

## Stereotypes and Discrimination in the "Green Book" Movie: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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### ABSTRACT

This research entitled Stereotypes and Discrimination in the "Green Book" Movie: Critical Discourse Analysis aims to analyze the stereotypes and discrimination that occur in the main character, Don Shirley. The theory used in this research is critical discourse analysis theory by Van Dijk. In this research, researchers found many expressions or utterances and actions that refer to stereotypes and discriminatory behavior committed by white people against black people in America. This study uses qualitative methods because qualitative is a procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written and spoken words. The results showed that this case contained three types of discrimination and stereotypes. First, Individual Discrimination is presented in the unfair treatment by white people against the main black figure, Don Shirley. Second, Institutional Discrimination occurs in the police institution where the police imprison Don Shirley who has not committed a crime at all, but only because he is black. Third, Structural Discrimination occurs in the form of policies carried out by majority races which have a negative impact on racial minorities.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a human tool to communicate thoughts and ideas. Language is a major part of humans so that no human can survive in the world without knowing any language. Written language, verbal and symbolic forms are used by humans to live their lives as social beings because every human being needs daily reciprocal interaction with the speech system and written symbols used to communicate in society. Language consists of words or a collection of words that have meaning. Good language develops based on a system, namely a set of rules that are obeyed by

its users. Not only as a means of communication, the function of language is to convey thoughts, ideas, concepts or feelings. Ferdinand de Saussure conceptualized language as a sign system. Linguistic signs are tools for creating meanings (or coding concepts) that unite image-sound and concepts.

According to (Malinowski: 1923), the development of language is also influenced by human life, language never existed and when no one uses that language or will die and vice versa in human life humans can never grow and develop without it. language because language is an indispensable tool in human life and

moments are never created without language because language is a unifying tool for social action. In communicating with each other, people sometimes say statements that offend others unconsciously where these words relate to discourse.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), or discourse studies, is an umbrella term for a number of approaches to analyzing the use of written language, vowels, or signs or significant semiotic events. Through discourse analysis, we not only know the contents of the text contained in a discourse, but also know the message to be conveyed, why it should be conveyed, and how the message is structured and understood. The object of discourse analysis is a unit of language, sentence or expression which has unity and context in everyday life, for example direct conversation, spoken text, recorded conversations. According to Dijk (2008), critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytic research that primarily studies how the abuse of social power, domination and inequality is enforced, reproduced and rejected by texts and talks in social and political contexts. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysis takes an explicit position, and thus wants to understand, expose and ultimately combat social inequality. Discourse contributes to racism. Whereas racism is often reduced to racist ideology, here it is understood as a complex societal system of ethnic or "racial" based domination and the resulting inequality (Dijk, 1990).

The Stereotype Content Model (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) proposes two fundamental dimensions of stereotypes: warmth (associated with 'cooperative' groups and denied to 'competitive' groups) and competence (associated with high-status groups and denied to low-status groups). Groups with stereotypes that are similarly high or low on each of the two dimensions of warmth and competence arouse similar emotions. Stereotypically warm and competent groups (e.g., the ingroup, close allies) elicit pride and admiration; stereotypically warm but incompetent groups (e.g., housewives, the elderly) produce pity and sympathy; stereotypically cold but competent groups (e.g., Asians, Jews) elicit envy and jealousy; and stereotypically cold and incompetent groups (e.g., welfare recipients, poor people) generate disgust, anger, and

resentment.

Racism arises from stereotypes, because all differences in the treatment that people treat one another is caused by a misperception of one another. Stereotype is a form of assessment given by other people to someone based on their physical and non-physical conditions. Most people judge someone based only on their physical form. Stereotypes in the form of prejudice have a very close relationship with discriminatory behavior. Stereotypes are the root of discrimination because the judgments that produce these stereotypes are not based on strong reasons. Thus, people who accept these stereotypes feel discriminated against by the group that provides them.

Discrimination is unfair treatment or distinguishes a certain person or group based on their characteristics such as physical, thinking ability, ethnicity, race, gender, religion/belief and others. The consequences of discrimination can be detrimental to others, and can lead to disputes. in society. Swim stated that discrimination is a negative act against people who are the object of prejudice such as race, ethnicity and religion. It can be said that discrimination is prejudice in action. Prejudice to think of negroes as stupid people but prohibiting them from working or going to certain institutions because it is colored is discrimination.

