations is difficult for others to fully grasp. According to Rosenblatt, grief manifests as chronic sadness, sadness, feeling blue, feeling sad, heartache, emotional pain, hopelessness, and depression (53). Such grief can adversely impact individual relationships or functioning (54).

b. Rage

Rosenblatt defines rage as violent or intense anger, wrath, or fury (59). Anger is an inherent emotion experienced by all individuals. The rage expressed by victims of racism serves as a reaction to the discrimination they endure. This emotion can escalate significantly, leading to heightened feelings that may erupt unexpectedly and can persist for extended durations, potentially lasting a lifetime (59).

c. Humiliation

Humiliation can be considered an unpleasant act in the form of a disregard for the dignity of others. This act is often executed without regard for the emotional state of the victim, resulting in feelings of being belittled, chastised, diminished, degraded, discredited, dishonored, humbled, or shamed. (64). These feelings can make a person insecure and withdraw from the environment, affecting family relationships. Rosenblatt posits that when individuals transport their emotional struggles into the home environment, they may suffer from feelings of anguish, discouragement, and a lack of self-esteem, potentially impacting the dynamics and relationships within the family (64).

4. Character and Characterization

Characters are imbued with distinct moral, intellectual, and emotional attributes, derived from the implications of their dialogue and the unique manner in which they express themselves through both speech and action (Abrams 32). Based on this statement, characters play a role in attracting readers interested in the stories they present. The process of creating and developing character in a work of fiction is called characterization (Jones 84). Characterization is a tool of literature to explain or define a character in a story. There are two types of characterization: direct characterization (*telling*) and indirect characterization (*showing*):

a. Direct Characterization

Direct characterization, also known as explanatory characterization, is a method that places the narrator or main character as the judge to describe another character (Klarer 19). In other words, direct characterization is a method of the author to *tell* or explain the characters from the story to the reader, where the author has complete power over the depiction of these characters.

b. Indirect Characterization

The indirect or dramatic characterization is a method that *shows* characters in a story in various ways so that the readers have a place to determine or imagine the characters in the story. There are various ways to show indirect characterization: through action, speech, external appearance, and environment (Kenan 61).

1) **Action**

Action is one of the essential aspects in the development of characterization apart from the narrator's explanation and dialog between characters. According to Kenan (62), actions can be classified into two categories: one-time actions and habitual actions. One-time actions illustrate the dynamic nature of a character and frequently contribute to the narrative's climax. In contrast, habitual actions demonstrate a consistent or unaltered facet of the character, often resulting in a humorous or ironic effect.

2) **Speech**

Speech helps the character express themselves and helps the reader judge and interprets the characters. The dialogue of a character, as well as their internal monologue, can reveal specific traits through both the substance of their speech and the manner in which it is expressed (Kenan 64).

3) **External appearance**

The external appearance of a character helps readers recognize or visualize a character by explaining characteristics through physical appearances, such as height, eyes, skin, hair color, body posture, and character style. Kenan explained that the narrator describes external appearances by associating them with character traits or feelings (67).

4) **Environment**

The character's environment plays a significant role in shaping their portrayal. This environment encompasses both intimate aspects, such as the character's room, family dynamics, social class, and friendships, as well as broader contexts, including the neighborhoods and cities in which they reside (Kenan 67).

C. RESEARCH METHOD

1. Research Design

This research used qualitative research. Qualitative research refers to the “what, how, when, where, and why of a thing-its essence and ambiance” (Lune and Berg 12). This method is the best for examining many questions about what and how human experience can affect their lives. What humans face in their lives will help them be more mature in addressing a problem. This research also uses a sociological approach to help this thesis. The field of sociology is fundamentally concerned with the exploration and observation of human societies, particularly in relation to social order, conflict, change, power structures, inequality, and the mechanisms of social reproduction (Jarc and Vičič 78). This framework prioritizes the analysis of social conditions while considering individuals as the focal point of inquiry.

2. Data and Data Source

In this research, the researchers used the film *Till* (2022), directed by Chinonye Chukwu, as the data source. The researchers watched this film on Amazon Prime Video. The data of this

research were dialog and action, which show the level of racism and the emotional impact experienced by the main character in *Till* film (2022).

