Çankaya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences
2025, Vol. 19, no. 2, 516-525
https://doi.org/10.47777/cankujhss

ÇANKAYA UNIVERSITY JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Literary Studies | research note

Bodies as Commodities and Stolen Identities in Horror: A Comparative Analysis of *Never Whistle at Night* and *Get Out*

Korku Anlatılarında Bedenin Metalaşması ve Çalınan Kimlikler

Doina Ciochina 0009-0002-1409-2543
Université de Sherbrooke

ABSTRACT
This paper examines the commodification of Indigenous and Black bodies through two works: the short stories in the Indigenous horror anthology *Never Whistle at Night* (2023), and the film *Get Out* (2017). I aim to analyze two short stories from the anthology Never Whistle at Night that highlight the exploitation and objectification of Indigenous bodies: "Collections" by Amber Blaeser-Wardzala and "Navajos Don't Wear Elk Teeth" by Conley Lyons. Drawing parallels with the critically acclaimed horror movie Get Out, I will explore how the exploitation of Black bodies in the context of systemic racism and white supremacy resonates with the themes presented in *Never Whistle at Night*. While the experiences of Black and Indigenous communities are distinct, there are undeniable similarities in the ways they have been and continue to be marginalized, exploited, and dehumanized by dominant cultures. Academic spaces often overlook or ignore Indigenous scholars and minorities in general, because it is easier to critique existing knowledge and systems from a dominant and usually privileged position.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 19 Aug 2025
Accepted 14 Dec 2025

KEYWORDS
Speculative fiction, colonialism, horror, never whistle at night, Indigenous, power, control, survival, oppression, get out

The themes of theft, collection, and colonization have often been explored in horror storytelling, literature, and film. Several Indigenous scholars and intellectuals have argued that "literary tropes familiar in speculative fiction, such as contact with alien species, apocalyptic disasters or dystopian scenarios, can be easily related to the lived experiences of many Indigenous communities" (Eguíbar-Holgado 2022, p. 4). This is why speculative fiction is the literary genre that can give voice, better than any other genre, to a world outside of colonial influences, beyond the loss of homeland, resources, and the unethical treatment of the population (Whitehead 2020, p. 14). This genre allows authors to explore critical social issues and universal themes through imaginative and creative storytelling. For Indigenous people, as many intellectuals have noted, the speculative elements of the genre can serve as powerful metaphors for the lived experiences of Indigenous communities, providing a platform for marginalized voices to be heard and understood. Within Turtle Island Indigenous literatures, horror is never merely a genre of entertainment; it is a mode of historical truth-telling and cultural resurgence, highlighting the profound role that horror plays in Indigenous storytelling. Far from being a simple thrill mechanism, Indigenous horror literature

Doina Ciochina, PhD Candidate, Dept. of Comparative Literature, Université de Sherbrooke, Canada | doinaciochina1992@gmail.com; ORCID# 0009-0002-1409-2543; https://doi.org/10.47777/cankujhss

serves as a powerful medium for confronting historical traumas and asserting cultural identity. As noted in "Reclaiming Horror: Indigenous Voices Transform the Genre," Indigenous horror "invites readers and viewers alike to peer into shadows where the past and present converge" (creepycurrent.com). This convergence allows for the exploration of unsettling truths about colonial violence and its enduring impacts on Indigenous communities. The genre becomes a space where suppressed histories are brought to light, challenging dominant narratives and fostering a deeper understanding of Indigenous experiences. Moreover, Indigenous horror often reclaims and reinterprets traditional stories, transforming them into contemporary narratives that resonate with present-day issues. This process not only revitalizes cultural practices but also asserts Indigenous sovereignty over their own stories and histories. By engaging with horror, Indigenous authors and creators can disrupt colonial narratives and offer alternative perspectives that honour their cultural heritage. In essence, horror in Indigenous literature is a vital tool for cultural resurgence, enabling the articulation of historical truths and the reclamation of Indigenous identities. It is a genre that, rather than merely entertaining, educates and empowers. The history of Indigenous peoples is filled with countless instances of horror, trauma, and injustice that do not necessarily need supernatural elements to convey the profound and lasting impact they left on Indigenous communities. The lived experiences, historical events, and ongoing struggles faced by Indigenous peoples can be profoundly unsettling and horrifying in their own right, without the need for fictionalized horror elements. However, speculative fiction is often a form of escapism to escape trauma or process our fears in a safe environment. These genres enable writers to envision alternate worlds and possibilities, offering new perspectives and interpretations of their realities. When realism is defined by language loss, dysfunctional families, or dispossession, it overlooks important qualities such as resilience, strength, and diversity within Indigenous communities. Sometimes, it fails to acknowledge the efforts of many Indigenous communities to reclaim, revitalize, and preserve their languages, cultures, and traditions. Despite centuries of colonization and oppression, many Indigenous people have worked tirelessly to preserve their languages and their cultural practices and were able to carry them through works of fiction such as speculative storytelling.

