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**SOCIO-COGNITIVE ANALYSIS OF POWER RELATIONS IN THE
MOVIE *THE HELP*: A MULTIMODAL CRITICAL DISCOURSE
ANALYSIS**

Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture

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DEDICATION

Any success is not an easy task to fulfill
It is a fruit watered with effort and sweat
Limits are to be tested with ink and quill
Otherwise the journey will have no sunset

The ones to be crowned on my dedication table
My precious and caring parents Warda and Salim
Who pushed me everyday to be a great example
For my brothers Mohammed, Rami, and Wassim

Within the walls of university, I became scared and lonely
Until I was graced with the friendship hands of two angels
On my right hand, Alaeddine the wise whom I cherish daily
On my left hand, Aymen the brave with his unmatched morals

Among the flowers of our class garden, fairies I found
Manar, Rayan, Nihad, Mofida, Amina, Aya, Wissal, and Iman
Their beauty and glimmer shined everywhere and around
With the company of the fortune sisters Djamila and Djihane

Such a holy quest is not forsook by god
He promises us strength and patience
We are not to sacrifice or shed any blood
He asks only for belief and obedience

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to:

My mother, Her Majesty, who has always reminded me that among all women, she is truly fortunate to have a son like me.

To my esteemed father, the epitome of wisdom.

My grandparents, may Al-Firdaus be bestowed upon them.

To my brothers, the pillars of true manliness: Fateh, Ali, Sami, and Saado.

My beloved aunts and their adorable naughty children.

My two sisters, Yomna and Nourhan.

To my uncle Ferroudj Nasib, Aunt Najma and Kobi, may you rest in peace and may God's mercy be upon you for eternity.

Masoud Bouteraa, the man who was more than a father figure

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Abstract

The present research is a multimodal critical discourse study that seeks to investigate the ways different forms of power relations are represented within *The Help* movie. These power relations are generally expressed through the dichotomous representations of the Self and the Other, which are integrated within the communicative modes of the movie. Hence, the primary aim of this work is to identify these modes of communication, to examine their portrayal of power relations between these ideological groups, and to conclude the significance of such critical analytical procedure in promoting racial equality. This study adopted a qualitative research design, in which Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) necessitates the use of content analysis as the main data gathering and analytical tool. The sample selected for this analysis is a set of ten scenes that were extracted from *The Help* movie. The results and findings obtained show the disparity between the representations of this racial polarity. The positive “self” is embraced by the white ideology while the negative “other” is attributed to the black community. Thus, notions of dominance and resistance are born from this disparity between representations. A harmonious coexistence is achieved at the end to stabilize the relations between both races. This form of equality, however, is still an illusion that the whites employ to extinguish similar resistances and maintain their control and manipulation over the blacks. As a result, this current study offered few suggestions for future researches that will contribute to the permanent termination of this white supremacy and the realization of true ideological equality.

Keywords: Multimodal critical discourse analysis, power, power relations, ideology, dominance, resistance, harmony.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CDA Critical Discourse Analysis

MCDA Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis

List of Figures

Figure 1: Relationship between Power, Ideologies, and Movies.....	22
Figure 2: Aibileen Narrating her Life Story.....	38
Figure 3: Pictures of Aibileen’s son and Jesus Christ.....	38
Figure 4: Hilly’s Disgusted Attitude towards Black Servants.....	42
Figure 5: The Whites’ Conversation.....	43
Figure 6: Skeeter’s Attempt to Comfort Aibileen.....	48
Figure 7: Aibileen’s Nervous Demeanor.....	48
Figure 8: Charlotte Confronting the Black Family.....	53
Figure 9: White Club Members Staring at their Host.....	53
Figure 10: Minny’s Annoyed Attitude from Celia’s Naivety.....	58
Figure 11: Celia Refusing to Obey Minny’s Instructions.....	58
Figure 12: Skeeter’s Defensive Attitude against Minny’s Accusations.....	62
Figure 13: Minny’s Sarcastic Attitude.....	62
Figure 14: Aibileen Invading Hilly’s Personal Space.....	66
Figure 15: Aibileen Overwhelming Hilly Emotionally.....	67
Figure 16: Celia’s Shocked State.....	71
Figure 17: Minny Comforting Celia.....	71
Figure 18: Skeeter Interviewing Aibileen.....	75

Figure 19: Skeeter’s Joyfulness with Aibileen’s Cooperation.....75

Figure 20: Minny Shocked by Celia’s Surprise.....79

Figure 21: The Married Couple and Minny Sharing Food Together.....79

Table of Content

Dedication.....	i
Acknowledgment.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	v
List of Figures.....	vi
Table of Content.....	viii
General Introduction.....	01
1. Background of the Study.....	01
2. Statement of the Problem.....	03
3. Research Questions.....	04
4. Objectives of the Study.....	04
5. Significance of the Study.....	05
6. Research Methodology.....	06
6.1. Research Design.....	06
6.2. Research Instruments.....	06
6.3. Sampling Material.....	06

7. Structure of the Study	07
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Chapter One: Power and Power Relations in Movies

Introduction.....	08
1.1. Conceptualizing Power.....	08
1.1.1. Power Defined.....	08
1.1.2. Power and the Struggle for Existence.....	10
1.1.3. Quantitative Capacity Perspectives of Power.....	13
1.1.4. Power within Discourse.....	15
1.2. Power Relations.....	17
1.2.1. Definition of Power Relations.....	18
1.2.2. Types of Power Relations.....	19
1.2.3. Movies, Power, and Ideology.....	20
1.2.4. Impact of Movies on Thought and Action.....	22
1.2.5. Power Relations in Movies.....	24
1.2.5.1. Religious Discrimination.....	24
1.2.5.2. Social-Class Distinction.....	25
1.2.5.3. Gender Equality.....	26
1.2.5.4. Racial Prejudice.....	27
Conclusion.....	28

Chapter Two: Research Methodology and Data Discussion

Introduction.....	29
2.1. Research Design.....	29
2.2. Sampling Material.....	31
2.3. Content Analysis.....	32
2.3.1. Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis.....	33
2.3.2. Analysis Procedure.....	36
2.3.3. Data Analysis and Interpretation.....	37
2.3.3.1. Analysis of the Introductory Scene.....	38
2.3.3.2. The White Supremacy.....	42
2.3.3.3. The Black Retaliation.....	58
2.3.3.4. The Grey Harmony.....	71
2.4. Discussion of the Findings.....	83
Conclusion.....	88
General Conclusion.....	89
Reference List.....
Résumé.....
الملخص.....

General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

Power is ubiquitous. Since the dawn of history, humans have always been in an endless lifelong quest to gain consensual power in order to secure their basic needs, to be of value to the group they belong to, and most importantly, to survive. With the passage of time and the effective intervention of science in the social and psychological aspects of human existence, social groups began to evolve and climb from the ordinary primitive, gregarious lifestyle of species to more organized, sophisticated social structures, which were followed by a significant shift in the concept of power within societies. The fundamental concept in social science is Power, in the same sense in which Energy is the fundamental concept in physics (Russell, 1938).

The perception of power went through three main historical phases. It began as a primeval desire to fulfill the struggle of existence to the dependence-based approaches. Based on the latter, the powerful are independent while the powerless are dependent. In the earliest refined new version, different forms of power can be seen when a governor passes a bill, a father asks his child to stay home, or even within the relationship between bosses and employees (Guinote & Vescio, 2010). This type of power is expressly relational in nature. It requires the involvement of two different parties that mutually reciprocate performances, resources, and belong to the same social environment.

In other words, one cannot have a direct or subtle influence over others if the latter do not submit to them. This particular form of power is referred to as power relations, and it was first coined by the French philosopher Michel Foucault. According to Foucault, power relations are modes of action that do not act directly or immediately on others; they are a set

of actions upon other actions. He also went further, saying “power is everywhere’, diffused and embodied in discourse, knowledge, and’ regimes of truth” (Foucault 1991; Rabinow 1991). The embodiment of power in discourse (language in use) is what makes critical discourse analysis the one and the only discipline that could be applied to investigate it. CDA is a critical study that is mainly concerned with the “opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language” (Wodak, 1995, p.204). It has primarily been related to the ideas of Norman Fairclough, Wodak and Van Dijk. It assumes that power relations are discursive. In other words, power is communicated and practiced through discourse. Therefore, "we can study how power relations are exercised and negotiated through discourse" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p.272).

These power relations are always transmitted implicitly through different communicative levels of “Media”. The latter is comprised of the “Visual” level (printed materials such as books, pictures, political posters...), the “Aural” level (such as radio podcasts and songs), and the “Audio-Visual” level (such as TV shows and movies). Accordingly, CDA practitioners took into consideration the use of a single communicative mode (linguistic, gestural, spatial, visual, or aural code of communication) in their socio-cognitive analysis of any media material. Susanti (2016), for instance, focused on the linguistic aspect in the analysis of song lyrics. Pardesi (2019) relied on the visual semiotic elements to critically analyze the images used in language textbooks. Tobing (2013) considered the linguistic code of racism in his film analysis ...In the case of movies, however, certain criticism arose in response to this sole use of a single communicative mode, arguing that the analysis will be unreliable and insufficient since the implicit meaning or message extends beyond one communicative code to include simultaneous interaction of different codes. As a solution, Van Leeuwen and Kress (1996) proposed the integration of the

“Multimodality” concept within CDA, from which “Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis” emerged (Ledin & Machin, 2018).

Multimodal CDA, according to O’Halloran (2004), is a multi-layered or multi-faced analysis that examines how various modes of communication interconnect with each other within a media text to form and convey non-explicit messages (Coskun, 2015). Such an analytical method has seen numerous prototypical forms, such as Content Analysis and Social Semiotic Visual Analysis, before reaching its final acknowledged form. Correspondingly, some previous studies have tackled with the discipline of MCDA. (Khalifah, 2013; Febby, 2016; Syafik, 2023). On the other hand, other researchers investigated the power relations within movies, such as Sunarto et al (n.d.). It seems, however, that the infusion of both previously mentioned aspects in a single study has been neglected and put aside. This study, evidently, will attempt to present a new investigation about displaying the power relations through the utilization of MCDA in the exemplary movie *The Help*.

2. Statement of the Problem:

Historically speaking, humanity sought different artistic sources and tools of reflection in order to express themselves and social realities. It began with visual arts such as paintings and literature; then, the tendency shifted towards audio-based communication, like radio podcasts and songs, before the creation of movies and the appearance of cinema. These initial audio-visual products were commonly viewed as a source of entertainment, salvation, and unity for people, where groups with different cultural backgrounds assemble together as a unified community to undergo the same experience. Similar to its predecessors, however, movies have been harnessed within the clash of ideologies and powers as a more effective weapon to implement stereotypical ideas and falsified basic beliefs about superiority and inferiority, hegemony, racial discrimination...to widen the gap between the “Self” and the

“Other”. Although some critical studies attempted to analyze these power relations within movies, they failed to represent a holistic understanding of the implied messages due to marginalizing the factor of multimodality. Thus, there is an urgent need to enact MCDA within the socio-cognitive analysis of the movie “*The Help*” to obtain a better understanding of power dynamicity and avoid misinterpretations that lead to the aggravation of this critical situation of power imbalance.

3. Research Questions:

The aim of the present study is to provide sufficient answers for the following questions:

1. What is the nature of relationships between the different social groups within the movie?
2. What are the different modes that enabled the analysis of power relations?
3. What are the psychological motives behind creating these power relations?

4. Objectives of the Study:

This work seeks to meet the following objectives:

1. To explore the ways racial binaries treated and associated with each other socially within the movie.
2. To identify the various interactive codes of communication engaged within “*The Help*”.
3. To determine the distinctive cognitive and ideological impulses that led to the racial discrimination.

5. Significance of the Study:

The present study is enacted to demonstrate how the concept of the “Self” and “Other”, as well as the way power relations are represented in the interaction between both races within the movie “*The Help*”. In addition, the work will display the effectiveness of multimodality utilization in analyzing critically the power of race. Furthermore, the investigation will showcase the importance of CDA and critical thinking application in fostering cultural and racial tolerance of learners. The findings of this study will be of great value and use for the following:

- **Learners:** the end products of the study will enable the learners to enrich three main competencies: 1- “Criticality” or critical thinking will be developed to improve their epistemic, non-judgmental, evaluation of different racial communities and ideologies. 2- Comparative perception of the self and the other will be objectively rectified and reflected upon. 3-Ideological tolerance and understanding will be developed while racial prejudice and discrimination will be diminished.
- **Scholars:** the results of the research will be of significant benefit to socio-linguistic scholars, especially for CDA. Multimodality will be highlighted within their studies, along with the enhancement of their semiotic and multimodal semiotic analysis at the same time.
- **Movie Makers:** the producers of movies and films will consider the findings of this investigation as a reliable reference and a reminder for them to meticulously attend an accurate socio-cognitive representation of the “Self” and the “Other”. Moreover, the reason they require similar guidelines is to avoid the misconception of a certain ideology, ethnicity, or race, which will naturally result in an aggressive reaction and criticism by the audience of that offended cultural group.