3. Research Instrument

A research instrument is designed to identify and collect data relevant to the researchers' areas of interests. According to Roberts and Stone, this instrument functions as a vital tool for data collection, acting as a means to acquire information regarding specific concepts or attributes of interest (70). Essentially, the purpose of the research instrument is to assist researchers in the systematic collection of data during their investigations.

4. Data Collection

For data collection, the researchers used several phases. The first phase involved watching the film to comprehend its plot and emotional context. Subsequently, they identified and recorded the dialogue, narration, and actions that aligned with their research question, making use of a notebook for documentation. Additionally, they noted the timestamps to streamline the data retrieval process. After completing these steps, the researchers gathered the data and proceeded to analyze the information they had collected.

5. Data Analysis

Utilizing data analysis methods proposed by Mikos, the researchers opted to implement three of the fourteen steps (420) due to their relevance to the current research context.

1. The researchers engaged in the interpretation and contextualization of the data under examination. This step involved a thorough analysis of the data, guided by relevant theoretical frameworks.
2. During this stage of the evaluation I, the researchers undertook a review of the analysis.
3. In evaluation II, the results are analyzed, allowing the researchers to formulate conclusions derived from the findings.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Level of Racism

Jones identified three categories of racism that have manifested within society: institutionalized racism, personally mediated racism, and internalized racism. The findings of this research indicate that Mamie faced experiences of institutionalized racism, personally mediated racism, and internalized racism.

a. Institutionalized racism

The concept of institutionalized racism encompasses a structured form of racial discrimination that influences the availability of needs, services, and opportunities within institutional settings (Jones 1212). In essence, institutions adopt distinct policies that result in unequal treatment of various racial groups. This study highlights two significant aspects of institutionalized racism: differential access and differential opportunities.

1) Differential Access

In 1950, Mississippi was recognized as a southern state within the United States that exhibited a notably high prevalence of racism, especially when compared to northern states. Throughout the late 19th and into the 20th century, the justice system in Mississippi employed racial and gender-based discriminatory ideologies that systematically oppressed black individuals. This environment fostered a climate in which lynching of African Americans was tragically common. The first indication of institutionalized racism is exemplified by Mamie and her father's visit to Mississippi for the trial of her son's brutal lynching. Prior to entering the courtroom, they were required to undergo a body check, as illustrated in the data shown in Figure 1 below.

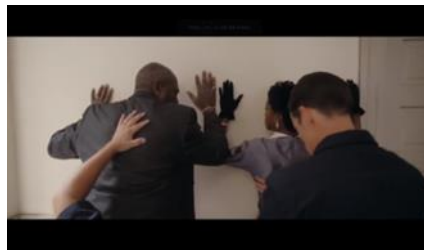


Fig. 1 Mamie and her father underwent an examination conducted by two police officers prior to entering the trial (Till / 01:18:01)

Mamie : How dare you!
John Carthan : It's alright Mamie. (Till / 01:17:57 – 01:18:05)

Indirect characterization revealed the presence of institutionalized racism within the data, as shown in the figure above. Here, Black individuals, such as Mamie and her father, were compelled to wait in line for a body examination performed by two white police officers before gaining access to the courtroom. Conversely, white individuals were allowed to enter the courtroom directly, highlighting a clear disparity in treatment. This scenario served as evidence of entrenched racism, illustrating the disparate access to public services faced by Black individuals. Mamie and her father stood as representatives of the victims' families in the courtroom, seeking justice. In stark contrast, most white individuals present were simply onlookers and were permitted entry without any form of inspection.

2) Differential Opportunities

The subsequent information regarding institutionalized racism reflects Mamie's engagement with Mr. Mooty and the NAACP in their pursuit of justice for African Americans in the United States. Following the trial, Mamie continued her life journey. Addressing the African American community in Harlem, New York, she articulates her opposition to the inequitable practices of the Mississippi criminal justice system concerning her son's death, as illustrated in the dialogue presented in data below.