In the introduction to *Mitêwâcimowina: Indigenous Science Fiction and Speculative Storytelling* by Neal McLeod, he explains how science fiction has imagined possibilities for itself (2016, p. 4) and that it might have been used in projects of colonialism. Indigenous writers might have used science fiction to critique science and how technology was used to disseminate colonialism. This is why speculative fiction resonates more with Indigenous experiences. While science fiction involves the exploration of space, speculative storytelling does not always involve the marvellous. McLeod's discussion highlights the importance of recognizing the diversity and complexity of Indigenous experiences and identities. Indigenous speculative fiction includes themes and perspectives that reflect many aspects of Indigenous cultures and histories. For example, in *The Marrow Thieves*, Cherie Dimaline explores a post-apocalyptic world in which Indigenous people are hunted for their bone marrow, believed to hold the key to restoring the ability to dream again. The novel explores in depth the loss of language, culture, and identity resulting from colonization and exploitation, highlighting the characters' resistance as they fight to preserve their heritage. The hunting premise serves as a powerful allegory for the historical and ongoing oppression of Indigenous people, in this case, people from Turtle Island. This is used to bring to light the devastating impact of colonialism and systemic racism on these communities. Through her characters, Dimanline explores their suffering and resilience in a world where they are treated as commodities because of their bone marrow. Indigenous communities around the world have experienced forced displacement, colonization, and cultural assimilation as a result of European settlement. The colonization of Indigenous lands and the imposition of colonial laws and policies, such as the Indian Act in Canada, have resulted in the loss of traditions, culture, and languages. The most

heartbreaking example of this that happened in Canada is the residential schools, which still live on the skin of people who experienced it and survived to narrate it. At the same time, as McLeod states, many stories tell traditional Indigenous narratives. *Never Whistle at Night* is a collection of twenty-six short stories written by Indigenous authors from the United States and Canada. This anthology is an excellent contribution to Indigenous literature and storytelling. It provides a platform for Indigenous authors to share their perspectives, voices, and stories, challenging stereotypes and a lack of representation in mainstream literature. Some stories have supernatural or horror elements, while others don't deal with any paranormal themes. The stories collected in *Never Whistle at Night* use horror to confront its reality, revealing that the greatest terrors are those produced by colonization and environmental devastation. In these stories, the haunted landscapes of North America are not metaphors but witnesses. They remember what settler history refuses to see: that the land itself has absorbed centuries of trauma and continues to speak through spirit, dream, and nightmare. This anthology is a perfect mix of traditional storytelling, such as the story "Scariest. Story. Ever." by Richard Van Camp, which explores the importance of respecting roots and not exploiting Indigenous traditions for profit. Other stories, such as "Snakes Are Born in the Dark" by D. H. Trujillo and "Limbs" by Waubgeshig Rice, explore supernatural elements to denounce the environmental injustices that Indigenous lands have endured and continue to face today. Furthermore, it denounces the systemic racism Indigenous people still suffer in the present and the disrespect for Indigenous artifacts and land, which are safeguarded by federal laws. In addition, other stories deal with trauma, death, and loss. In this essay, however, I will analyze two short stories from the anthology that highlight the exploitation and objectification of Indigenous bodies: "Collections" by Anishinaabe author Amber Blaeser-Wardzala and "Navajos Don't Wear Elk Teeth" by Comanche author Conley Lyons. Drawing parallels with the critically acclaimed horror movie *Get Out,* I will explore how the exploitation of Black bodies in the context of systemic racism and white supremacy resonates with the themes presented in *Never Whistle at Night*. While the experiences of Black and Indigenous communities are distinct, there are undeniable similarities in the ways they have been and continue to be marginalized, exploited, and dehumanized by dominant cultures. Through a comparative analysis of these stories, I seek to explore how themes of exploitation, cultural appropriation, and violence intersect across different racial and cultural contexts. By examining the resemblance between these narratives, one can gain a deeper understanding of the systemic forces at play and how they impact the lives and bodies of marginalized communities.