6. Research Methodology:

6.1. Research Design:

The research attempts to investigate how power relations and racial discrimination are symbolically portrayed within the American movie “The Help”. The study follows a Qualitative Descriptive design to reach that end. The adoption of such approach functions in parallel with the main aim of the study: to critically analyze, scrutinize, and deduce the socio-cognitive influence of power relations within the case study *The Help*. In addition, the research questions contributed to the selection of this descriptive approach since the former necessitates the use of semiotic interpretation of different integrated modes of communication for a thorough delineation of these problematic social phenomena depicted within the movie.

6.2. Research Instrument:

Content Analysis is the data gathering tool selected for this qualitative study in order to answer the previously structured questions and objectives. The entire movie will be adopted as the sample of the study on which content analysis will operate. Accordingly, the work will be organized in two main phases. The multimodal description will be the first phase, where the five systematic codes of communication are to be located and related to their co-operative display of power relations. In the following phase, psychological motives and ideological beliefs will be identified and analyzed thoroughly within the sample.

6.3. Sampling Material:

Content Analysis will be applied specifically on the movie “*The Help*” as the study sample. The latter is carefully chosen for specific reasons. It holds a particular characteristic that is sought by the objectives of the research, which is the relational power of race. Another

purpose behind the selection of this sample is to investigate the way positive self representations and negative other representations are promoted within these power relations.

7. Structure of the Study:

The forthcoming study will be resolved through two chapters: the theoretical part and practical part. The first chapter will pursue the historical development of both power relations and Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis in a sub-sectional exploration. One segment will follow the distinctive periodic evolution of the perceptual view of “Power”, from which various forms of “Power Relations” materialized within the struggle of ideologies over dominance. Another segment will present an overview about CDA, its theoretical approaches, and how it assimilated the notion of “Power Relations” as an integral part of its analysis. Furthermore, a whole separate segment is designed to project the significance of Multimodality, the purposes and functionality of its components, and how the consideration of the latter by CDA led to the emanation of MCDA.

The research methodology and its structural framework will be the concern of this practical phase. Each and every step of the study will be properly and thoroughly described in order to answer the stressed research questions and objectives. The first section will be attributed to define, explain, and justify the choice of research design, data gathering tool, and data analytical method. The second section shall construct an intricate and ample analysis, discussion, and interpretation of the data aggregated.

Chapter One

Power and Power Relations in Movies

Introduction

Life on earth was, is, and will always be a colossal natural theatre that presents a good deal of brutal scenes of struggling. In one of the most well-known myths in The Greek mythology, Pandora was entrusted with a box in which the supreme God Zeus had used to contain all sorts of evil. As a result, she was ordered not to open it. Eventually she did and cruelty, sickness, and pain were released bringing suffering to humanity. She attempted to close the box but she only managed to keep hope inside. In accordance with the myth and from the first appearance of our extinct ancestral hominins to modern humans, the natural law made it so clear that all species on earth are born in an endless perpetual cycle of conflict. The natural law opened Pandora's box not out of curiosity as she did but to pave the way for the recognition not only of the fact that the world is inevitably a cruel place to live in, but also to the only solace and the healing antidote to prevail and survive that has been left inside the box, namely power. This chapter is mainly concerned with defining the concept of power and its dynamics, as well as its manifestations in movies.

1.1. Conceptualizing Power

1.1.1. Power Defined

Power is miscellaneous, imperative and earnestly covetable by everyone. It is no surprise that power is a concern for disciplines ranging from the social sciences to humanities such as anthropology, philosophy and sociology (Fiske & Burdahl, 2007). It received considerable attention from an unending line of notable figures, including Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Weber and has been conceptualized in a variety of ways over the course of studies and years (Overbeck, 2010). The power basis theory defines power as the faculty to

fulfill one's fundamental survival needs, taking into account one's individual abilities within the constraints imposed by the environment and resources (Sun & Pratto, 2017). That is, people have a variety of survival requirements and in order to satisfy them, they need power (Pratto & Zeineddine, 2015).

After the rise of civilizations, Greek historians and philosophers pondered the concept as well. The Athenian historian Thucydides suggests that power is of a bipolar nature and follows a developmental trajectory that rises from early weakness to the tremendous clash at its peak (Shepard, 1993). In a dialogue between Polus and Socrates on the power of rhetoricians, two opposing perspectives were introduced. Polus argued that power is the faculty to do whatever serves one's best self-interests like tyrants, has the potential to shed blood and imprison others at will. Socrates, on the other hand, believed that rhetoricians have no power because they lack the intelligence required to consider their actions as beneficial to the person holding it. The latter must be utilized properly since improper usage of anything does more harm than leaving it alone (Campbell, 2017).

As a human relational phenomenon, the writings of Thomas Hobbes and Niccol Machiavelli marked the beginning of modern power theory (Akotey, 2020). According to them, power could be defined as the capability of people or entities to force their will on others in the face of resistance (Machiavelli, 1515, as cited in Houghton, 2020). The same conception was later examined by Dahl (1957) and Mills (1959) which has grown to be highly prevalent in sociology (as cited in Overbeck, 2010). Since individuals with power were more prone to view other people as tools to achieve their own objectives, and with the rising complexity of human societies, The distribution of power within social groups should be given to those who participate in ways that benefit the group's interests (Keltner et al., 2008). Locke argues that consent is a must measure that constructs a sense of duty, and he emphasizes the importance of political consent due to the inherent freedom and sovereignty

that each individual is endowed with. Furthermore, he asserts that individuals with such attributes cannot be subjected to imposed vague obligations (Locke, 1689, as cited in Layman, 2016).

Power-dependence theory is one of the theories that shed light on the concept of power in terms of corporations among people. It examines social relationships by taking into account the reciprocal reliance between individuals and identifies power within the interconnections among actors within these relationships (Belaya & Hanf, 2009).

After presenting several definitions of power from philosophical, psychologist, and sociological perspectives, it can be inferred that power is the capacity to exert a kind of influence on individuals. It is contingent upon several means, including materialistic resources (money, social status...) and personal characteristics. The latter is associated with the individual's attributes to achieve personal interests and dominate others, whether through direct coercion or mind control.

1.1.2. Power and the Struggle for Existence

It is axiomatically known that all creatures are born in a state of perpetual battle against the forces of nature. Power is needed and struggle is our inheritance, just as it was for our early primate relatives.

In his book *Principles of Biology*, Herbert Spencer first introduced the phrase "survival to the fittest" (as cited in Falk, 2020). Creatures with the finest environmental adaptations have the biggest chances of surviving and procreating (Cunningham, 2023). This notion is at the core of natural selection and has a direct relationship with the ecological theory that defines power as the faculty to fulfill one's fundamental survival needs, taking into account one's individual abilities within the constraints imposed by the environment and resources (Sun & Pratto, 2017).

Animals with the capability to adapt to changes in their environment will eat more and be healthier than the average and will thus produce more offspring with the same characteristics. Animals with inabilities to adapt, on the other hand, will receive less food, be less healthy, have fewer offspring, and will be eliminated entirely (Bowler, 1976). Early humans are no exception. They had to cope and survive. Individuals require multiple specific survival needs. People require the ability to satisfy all types of wants, which is why the foundation of power and the drive to gain power comes from survival necessities (Pratto & Bou zeineddine, 2015).

Five unique characteristics that man held at the beginning of his existence offered him the ability to prevail (Coon, 2017). The early hominids were distinguished from the other four-legged apes by their bipedalism (Wayman, 2012). This posture provides a natural ability to sprint and jump, as well as a generative capacity of maximum force and power when defending against possible predators (Carrier, 2011). Besides, in his book *The Descent of Man*, Charles Darwin (1871) offered an explanation for both the erect posture and the second form of power which is the grasping hands:

The hands and arms could hardly have become perfect enough to have manufactured weapons, or to have hurled stones and spears with a true aim, as long as they were habitually used for locomotion and for supporting the whole weight of the body, or as long as they were especially well adapted, as previously remarked, for climbing trees” (p. 141).

Later, human hands had evolved responding to environmental changes to perform unique grips and the three primary grip functions: cupping, skilled handle of objects, and power grip to use tools and weapons (Chavez & Morrell, 2022). A man cannot use a tool to manufacture a weapon unless he sees it. Since vision is of paramount importance, humans

were endowed with intrinsic and well-designed eyes. According to the cooperative eye hypothesis, human's eyes evolved in part to facilitate eye contact during communication and teamwork on tasks that need close proximity (Than, 2006). They were widely used to locate potential mates, adequate food, and shelter while avoiding predators and other threats (Erichsen & Woodhouse, 2012).

The use and the application of tools require a cerebral capacity greater than that of most primates to plan and learn. Therefore, human cognitive ability must be improved through evolution (Shi, 2021). Old ancestors evolved in response to different environmental circumstances and the most noticeable evolutionary shift has been an increase in both absolute and relative brain size (Schoenemann, 2008). Larger brains enabled early humans to analyze and store knowledge, make plans, and offered adaptable solutions to novel and varied survival problems (Chung, 2021). Moreover, high church evolutionary psychology suggests that the human mind contains numerous, computationally unique "modules" developed by Natural selection.

These cognitive modules are ways of thinking to help our Stone Age ancestors deal with different kinds of problems such as communicating, tracking prey, avoiding diseases, choosing a spouse, and forming coalitions (Heyes, 2012). Since humans are social creatures equipped with different abilities and experiences, it is necessary for them to communicate with each other through the power of speech. As Pinker (2013) stated "The most remarkable aspect of language is its expressive power: Its ability to convey an unlimited number of ideas from one person to another via a structured stream of sound" (p.16).

Language is a human ability, and through steady adherence to communicative aims, its nature and features are shaped to meet the desires of the species (Markov et al., 2023). The latter, from apes to bees, appear to have a handful of expressions at best in comparison to the

human being, who has tens of thousands (Donald, 1993). For humans to successfully hunt, farm, and defend themselves from the hostile environment, they had to communicate with one another using language as a survival advantage (Bryant, 2021). Furthermore, the ability to build artifacts and the need to collaborate on multifaceted efforts made spoken language the most efficient method to convey the intricacies of these tasks, thus making it an indispensable requirement for their survival (Schroeder, 2015). Power through language is embodied in the idea that all skills are passed down from generation to generation to perpetuate the human lineage.

The five above-mentioned unique gifts that nature bestowed upon man in his early development provided him with exceptional abilities to transport through his legs and feet, communicate through his brain and speech organs, and work through his hands, eyes, and brain. All of which enabled him later to ascend to the pinnacle of global dominance (Coon, 2017).

1.1.3. Quantitative Capacity Perspectives of Power

In the past, humans aimed to satisfy their instinctive need, to fulfill the struggle of existence, to cooperate and compete with others for mating chances and some resources at best. Human societies, however, evolved and took more complex forms, resulting in a radical change from their primitive use of power to the insatiable desire to dominate others. Of all the intellectual and emotional disparities between man and animals, one of the primary emotional distinctions lies in the fact that certain human desires, unlike those of animals, are inherently limitless and cannot be fully gratified (Russell, 1938).

The writings of Thomas Hobbes and Niccol Machiavelli marked the beginning of modern power theory (Akotey, 2020). Someone can be said to be powerful when s/he has the capacity to influence someone else and stay uninfluenced by others (Voyer, 2018). In his

book, *Leviathan* Hobbes (1651) defined power as someone's capability to exploit what he presently possesses to gain some benefit in the future (as cited in Read, 1991). That is, In Hobbes' depiction of the state of nature, where trust is absent, individuals are compelled to behave as if their own gain always results in the loss of others. However, he highlights that this approach ultimately leads to loss for nearly everyone involved since he believes that people are driven by unending and relentless pursuit of power, which only comes to an end with one's demise (Evans, 2007). It is evident that self-interest serves as the sole motivation for humans' actions and the fundamental prerequisite to obtain one's felicity by which he meant self-interest is through the exercise of power (Rowlandson, 1998).