Mamie : **My son’s brutalized body meant nothing to Mississippi’s criminal justice system.** And while they blamed the victim as usual, the federal government stood idly by. (01:56:00 – 01:56:11 / *Till*)

Mamie expressed her outrage regarding the racism she experienced and the inequity of the Mississippi court's decision in her son's case. Even in the face of clear evidence of guilt, the defendant was ultimately released without consequence. Mamie's statement, "My son’s brutalized body meant nothing to Mississippi’s criminal justice system," illustrated the indifference of the judicial system towards black victims. This dialogue employed indirect characterization to highlight the internalized racism that results in disparate treatment and limited opportunities for African Americans within the legal institutions of Mississippi. The trial focused solely on Carolyn's inaccurate testimony, which alleged that Emmett had sexually assaulted her. However, it failed to take into account the involvement of Bryant and Milam in the kidnapping and murder, despite the fact that the proceedings were intended to address the abduction and horrific lynching of Emmett.

b. Personally Mediated Racism

The film portrays racism primarily as personally mediated racism, which is characterized by both prejudice and discrimination (Jones 1212). This form of racism encompasses both acts of commission and acts of omission. Furthermore, it is expressed through various manifestations, including a lack of respect, devaluation, suspicion, scapegoating, and dehumanization (Jones 1213). The researcher identified five distinct forms of personally mediated racism: lack of respect, discrimination, prejudice, scapegoating, and acts of omission.

1) Lack of Respect

In the initial scenes of the film, Mamie and her son Emmett are seen in a shopping area. Mamie, who is holding a box of shoes she plans to purchase, walks over to her son, who is looking at a wallet on display. At this point, a white security guard confronts Mamie, recommending that she view the shoes in the basement, as shown in the subsequent dialogue.

Security guard: Are you looking for something?

Mamie : No. I’m just doing little shopping.

Security : **We also have shoes in basement.**

Mamie : Do the other customers know about that too? (*Till* / 00:02:01–00:02:11).

The data presented indicated the presence of personally mediated racism, as evidenced by the dismissive remark from security: “We also have shoes in the basement.” Through the use of indirect characterization via dialogue, it became evident that the security's lack of respect towards Mamie contributed to her discomfort, suggesting a demeaning attitude. Although Mamie intended to purchase shoes from the store, she was uniquely instructed by security to search for shoes in the basement, a directive not given to other patrons. This disparity is particularly notable given that the

majority of the other customers were white, while Mamie and her son were the only black individuals present.

2) Discrimination

The data that depicts personally mediated racism is found in the moment when Mamie meets Gene to communicate her plans to travel to Mississippi without his company. Mamie explains her acceptance of the racism she faces from white people, which leads her to make this journey alone, as shown in the dialogue detailed below.

Mamie: **This is what they are writing about me down there! They're making me out to be some kind of jezebel.** Two reporters called me to ask about my ex-husbands and about you. Mr. Huff was right. **I'm on trial like people who killed Bo.** Jury will be watching me while and reading these stories when they decided the men who murder my son go free. I had to protect my image. If it can help get justice for Bo (*Till / 01:06:29 – 01:07:55*)

The news of Emmett's death circulates widely, prompting numerous journalists to interview Mamie in their quest for insights into her life. Mamie's experience of racism is conveyed through indirect characterization, particularly evident in her statements: **"This is what they are writing about me down there! They're making me out to be some kind of jezebel"** and **"I'm on trial like people who killed Bo."** These statements reflected the discrimination she encounters from white individuals who are probing into her life as it pertains to her son's trial. Such a damaging portrayal of Mamie was likely to adversely affect the jury's decision-making process regarding her son's case.

3) Prejudice

Prejudice is notably represented in the second trial, where Sheriff Strider testified as a witness. Strider, a white man, is the one who located the body of a boy, thought to be Emmett, in the Tallahatchie River. The legal counsel for Bryant and Milam directs a series of questions pertaining to the finding of the boy's body, which Emmett seems to question, as depicted in the following dialogue data:

Sheriff Strider: You want my honest opinion? **I think the boy's mommy and NAACP plotted this whole thing.**

Smith : Thank you Sheriff Strider. (*Till / 01:41:45 – 01:41:52*)

The support provided by the NAACP for Mamie in her son's case was met with disapproval from white people. Sheriff Strider expressed the belief that Mamie and the NAACP were attempting to exploit the circumstances surrounding Emmett Till's death, as evidenced by his statement: "I think the boy's mom and the NAACP plotted this whole thing." This case is connected to an earlier incident involving the murder of two black individuals in Mississippi. The murder of Emmett Till intensified the existing racial tensions between black and white residents in the area. This escalation prompted figures like Sheriff Strider to suggest that Mamie and the NAACP had conspired to elevate the significance of Emmett's case by leveraging media coverage for profit. As a

result, the indirect characterization evident in this narrative reveals instances of personally mediated racism, particularly in the form of prejudice against Mamie.