In her work *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith discusses how the historical era known as 'collecting' occurred during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a period that, for many Indigenous communities, was seen as theft rather than collection. Many territories, mineral resources, and even species of flora and fauna have been collected during this time. The collecting from Indigenous communities was often justified as rescuing artifacts and knowledge from 'decay and loss', legitimizing practices such as trade or theft. Many Indigenous properties are still in the collections of rich people or museums and private galleries. Smith argues that colonialism was not simply about collection but about rearrangement and redistribution (2021, p. 71). The historical era of collecting and colonization reflects the systemic exploitation and cultural appropriation that Black and Indigenous communities suffered during many historical eras and continue to face even today. Historically, museums have played a significant role in the colonization and appropriation of Indigenous cultures and artifacts. Today's museum objects were acquired through colonial conquests and unethical practices. Consequently, they were shown, interpreted, and narrated through the lens of colonialism, thus perpetuating harmful stereotypes and misrepresentations of many cultures. In her work *Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor,* Eve Tuck states, "When we write about decolonization, we are not offering it as a metaphor; it is not an approximation of other experiences of oppression. Decolonization is not a swappable term for other things we want to do

to improve our societies and schools. Decolonization doesn't have a synonym" (2012, p. 3). Tuck highlights the importance of understanding the unsettling aspects of colonization and advocating for the critical analysis of colonialism, particularly in academia and research. To do that, Indigenous people need to be part of this conversation. Academic spaces often overlook or ignore Indigenous scholars and minorities in general, because it is easier to critique existing knowledge and systems from a dominant and frequently privileged position.

Understanding the unsettling legacies of colonization is crucial, for example, within academia and research, and the short story "Collections" brings this into discussion. The protagonist of "Collections", Megis is an Anishinaabe student, known as Meg to everyone because no one makes the effort to learn how to pronounce her name. She attends a party hosted by one of her professors, even if she is exhausted after work, because she needs a letter of recommendation. As the only Indigenous scholar with a scholarship, she must maintain an excellent average to keep it. She is very aware that she needs to work harder than her classmates to access the privileges and opportunities they have more easily. Her presence at the party feels like an obligation, but also a strategic move to build connections and secure a letter of recommendation. Megis explains that one of them was rude, racist, or otherwise unpleasant, but whenever she spoke to them, there was very little common ground in their conversations (Blaeser-Wardzala p. 368). Despite the absence of overt racism or rudeness from her white peers, the lack of shared experiences and cultural understanding creates a sense of discomfort and awkwardness in interactions between white students and non-white students. The passive-aggressive tone that Professor Smith used towards Megis's late arrival also highlights a lack of understanding and empathy for the struggles and realities faced by less privileged students who may have to work in different environments to survive and support themselves financially. It is important to recognize and address the systemic biases and prejudices that perpetuate the exclusion and marginalization of less privileged students in educational settings. This interaction between Megis and Professor Smith highlights the importance of educators' and institutions' empathy and support in creating a more inclusive and accessible environment where all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background, feel respected and supported. Furthermore, Trevor's remark about Tracee's leaving shortly after seeing the heads makes her feel bad for Tracee. Professor Smith took her leaving personally. She's going to be harder on Tracee's paper than she would have been had Tracee just stayed (2023, p. 374) highlights the toxic dynamics in the academic world where oppressed communities have to submit to forced violence, disguised as fake privilege, to access specific environments.