Machiavelli, on the other hand, concurs with Hobbes to a certain degree that individuals are primarily motivated by self-interest (Gardner, 2010). Yet, he has multiple views on power. Machiavelli posited that an accomplished ruler ought to project a persona that embodies the qualities demonstrated by both a lion and a fox (Patel, 2020). The latter possesses cunning and foresight, yet lacks the essential strength of a lion, rendering it powerless. Conversely, the lion, lacking the shrewdness and prudence of a fox, would exhibit recklessness. The successful Prince must exhibit and imitate the courage akin to that of a lion and the shrewdness of a fox (Machiavelli, 1993). Furthermore, In terms of being feared and loved, individuals love by their own will while they are compelled to fear by the prince's authority. A prudent prince must depend on his own power rather than relying on the others' (Holler, 2007).

The German sociologist Max Weber (1978) primarily examined power within the framework of society and the state, defining it as "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests" (As cited in Warren, 1992, p.19). This definition provides insight into power as an expression of people's capacities and will.

According to his community power theory, power is wielded by a specific, tangible individual, preventing others from pursuing their personal choices (Sharma, 2016).

A universal rule has been established in order to understand this power dynamicity. If “A” can force “B” to do something that “B” would not want to do, then “A” has power over “B” (Ailon, 2006). That is, if a person were to assert his authority and command all automobile drivers on the street to drive on the right side of the road, the majority of people would likely view him as mentally unstable. It would be difficult for people to accept that he possess enough influence over automobile drivers to compel them to adhere to a specific driving behavior. When a policeman, however, instructs drivers towards various directions, such situation aligns with the fundamental understanding of power. It is evident that the policeman possesses authority to compel drivers to change their course (Dahl, 1957). Power in this sense is the capacity to compel someone to do an action that they otherwise would not have taken, and actor A's influence over actor B is determined by the extent to which B's resistance can potentially be overcome by A (Emerson, 1962). Put simply, all the above-mentioned perspectives share a common perception of power as a quantitative capacity that someone holds over the others (Overbeck, 2010).

1.1.4. Power within Discourse

Humans are inherently languaging. Through the use of language, they endeavor to communicate our thoughts and feelings which bring immense pleasure, power, and benefits to both ourselves and others (Vargas, 2022). More importantly, humans utilize it to accomplish their desired goals and aspirations. The primary objective of language, which is communication, is overshadowed by a more significant aim, which is control (Halper, 2022).

Language is more than just a means of communication. Ancient societies were cognizant of the needed power to change human experience, influence their behavior, and have an impact on the world around them. The ancient Athenians placed a profound preoccupation in rhetoric, often known as oratory, and the Platonic dialogues not only introduced rhetoric as a significant topic but also named a number of well-known rhetoricians, or those who taught others persuasive speaking, including the famous philosopher Gorgias (McCarron, 2021). Gorgias asserts that the power of verbal persuasion, or logos, can be exploited maliciously to convince people to act against their own interests. It manifests itself in a multitude of forms such as holy incantations, poetry (metric language) or oratory. Additionally, Gorgias refers to the use of language and verbal persuasion as a "powerful lord," claiming that speech's impact on a person's soul state could be like the influence of drugs on bodies (Higgins, 2006). Based on the discussion between Socrates and Gorgias, the latter claimed that rhetorical power is unbounded and gives rhetoricians unlimited capacity to control others (Winn, 2021). Socrates asserts that language is both powerful and dangerous at the same time, and the reason for this danger is because ideas transmitted by language could be easily manipulated. Besides, the faculty of rhetoric to persuade without regard to veracity exposes the harmful qualities of language since the latter can be wielded to deceive (Prottas, 2023).

Every human is dependent on and constrained by his or her knowledge and experience, which primarily constructs their perceptions and views of the world. The power within modern democratic societies is not exercised through the use of force but through persuasive and manipulative means (Van Dijk, 2000). In contemporary societies, reality is molded by the desires of specific individuals who strive to manipulate the beliefs of others through the use of language since the latter has a profound impact on how we see the world and the way we think about it (Mykhailyuk & Pohlod, 2015). Language is convoluted and exploited by systems of prevailing ideas and beliefs that influence all aspects of human social interaction

and organization whether it is political, economic or cultural (Zajda, 2014). Some of these systems (ideologies) are distorted and falsified, which makes them capable of misleading people by offering a wrong impression of reality (Skaroupka, 2018). One example is the politician and dictator of Germany Adolf Hitler who was best known for his ability to skillfully disguise deception and hyperbole in eloquent and moving choice of words. His language and speeches possessed such persuasive force that they seemingly rationalized the extermination of millions of humans and had the support of his people despite his valiant enmity against the strongest nations that certainly endangered the very existence of Germany itself (McNamara, 2016).

Foucault and Derrida argue that any discourse is ubiquitous and inescapable as it plays an important role in the construction of truth and subjects reinforcing existing power relations (Skaroupka, 2018). Sociologists posited that poverty and black colored skin are contributing factors for imprisonment. The latter's rationale extends beyond the intricate relationship between poverty, race, and inequality. It is fundamentally the result of crime's discourses, which targets the least powerful members within societies (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

1.2. Power Relations

Individuals with different ideological backgrounds interact with each other on a daily basis. They can share a productive relationship that is based on mutual respect and love. At the same time, their social interactions can be disturbed by the intolerance of one group towards the ideology of another. The main reason behind such a negative perception of the other is possession of power. As stated before, power is considered as a key of opportunities, through which specific individuals are enabled to manipulate and control those who lack or have less access to this notion. This private ownership of power can be either channeled through a social hierarchy or can be bridged between these social groups. Yet, this unequal

exchange of power eventually results in unstable social relations between the powerful and powerless. Through the conceptual combination of power and relationships, a new term of study, known as “power relations”, was discovered and attributed to these social problems.

1.2.1. Definition of Power Relations

The concept of power relations is not limited to a single definition. Many analytical perspectives approached this notion with distinctive interpretations, yet they share a universal view of it. A power relation occurs when the uneven distribution of power affects to a certain degree the social interactions between the most and least powerful individuals. Such principle can be stretched to touch different specificities within these relationships, in which its functional correlation with notions of manipulation and control can be studied thoroughly.

Foucault implemented a sociological value to his definitive interpretation of power relations. He stated the following “There cannot be a society without power relations” (Power Relations, 2022, as cited in Oxford Reference Online Dictionary, n.d.). His claim clearly indicates that this kind of control naturally generate dominance and resistance as fundamental pillars for any society to exist and function. By attributing this new opposing force to the powerless, resistance leads power relations to the possibility of alternative realities, where dominance is not the only inevitable outcome.

Another reliable definition of power relations is explained from a communicative perspective. The Oxford Reference Online Dictionary states that “In interpersonal interaction, the relative status, power, and/or dominance of the participants, reflected in whether expectations and behaviour are reciprocal, and consequently in communicative style “(Power Relations, 2022). Based on this definition, power relations is linked to the

influential extent of power on social interactions among participants, which is expressed within their communicative behavior towards each other.

1.2.2. Types of Power Relations

One's capacity to reach and withhold power sources shapes different forms of power relations. The latter are distinguished into three main types: power over, more/less power to, and different power. Three sub-categorical outcomes can be located within each type of these power relations.

Dominance of the powerful over the powerless is the first type of power relations. According to Avelino and Wittmayer (2016), this ability to occupy and exercise power over subordinate participants creates three manifestations of dependability relations. A mutual dependence occurs when both parties have power over each other. One group's possession and application of power over another powerless group lead to a one-sided dependence. The last possibility is achieved when both interactive parties exercise no power over each other, resulting in an independent relationship.

The second type of power relations correlates both notions of dominance and resistance. In their interaction with inferior participants, superior individuals tend to harness their powerful positions and resources to dominate and create social changes. This unjust exercise of power develops the desire and reality to resist these social changes within the socially oppressed groups. Once again, Avelino and Wittmayer (2016), identifies three possible outcomes within this type of power relation. Both parties can share cooperative goals despite the dominance of one over another. They can also compete to reach their mutually exclusive goals. Their goals can be independent from each other, yet they can co-exist in their social relationships.

The third and final form of power relations eliminates the concept of dominance for both interactive parties. The notion of power is attributed equally and exercised distinctively by

these social groups. This equal distribution of power results in three possible relations. They can share a positive synergetic interaction when different power exercises co-exist harmoniously. A negative antagonized relationship occurs when both different adaptations of power resist and disrupt each other. The third form is neutral by nature, in which both parties do not affect each other significantly when their power applications are collided.

1.2.3. Movie, Power, and Ideology

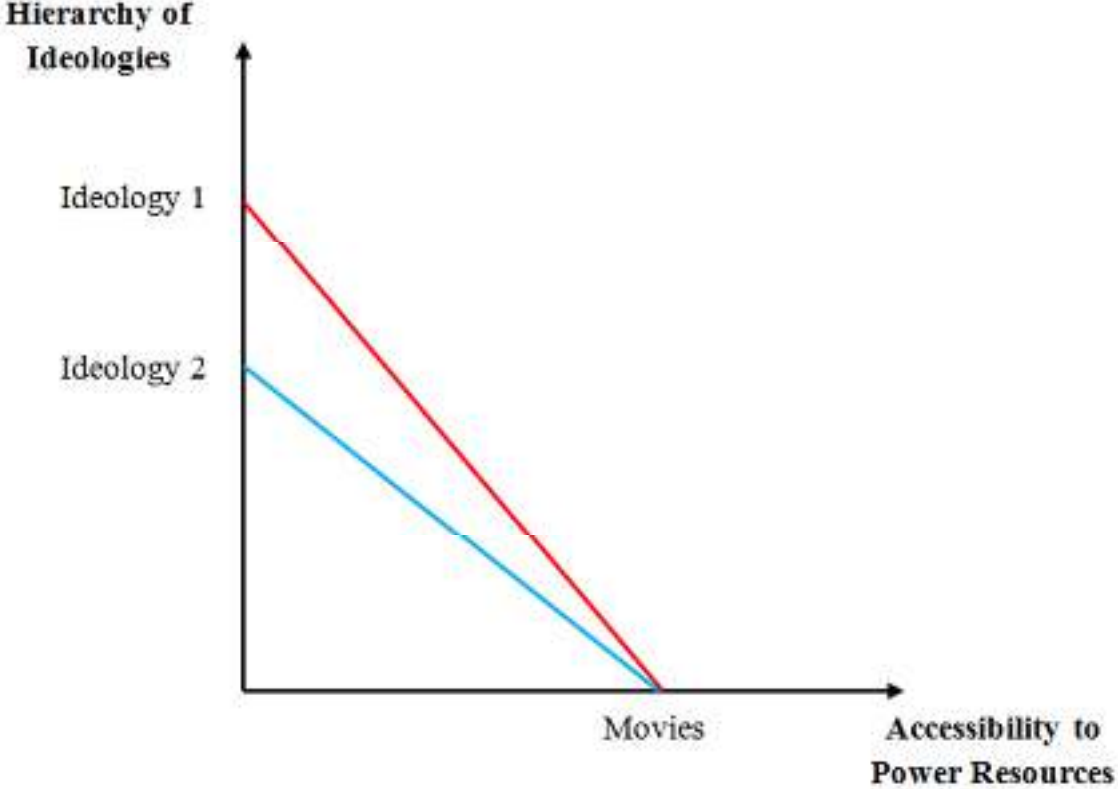
In order to understand how forms of power and ideological influence are transmitted within the movies, one must grasp the latter from different angles. Before the emergence of the first movie, the human being relied regularly on the use of visual aids, such as posters and paintings, and auditory means, such as radio and music, in order to influence the thought and behavior of others. Once the concept of filming was founded and noticed to have much greater impact on people, it was adopted and utilized by several ideologies to strengthen their dominance and control over less powerful ideologies. Thus, Movies can be defined as audio-visual forms of communication that influence and/or determine the socio-cognitive behavior of individuals.

The term “movie” has seen various developments and nuances in its definition by many film analysts and psychologists. Movies are the result of the recording and projecting processes of story-based pictures in motion, accompanied with sound effects. They are produced and presented to the audience as a source of entertainment. This notion is associated with two distinctive, yet closely interrelated terms. The first one is cinema, which represents the whole film-making procedure and setting, such as script writing and editing.... The second term is film, which is considered as the raw form and original name of movies. It refers also to the roll film on which the motion pictures and images are imprinted (Bisbey, 2019; Leitch, 1990).