4) Scapegoating

During the trial, the judge summons Carolyn, identified as a key figure in the planning of Emmett's kidnapping but not formally accused, to testify. In her testimony, the judge also provides demonstrations, which contributed to a heightened tension in the courtroom. This is illustrated in the data shown in Figure 2 and the dialogue that follows.



Fig. 2 Mamie looked away and closed her eyes when Carolyn discredited her son (Till / 01:53:20)

Carlton : **He grabbed hand, pinning it behind your back?**
Carolyn : **Yes**
Carlton : **He's right hand on your hip?**
Carolyn : **Here**
Carlton : What did he say?
Carolyn : **He said "You needn't be afraid of me I've been with white women before. (Till / 1.53.06 – 00.53-.39)**

The presented data illustrated the concept of personally mediated racism, specifically scapegoating. Through the use of indirect characterization, particularly in her actions and dialogue, Carolyn fabricated her testimony. This was evidenced by the statement depicted in the figure above: "He said 'You needn't be afraid of me. I've been with white women before.'" Carolyn's deceit left the courtroom in disbelief. Mamie, who observed Carolyn's act of scapegoating her son, was rendered unable to confront the situation.

5) The Act of Omission

The other data of personally mediated racism is highlighted when Mamie tunes into the trial's verdict via the car radio while leaving Mississippi. The all-white jury unanimously concludes that Bryant and Milam are not guilty. As a result, they are exonerated from any legal repercussions, as depicted in the dialogue found in data below:

Radio Host: After deliberating for about an hour, **the jury has just come back with the verdict of not guilty. Both the defendant Milam and Bryant are free men.**

They celebrate their victory laughing and smiling with their wife on the side, very happy.

(*Till / 01:54:04 – 01:54:22*)

The outcomes of the trial were inconsequential, as the jury's verdict failed to take into account the evidence and testimonies put forth by Mamie's team. Mamie's side presented both evidence and witnesses who observed the defendant's abduction of Emmett. In addition, there was substantiated evidence confirming that the remains retrieved from the river were those of her child. However, the jury, which was primarily comprised of white members, acquitted both defendants. The speech utilized in the narrative serves as a means of indirect characterization, revealing that the racism directed towards Mamie was characterized by an act of omission. The declaration that "The jury has just delivered a verdict of not guilty, thereby granting freedom to defendants Milam and Bryant" reflects the jury's reliance on the evidence and witness accounts, which culminated in the determination that the defendants were not guilty. Consequently, neither defendant received a murder conviction. It is noteworthy that both Bryan and Milam were also not found guilty of kidnapping, despite their confession to the abduction of Emmett at the time of their arrest and the corroborating testimony from a preacher.

c. Internalized Racism

The final manifestation of racism is internalized racism, which can be defined as the acceptance by individuals of their racial group's negative societal perceptions regarding their capabilities and inherent worth. This phenomenon often results in the adoption of characteristics associated with whiteness, alongside feelings of self-deprecation, resignation, and a sense of powerlessness and despair (Jones 1213). The researchers identify instances of internalized racism primarily expressed through resignation.

1) Resignation

The findings reveal that internalized racism is evident after Carolyn's false testimony. In light of this, Mamie opts to depart from the trial, followed by her father and Medgar. She makes this choice before the verdict is delivered, as depicted in the following data.

Mamie : I'm ready to go.
Medgar : Should I get you when they read the verdict?
Mamie : No. I'm ready to leave Mississippi now.
John Carthan : But what about the verdict
Mamie : **I know what the verdict is.** . (*Till / 01:53:48 – 01:54:00*)

The decision made by Mamie was largely shaped by Carolyn's inaccurate testimony, which claimed that Emmett had committed sexual assault against her. However, having raised her son for 14 years, Mamie possessed a deep understanding of his character. Consequently, she was confident that Carolyn's testimony would significantly impact the trial's verdict. The indirect characterization evident in Mamie's statement, "I know what the verdict is," reflects a sense of resignation. This dialogue

illustrated Mamie's comprehension of the situation and her acceptance of the likely outcome of the trial, indicating that her presence there would soon be unnecessary.