Also, Linda Tuhiwai Smith discusses in her work how academic knowledge within universities is inherently biased and limited because most traditional disciplines "are grounded in cultural worldviews which are either antagonistic to other belief systems or have no methodology for dealing with other knowledge systems" (2021, p. 74). There is a need for critical examination and deconstruction of academic disciplines and complicity in perpetuating colonialism and systemic inequalities. Smith also delves into the discipline's concept, which organizes systems and controls people and their bodies. Drawing on Foucault's theory, which argues that discipline in the eighteenth century became "formulas of domination" at work in schools, hospitals, and military organizations. Techniques of detail were developed to maintain discipline over the body (2021, p. 78). In this case, knowledge was used to discipline and control colonized people more effectively. The consequence of the so-called discipline was brutal violence towards Indigenous communities. For example, Aboriginal parents in Australia had their children forcibly removed, sent away beyond reach and "adopted" (2021, p. 78). In Canada, native children were sent to residential schools where they were stripped of their identity, culture, and language. This is why *Never Whistle at Night* is an essential Indigenous work that explores all the facets of oppression and discrimination. By shedding light on these themes, the anthology aims to challenge and unsettle settler readers by confronting them with uncomfortable truths and disrupting their preconceived

notions and privileges.

Get Out (2017), produced and written by Jordan Peele, features Chris Washington (Daniel Kaluuya) as its protagonist. This Black man spends the weekend upstate visiting the wealthy family of his white girlfriend, Rose Armitage (Allison Williams). During the weekend, Chris discovers that the Armitage family was piloting "a modern-day slave trade operation in which Black people are abducted for the use of their bodies" (Camille 2022, p. 1). The Armitage family was kidnapping Black people to implant the brains of sick or elderly people into these new bodies through a surgical procedure known as The Coagula. Once the operation is successful, the new white owner takes control of the body and mind, while the original owner is hidden in the dark, remaining powerless yet observant. Camille argues that the Armitage family are fixating on Chris' black physique because they see it as an object of physical desire (2022, p. 1). Peele, in his movie, introduces a new way of American racism, which is masqueraded as adoration of black people's bodies, an adoration that erases their identity.

The movie starts with Chris expressing his worries about meeting Rose's family by emphasizing that he's Black. To that, Rose answered things such as "My dad would've legit voted for Obama a third time if he could've"[1] and "And my mom loves Idris Elba," highlighting the superficial and performative nature of the Armitage family's liberalism. Rose's comments about Obama and Idris Elba serve to mask the underlying racism and fetishization of Blackness that pervade the family's interactions with Chris. These seemingly innocuous remarks, which are intended to show the family's open-mindedness and appreciation for Black culture, ultimately serve to objectify Chris's Black identity. Rose's parents are the typical white and privileged family with a big house full of souvenirs from all over the world that serve as a powerful commentary on cultural appropriation and the superficial appreciation of diversity. Dean Armitage justifies his collection as a privilege to access all these cultures. He reflects on how white privilege and entitlement can manifest themselves in the commodification and objectification of cultures and identities that are perceived as "other." The exploitation of cultural artifacts and symbols from all around the world serves to exoticize and decontextualize them, stripping them of their cultural significance and reducing them to just displayed objects that white people can admire. In "Collections" and "Navajos Don't Wear Elk Teeth," we are confronted with two different realities concerning the objectification of Indigenous bodies displayed as trophies.

"Navajos Don't Wear Elk Teeth" is the story of an Indigenous man named Joe who spends the summer in his grandparents' house by the beach and meets a white man named Cam, who shows interest in him right away. It can be said that Cam has a fetish for Indigenous men, which can be read as a powerful allegory for the historical and ongoing exploitation and erasure of Indigenous lands and people by the hand of white supremacy. From the beginning of the story, Cam shows his possessiveness over Joe, especially his body. He continually says he should remove his shirt only for him and jokes, but you feel the rage in his tone when he posts a shirtless pic on Instagram. When asked about his necklace, Cam says "Elk tooth. From my last guy. (...) He was Navajo (...) he gave it to me for safekeeping. The eye teeth are good luck, you know" (Lyons 2023, p. 43). He also says that at home he has a whole collection of other animal teeth; "Maybe if you're good, I'll show 'em to you" (2023, p. 44). This entire dialogue provides an insight into the dynamics of cultural appropriation and the fetishization of Indigenous cultures and artifacts. Cam's description of the elk tooth as a symbol of good luck and his assertion, 'you know' reflect a superficial, stereotypical understanding of Indigenous cultures and traditions. Also, there was a bit of mansplaining about cultures that white people very often do not take the time to understand or learn more about. Their first sexual intercourse is quite violent and graphic, and Joe is completely used as an object. The

[1] *Get Out* script p. 6.

day after, Cam enters Joe's house completely uninvited and forces him into another violent sexual act. This invasion of privacy and boundaries can be seen as a parallel to what Europeans did historically to Indigenous communities and their lands. Joe's discomfort and attempts to assert boundaries fail, and this resonates with the experiences of many people who are forced to deal with relationships characterized by unequal power dynamics and exploitation. Joe's powerlessness and uneasiness can be easily compared to how Chris feels surrounded by all the rich white people at the party at the Armitage house, and Megis.

