

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides background of the study, the research problem, the objective of the study, the scope and limitation of the study, and the significance of the study.

1.1`Background of the Study

CDA provides an effective approach to analyzing how verbal and visual elements in films contribute to the study of race and power. By examining dialogue and visual techniques, CDA helps uncover messages embedded in narratives and the aesthetic choices of filmmakers. This analysis can reveal how films, through language and visuals, either support or reject racial stereotypes and power structures. Therefore, CDA serves as an effective tool for understanding how films contribute to either maintaining or disrupting racial inequality in society.

Race in film has been widely analyzed in academic studies, with many researcher examining how racial identities are portrayed and the impact of these representations on society's understanding of race. Hall (1997) argues that films are not created in a vacuum but are influenced by the cultural, political, and social contexts in which they are produced. These contexts shape how different racial groups are depicted in films, often reinforcing dominant racial ideologies or, in some cases, challenging them. According to Hall, the way race is portrayed in films is closely related to broader structures of power in society.

Seligman (2011) explains that films often portray racial minority groups in limited roles. The roles assigned to racial minorities are usually as villains, victims, or side characters, which can negatively impact how audiences perceive these racial groups in real life. Such representations contribute to reinforcing stereotypes that associate minority groups with negative traits such as violence, criminality, or weakness. For example, in many Hollywood films, Black characters have historically been depicted as criminals or slaves, often lacking significant roles.

These representations reflect real world biases about race and justify the unfair treatment of racial minority groups in society.

However, as the film industry evolved, some filmmakers began to challenge these conventional portrayals. For example, *Do the Right Thing* (1989) by Spike Lee and *12 Years a Slave* (2013) by Steve McQueen present more complex and critical portrayals of race. These films examine racism from various perspectives and provide deeper insights into the social and historical contexts that shape racial inequality. *Do the Right Thing* explores tensions between different racial groups in a Brooklyn neighborhood, depicting the complexities of prejudice, violence, and community dynamics. This film also features a diverse range of Black characters, each with unique experiences and personalities, challenging the common stereotypical representations in Hollywood at the time. Similarly, *12 Years a Slave* delivers a powerful and harrowing depiction of slavery in the United States, focusing on the humanity and resilience of Black individuals in the face of extreme cruelty. These films, along with others, play a significant role in challenging the traditional ways in which race is represented in Hollywood. By presenting more nuanced and realistic portrayals of racial minority groups, these filmmakers encourage audiences to critically reflect on racism and the historical and contemporary forces that shape racial inequality.

Films such as *Black Panther* (2018) by Ryan Coogler have received praise for offering a new portrayal of race. Unlike earlier films that often depicted Black characters as inferior or marginalized, *Black Panther* presents Black characters as strong, intelligent, and heroic. The film is set in Wakanda, a technologically advanced African nation that is not defined by a history of colonialism or slavery. In *Black Panther*, Black characters are portrayed as leaders, warriors, and visionaries, challenging stereotypical portrayals of Black identity in mainstream media. This film presents a positive and empowering image of Black identity, celebrating African culture and heritage while also addressing issues of injustice and racial inequality.

CDA can be used to analyze how *Black Panther* reshapes traditional racial narratives and provides a more positive representation of race. By examining the

verbal and visual elements of the film, CDA allows researcher to uncover how language and visuals are used to construct racial identities. In the case of Black Panther, CDA can explore how the film challenges negative stereotypes and promotes a more positive vision of Black identity. This approach can also be applied to the analysis of “Get Out” (2017) by Jordan Peele. The film presents various experiences of Black individuals, ranging from overt racism experienced by Chris to more subtle forms of microaggressions demonstrated by White characters. “Get Out” also employs strong visual symbolism. These symbols not only reflect Chris’s personal experience but also illustrate broader social issues related to the oppression of Black individuals in a White dominated culture.

By using CDA, researcher can analyze how films like Black Panther and “Get Out” challenge traditional racial hierarchies and offer a more positive understanding of race and power. By focusing on the language and visuals used to depict Black characters, CDA helps identify whether these representations reinforce or challenge social norms and ideologies. Through this analysis, CDA provides valuable insights into the role of media in shaping public perceptions of race and social inequality.

1.2 Research Question

The research questions are presented as follows:

1. What are the indications of racism from the CDA perspective that manifest in Chris Washington's experiences in the “Get Out” film, based on utterances, social cognition, and social context?
2. How does Chris Washington respond to the strangeness and racist behavior of white people in the film “Get Out”?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the research questions above, the objectives of the study are as follows:

- 1 To explore how race manifests in the experiences of Chris Washington, the main character in the film “Get Out,” as a Black man in a predominantly white environment through analysis using CDA theory.
- 2 To analyze Chris Washington’s responses to the strange and racist behaviors exhibited by the white characters in “*Get Out*” Using CDA Theory.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Theoretically, this study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), focusing on the work of Teun A. van Dijk (2001), which emphasizes the relationship between language, power, and ideology. It is used to analyze how media, such as the film “Get Out”, challenges social norms, particularly in terms of race. CDA enables a critical examination of the verbal and visual elements in the film, allowing for an analysis of how racial ideologies are reinforced. Van Dijk’s theory argues that ideology shapes social behavior and power, which is essential for understanding how “Get Out” critiques subtle and often overlooked forms of racism in predominantly white environments. This approach provides insight into how the film portrays and questions racial ideologies that persist in society.

Practically, this study examines unhealthy environments and mental health. By exploring subtle discrimination and cognitive dissonance experienced by Chris, viewers can gain a clearer understanding through this research, as it explains the harmful effects of both direct and indirect racism. The study highlights that racism can create an unhealthy environment by making people feel uncomfortable and can also damage the mental well being of those affected.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study focuses on analyzing the portrayal of racism in the film “Get Out” using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine how race is depicted through the experiences of Chris Washington, a Black man in a predominantly white environment. This analysis covers three main aspects: utterances, social cognition, and social context. First, this study examines the language used by the characters, focusing on how they communicate with Chris and their choice of words, based on van Dijk's (2001) framework to identify both explicit and subtle forms of racism, such as microaggressions, stereotypes, and hidden messages in their dialogues. Second, it explores social cognition, specifically how the white characters perceive Chris based on his race, how these perceptions influence their treatment of him, and the impact on Chris himself. Lastly, this study considers the social context of the film by analyzing the broader social and historical background of race relations to understand how the environment shapes the actions of others toward Chris. By applying CDA, this study aims to uncover how racism is portrayed not only through language but also through actions and social structures, providing a deeper understanding of race and power dynamics in “Get Out”.

However, there are several limitations to this study that should be noted. First, this research focuses solely on “Get Out”, meaning the findings may not be applicable to all films or representations of racism in media. While “Get Out” is a unique film that blends horror with social commentary on race, other films may take different approaches to portraying racism. Therefore, the conclusions of this study may not be generalizable to other movies or genres. Second, this study primarily focuses on the experiences of Chris Washington, so it will not explore other characters or the full spectrum of racial interactions in the film. While the white characters and other Black characters in the movie play important roles, the study will center more on Chris's perspective. Additionally, since CDA is an interpretive approach, the findings of this study are based on the researcher's understanding of the film, meaning that other viewers may have different interpretations of “Get Out”.