2) The Emotional Impact of Racism

Beyond examining the prevalence of racism, the researchers also investigate the emotional impacts of racism as depicted in *Till* film. They focus on the emotional turmoil faced by the character Mamie Till. The film poignantly illustrates the emotional consequences of racism, highlighting its profound impact on individuals and families. The emotional responses elicited in this narrative include sorrow, anger, and a sense of shame.

• Grief

Emotions are an inherent aspect of the human experience, with grief being a prominent example that emerges in response to loss or painful events. This complex emotion is characterized by chronic sadness, feelings of despondency, heartache, emotional distress, hopelessness, and depression (Rosenblatt 53). The impacts of grief can significantly affect interpersonal relationships and an individual's ability to function effectively (Rosenblatt 54). The researchers delineate three distinct manifestations of grief: emotional pain, its impact on personal functioning, and the sensation of sadness.

a) Emotional Pain

The depiction of emotional pain is evident in the moment when Mamie seeks assistance from Mr. Mooty, while Mr. Huff collaborates with individuals in Mississippi to locate Emmett. During this scene, family members, neighbors, and friends gather at Mamie's residence to offer their support following the abduction. Nevertheless, one of Mamie's acquaintances, Ollie, delivers unfortunate news.



Fig. 3 Mamie faints after hearing her son's death (Till / 00:39:48)

Ollie: A reporter called me. He didn't wanna tell you himself. Bo's body was found in river. Preacher just started identified him to the sheriff. He recognizes the ring Bo's wears. I'm so sorry Mamie, he's, he's death. (*Till* / 00:38:51 – 00:39:25)

After multiple attempts to search for her son, Mamie was confronted with heartbreaking news. Overwhelmed by shock, she could only absorb the information in silence. Her child had been found dead in deplorable conditions. The direct racism inflicted by white individuals on their children left a significant mark on Mamie, illustrating the deep-seated effects of such prejudice. Indirect characterization reveals Mamie's sorrow through her behavioral responses. The emotional anguish she faced

was so profound that it caused her to lose consciousness. Emmett's death cast a long shadow of grief over Mamie's life.

b) Affects the Individual Functioning

The data presented reveals another instance of grief as Mamie sat in the living room with Gene, attentively watching the television report on Emmett's death. The announcement of Emmett's death permeated various media outlets, including newspapers, radio, and television, ultimately capturing widespread attention. Following the revelation of her son's death, Mamie lapsed into silence, a reflection of the profound effect this news had on her, as demonstrated in the following data.

Gene: Mamie you need to eat something. (*Till / 00:41:21 – 00:41:22*)

In that scene, Mamie sat on the couch and listened to her son's news. In this scene, indirect characterization was conveyed through Gene's words, "Mamie, you need to eat something." This dialogue illustrated Mamie's emotional state, as her grief has manifested in a loss of appetite. The sorrow she experienced from the death of her child has taken a toll on her health. The impact of losing someone to racism can leave the bereaved in a state of profound grief, which, if left unaddressed, can have detrimental effects on their overall well-being.

c) Sadness

Subsequently, Emmett's body is transported to the funeral home, A. A. Rayner & Sons. In this moment, Mamie, Gene, and Rayner, the funeral director, are confronted with her son's body, which is draped in a white sheet. The state of the corpse, having been exposed for several days, emits a foul odor. Despite the circumstances, Mamie strives to maintain her composure as she requests the unveiling of the sheet. The condition of her son, depicted in the following figure, astonished all three of them.



Fig. 4 Mamie wept at the sight of Emmett's lifeless body, overwhelmed with grief upon seeing her son for the first time since her journey to Mississippi (Till / 00:54:25)

Mr. Rayner : Mamie I need to prepare you...

Mamie : Remove the sheet

Oh my god!