An interchangeable relationship is formed when notions of power, ideologies, and movies are accumulated in the context of power relations. According to the previous studies, the concept of power is simply understood as the ability to impose control over the thoughts and behavior of others. As for the concept of ideology, Blackburn (2008) provided a universally agreed upon definition:” Any wide-ranging system of beliefs, ways of thought, and categories that provide the foundation of programmes of political and social” (as cited in Oxford Reference Online Dictionary). In other words, he claimed that ideologies are sets of basic beliefs that influence and/or determine people’s identities, thoughts, and communicative behavior. The simultaneous existence of multiple ideologies always results in competitive relationships, where one social group strives to prove its ideological credibility and superiority on the expense of others. In order to reach this end, different sources and high positions of power must be accessed only by a single ideology and prevented for the rest. This private accessibility of power and its uneven distribution among various ideologies creates a struggle for power or power relations. Now, the significant role of movies can be observed within the following diagram:

Figure 1

Relationship between Power, Ideologies, and Movies



It showcases that movies are one of many manifestations of power. They function as effective channels for ideologies and their struggle to be implicitly implemented within the socio-cognition of individuals. They also have a direct contribution in maintaining power relations in society, as well as the dominance of one ideology over another.

1.2.4. Impact of Movies on Thought and Action

Unlike their artistic predecessors, movies and cinema were noticed by several psychologists and discourse analysts to have more radical influence and effect on how people perceive, think, and act in their daily lives. Hence, there was an urgent need to study and analyze the nature and degree of this impact on the individual and on the society.

The behavioral patterns of individuals are deeply infected by the influential impact of movies. According to several studies, movies and films were proven to have maximum influential capacity on individuals at younger ages. Actions of children were observed and identified to be mimicry of the actions and behavior of their favorite characters in the movies. This effect may either sustain or fade quickly depending on children's mindset, memory, sociability, and morality. After watching movies constantly, a dichotomous impact on people's behavior has been confirmed. They can either construct the individual positively by adopting beneficial and helpful practices to build a more coherent and harmonious society, such as aiding others and consuming healthy food. On the other hand, they can easily corrupt and influence their actions negatively, which result eventually in a fragile and weak society and membership (Lyengar, 2023).

In addition to behavior, people's attitudes, thoughts, and worldview are also affected by movies. Based on the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (1929), the language and discourse of films may influence and/ or determine the way people perceive the world either in a constructive or destructive manner. Movies, accordingly, help in enlarging background knowledge and social awareness of individuals about other cultures and ideologies, preventing the occurrence of prejudices, stereotypes, and discrimination by default, such as watching films about immigrants and mental illnesses to grow intercultural sympathy and understanding. On the other hand, these products can be utilized as primary tools and weapons to provoke the previously mentioned intercultural issues (Lyengar, 2023).

Overall, the cognitive and behavioral patterns of individuals are affected on a daily basis by the ideological influence of movies. From one side, they are beneficial instruments for a productive promotion of mutual tolerance and respect among ideologies. On the other hand, they can lead to misinterpretations and stereotypes of other ideologies. Such misuse of movies is the main contributor to the emergence of unbalanced power relations. In addition,

notions of positive self representations and negative other representations are formed by the powerful to control and manipulate the powerless. Movies can be also used to resist this dominance of the superior ideology and balance the scales of power distribution. Hence, movies can have a positive or negative impact on individuals depending on the ideological messages behind them.

1.2.5. Power Relations in Movies

As mentioned earlier, movies and cinema are sophisticated mediums of exhibiting story-based motion pictures with sound, through which ideological messages are implicitly transmitted to spread awareness about the unequal distribution of power among various cultures and beliefs throughout history. This interactional relationship between more and less powerful ideologies is known as power relations. The latter is tackled by the multimodal critical discourse analysis, which results from combining both critical discourse analysis and multimodality to achieve optimum and reliable results. Power relations can be limited into four main categories: Religion, social class, gender, and race.

1.2.5.1. Religious Discrimination

It is universally approved by scholars and historians that religion is the most controversial topic used in debates and discussions and has the most impactful influence on people since it addresses the core nature, personality, and basic beliefs of individuals in societies. Religious books and figures are used as reliable references to support one's ideological claim. Later, various religious currents relied on media and especially on movies to effectively strengthen its infiltration and control over people's emotional and spiritual needs.

Despite having many religion-based movies, such as *The Message* (1976) and *The Kingdom of Heaven* (2005), the movie *Le Chocolat* (2000) remains the best embodiment of power hegemony between two contradictory beliefs. The movie showcases slow and intense

adversary between the reign of Catholic Church and the new arrival of pagan religion. The aim of the film producer was to present the oppression and restriction of Christianity over societies and individuals, portraying a gloomy surrounding and lack of life pleasures and enjoyment. The film demonstrated even the pain and agony of the count from his idealistic commitment to his catholic imagery. Such strong foundation is challenged and disturbed by the arrival of Vianne, a pagan chocolatier who travels between towns to fulfill her spiritual duty and set people's true nature and emotions free. Regardless of their religious rivalry, the movie offered a harmonious ending, where religious tolerance and understanding are achieved (Carol, 2001).

1.2.5.2.Social-Class Distinction

Before the emergence of the Marxist theory, the differences between social classes have always been exploited by the highest and most powerful members without any intention to address this social stratification. Carl Marx (1848) took the initiative to study and analyze critically this social class distinction in order to expose the misuse of power, such as money and reputation, to persecute less powerful members in society.

This social classification is symbolically portrayed in several movies, such as *Titanic* (1997) and *Knight's tale* (2001). Yet, such a struggle among social classes is perfectly represented within the movie *Snowpiercer* (2013). After a massive blizzard hit the world, humanity survived the extinction and found salvation in the Wilford's train. The latter, however, suffered from the same class hierarchy even after the apocalypse, where the passengers were placed in sections from the most luxurious compartment in the front and middle to the least hygienic and bearable compartments. The protagonist challenged this abusive, non-humanistic hierarchy within the train because it is natural and inevitable for the lower and weaker classes to revolt against their leaders in order to shift and equalize the

power balance among social classes. Despite the death of many people in this revolution, the passengers exited the train after it was stopped, symbolizing a new beginning for humanity featured by the end of tyranny and class stratification (Jurana, 2023).

1.2.5.3. Gender Inequality

Women, throughout history, were constantly being oppressed and abused by men in patriarchal societies. They were inferiorized and prohibited from participating in male-centered practices and proclaimed activities, such as economics, politics, and occupations. Instead, their fate was drawn by the male hegemony to marry, reproduce, raise, and do house chores. Following the arrival of Feminism, however, women attained this opportunity to express their dissatisfaction and rebellious attitudes towards male dominance and the stereotypical conventions of women through the initial use of literature, giving birth to the “New Woman”. They were met with success after several failed attempts, which made them strive for better advertising methods to maintain their cause’s survival and existence. Female causes and gender relations were eventually integrated in movie production.

The movie *Suffragettes* (2015) is a historically based recreation of the famous suffragette movement to vote for women in the UK, which encompassed women’s struggle at that time to obtain political acknowledgment and recognition. Despite risking their marriage, their lives, and their future, Maud, Emmeline, and all free-thinking women committed to their righteous cause in order to end the women’s suffrage and underestimation within patriarchal communities (Siti, 2018). Other movies adopted and presented this notion of gender inequality with similar or different analytical perspective, such as *Bombshell* (2019) and *Barbie* (2023).

1.2.5.4.Racial Prejudice

Racism has been and still is a global flaw in human history that led to the discrimination and deaths of countless number of oppressed people. The former is any situation of judging people poorly based on their physical appearance, ideological beliefs, and/or previous perceived stereotypes. The result of such negative phenomenon always ends with the imperialistic dominance of one race over another, especially between blacks and whites. Movies were initially harnessed to widen the gap between the opposed races, such as *The Jazz Singer* (1980), but then the use of films and cinema shifted from being a directional into a bi-directional weapon by both ideologies. Displaying their suffering and agony from their biased mistreatment within movies was very successful and effective to receive support and sympathy from others.

Among the movies that displayed racial inequality and discrimination, the movie *Remember the Titans* (2000) stands out from the rest. It is a renovation work that captured the first attempts of the American racial integration, where black and white citizens lived and shared equally. Nevertheless, we can deduce from the movie that it was a critical era for both races, in which constant stress and hatred between the binary of people sustained. Coach Boon, however, was successful in his attempt to unify his players for the benefit of the team by eliminating the racial tension and disrespectfulness among them. All the struggle and difficulties they faced in the movie symbolizes the refusal and intolerance of the society for harmony between the white and black. Overall, the movie portrayed the ups and downs in the developmental interaction between the colored people in America, which ended with a prolonged union and integration of both races “*Critical Analysis of Racism in ‘Remember the Titans, 2023’*”.

In this context, similar movies were analyzed and studied critically by several scholars and CDA experts, such as *Hidden Figures* (2016), *Race* (2016), and many more in order to expose the hidden power relations within them. It seems, however, that the movie *The Help* (2011) has not been considered in this domain of analysis despite its thorough and detailed manifestation of the power of race between the white and black in America. Therefore, there is an urgent need to conduct a multimodal critical discourse analysis to identify power relations between the social actors within the American movie *The Help* (2011).

Conclusion

This chapter has encompassed the concept of power and power relations thoroughly. The first half of this chapter is dedicated to the different theoretical definitions of power, its relation to the struggle for existence, its quantitative capacity perspectives, and its implementation within discourse. The second half tackles mainly movies and their socio-cognitive impact on individuals and societies, the significant role of movies in the relationship between ideology and power, and the different power relations that can be transmitted through these audio-visual instruments. The forthcoming chapter, however, is the practical part of the research, in which power relations within the movie *The Help* (2011) will be described, analyzed, and interpreted using multimodal critical discourse analysis.

Chapter Two

Research Methodology and Data Discussion

Introduction

The methodological framework of the study is undertaken within this chapter. The latter outlines the study structure, methods, and tools used for collecting and analyzing data. This framework is constituted and constructed in accordance to the researcher's underdeveloped questions and objectives. The aim of this study is to investigate how the Self and the Other are manifested within the racial relationship between the black and the white people in the movie *The Help* through describing and analyzing the five modes of communication. The methodological steps that regulate the study process are discussed in the first part of this chapter, in which research designs are constructed to meet the research objectives. The latter is followed by a multi-simultaneous process of collecting and analyzing data, selecting sampling materials, and detailing the analysis procedure. However, the second part of this research is dedicated to the discussion, analysis, and interpretation of the previously gathered data.

2.1. Research Design

In order to secure accurate results to be served as reliable references in further researches, a well structured research must be constituted by the researcher. To construct the research, the researcher is required to be careful and precise when planning the research outline to frame the entire research structure. Prior to undertaking the scientific study, each and every step the researcher needs to follow must be covered in order to answer the research questions and fulfill the research objectives.

Among the numerous definitions of the research design, the one provided by Durrheim (2004) is considered to be holistic and accurate:” The research design is a strategic

framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution, or implementation of the research strategy.” (p.29) Hence, the research design represents a well detailed guideline that links the conceptual research problem to the relevant empirical research. In other words, it provides the researcher with a practical manifest about using the proper methodologies and techniques to identify the type of data needed to be collected and analyzed for the main goal of answering the research questions.

Furthermore, conducting a good research design mandates the researcher to accomplish certain conditions. First, the research problem, objectives, and questions must be stated. Then, the sampling size and strategy must be fixated. The next phase is identifying the proper techniques for gathering the data, which must be compatible with the type of data. Finally, the researcher should analyze and interpret the data using specific data analysis procedures (Sunaina, 2023).

The most crucial step, however, is to choose the appropriate research approach that the research problem dictates. There are three main research approaches to be considered by the researchers when forming their research design: a quantitative approach, a qualitative approach, or mixed methods that combine the previous two approaches. The current study adopts a qualitative approach to investigate the already stated research problem and to address the research objectives. The reasons behind choosing qualitative research is its principles that serve the main research aim, which is to describe, investigate, and analyze the power relations within the movie *The Help* (2011). Additionally, the research questions also play crucial role in this selection, for they necessitate an in-depth, thorough description and exploration of the issue at hand. Unlike the quantitative approach, this qualitative approach permits researchers to be as flexible and creative as possible in their scientific quest.

This non-measurable data is collected and analyzed through various tools that have distinctive function and specific tendency towards different types of non-numerical data.

Such techniques are participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus groups. However, this particular study requires the use of document analysis, in which textual, visual, and other types of documenting data are collected. This technique depends on content analysis in order to describe, interpret, and explain the socio-cognition and power relations between the black and the white within the movie *The Help* (2011).

2.2.Sampling Material

The aim of this present study is to examine the representation of power relations and racial discrimination through the analysis of five communicative, semiotic modes incorporated in the American movie *The Help* (2011). Therefore, this study concentrates on analyzing different scenes extracted from the previously mentioned sample. The latter is drama, historical fiction inspired film directed by Tate Tylor in 2010 and produced by Chris Columbus, Michael Barnathan, and Brunson Green in 2011. The source and motivation behind the movie production was Kathryn Stockett's 2009 novel *The Help*. The actors were carefully selected based on their paternal acting skills in previous movies. They were chosen in order to recreate as much details as possible to match the novel's and audience's expectations.