At the party, Megis discovers that her professor has a collection of human heads displayed on the walls of the living room. The problem is that no one feels as disturbed as she does. The living room is described as large and imposing with big windows, a different kind of decorations that look more like a museum rather than a warm household. And on the walls "there were heads. Heads of every shape, every colour, every hairstyle. Male heads, female heads, nonbinary heads" (Blesser-Wardzala 2023, p. 368). The description of the living room, with its imposing decor and assortment of heads of different shapes, hair, and colours, serves as a chilling representation of the objectification and commodification of human bodies and identities. The empty space above the fireplace, in contrast with the rest of the room filled with watching eyes, can be interpreted as an absence and erasure of Indigenous voices, histories, and experiences in a society that often fails to recognize or respect their heritage and traditions. When Megis realizes she is the only one unsettled by the heads, she tries to see if that is the reality and speaks with her classmate Trevor, whose answer is "Oh. those. (...) Well, apparently, she's been collecting them ever since she started teaching. Crazy, right? I was never good at collecting. Do you remember those collect all fifty state quarter things from when we were kids?" (Blesser-Wardzala 2023, p. 372). Trevor's casual minimization of the collection, comparing it to childhood hobbies such as collecting coins, highlights the normalization of violence and dehumanization in the context of Indigenous experiences. Trevor asks if there are heads of deer or any other animals on that wall. The unnecessary violence and exploitation involved in killing and displaying animals, like the collection of human heads, reflect a pattern of disregard for the lives and traditions of marginalized cultures. This normalization of violence and exploitation, whether directed towards humans or animals, highlights a need for education and awareness to destroy these harmful narratives. In *Get Out*, Chris and Rose kill a deer by accident, and Dean's commentary is "You know what I say: One down... a few hundred thousand to go. What?! They're everywhere; like rats. The threat they pose to the ecology is pretty serious stuff."[2] While we are aware that the Armitage family is not known for its empathy, this exchange highlights a casual and dismissive attitude towards harm done to animals. It can be extended to their lack of empathy, carelessness for the environment, and also justification of violence for non-human lives. The Armitage family's choice to abduct Black people underscores how, in their vision, a deer or a Black person has the same value. In *Get Out,* the deer symbolizes Chris' trauma because his mother died in a hit and run, underlining the emotional and psychological impact of such loss and grief in contrast with Dean's words, which diminish the value of life. On the other hand, deer are also often hunted for trophies, and their heads are displayed on walls as prizes, reflecting a disturbing mindset that equates the life of a living being with its status as a trophy and object. Before the surgery, when Chris is tied to the chair, a deer's head is above him on the wall. That image showed once again his powerlessness in that situation, and that soon he might be 'dead' just like that deer who stares in the emptiness. Just like Professor Smith, who collects human heads, later we will discover that Cam's collection of teeth was not animal ones but human and allegedly all from Indigenous people.

Joe, Megis, and Chris are impressive protagonists because of their first-person narration (and in the case of Chris is good acting from Daniel Kaluuya), which can express the powerlessness and

[2] *Get Out* script p. 17.

unease of their situations. The dynamics between Joe and Cam are further highlighted, drawing parallels to the historical invasion and colonization by European settlers. This comparison is not even that subtle, because one can easily observe the pattern of disrespect shown by Cam at Joe's house.