In this movie, Don Shirley experiences a lot of discriminatory treatment as the main character of the film. Don Shirley is a famous black pianist but he often gets unfair treatment from white people in America. In this film, there are three types of discrimination, namely, Individual Discrimination, Institutional Discrimination, and Structural Discrimination.

## **II. METHODS**

The type of the research is qualitative research. Qualitative data, with their emphasis on people's lived experiences, are fundamentally well suited for locating the meanings people place on the events, processes, and structures of their lives and for connecting these meanings to the social world around them. or in other words, it aims to describe or explain something, for example circumstances, conditions, situations, events, activities and so on. –other (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Researchers use qualitative research because qualitative research

is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written and spoken words. This method is intended to describe the stereotypes and discrimination in the "Green Book" movie.

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### 1) Stereotypes

Lippmann & Curtis (1998) introduced the term 'stereotype' which refers to the typical picture that comes to our mind when thinking of a particular social group.

#### a) White People Stereotypes Against African Americans



**Figure 1.** Tony's extended family watching a baseball game (00: 7: 39)

- JOHNNY : Come on, Roger! Hit one out!
- RUDY : Be quiet, you're gonna jinx it!
- LIP : Johnny, think you can yell a little louder?
- JOHNNY : Maris is up...
- LIP : Yeah, so am I now. What the hell are you guys doing here?
- JOHNNY : Figured we'd come up and keep Dolores company...
- ANTHONY : (in Italian) **You shouldn't be sleeping in the middle of the day, leaving my daughter here alone with these sacks of charcoal.**
- NICOLA : (in Italian) And why do you hire them to do an Italian' job?  
It's a disgrace.
- LIP : (in Italian) I don't know who they're gonna send.

The picture above shows the incident in the morning at Tony Lip's house. At that time,

Tony Lip woke up because the voice of his family, Johnny was very noisy because he shouted Roger's name while watching the match. Roger Maris is a white man who is a professional baseball player and is famous for setting the best record by making 61 home runs from 1961 to 1998. The situation was unusual, Tony's extended family gathered that morning to accompany Dolores (Tony's wife) who was cooking in the kitchen. That morning the tap in their house was broken so Dolores called a repairman to fix it. However, the repairmen were two blacks. Tony's family accompanies Dolores for fear that the black repairman will hurt Dolores.

In their conversation, Dolores' father made the sentence " **You shouldn't be sleeping in the middle of the day, leaving my daughter here alone with these sacks of charcoal.**". This sentence has an implied meaning in the sentence "sack of charcoal". It refers to the black person, a kind of stereotype of white people towards black people which means these two blacks are dangerous. He told Tony not to sleep when his wife was alone in the kitchen with the two blacks. The above incident shows Tony's extended family where they are stereotypical white Italians that black people are criminals, they are bad people. They're afraid the repairman will injure Dolores. Therefore they all gather at Tony's house to protect Dolores. However, it turned out that the masons had only come to fix the water tap without harming Dolores. In his occasion, stereotype threat can be activated by cues that are likely to be present in real-world testing situations. For example, simply describing a test as a measure of intelligence (rather than as a learning exercise) is sufficient to enhance the accessibility of the stereotype that 'black people are less intelligent', thereby impairing performance among black individuals (Steele & Aronson, 1995)



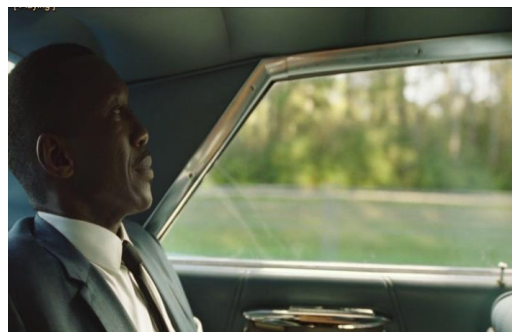
**Figure 2.** Don Shirley and Tony Lip in the car

eating fried chicken (00:53:01).

- LIP : This might be the best Kentucky Fried Chicken I ever had. But I guess it's fresher down here, right?
- DR. SHIRLEY : I don't think I've ever met anyone with your appetite.
- LIP : No, I bought the bucket so you could have some.
- DR. SHIRLEY : I've never had fried chicken in my life.
- LIP : **Who you bullshittin'?** **You people love the fried chicken, the grits, the colored greens...**I love it, too. The negro cooks used to make it when I was in the army.
- DR. SHIRLEY : You have a very narrow assessment of me, Tony.