The movie starred several actors as an ensemble cast, which is a drama-film-term that refers to a sum of primary actors who share approximately the same equal amount of screen time in the movie. Such actors are as follows: Viola Davis, Octavia Spencer, Emma Stone, Bryce Dallas Howard, and Jessica Chastain while the rest of the actors served some complimentary and supportive roles to accentuate the previous ones. The story follows the dramatic narration of the American journalist Skeeter Phelan during the 1960s in Jackson, Mississippi. She, with the major contribution and help of both Aibileen Clark and Minny Jackson, captured the compelling circumstances and daily suffering of the African American

house maids and the black individuals in general while showcasing and exposing the white prejudice and racial discrimination against them (Rotten Tomatoes, n.d.).

The whole study revolves around ten main scenes selected from the movie to be described, interpreted, and then analyzed. Each scene is assigned into one of the three main categories: the white supremacy, the black retaliation, and the grey harmony. Eight of these scenes are divided equally between the white supremacy over the black and the black retaliation against the white. While the rest two scenes are comprised within the grey compatibility and harmony between both races. These scenes represent different aspects of the American culture, mentality, lifestyle, values, norms, and history from the point of view of both ideologies. The sum of the selected scenes helps to uncover and confirm whether these different modes of communication (linguistic, gestural, visual, aural, and spacial modes) within the movie promote a socio-cognitive awareness that supports or opposes the notion of racism and racial prejudice.

2.3. Content Analysis

The careful selection of proper research tools to collect and analyze data is regarded as a key step in order to form a solid foundation for the final results of the scientific inquiry. In addition, these data gathering instruments must serve the research objectives and questions. Therefore, content analysis has been selected to function as the research tool for the current study. The former is broadly viewed by many scholars and researchers as a tool of research, through which different meanings that are implied within the content of non-textual messages are deduced and extracted. These messages, such as images and symbols, are argued to have their own distinctive structures that fit the analytical framework of content analysis.

According to Krippendorff (1980), content analysis is defined as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the

contexts of their use” (p.21). This definition suggests that the inferences are the main focus of this analytical method of content. Henceforth, the researcher must rely on analytical constructs that facilitates the transition from the text to the context in order to construct these inferences (White & Marsh, 2006). In other words, the inferential analysis of the content of the messages constitutes certain conclusions that, when contextualized, are used to answer the significant questions of the study.

There are several reasons and advantages behind this choice of data gathering tool. It a flexible instrument that grants the researcher the competence to adapt to any questions that may appear throughout the decoding processes. White and Marsh (2018) concluded that content analysis has a better and more effective compatibility with the qualitative analysis rather than the quantitative one due to the former’s holistic inferential conclusions of the phenomenon under investigation. The current study, thus, opts for this specific instrument of collecting and analyzing data in order to deduce and conclude the various power relations and racial meanings implied and represented within the content of the movie *The Help* (2011).

2.3.1. Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis

Like any other research method, content analysis requires the researcher to use certain deconstructive, systematic ways that tackle the phenomenon at hand in order to reach their main objectives and derive conclusive and reliable inferences. In this case, the current study deals with different semiotic, linguistic and non-linguistic modes within the movie; hence, Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) is regarded to be the optimum option to thoroughly analyze this multi-layered sample.

Before engaging with the term itself, one must differentiate between the two composed notions within Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis. The first is being “Critical Discourse Analysis” (CDA), which is viewed as a discourse analysis branch that investigates

social problems, such as inequality, hegemony, power, and dominance... and the way they are implicitly manipulated within the discourse in order to expose this non-innocent use of language. A generally agreed upon definition of CDA has been provided by Van Dijk (2015), in which he explains:

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context...critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality. (p. 466)

CDA follows its origins ever since a new wave of thinkers, representatively Karl Marx, emerged to replace the descriptive and superficial approach with more discursive one in order to analyze these social realities, creating by default Social Criticism. The focus of the latter turned towards the discourse itself since it was the most effective weapon and social practice to create and change social realities. Thus, CDA was founded due to the combination of both Social Criticism and Discourse Analysis.

The second term within MCDA is “Multimodality”. The latter was expressed by Bezemer and Jewitt (2018) in simple terms as “multiple means of meaning making” (p.28). They argued that the process of constructing and deducing meaning communicated within the content of the phenomena has stronger reliability and validity when taking into consideration more than one mode of communication. In other words, the sole reliance on the linguistic aspect when attempting to extract the implied meaning is insufficient. Instead, one must incorporate other semiotic modes simultaneously in order to form and reach a solid meaning as close as possible to the original intended one. Besides the linguistic elements like the choice of words and the order of ideas, there are other communicative means that have unique interpretive, non-linguistic language, such as visual elements like colors and

shapes, auditory elements like music and tone of speaking, gestural elements like body movements and facial expressions, spacial elements like position and distance.... Subsequently, CDA claimed this meaning making process to be incorporated within the analysis. The reason behind this significant decision is to withstand the repetitive criticism of many scholars and researchers. They proclaimed that CDA's main focus revolves around only linguistic phenomena, limiting its conclusive boundaries and making the reliability and validity of its findings weaker in the contemporary studies (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2018).

Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis has been founded as a result of the integration of CDA and Multimodality. As a new trend among the qualitative approaches, it shifted the analytical perspective of several critical discourse analysts, inquiring not only linguistic features, but other semiotic modes are also to be considered significantly in the study. Put simply, MCDA examines the language and the integrated semiotic forms within the message in a critical and systematic manner. The researcher, thus, must be familiar with the cooperative functionality of the language and the different modes of communication of the message in order to acquire the communicated meaning as originally intended. Simultaneously, the researcher employs this multimodal analysis to improve his critical understanding and unbiased interpretation of the social problem. It was thanks to the initial efforts of Kress and Leewen (2001) that MCDA came into consideration for the first time. They argued that CDA and other linguistic analytical principles extend beyond the boundaries of written and textual languages to include visual, aural, spacial, and gestural communicative patterns. They confirmed that both the language and the extra semiotic modes work interchangeably. In other words, the pure linguistic and textual analysis of political speeches, for example, without considering the tone of speech, its contextual and spacial setting, or the physical movements of the body and the face of the person presenting the speech leads to a partial understanding or misunderstanding of the text due to its various

misinterpretations. At the same time, combining the visual and gestural analysis of caricatures, for example, with the linguistic examination of the text provides a better and more reliable acquisition of the intended meaning (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2018).

2.3.2. Analysis Procedure

The research sample must undergo the analytical process of content analysis in order for the study objectives to be fulfilled. Describing, analyzing, and then critically interpreting the different power relations existing between the black and the white within the movie “*The Help*” is the main aim of this qualitative inquiry. Thus, the highlighted scenes from the sample are assigned accordingly to one of three main categories: white supremacy over the blacks, the black retaliation against the whites, and the grey harmony between the two races.

There are three main phases within this analytical procedure of the chosen sample. A non-contextualized and detailed description of all the scenes is the first stage of this study. Various forms and modes of multimodality (linguistic, gestural, aural, visual, and spacial) are to be highlighted and identified in isolation by the researcher. This includes describing the choice and organization of words, the physical movements and facial expressions of the characters, their external aesthetic appearance, the variation of colors and their saturation, the tone and pitch of speech, the genre and the volume of background music, the structural and physical framework of the scene’s background, and the angles and framing of camera shots. The next phase to follow is the interpretative process of the scenes. The connotative or the symbolic meanings behind the usage of multiple modes of communication are to be deduced and displayed individually before interpreting them collaboratively. The third and last phase of this analytical study is to critically link these denotative and connotative examinations to the socio-cognitive conceptualizations of Van Dijk. In other words, the researcher must understand and evaluate the ideological message and its influence on both the white and the black people’s attitudes and beliefs.

2.3.3. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Ever since the creation of movies, the whites have exploited the blacks to convey their racial and falsified perspective about the other colored individuals in order to spread and preserve their dominance and power over the others. As previously mentioned, these stereotypical representations of “the other” played a big role in the forming and shaping black people’s identities, self reflection, and their social role and position in the white society. This socio-cognitive foundation pushed the oppressed population to rise and rebel against such conceptualization, utilizing the same media weapon against the white supremacy to expose the latter’s racial discrimination and portray the daily suffering of the black people. Thus, the current study examines the way this clash between the two binary ideologies are conveyed though the use of multimodality.

2.3.3.1. Analysis of the Introductory Scene

Figure 2

Aibileen Narrating her Life Story



Figure 3

Pictures of Aibileen's Son and Jesus Christ



- Modes' Description

This first part of the movie is taken as an exemplary foundation for the upcoming analysis of the other scenes. The aim of this initial segment is to provide the reader with the analytical framework of this work. The first step is to identify and describe the dominant modes of communication within this scene. The movie introduces a discussion between a black woman called Aibileen and an unknown white interviewer. There are three main forms of modality to be examined: linguistic, gestural, and spacial elements.

It is customary to deconstruct the language and the gestures of the characters simultaneously. The scene presents the white reporter's hand writing "The Help" on her notebook. Aibileen was silently drying the dishes. She initiated the conversation by stating her birth date and place after looking directly at her interviewer. The white woman asked Aibileen about her childhood, and whether she was familiar with the inevitable fate to become a house maid. Aibileen answered that question affirmatively while addressing Skeeter "ma'am". She further asked about the source of her preconception. Aibileen widened her eyes before answering: "My mama was a maid. My grandma was a house slave." Skeeter asked Aibileen further if she had any alternative vision of her life in the future. The latter silently smiled and nodded positively. The last question was hypothetical: "What does it feel like to raise a white child when your own child's at home being looked after by somebody else?" Aibileen contemplated the answer before staring at the wall. It had two pictures: the bottom one is of her graduated son, and the other one is of Jesus Christ. She finally changed her gaze towards the window without uttering any sound.

- **Modes' Interpretation**

The next phase is to deduce the implicit connotative meanings from the previous denotative analysis. This first part of the movie is a flash-forward segment of the interview between Aibileen and Skeeter. The purpose behind this scene is to prove that the movie is depicted from a true story. It also shows that this book entitled "The Help" is the main focus

of the upcoming events. Aibileen's initial answer is the next element to interpret. This interview clearly showcases a typical exchange of questions and answers between the two ladies. When Aibileen stated her birth place and date, there was no question made by the interviewer. This part is skipped purposefully to be found in another scene. Aibileen's friend Minny was interviewed by the same reporter, who requested her birth place and date. It indicates that Skeeter is nervous during these interviews, so she attempts to "Break the Ice" and reduce the intensity between them by asking a simple basic question. When she asked about Aibileen's pre-knowledge of becoming a house maid, the latter found the question ridiculously absurd. Once she was told her mother and grandmother worked domestically for the white men, she realized that her future would be the same. Skeeter's next question about Aibileen's dreams made her happy. The movie portrays Aibileen as a religious woman, who loves to write her thoughts and look after the little ones. She wanted then to be a famous writer and a caring mother. However, she could not become one without losing the other option. Before her book got published, she found the happiness of motherhood with Mae Mobley. She lost her job and Mae Mobley's company when she became well-known for book. The last question made Aibileen speechlessly nostalgic. Mentioning her son in the question caused Aibileen to remember the traumatic death of her son. She avoided answering the question; otherwise, she would collapse in tears and sorrow.

- **Modes' Explanation**

In this introductory scene, the objective is to set the stage for the reader to internalize and develop a holistic idea about how power relations between the two races came to be. It is also critical to provide essential explanations that will enable and foster the reader's analytical understanding of later scenes.

In his book "*The Path of least Resistance*", The American writer Robert Fritz stated that he received several questions from many visitors of Boston about its roads' layout. He

asserted that during the seventeenth century, cows moved according to the area's structure and selected the easiest route that did not contain many impediments. Over time, the cows began to form a pattern of behavior when traveling the same path continuously. Therefore, the topography of the land ascertained the cow's behavioral pattern, from which Boston's layout of roads was created (Fritz, 1986). In the light of the above-sated story, Aibileen's answer to Skeeter's first question hides an entire system of discrimination that has influenced black people's lives throughout history and prompted them to create a behavioral pattern. Just as the behavioral patterns of cows were shaped by the land's structure to take the easiest route, racial institutions shaped black individuals' lives in a way that compelled them to choose the familiar path. In other words, it influenced them to construct and perpetuate their behavioral patterns across generations to ensure their enslavement and inferiority.