> What I hated more than anything was how he'd begun to move my stuff around. First it was boxes or bags of old clothes getting shuffled from the living room and down to the workshop, which was annoying but made sense. Then he started picking knickknacks up at random, proclaiming he'd toss them out: a soap dish my grandma bought in the mountains, a bronze ship my grandpa put in the tiny window of the hall bathroom so it could sail along the clouds. But Cam's least favourite thing in my house was the brown-and-white ceramic crock that sat in the middle of the kitchen counter. (...) Cam took every opportunity he had to let me know how much he hated it."That thing is so fucking ugly," he told me on Monday afternoon. (Lyons 2023, pp. 53-54)

Cam's insolent behaviour, mocking and throwing out Joe's belongings and cultural items, highlights a profound lack of respect and understanding of Joe's heritage and identity. His invasive behaviour, proclaiming what objects are worth staying and the judgment over their value, further underlines the damages of colonialism faced by Indigenous and minority communities. While Dean Armitage and Professor Smith showed a superficial admiration and love for other cultures, Cam embodied the most violent form of oppression. Dean Armitage and Professor Smith reflect a form of cultural appropriation where elements of Indigenous and minority cultures are exploited and consumed without genuine understanding or respect. Their actions echo how dominant cultures often selectively appreciate and exoticize aspects of other cultures, while simultaneously perpetuating systems of inequality and oppression. On the other hand, Cam's invasion of Joe's personal space, disrespecting his belongings in mocking and discarding items of significance to Joe, highlights the deep-seated racism, ignorance, and entitlement. As stated before, Cam also showed similar behaviour towards Joe's body. First of all, it can be argued that all their sexual intercourse was not consensual and also very graphic and violent towards Joe, enforcing again the idea that he might embody settlers' behaviour against Indigenous communities. Cam became very possessive from their first encounter, jokingly insisting on keeping his shirt on and removing it only for him. Then, later in the story, after he appropriates Joe's space, he starts accusing him of seeing other guys and seeking attention because of a shirtless picture he posted on Instagram.

In "Collections," Megis is not the direct victim of this bodily abuse, but she is scared she might be on that wall with the other heads since the other guests do not seem as disturbed as she is. She is not able to understand how no one is disturbed by the heads on the wall, expressing that the professor killed all those people. However, Trevor's nonchalance demonstrates once again how normalized the violence is and how dystopian its display is. Trevor also says that Tracee, the other BIPOC student, left shortly after she saw the wall full of heads, highlighting further how marginalized communities are the ones suffering these aggressions in front of a world of oppressors. Later, we discovered that all those heads were Professor Smith's protégés, people she helped with their careers and in return, they donated their heads. It is essential to specify that the heads were of different ethnicities and even different sexualities. Her statement, "a museum of my goodwill" (2023, p. 379), is deeply unsettling and highlights her objectification and dehumanization of people she claimed she helped. The categorization of the heads based on religion, sexuality, and 'almost all races' emphasizes the exploitative nature of her collection again. It is pretty clear that the empty space is for Megis because she does not yet have an Indigenous head. "A girl like you," she said, her voice barely above a whisper, "is rare, Meg. So hard to find. There's only one like you in the entire university. Did you know, in my thirty years at this institute, I've seen only one other? They slipped right through my grasp then. I won't make that mistake

again. This time it will be different. For us' (Blesser-Wardzala 2023, p. 380). Furthermore, it can be said that Professor Smith does not refer to Megis' intelligence, even though she is a fantastic student, because the only thing she cares about is having her head displayed in her living room, imagining herself already presenting the 'perfect' wall display to her white and wealthy friends. She is willing to help Megis as much as she did the others, but she wants the head in return, as if it were a diploma or a trophy for a job well done. It can also be stated that, allegedly, she might have killed all of these people herself to preserve their beauty and their youth.