Everyone leave us! (*Till / 00:51:17 – 00:51:53*)

The experience of personally mediated racism prompted Mamie to express her sorrow through two distinct expressions: physical action and verbal communication.

Her physical response included crying and taking deep breaths, with her lips quivering in an effort to suppress her tears upon observing the dire circumstances of the children, as illustrated in the preceding figure. Her verbal expression manifested in her exclamation, “Oh my god!” at the moment the cloth was first unveiled. Following the departure of Gene and Mr. Rayner, Mamie, still struggling to contain her tears, endeavored to regain her composure. She then fully revealed the cloth to view Emmett’s entire body. These actions and utterances poignantly conveyed the depth of Mamie’s grief, as the sight of her child in such a tragic state profoundly affected her as a mother.

- **Rage**

Rage represents a prominent emotional response to racism, defined as a state of intense or violent anger, wrath, or fury (Rosenblatt 59). It is a common human reaction to perceive unfairness, and individuals who experience racist actions often find themselves engulfed in anger. The study revealed that this rage often takes the form of severe emotional turmoil.

- a) **Intense Anger**

The data indicates that Mamie exhibits feelings of anger during the initial trial concerning Emmett’s death. In this context, Mamie, along with her father and other Black individuals involved in the court proceedings, encounters institutionalized racism manifested through the unequal treatment administered by two police officers assigned to oversee the trial. This is illustrated in the following dialogue data.

Mamie : **How dare you!**
John Carthan : It’s alright Mamie. (*Till / 01:17:57 – 01:18:05*)

Body checks were conducted solely on black individuals, while their white counterparts were allowed to enter the courtroom without any form of examination, even though they were also participants in the trial. This inequitable treatment provoked a visceral reaction of anger in her. Mamie’s dialogue serves as a means of indirect characterization, revealing the emotional toll of personally experienced racism, as evidenced by her vehement declaration, “How dare you!” This utterance highlighted her profound discomfort and fury in response to the institutionalized racism she faced. The information provided illustrated that black individuals are subjected to disparate access and treatment within judicial institutions.

- **Humiliation**

Humiliation represents the last emotional impact, often regarded as an adverse behavior that shows a lack of respect for the dignity of others. This can include actions such as demanding, reprimanding, belittling, degrading, discrediting, dishonoring, or instilling feelings of shame and humility (Rosenblatt 64). The researcher identified two primary types of humiliation: that which is experienced as being demeaned and that which is experienced as being discredited.

- a) **Demeaned**

The experience of being demeaned is captured in the moment when Mamie and her son Emmett are shown in a shopping area. Mamie approaches her son, who is

browsing a wallet on display while holding a box of shoes she plans to purchase. Suddenly, a white security guard confronts Mamie, demonstrating an instance of personal racism directed at her.

Security : We also have shoes in basement.
Mamie : **Do the other customers know about that too?**
(*Till / 00:02:08–00:02:11*).

Indirect characteristics served as a means for Mamie to express her emotions following the humiliation inflicted by security personnel. Her inquiry, “Do the other customers know about that too?” reveals her feelings of being belittled by the security's treatment. This lack of respect was highlighted when the guard recommended that she buy shoes from the basement rather than from the mall itself. Thus, the personally mediated racism demonstrated by the security guard played a crucial role in her experience of humiliation.

b) Discredited

The feeling of being discredited envelops Mamie as she witnesses Carolyn's testimony about the incident at Money's shop. Carolyn's statements are not only untruthful but are also presented with a theatrical display aimed at influencing the court's perception. The personal racism that Carolyn exhibited towards Mamie left her at a loss for words, as she found it unbearable to witness the dishonor cast upon her late son by Carolyn's assertions.