After the first question, Aibileen nodded her head in approval to the second one. She seems uncertain about her desires and her identity. It is logical to deduce that any behavioral pattern that is not advantageous to individuals in human society will not be sustained for a long time. This is similar to the natural selection in the animal's world, where unnecessary non-adaptive traits must be rooted out. When it comes to social systems, however, adaptability is essential for sustaining society's behavioral norms and power relations as well. The latter can only persist if it goes hand in hand with the overall societal structure. Racism, for instance, survived despite the harmful outcomes it brought due to its harmonious correlation with the influential interests and the majority of people within one particular society (Perry, 2007).

The last question Aibileen received was about her deceased son. After she heard the inquiry, she looked directly at the two pictures on the wall. The figure of Jesus Christ was highlighted on one of them while her son appears in the other. The selection of the former was not spontaneous or coincidental. Instead, this picture alludes to Ham's curse in the book

of Genesis. According to this biblical story, Ham saw the prophet Noah unclothed. Therefore, a curse was cast upon him to have his descendants eternally slaved (Whiteford, 2009). Throughout history, slave masters justified their tyrannous inhuman actions towards black individuals based on such biblical stories. Furthermore, it is evident that the story of Ham is considered as a religious justification for enslaving African Americans (Goldenberg, 2003). In the upcoming analysis of the scenes, the behavioral patterns that paved the way for the inferior position of the black maids as well as the sudden shift in power dynamics between them and whites will be analyzed thoroughly.

2.3.3.2. The White Supremacy

a. Instance One: The House Toilet Discussion

Figure 4

Hilly's Disgusted Attitude towards Black Servants



Figure 5

The Whites' Conversation



- **Modes' Description**

The third and fourth figures belong to the cut scene 14:53. The pictures depict different interactional moments between high-class white women and wives, talking and playing during their weekly scheduled house parties with the presence of their colored house maids and servants. There are four dominant semiotic modes within these figures: linguistic, gestural, visual and spacial.

The linguistic mode and physical behavior of the characters are the most noticeable and repetitive aspects throughout the whole scene. Initially, the main topic tackled among these ladies was everything linked to feminist issues, such as Skeeter's new job and her marital state. After Skeeter turned towards Aibileen to thank her for pouring juice in the glass, Hilly's body started shivering. The conversation suddenly shifted towards Hilly's abstention from using the bathroom. Hilly's mother clarified this odd response as Hilly's insecurity towards sharing bathroom with the black maids: "Oh, she's just upset because the nigra uses

the guest bath and so do we.” Hilly suggested that Aibileen should have access to a toilet in the house. Skeeter had a very irritated expression on her face. Hilly made a disgusted looking face while asking:” wouldn’t you rather them take their business outside?” Skeeter attempted to change the topic, but Hilly re-emphasized the necessity to build isolated colored bathroom for Aibileen as a profitable financial investment. She also said: “it’s just plain dangerous. They carry different diseases than we do”. She used the “Disease-Preventive Bill” to substantiate her claim: “...every white home to have a separate bathroom for the colored help”. She justified her actions with a serious tone to be for the sake of their children:” I’ll do whatever it takes to protect our children”.

Lastly, this section will be devoted to a co-operative functionality between the visual and spacial modes of communication. In terms of colors, it is safe to say that the background décor and characters all shared the same color palette. The director projected an autumn-based background with different shades of brown, orange, green, yellow, and gold. There are two main characters who broke the color harmony and flow. Hilly wore very distinctive and vibrant color palette of dark green and neon pink. The other character is Aibileen, who can be recognized to be unfitting in that setting primarily due to her black skin color. Her clothes consisted of light blue and white. In terms of their physical and aesthetic appearance, there are several ones to describe. Fancy dresses, expensive jewelry, and stylistic haircuts are all observed clearly in Hilly and Elizabeth. Skeeter broke that style with a curly hair, less colorful dress, and no use of makeup. As for Aibileen, she was the least attired among the other characters. The next aspect to talk about is the spacial mode. The party takes place in Elizabeth’s residence, where the white women have occupied a seat on each table, except for two characters: Aibileen and Hilly’s mother. As for the main table, Skeeter’s back faced Hilly’s mother while Hilly’s back faced the other tables behind her. After she checked on

Mae Mobley, the camera focused closely on Aibileen's facial expressions while she listens to the ongoing conversation.

- **Modes' Interpretation**

The complexity of deconstructing and decoding different layers of meanings resides in the combination between the linguistic and gestural mode. First, Skeeter's unconscious act of thanking Aibileen symbolizes her appreciative nature to all hard working people. Furthermore, Hilly's physical reaction and her abstention to clarify the reason behind not going to the bathroom were planned intentionally to announce her new lawful initiative. Hilly's dissatisfaction with the maid's usage of their employer's bathrooms shocked both Skeeter and Aibileen. The latter's silent diversion of her gaze served as a defensive mechanism to restraint her offended emotions from disrupting her duty. Elizabeth and Skeeter were discreetly attempting to shift the conversational attention from this sensitive topic, yet Hilly purposefully ignored all of their warning signals. The reason behind Hilly's serious tone in response to Skeeter's joke lies in the fact that she regarded her as a threat to her credibility among her club members. She faced that threat with a more powerful proof that cannot be put in sarcastic situations, which is the involvement of children's safety into the conversation.

Unlike the previous modes, the combined visual and spacial modes of communication are much easier to locate and decode. The autumn-based color palette often creates a comfortable and pleasing visual experience for the audience. The purpose behind using such background is to be dismissed from the visual focus while highlighting the color palette of the main characters. The different color shades of orange and gold transmit joyful, yet pessimistic sensation, which reflects the contemporary mood of the party. The mutual color scheme of Skeeter and Hilly's mother is suitable for conveying their simplicity, elegance, and clumsiness. It also reflects their companionate personalities to a degree, which is noticed

in their smooth interaction with Aibileen. Moreover, Hilly's aggressive color tones neither fit the color palette of the other characters nor the background. It indicates her innate need and desperation to be distinguished in the presence of other ladies. In addition, it is customary for the leaders and most influential members of groups to have distinctive color code and clothes as a sign of authority and superiority. However, Aibileen's plain clothes and silent color tones reflect her humility and unwillingness to be noticed by the white women. It also represents her low daily income in comparison to the white women, who derive their fortune to buy clothes and jewelry from their white husbands.

As for the spacial mode, the first thing to highlight is the sitting position of Skeeter and Hilly's mother in comparison to the other attendants of the party. This symbolic assignment expresses the other women's implicit intolerance towards the previously-mentioned characters due to the dementia and old age of Hilly's mother as well as the new job and marital state of Skeeter. Moreover, Aibileen's constant movement and the close camera shot of her face represent her attempts to hide her disagreeable feelings regarding the discussed topic.

- **Modes' Explanation**

When watching the interaction between the four social actors (Hilly, Skeeter, Aibileen, and Elizabeth), it becomes more apparent that the most indicated type of power relation is the power over the black maid. The linguistic -gestural codes showcase the white's authoritative dominance over Aibileen. Miss Walter impersonated her daughter when she employed the word "Nigra" to expose what is in Hilly's mind. Such white-coined term is meant to diminish black people and imply their inferiority. This becomes more evident when she said: "and so do we". The pronoun "we" indicates the racial superiority and positive self representation of the white people while highlighting the negative "otherness" of the black ones. Hilly, as a woman of supreme society status, maintains superiority and inferiority

dynamics. Her power comes from access to social resources which provide the capacity to dominate and control subordinate groups. Furthermore, her body's reaction could be explained by the embodied emotion theory, which is the idea that mental events can be expressed by states of the body. People in power often express animosity and apprehension towards individuals they dislike by portraying them in unfavorable images while depicting themselves in a positive way.

According to Van Dijk's ideological square (as cited in Shojaei et al., 2013), ideologies show a distinction between the Self and Other, often portraying "We" positively and "Them" negatively. Such utterances are: "it's just plain dangerous "and" they carry different diseases than we do". Those terms (Danger and Diseases) refer to ideological history of scientific racism, such as the race-based classifications made by Friedrich Blumenbach (as cited in Caswell & Desmond-Harris, 2015) in his book *On the Natural Variety of Mankind*. He classified humans into five categories, in which "the white race" ranked as the highest compared to the other races. Moreover, Hilly's claims were supported by the approval of "Disease-preventive Bill". This refers to the exploitation of healthcare institutions of certain fields, such as anthropology, evolutionary biology, and genetics to promote racist ideologies. In their search for empirical evidence to prove the black biological inferiority, the medical researchers found mortality rates highly reliable (Patterson, 2008).

In terms of colors and their usage, power dynamics are conveyed through Hilly's costumes compared to the black maid's. Hilly consistently dresses in a sophisticated and stylish manner, highlighting her importance within the community of Jackson. Aibileen's clothes, conversely, portray a sense of vulnerability and helplessness due to being forced to wear such an attire. Individuals could only be in a position of power when they have the capacity to influence others and stay uninfluenced by them (Voyer, 2018). Hilly holds a

greater social power over any other white woman in the room. Her high social status enables her to set the norms considered unquestioningly acceptable in her community.

b. Instance Two: Skeeter and Aibileen

Figure 6

Skeeter's Attempt to Comfort Aibileen



Figure 7

Aibileen's Nervous Demeanor



- **Modes' Description**

Figure 1 and 2 are exemplary representatives of the next cut scene to be analyzed between 35:35 and 37:14. In this segment, a quick conversation takes place between Skeeter and Aibileen in the neighborhood. The categorical semiotic modes of modality within the current scene are identified as being equally the same ones within the previous examined scene (linguistic, gestural, visual, and spacial ones).

The first pair of communicative modes to describe is the linguistic and gestural aspects of the conversation between Skeeter and Aibileen. The latter and the rest of the black maids were getting prepared to enter the bus. She was talking to her friend Mae Davis when Skeeter appeared behind the bus to call upon Aibileen. The maids were shocked by the unexpected arrival of Skeeter. Mae Davis climbed on board the bus while Aibileen waited for Skeeter to reach her. Aibileen asked Skeeter for the purpose of her arrival while addressing her "ma'am". Skeeter enthusiastically approached her to clarify that she needs her help. Aibileen assumed that Miss Skeeter wants to discuss the previous questions of Miss Myrna. Skeeter reminded Aibileen of her previous offer that she declined before. She wants to write a book about her experience as a black servant for the white people. Skeeter expressed her determination to have Aibileen as her main credible source. Skeeter stated her understanding of the consequences when she said: "I know it's scary". Before responding, Aibileen was staring at Miss Skeeter and the white young men were sitting on a bench. She answered with an example of a terrible arsenal that happened to her cousin: "they set my cousin Shinelle's car on fire, just 'cause she went down to the voting station".

Skeeter restated that the book is completely original and unharmed to anyone. Aibileen was nervously shaking when she said: "cause there's a reason. I do this with you; I might as well burn my own house down". Skeeter stated that she will be cautious during the process, but Aibileen met the comforting attempts with an aggressive tone: "This already ain't

careful, Miss Skeeter”. Aibileen was breathing heavily and sweating profusely. She accused Skeeter of being ignorant to the true source of her fear: “You not knowing that is what’s scaring me the most”. She employed “Simile” when she compared the source of her panic to be worse than “Jim Crow”. Suddenly, Aibileen noticed the passing lady in the background while Skeeter offered her phone number and a lift to her house. She refused her offer with a trembled voice.

The next semiotic pair to investigate and identify within this scene are the visual and spacial modes of modality. The main characters met and discussed next to a public garden in the city. Aibileen and Mae Davis were talking to each other under the sunray. Mae Davis climbed inside the bus to leave the scenery open for Aibileen and Skeeter. These two ladies started their critical conversation under the big shadows of the trees, away from the sun. All the white people, except for Skeeter, were located on the bright side in the background. As for the visual aspect, there are numerous features to uncover. All the black maids wore the same uniform with white and bluish color scheme. The white people’s color and clothing codes were colorful and fashionable shirts and dresses except Miss Skeeter, who wore simple dress with shadier color palette. The setting behind Skeeter has different tints of green, yellow, and brown whereas the one behind Aibileen comprises different shades of the same colors.

- **Modes’ Interpretation**

These semiotic modes import several hidden symbolic meanings that need to be uncovered for better understanding of the scene. The initial reaction of Aibileen and Mae Davis from Skeeter’s arrival is the first segment to interpret. They anticipated that she came for her usual request about the book, which made them irritated. They attempted through different methods to prohibit Skeeter from mentioning that topic. Mae Davis directly showcased her abstention from talking with Skeeter by climbing on board the bus.