While movies such as *Get Out* and stories such as "Collections" and "Navajos Don't Wear Elk Teeth" might appall people, unfortunately, historical horrors expand the depths of human cruelty and the dehumanization of marginalized groups, particularly in the context of colonialism and systemic oppression. While Professor Smith and Cam possess parts of human bodies, displaying them as collections to be admired, in *Get Out* we witness a private, silent auction organized by the Armitage family for the next person who will be able to continue or improve their present life by occupying an able-bodied black body. "The portrayal of this scene is reminiscent of slave auctions during the period of American slavery, carrying on the film's deployment of past racist systems as analogies for modern racist structures and practices. Nonetheless, this modern-day form of a slave auction is distinguishable from past slave auctions by its use of bingo as the preliminary purchasing method" (Camille 2022, p. 7). The person who wins the auction for Chris's body is Jim Hudson, a blind art gallery owner. Hudson, before the auction takes place, actually takes the time to compliment Chris on his photography skills because he could appreciate his work thanks to his assistant, who described all the details to him. Hudson was going to have Chris' body and mostly his photographer's eyes, therefore he would be back to continue his biggest passion and, why not, earn even more money. Walter and Georgina, the gardener and the housekeeper, were Rose's grandparents. Jeffrey Camille, in his work, discusses Michael Morris' definition of white normativity as the belief that "white people are people, and the members of other racial groups are people to the extent they resemble white people" (2022, p. 952). Camille explains further that applying this notion to *Get Out* explains that Armitage's modern-day slave trade chose Black people because they consider them superior in bodily terms. Therefore, a black body with a White brain would make a 'superior' Black body. It can also be said that killing or making Black or Indigenous people will pass under the radar due to the justice system's biases. It can also be argued that there is a narcissistic behaviour of defeating death, sickness, and disabilities. Moreover, the exploitation and dehumanization of Black bodies in the pursuit of immortality reflect a lack of empathy and regard for the experiences and humanity of others. The Armitages and their friends perceive the Black bodies as vessels to be used for their benefit, reinforcing their narcissistic belief in their inherent superiority. During the first dinner at the Armitage's place, Rose's brother, Jeremy (Caleb Jones), says, "If you pushed your body, I mean really trained, you'd be a beast"[3]. Jeremy's comments highlight a disturbing obsession and objectification of Black bodies, reducing them only to their strength and "their genetic makeup." This reduction strips away Chris' humanity, denying him complexity and depth of intellect. Instead, he is reduced to a "beast," reinforcing harmful stereotypes about Black individuals being inherently aggressive and animalistic. Chris's simple response, "Cool…Thanks?"[4] highlights his discomfort with Jeremy's remarks, indicating his awareness of the racial undertones and how racism manifests in everyday interactions, even the seemingly innocuous ones.

Lastly, how do these stories finish? Who is the winner in the end? Chris resists the hypnosis Rose's mother tries to impose on him; therefore, the Coagula never occurs, and Jim Hudson never possesses Chris's body. There is one of the final scenes where Chris starts to choke Rose, even

[3] *Get Out*, script p. 33.
[4] *Get Out*, script p. 33.

though she was shot, and in that moment, Rose starts smiling. It can be argued that in this moment, she was smiling because she felt she was proving her and her family's point about Black people being animalistic, even if Chris had been tortured and almost did not escape from that weekend. Chris is interrupted by his friend Rod, who senses something is wrong and comes to his rescue. Since Rod arrives in a police car, Chris thinks it is the police and is ready to be taken to jail with his hands in the air, while Rose starts rumbling about how he is going to kill her. If at that moment another policeman had arrived, nobody would have believed Chris simply because he was Black. Jordan Peele prepared two alternative endings for the movie: one ending with Chris being in jail, arrested after he strangled Rose and another one where Chris' body gets possessed. The ending, where Chris is arrested for defending himself, would have underscored the systemic racism and injustice faced by Black people within the criminal justice system. However, it might have felt too bleak and hopeless. On the other hand, the ending with Chris' body being possessed, while intriguing from a plot perspective, might have detracted from the film's social commentary and its grounded reality. Peele's decision to end the movie with Chris escaping and surviving serves as a powerful message of hope and resilience. It allows the viewers to feel a sense of empowerment, especially considering the intense journey Chris undergoes during the whole film. This ending reinforces the idea that marginalized people can overcome oppression and reclaim their voice. It can also be said that "Collections" and "Navajos Don't Wear Elk Teeth" offer a glimpse of empowerment and resilience. "Collections" do not have an explanatory ending. Megis, whilst being deranged by Professor Smith's collection and her explanation for it, is still torn about what to do. "At least he had accomplished something before he died. At least he had a legacy. That was better than dying as a no-name server. I squeezed my eyes, tried to force that horrible thought from my mind. I was no better than Professor Smith" (Blaeser-Wardzala 2023, p. 379). Megis finds herself contemplating legacy and accomplishment, wondering whether having a legacy, even a controversial one, is better than being forgotten or relegated to obscurity. Her internal conflict reflects her attempts to justify or rationalize Professor Smith's actions in order to understand or accept the disturbing reality she is facing. "I pictured it for a moment: Erdrich, Orange, Cloud. Megis Cloud is one of the three Native fiction writers that nearly anyone, even non-Natives, could name off the top of their heads. There was nothing more that I wanted in the world. I hadn't even realized I wanted it until that moment when she dared me to dream. Now I couldn't stop picturing it" (Blaeser-Wardzala 2023, pp. 380-381). Suddenly, Megis envisions herself as one of the prominent figures in Indigenous literature, even if to do so she will have to make a pact with a devious mind. Professor Smith's offer of help and support further intensifies Megis' internal conflict. On the one hand, she appreciates the help and recognizes the struggles she would face otherwise as an Indigenous student in the academic field. Yet, she also senses the manipulation but decides to ignore it and probably will accept Professor Smith's deal. While Megis might consider being displayed on that wall as a trophy at some point, Joe does not want to become a tooth necklace around Cam's neck. He discovers that Cam's tooth collection is human. After all of Cam's verbal and physical violence, Joe realizes he needs to escape. Cam follows him, and even if he states he does not want to hurt Joe, the last line of the story is the following "I fumbled around the boulders at the base of the pier before I found what Cam had hidden up his sleeve: glimmering in the low light, sticking out from the seam of a few smaller rocks. An old pair of needle-nose pliers" (Lyons 2023, p. 56). The fact that Cam concealed the pliers implied premeditation and malice. During his fight with Cam, Joe remembers his grandpa's advice "If you ever do fight, Joe-Joe, don't think about hurting or not hurting. Fling sand in their eyes, twist their nuts, take them down at the knees. Just stay calm, and don't let yourself get cornered" (Lyons 2023, p. 49). While Joe has been submissive up to that point, he ultimately takes his power back and does not become one of Cam's next victims. Chris, Joe, and Megis are all victims of a system full of oppression that they need to fight in order to survive. Through their struggles, they confront and resist these oppressive systems, but their stories also underscore the ongoing need for collective action and advocacy to address structural