The conversation above took place as Don Shirley and Tony Lip continued their journey. Just as they arrived in Kentucky and saw Kentucky Fried Chicken, Tony stopped to buy a bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken to eat in the car. In Tony's car forcing Don Shirley to try fried chicken but Don refuses because he has never eaten fried chicken in his life, Tony immediately utters the statement " **Who you bullshittin'?** **You people love the fried chicken, the grits, the colored greens** " This statement refers to the stereotype. . Tony directly stereotypes all black people who like to eat fried chicken. African-Americans love fried chicken is a common stereotype for them. The fried chicken stereotype in America is associated with African American ethnicity because chicken was a popular food served to slaves in America before civil war, and chickens were the only animals that African-American slaves were allowed to raise. That is the reason the African-American stereotype is historical.

#### b) Stereotypes Against German Society



**Figure 3.** Don Shirley and Tony Lip in the car (00:31:21).

- LIP : Hell's he looking at? You speak German, huh?
- DR. SHIRLEY : That was Russian.
- LIP : Yeah, I was stationed in Germany in the army. I can pick up a little of what you're sayin'. **Be careful, Krauts are all sneaks. Kennedy shoulda bombed „em when we had the chance plus now them Cuban bastards.** Where they going anyway? Ain't they supposed to be following us?
- DR. SHIRLEY : They have the itinerary. As long as they make it to the shows on time, I don't worry and you shouldn't either.
- LIP : (offended) I ain't worried about nothin'.

The conversation above is seen when Don Shirley and his driver Tony Lip tour the south. On their way their trio of members were Oleg and George. They approach Don Shirley's car, Oleg asks Don Shirley if everything is okay? (in Russian). After their conversation is over, Tony tells Don Shirley not to trust the Germans so easily because they are sneaking.

Tony Lip said in a statement "**Be careful, Krauts are all sneaks. Kennedy shoulda bombed „em when we had the chance plus now them Cuban bastards**". Through this statement Tony directly stereotypes that all Germans are cunning, they cannot be trusted. One of the factors in the occurrence of stereotypes is due to past history. The Germans are stereotyped as cunning and cruel because of the history of the famous Adolf Hitler who was the most violent military president in history. He



is the chairman of the NAZI party very cunning and killed many Jews during World War II. The Nazi Party is a political party in Germany that was founded in the early 1920's. The official symbol of the Nazi party is the Swastika. The Nazi party was formerly known as the Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (German Workers' Party), but later changed its name to the Nazi party on February 24, 1920 after Adolf Hitler became leader of the party. The ideology of the Nazi party was made with the aim of getting rid of the Lebensunwertes Lebens, namely Jews, Slavs, Romans, and homosexuals. In implementing this ideology the Nazi Party killed 6 million Jews and another five million, most of whom were Russians, Poles and Romans. So that the emergence of stereotypes about Germans because they are influenced by past history, but not all Germans are like that. Oleg in the film *Green Book* is not cunning, he is a loyal person to Don Shirley.

## 2) Discrimination

Discrimination is a critical term in understanding issues related to diversity. Historically, discrimination has been the main cause of the lack of diversity in higher education and other societies while the expression of ethnic prejudice actually becomes a form of verbal discrimination in social interaction (Dijk, 1984).

### a) Individual Discrimination

Individual discrimination refers to the behavior of individual members of a racial/ethnic/gender group which is intended to create differences and or adverse effects on members of another race/ethnicity/gender. In the film *Green Book*, researchers found many scenes and sayings that contain Individual Discrimination committed by white people against black people.



**Figure 4.** Tony Lip throws two glasses that have been used by two black repairmen into the trash (00:08:50)

The scene above takes place at Tony Lip's house when Dolores calls two repairmen to fix the water tap in their house. However, the two craftsmen turned out to be black people. Tony and his family hate black people because in their minds they have stereotyped black people as very bad and criminal. While the two repairmen fixed the tap, the whole Tony family waited while watching TV. They gathered for fear that the two blacks would injure or physically abuse Dolores.

Tony hated black people so much, when he went to the kitchen and saw the glass that had been used by two repairmen, Tony threw the glass into the trash. Tony's treatment was an act of discrimination because he threw away the glass just because it had been used by two black repairmen. Tony is disgusted by repairmen because he thinks they are not their equal, black people do not deserve to use glass in their home. The discrimination act that Tony did was institutional discrimination because Tony did it to the two craftsmen himself. These acts are related to the theory of individual discrimination because they are committed by individuals against other individuals.