Aibileen's response was more subtle. When she suggested Miss Myrna's questions, she purposefully signaled her unwillingness to discuss the book. They were helplessly disappointed due to Skeeter's resolved attitude. The bus's departure made Aibileen realize the eventuality reaching her destination on foot. She used figurative speeches in her arguments to simultaneously confirm her viewpoint and regulate Skeeter's optimistic misassumption. Aibileen was under tremendous amount of pressure due to this conversation and Skeeter's stubbornness. It caused her to sweat, nervously stare at Skeeter, and speaking got aggressive. The act of giving her phone number to Aibileen clearly indicates that she does not accept Aibileen's abstention. She believed that it is a matter of time before Aibileen inevitably accepts the request. Skeeter's offer to drive Aibileen home signaled her own self-reflection of her recent actions, trying to compensate Aibileen for wasting her time.

Despite their limited significance and contribution in the scene, the spacial and visual modes must be analyzed to obtain holistic picture of the underlying meanings. Putting the main characters under the shadow while positioning the others under the sun might be viewed as an unintentional mistake; however, it is done intentionally with utmost consideration. Many movies have been criticized for highlighting background characters more than the main ones because they obstruct the audience's focus from the main dialogue and interactions. The shaded color palette of Aibileen and Skeeter invites the watcher to concentrate on their physical movements and facial expressions while following their conversation in detail.

- **Modes' Explanation**

Before all else, it is observed that both social participants in this scene employed lexical choices and body gestures that signified a systematic white "power over" dynamics. To that end, it is incontrovertible that any resistance or contravention of the laws by the black maids means severe punishments. In an effort to convince Aibileen to assist in the book, she could

have selected words such as "Aibileen, I know this is hard" or "I understand that you're busy." However, she opted for "I know this is scary." Skeeter, being a white woman with more social and economic privilege, could easily manage risk exposure and the repercussions of her project. Aibileen, as an African American maid, must be prudently cautious due to the racial and systematic racism during that era. Aibileen's resistance and fear manifested in her word choices as she communicated particulars regarding her situation: "They set my cousin Shinelle's car on fire, just because she went down to the voting station." and "I do this with you, and I might as well burn my own house." She also mentioned the name Jim Crow, which represents a set of laws that authorized racial segregation. Those who attempted to violate Jim Crow ordinances faced imprisonment, brutality, and arrest (Onion, 2024). Furthermore, her word choices and body language are indicative factors of the coercive power relation that creates fear and threat of loss. This fear compels others to act in a certain way in spite of their own will or interests (Murphy, 2023). Another point to consider is the visual modes of the characters and setting. It is evident that Skeeter is standing on the bright green side of the ground while Aibileen is on the opposite shadowy barren side. This indicates that Skeeter is in the limelight and that the grass is always greener on the whites' side, unlike the dire and dull state of black Africans. This gives the impression that the whites have more accessibility to power and its resources while marginalizing the blacks.

c. Instance Three: Skeeter's Mother and Constantine

Figure 8

Charlotte Confronting the Black Family



Figure 9

White Club Members Staring at their Host



- **Modes' Description**

The accumulated set of pictures is depicted from a flashback scene that takes place after 1:49:19. This special section of the movie represents Skeeter mother's own interpretive recreation of her last experience with her house maid Constantine before discharging her and her daughter Rachael from the residence and service. The unfortunate prequel event occurred during the celebrative atmosphere of congratulating Skeeter's mother for occupying a high role in the Daughter of America's community. Although the linguistic mode is rarely used, only two of semiotic forms are identified to be substantial for the descriptive sphere to encompass: the gestural and visual modes.

The first semiotic mode to be described is the physical behavior of the characters. The flashback scene begins with the celebration of Skeeter's mother. When she got nominated by her community's president, she was cheerful and prideful. She smoothly winked at Constantine while bragging with her new medal. The maid was watching her employer enthusiastically. The narrative setting changed to the dining room. Skeeter's mother and the president Higginbotham were having a conversation before the latter got alerted to something. Constantine leaned over the president's shoulder while struggling to serve her plate. Higginbotham signaled the maid with her eyes to move to the other side and resume her task. Skeeter's mother had a concerned expression on her face while looking at Constantine's interaction with the president. The knocking on the door caused Skeeter's mother to be more distressed while looking back and forth at Constantine and Higginbotham. The president also noticed the sound, but she gestured at Constantine to tell her: "that's all right". Constantine did not react to the sound, because she was too fixated on her task of refilling the plate. She eventually noticed the sound when her employer rushed to open the door by herself.

The unexpected arrival of Constantine's daughter shocked the others. Rachael enthusiastically explained that she changed her decision "to come early and surprise" her mother. When she attempted to open the door, she was prevented by Skeeter's mother. With a straight tone, the host told Rachael that she is in the middle of entertaining her guests. She was suggested to enter and wait in the kitchen. After closing the door, Skeeter's mother rushed back to her seat while apologizing to her guests for the inconvenience. Suddenly, all the attendants got startled to Rachael's overwhelming entrance. When she was asked for the reason behind her intrusion, she sarcastically declared her insistence to see her mother. Charlotte was speechless, which was followed by Constantine's efforts to calm and escort her daughter back to the kitchen.

This situation made the president intolerant and confront Skeeter's mother with shocked face and threatening tone. Charlotte and the president ordered Rachael to leave the house. When her mother tried to dissuade her employer from such decision, the latter dismissed the mother and her daughter from the house permanently. Constantine was traumatically silent while Rachael maintained aggressive eye contact with Charlotte before grabbing her traumatized mother by the arm to leave the house. When they exited, Constantine placed her hand on window to face Skeeter's mother with teary eyes. The host turned her gaze back to her guests, who stared at her silently. The scene ends with Skeeter's mother taking a deep breath before closing the inner door on Constantine and her daughter.

The color code of the background and characters, in addition to their physical appearance are to be reported as the next form of modality. The color palette of the setting is generally "Monochromatic" with different shades of brown, black, and white. All the white women in the scene are attributed with distinctive bright and colorful dresses. As for the two black ladies, Constantine was the oldest within this female gathering. She wore a traditional black

and white maid's outfit with hints of grey and gold. Her daughter also wore a black and grayish dress while holding colorful bouquet of flowers.

- **Modes' Interpretation**

This flashback scene is dominated with different behavioral signs and gestural codes, in which various meanings and interpretations are implied. The initial meaningful gesture is located in the subtle interaction between Charlotte and Constantine. When Skeeter's mother winked at Constantine, she wanted to receive her opinion on the medal. Constantine smiled at her employer to transmit her sense of pride and admiration. The president and Skeeter's mother were concerned due to the poor quality of Constantine's service. The reason behind the latter, as explained by Charlotte, is her age and slow responsive actions. When she heard the sound door knocking, Charlotte assumed that Constantine would eventually hear and investigate the source of the sound. Skeeter's mother blocked the door because she was afraid that Rachael may disrupt the atmosphere of the party. When Higginbotham pressured Charlotte to discharge the maid and her daughter, she was reluctantly unsatisfied with that decision. When Constantine extended her hand, she indirectly asked her employer to reconsider her decision. After looking at the other guests, Constantine was disappointed and disgusted by Skeeter's mother, which made Charlotte tearfully ashamed of herself.

As for the visual aspect of modality within this scene, the interpretative sphere comprises color codes, external appearance, and camera shots. The first angle to approach is the color analysis of the setting and characters. The color palette of the house creates comfortable sensation for the viewer. It functions as a neutral base to highlight the different colors of the guests' fancy dresses from warmer ones (such as yellow, pink, and orange) to cold ones (such as blue, green, and purple). These colors symbolize the excessive energy and emotions of joy and excitement in the party.

- **Modes' Explanation**

In this scene, the power dynamics are obviously in favor of white people. The spatial, gestural, visual, and linguistic modes have a central pivotal role in demonstrating the power relations between these social actors. When the maid Constantine went to refill Mrs. Higginbotham's glass, she accidentally touched her shoulder. Higginbotham's body resentfully shivered in disgust, making it clear that the maid had crossed her limits. Since she holds a position of power, she maintained distance and a level of separation from the black maid while comfortably communicating with the white women to convey Constantine's inferiority. In other words, people with high social positions tend to maintain a distance from those they consider to be lower in status. Charlotte Phelan, who hosted the party, used direct assertive language to fire both Constantine and her daughter Rachel: "Both of you. Leave. Now!" the way she articulated those words, as well as slamming the door in their faces, showcase her power over them. When they were unable to act and were reluctant to leave as a sign of resistance, Mrs. Higginbotham proceeded to reinforce their dismissal: "You heard her. Go on, girl." The main reason Rachel demonstrated this kind of demeanor is Ms. Higginbotham's authoritative influence. It is evident that she has power not only over black people but also over white ones. This power dynamic she poses on the white community is clearly illustrated by the social exchange theory, which states that the interdependence and exchange of interests between social actors is the cornerstone of relationships (Emerson, 2003). Higginbotham has the authority to readily grant or withhold promotions from Charlotte. The latter has no option but to submit to her boss's orders and behave in an unusual way towards her black servants.

2.3.3.3.The Black Retaliation

a. Instance One: Celia and Minny's Launch

Figure 10

Minnie's Annoyed Attitude from Celia's Naivety



Figure 11

Celia Refusing to Obey Minny's Instructions



- **Modes' Description**

Both figures describe a scene that takes place at 1:05:58. Celia and Minny share a face to face conversation in the kitchen while enjoying their launch together. The denotative phase of this analysis undertakes both linguistic and gestural modes of modality simultaneously since the other modes are either absent or lacking meaningful impact within the scene. After preparing the meal, Minny placed her share of the food on the table next to the window in the kitchen. Her silence and relaxed physical state got interrupted by Celia's arrival at the scene. Celia rushed to the table without making eye contact with her maid. She stated to Minny that she was looking for her while describing the deliciousness of the food. She also used a figurative speech when she said: "I'm starved. Looks so good." Minny calmly smiled at her employer before attempting to convince her with the necessity of eating in the dining room. Minny left her seat to reach and escort Celia back to the dining area. Celia instantly lifted her plate in the air. She expressed that she is comfortable in her current position while staring at her maid threateningly. Minny remained silent while slowly returning to her seat.

Celia started eating the chicken with expressions of disbelief and enjoyment on her face. Minny displayed an annoyed face when she noticed the smug face of her employer. Celia uttered her gratitude and admiration for Minny's presence in her house while Minny sarcastically informed her that such appreciation is misplaced. She reminded her employer to be more appreciative for other things. Minny suddenly increased the intensity of her tone and changed her facial expressions. She warned her employer that the consequences will be catastrophic if she does not inform her husband about the new maid in the house. Meanwhile, Celia resumed her eating with a careless face and attitude. Minny stressed further that her husband will eventually notice the difference in food quality. Once again, Minny's face changed when Celia criticized the food. She angrily stared at her before refuting that criticism in the third person: "Minny don't burn chicken".

- **Modes' Interpretation**

Despite its short duration, several symbolic meanings can be found and inferred within this scene. The first linguistic-gestural behavior to interpret belongs to Celia's initial moments of interaction with Minny. As explained by the movie, Miss Celia suffers from loneliness and isolation in her daily life. She seizes any occasional opportunity to develop her sociability and relationships whenever individuals are in the proximity of her reach. Because of her new maid in the house, the idea of dining alone was unbearable for Celia. Her initial approaching method of claiming that she was searching for Minny was an act and fake excuse to discreetly and subtly express her willingness to eat lunch along with her maid. She also avoided eye contact with Minny not only to hide her intentions and smooth the situation, but also to implicitly avoid any complaint and refusal about having lunch together. Minny's shocked state and sarcastic tone and attempt to separate herself from Celia, however, expressed her unwillingness and annoyance to eat her food in the presence of her employer. In order for Minny to receive the message, Celia's next response was more direct and clearer to restate, confirm, and strengthen her stubbornness and intention to dine with her.

The long stare and physical retrieve of Minny contained hints of sympathetic and pitiful understanding for Celia's situation. In response to the appreciative face, tone, and words of Celia to Minny's food and company, the latter, once again, expressed at first her annoyance and intolerance for Celia's silliness, naivety, and exaggerated positivism through her sarcastic statement. After the threatening reminder, Minny implied her prideful acceptance for Celia's compliment within her question about the obliviousness of Celia's husband for the improved quality of food. Celia's suggestion about the cooking temperature of the chicken was a successful attempt to preserve, relate, and change the topic of the discussion

implicitly. As a result, Minny's menacing stare symbolized two things: her dissatisfaction with Celia's commentary, and her divine belief and certainty in her cooking skills.