injustices. Literature, including these narratives, often serves as a mirror to society, reflecting the harsh realities faced by Indigenous people and minorities. While we might not reach a utopian, fair world, engaging with these narratives challenges readers to confront unsettling realities and work towards creating a more equitable world for all.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

References

Blaeser-Wardzala, A. (2023). *Collections* (pp. 366–381). In S. Hawk & T. C. Van Alst Jr. (Eds.), *Never Whistle at Night: An Indigenous Dark Fiction Anthology* (pp. 366-381). Vintage Books

Camille, J. (2022). "Black Is in Fashion: The Black Body as a Commodity in Jordan Peele's *Get Out*." *Dean James E. McLeod Freshman Writing Prize*,18. https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/mcleod/18

Eguíbar-Holgado, M. (2022) "Indigenous Diasporas in Speculative Fiction: Writing Through Estrangement." *Literature Compass*, 19(12). https://doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12687

Get Out. (2017). Directed by Jordan Peele, performances by Daniel Kaluuya, Allison Williams, and Lakeith Stanfield, Blumhouse Productions.

Hawk, S., and Theodore C. Van Alst Jr., eds. (2023). *Never Whistle at Night*. Random House Canada.

Bell, E. D. E., et al. (2017). "Indigenous Wonderworks and the Settler-Colonial Imaginary." *Apex Magazine*, 10 Aug. 2017, https://apex-magazine.com/nonfiction/indigenous-wonderworks-and-the-settler-colonial-imaginary.

Lyons, C. (2023). *Navajos Don't Wear Elk Teeth*. In S. Hawk & T. C. Van Alst Jr. (Eds.), *Never Whistle at Night: An Indigenous Dark Fiction Anthology* (pp. 38-57). Vintage Books.

McLeod, N. (2016). *Mitêwâcimowina: Indigenous Science Fiction and Speculative Storytelling*. Theytus Books.

Smith, L. T. (2021). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. 3rd ed., Zed Books.

Tuck, E., and Yang, K. W. (2012). "'Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor.'" *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1, pp. 1-40.

Whitehead, J. (2020). "Introduction." *Love after the End: An Anthology of Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer Speculative Fiction*, edited by Joshua Whitehead, pp. 9-15. Arsenal Pulp Press.

Zafar, A. (2024, June 15). *Reclaiming horror: Indigenous voices transform the genre*. Creepy Current. https://creepycurrent.com/reclaiming-horror-indigenous-voices-transform-the-genre.