### b) Institutional Discrimination



**Figure 5.** The police said that Don Shirley could not go out at night

Institutional discrimination, on the other hand, is very different because it refers to the policies of the dominant racial/ethnic/gender institutions and the behavior of the individuals

controlling those institutions and implements policies that are intended to have a different and/or detrimental impact. in racial/ethnic/gender minority groups. Institutional discrimination is usually carried out by dominant groups against minority groups because it is the dominant group that by definition generally controls social institutions.

DR. SHIRLEY : Excuse me! (no response) Excuse me, sirs. I quite understand why my associate is being held, but what exactly am I being charged with? (CONT'D) You seem like reasonable men-- can you let me out so we might discuss the situation please?

PATROLMAN #1 : Put the apple butter away, boy--you ain't goin' nowhere no time soon.

DR. SHIRLEY : You cannot hold me without cause!

PATROLMAN #1 : **I got cause. „Cause you let the sun set on your black ass!**

PATROLMAN # 1 asks Tony He can't be here at night. This is a city of sunsets. As a result of Tony's beating against the police, he didn't accept it because the police insulted Tony as a half-nigger. The police immediately arrested both of them and put them in prison that night. Don Shirley, who did not accept it, begged the police to be released because he was going to hold a concert the next day. At that time Don Shirley asked why he was also arrested because in fact only Tony made a mistake. However, the policeman replied that **I got cause. Cause you let the sun set on your black ass!** The meaning of black ass refers to black people, so the reason why Don Shirley was arrested was because he was black.

The first sentence put forward by the police was "He can't go out here at night. This is the city of sunset". refers to discriminatory behavior where in the city they mistreat black people. There are differences in treatment between whites and blacks. This shows the severity of racial discrimination in America. There are many places where black people are

forbidden.

Furthermore, the discriminatory action taken by the police was to throw Don Shirley in prison without any wrongdoing, he was arrested simply because he was African-American. This discrimination is included in the type of institutional discrimination because it is carried out within the police force.

In addition, language plays an important role in the transmission of stereotypes. When communicating, people focus on the traits viewed as the most informative. Because stereotypical traits are distinctive to a group, people are more likely to use them in social discourse than traits perceived as unrelated to group membership. Stereotypical traits are generally high on communicability (viewed as interesting and informative), contributing to persistent use (Schaller, Conway, & Tanchuk, 2002).

Moreover, it can be concluded that stereotypes are judgments based on perceptions of someone seen from where a person's group is. It can be categorized into two namely good and bad stereotypes.

### c) Structural Discrimination



**Figure 6.** Tony Lip reading the Green Book (00:56:46).

The image above is of Tony Lip reading the Green Book to see a better route for his next tour. The Green Book or Negro Traveler is a black travel guidebook created in 1892 to 1960 by Victor Hugo Green, he was a black postman from New York. This book was published from 1936 to 1976 during the segregation era in the United States. The Green Book is not just a travel guidebook but also includes a list of various businesses such as restaurants, hotels, beauty salons and drugstores that are indispensable for the convenience of traveling in the United States for black people.

One night Tony was reading the Green Book so he would know a safe and accessible

route to continue the next day so that he wouldn't get in trouble for South America. This must be done because in the 1960s there were still many areas that black people could not pass. This is due to the Jim Crow Law which separates White and Black People. This separation includes schools, garden areas and public settlements. Furthermore, in an era of harsh discrimination against black people, white Americans treat them harshly and inappropriately because the presence of black people is not allowed.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

The movie is set in 1962, in which African-American stereotypes of that year are elevated from the previous one because, that year was the culmination of black resistance with the emergence of the Human Rights Movement.

Black stereotypes in the 1960s included music, great athletes, like fried chicken, genius, and so on. This stereotype matches what the main character Don Shirley plays as a black genius who is also good at playing the piano. The stereotypes of the 1960s are different from the stereotypes of African Americans before the 20th century, they are stereotyped negatively, such as, criminal, stupid, evil, lazy, poor, uncivilized and others.

Not only the stereotypes of the film, but also contains a lot of discriminatory treatment against black Don Shirley as the main character of the film. Of the three types of discrimination put forward by Pincus, in the Green Book film script the researcher found that the dominant type is Individual Discrimination. It can be seen in this film that there are many acts of individual discrimination where Black Don Shirley is often the victim.

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