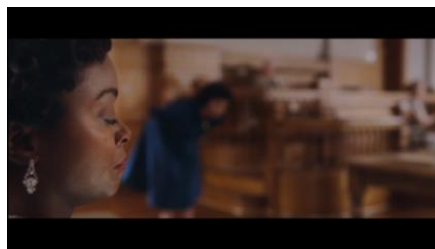


Fig. 5 Mamie averted her gaze by closing her eyes as Carolyn spoke unfavorably about her son (Till / 01:53:20)

Carlton : He grabbed hand, pinning it behind your back?
Carolyn : Yes
Carlton : He's right hand on your hip?
Carolyn : Here
Carlton : What did he say?
Carolyn : He said “you needn't be afraid of me I've been with white women before.”
(*Till / 01.53.17–01.53.40*)

The impact of Carolyn's testimony at the trial was substantial, casting a shadow over Emmett's reputation. By scapegoating Mamie's son, she effectively called into question Mamie's parenting, implying that it was responsible for Emmett's alleged misdeeds. As a result, Mamie's emotional distress was manifested through her behavior. In the depicted image, Mamie chose silence, turning her head away and

shutting her eyes as Carolyn disparaged her son, unable to withstand the weight of the testimony. This humiliation prompted her to leave the courtroom, followed by her father and Medgar, even though the trial's outcome had not yet been disclosed.

2. Discussion

This section presents the discussion which focuses on the level of racism and the emotional impact it has on Mamie Till, the central character in *Till* film. The initial category of racism identified is institutionalized racism. In their analysis, the researchers uncovered two forms of institutionalized racism within the film *Till*. The first manifestation was differential access through action, which allows the protagonist to convey the emotional impacts of racism, specifically rage, as articulated in Rosenblatt's theoretical framework. Here, rage is defined as a form of violent or extreme anger, wrath, or fury (Rosenblatt 59). The second focus was on the differential opportunities related to speech. Unlike prior research, Rahmatillah's study discovered that the institutionalized racism encountered by Black individuals was restricted to voting rights, as illustrated in the *Selma* film (32-36). This situation yields two primary effects: one beneficial, which involves the advocacy for equal rights (48), and one detrimental, represented by the growing disfavor within society (52-55). In her study, Farida applied Pincus's racial discrimination theory and discovered that institutionalized discrimination is represented in the novel entitled *Dear Martin* through three forms of segregation: in neighborhoods, employment, and legal systems (Farida 49-52). However, she noted that there is no portrayal of black individuals combating racial discrimination within the text.

The next level of racism examined is personally mediated racism. In their analysis of the film *Till*, the researchers identified this form of racism through five distinct expressions in speech and action: lack of respect, discrimination, prejudice, scapegoating, and acts of omission. In contrast to prior research, Rahmatillah's findings highlighted that personally mediated racism can also be seen in the form of dehumanization, as evidenced by instances of police brutality directed at Black protesters and hate crimes, as well as a lack of respect manifested through inadequate communication. In her analysis of the film *Selma*, two effects were identified: a positive effect associated with the fight for equal rights (49-52) and a negative effect related to violence and societal disapproval (52-59). In a previous study, Farida utilized Pincus' racial discrimination theory to investigate individual racism, which she defined as the presence of prejudice, stereotypes, and violence targeting black characters in the novel *Dear Martin* (38-48). Her research further revealed that individual racism reflects a struggle among black individuals against racial discrimination, manifesting in both withdrawal and confrontation (53-56).

The findings indicated that internalized racism was expressed through resignation in speech; however, this did not significantly affect Mamie's emotional experience of racism. Unlike the previous study, Rahmatillah's findings of the film *Selma* uncovered that internalized racism among black individuals manifested as disbelief, insecurity, feelings of inferiority relative to other racial groups, and a lack of confidence in their own community (43-47). Thus, this form of racism predominantly leads to adverse effects, particularly an inferiority complex (170). Furthermore, in the second previous study, which utilized Pincus's racial discrimination theory, Farida did not observe any instances of structural racism in the novel *Dear Martin*.

E. CONCLUSION

The portrayal of Mamie Till in Chinonye Chukwu's film illustrates her confrontation with three categories of racism: institutionalized, personally mediated, and internalized. Furthermore, Mamie faced emotional turmoil as a result of these experiences, characterized by sorrow, anger, and humiliation. The profound effects of racism prompted a significant transformation in her character, shifting her from a position of apathy to one of vigilance and advocacy for the civil rights of black individuals. It is hoped that the injustices faced by black individuals will inspire a broader societal awareness and a concerted effort to combat racism.

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Ilmu Budaya

Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, dan Budaya

e-ISSN 2549-7715 | Volume 9 | Nomor 1 | Januari 2025 | Halaman 31—48
Terakreditasi Sinta 4

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