- **Modes' Explanation**

In this scene, a transition of a type of power is noticed to be fundamentally associated with the Caucasian race. Customarily, the black maid is marginalized while serving white women. Nevertheless, Ms. Celia unprecedentedly joined Minny on the table while expressing her gratitude for the delectable-looking food. Her reaction is similar to the one of a famished young boy, who partakes a meal with his mother. On the other hand, a sign of confusion was shown on Minny's face. She stood firmly with her hands on the table before clarifying for Celia that employers and maids must eat separately. One may think she submitted a friendly request, but the tone she used still conveys the implication of a serious command that is similarly related to a superior reprimanding a subordinate. Within those few seconds, it is becoming evident that Minny holds the upper hand. The power dynamic at play here is Minny's power over Celia and the outcome power of Celia's unawareness of her own influential position. This unanticipated behavior on Celia's part surprises Minny, because all the white women she encountered have never shied away from demonstrating their social power.

Much evidence can be found to prove that Minny has two types of power over Celia. The first one is called "expert power", which is represented in Minny's ability to skillfully cook delicious meals and master all kinds of domestic work. This kind of knowledge gives her an advantage over Celia and her inability to manage the household. The second proof is the "looking-glass self" theory proposed by sociologist Charles Cooley. It is a psychological theory that highlights the individual's desire to seek validation from others (Nickerson, 2023). Celia, who experiences a sense of abandonment from her white community, finds company and comfort in her relationship with Minny. In addition to being a maid with

extensive experience in housekeeping, Minny is an important source of emotional support for Celia. Consequently, she holds power over her.

b. Instance Two: Minny and Skeeter

Figure 12

Skeeter's Defensive Attitude against Minny's Accusations



Figure 13

Minny's Sarcastic Attitude



- **Modes' Description**

The next scene takes place in Aibileen's residence, where she witnesses an interactional clash and confrontational conversation between Miss Skeeter and Minny about the ongoing process and hypothetical consequences of the book making. Similar to the previous scene, the linguistic and gestural modes within this scene are the main focus of the descriptive analysis.

Due to their co-occurrence and paralleled nature, both the verbal and non-verbal codes are to be analyzed at the same time. Initially, Aibileen and Skeeter shared a comfortable discussion about the content of the book. Suddenly, Minny rushed through the door to inform her friend with the latest updates about the black resisting movement. When she noticed Skeeter and Aibileen on the same table, she instantly became silent and shocked. Skeeter avoided making eye contact with Minny. The latter approached Aibileen with a threatening attitude. She stated her familiarity with this book-making process, but she did not believe it to be true. She slowly shifted her gaze towards Skeeter. She asked her for the reason behind her intentions to help the "Colored People". She even suggested that Skeeter wants to exploit Aibileen and cause her problems. Skeeter refuted such accusation with defensive facial expressions and tone. She explained that she wants to help Aibileen and display her perspective as a housemaid for the people to understand.

Minny crossed her arms and presented a set of sarcastic sentences and figurative speech. She compared their daily experiences to a picnic in the fourth of July. She claimed that every colored woman longs to enter white people's houses, polish their silver items, receive minimum payment, and be socially unsecured. After glancing Aibileen briefly, Minny mentioned their affection and attachment to the white people's children before they get influenced by their mothers. Skeeter declared her understanding of the situation. She optimistically suggested the possibility of an alternative reality. Minny responded

aggressively to Skeeter's answer with disgusted expressions on her face. She doubted the existence of a bill that permits the employer to be kind towards their maids. Minny became more aggressive and violent when Aibileen attempted to intervene. She agreed with Aibileen's suggestion to not be involved in this matter.

After dramatically leaving the house, Minny surprised the couple with her unexpected return. Minny announced her willingness to participate in this book-making process. She also expressed her need to monitor and supervise the interview herself to avoid any potential misunderstanding. Skeeter stared at Minny enthusiastically before she was asked to reposition her chair in order to conduct a face-to-face conversation. Minny slowly sat on the chair and stared at her interviewer with a serious look on her face. Skeeter seemed unprepared and uncomfortable before commencing the questioning process. Minny answered the questions directly with a sassy tone before grabbing and eating chicken.

- **Modes' Interpretation**

There are several linguistic and behavioral segments within this scene that hold different symbolic meanings. Minny's initial reaction indicated a sense of disappointment in Aibileen. She was sad and angry because Aibileen purposefully excluded her consultancy and involvement in this business. Skeeter avoided making eye contact with Minny because she was frightened from the aggressive attitude of Minny. The latter took the initiative to properly question Skeeter's intentions. She felt that Aibileen is too naive and inexperienced. She also implicitly accused Skeeter of exploiting Aibileen as a safety precaution in case the book is unprofitable and negatively reviewed. Minny was unconvinced by Skeeter's optimistic response, so she attempted to end this interview by providing the necessary information in a sarcastic framework. She also assumed that this interview is personally problematic for Aibileen since it deals with the loss of her son. Aibileen's intervention made Minny feel like a burden and respond aggressively towards both ladies. Her return, however,

clearly expressed her intention to support her friend in this book-making process. Minny threatening physicality caused Skeeter to have mixed emotions, such as excitement, enthusiasm, discomfort, and stress. Based on the stressful atmosphere caused by Minny, Skeeter initiated this interview with a basic question for several reasons: to hook Minny's actual attention instead of her sense of obligatory contribution and set a comfortable mood for discussion.

- **Modes' Explanation**

In this scene, the balance of power swings in favor of black people rather than white ones. In essence, there are two forms of power relations. The first is “overcome power” on Skeeter's side because she is incognizant of her authority as a white woman, just like Celia. On the other hand, the most visible power dynamic is Minny's over Skeeter. To clarify the first power dynamic, Skeeter does not seem to possess traits typically associated with a firm and a strong character. Even the way she walks and talks showcases a profound lack of assertive behavior. Therefore, her unawareness of the power she holds over black people by virtue of being a white woman is not the result of cognitive ignorance, but rather an essentially emotional problem. It is a clear indication that she is besieged between two bitter choices, each of which has negative consequences. Her inner turmoil reflects the ambivalence she experiences as she is trying to deliver the voice of the maids while risking her community's rejection. Her unwillingness to oppress black people establishes the second power relation, which is Minny's power over her. Minny employed an open body language to display her assertive behavior and power over Skeeter. The latter showed her submission through her inability to look directly into Minny's eyes. Her exaggerated anxiety was also manifested clearly through her hesitation in the way she speaks. Although Minny harbors a great deal of animosity toward white people, her collaboration at the end of the scene is one

way to achieve her self-interests. This collaborative relationship can be made more explicit through the interdependence of power relations. In other words, they both have power over each other: Skeeter depends on Minny to tell her stories and Minny trusts her to deliver those stories to the public opinion. It may seem they are equal, yet Minny still has power and authority over Skeeter.

c. Instance Three: Aibileen and Hilly

Figure 14

Aibileen Invading Hilly's Personal Space



Figure 15

Aibileen Overwhelming Hilly Emotionally



- **Modes' Description**

Figure 1 and 2 constitute segments of the confrontational conversation between Aibileen and Hilly in Elizabeth's house. This last encounter within the movie starts from 2:13:01 and ends with Aibileen's retirement from her job, leaving all the attendants (Hilly, Elizabeth, and Mae Mobley) in a shocked and sorrowed state. Hence, the main focus of the analysis revolves around three modes of modality: the gestural, linguistic, and visual ones.

The linguistic and gestural modes are of primary significance to be analyzed first. The scene initiates with Elizabeth demanding Aibileen's attendance in front of her. She arrives at the scene to find both Hilly and Elizabeth. Hilly maintained a threatening composure while mentioning the stolen silver pieces. Aibileen suggested the possibility that she might have misplaced them in the kitchen or Mae Mobley might have taken them. Hilly expressed a shocked face from Aibileen's attempt to put the blame on her child. Aibileen refuted her possession of any silver. Elizabeth broke her silence by supporting Aibileen's claim. Hilly discharged Aibileen from her service. She also stated her intention to call the police.

Aibileen was shocked by such news. Aibileen informed Elizabeth that she will retrieve cough syrup for her daughter. Hilly proclaimed that Elizabeth is competent to attend her children's needs. Hilly attempted to hold the baby herself. However, Elizabeth maintained her grip around the baby before leaving the room with her kids.

Aibileen started to sweat while restating her innocence from the silver's thievery. Hilly, then, expressed her desire to imprison Aibileen through accusing her falsely of stealing the silver. With a threatening tone, Aibileen instantly reminded the accuser that she knows her secret. Hilly, with red teary eyes and intimidated voice, told Aibileen that no one would believe her. Aibileen reassured her that she is already a successful writer due to publishing many books. Aibileen quickly approached Hilly to face her directly, making the latter produce a gasp of terror. Aibileen described her methods to be terroristic and deceptive by nature. She accused her of being a "Godless woman". While looking at her pitifully, Aibileen ended her speech by asking Hilly twice the same rhetorical question: "Ain't you tired, Miss Hilly?" the latter was speechless while trembling uncontrollably. After she left the room, Elizabeth tells her maid to leave the house immediately.

The second pair to be studied is the combination of both visual and spatial modes of communication. The overall color palette of the house is both Analogous and Monochromatic of the same color (Brown). Different colors adjacent to brown (such as orange, yellow, green...) can be noticed in the furniture, plant vases, and paintings. As for the other color palette, different shades of brown are seen in the walls, dresses and hair. Each character is distinguished with a different code of color and appearance. Hilly wears a brown skirt and a brown sleeveless shirt that is made of crocodile skin. She also applied lesser amount of cosmetics on her face than usual. Aibileen maintained her bluish maid outfit with hints of white. Such colors are shared by both Mae Mobley and the baby's clothes.

- **Modes' Interpretation**

The linguistic and physical behaviors of the characters are filled with several hidden messages. Hilly attempted to falsely implicate Aibileen with that crime and convince Elizabeth through her misleading statements. Aibileen realized her devious plan, so she acted innocently to refute all the accusations. When Aibileen blamed Moe Mobley, Hilly's exploited that situation to fire her. Elizabeth's attempt to defend Aibileen showcased her unquestionable trust in her maid. By resuming her domestic duty, she dismissed everything Hilly said. Elizabeth became terrified when Hilly assigned her the duties of motherhood. She knows her own incompetency to be a proper mother figure for her children. She also did not entrust her baby to Hilly because the latter's distracted state might harm him. Aibileen's outrageous threat indicated her intentions to avenge her friend's unfortunate imprisonment. Hilly did not want her secret to be exposed, so she attempted and failed to make Aibileen question her own credibility as a writer. Aibileen aimed to make Hilly realize the negative consequences of her actions, which was noticeable on her disfigured behavior and visage. She asks her indirectly to be a woman of faith. Although Hilly was convinced with such arguments, she did not utterly acknowledge Aibileen to be correct. Elizabeth was concerned and fearful about her maid. She granted her early release to avoid further issues with Hilly or the law. Aibileen eventually realized the bitter truth that her queerer in Elizabeth's house and the daily meeting and caring for her daughter are over.

Not only the language and physicality of the characters have hidden messages, but also the visual and spacial aspects convey different symbolic meanings. The color palette of the room and furniture conveys a comfortable sensation and serenity. Hilly's brown is linked to dirtiness, impurity, and ugliness. It reflects her personality, appearance, and her deceptive methods in this scene. The shared blue and white colors between Aibileen and the baby signify their innate innocence.

- **Modes' Explanation**

Within this scene, the power dynamics between Hilly and Aibileen shifted drastically in an unpredictable way. By looking at some gestural, linguistic, and spatial modes, it becomes evident that the black maid has power over her white employer. As usual, Hilly exploits the merit of being a white woman with a powerful social status and manipulatively employs unfounded accusations to assert her dominance on Aibileen. However, this power dynamic suddenly underwent a complete upheaval in favor of Aibileen when Hilly was confronted. She stared at her accused with a serious tone and demeanor, accompanied by a strategic and logical choice of words to convey her resistance to Hilly's attempts to control her.

Furthermore, Aibileen initially maintained a long safe distance to advocate for herself in a friendly defensive manner until Hilly threatened to imprison her. At this point, Aibileen invaded Hilly's personal space to threaten her back in a way that only someone in a position of power would do. Even though her resistance would normally escalate this conflict, the signs of fear on Hilly's face proved that Aibileen made the judicious decision. Aibileen's rebellious behavior could be explained by the "rational choice theory", in which individuals assess circumstances and then calculate benefits and costs before choosing an appropriate reaction that serves their interests (Ganti, 2024). This bold action, which one did not expect from Aibileen throughout the movie, was actually the cumulative result of accepting the oppressive actions towards her. It is also the outcome of starting to feel some self-worth. These two women hold certain power over the other, yet they touch different aspects of each person. Aibileen's success as a writer enabled her to threaten Hilly that her secret can be easily exposed to the public at any time, which will devastate Hilly's social reputation and mental stability. Hilly's accusation got weakened and neutralized immediately by Aibileen. Thus, the scales of power lean favorably towards Aibileen in this scene.

2.3.3.4. The Grey Harmony

a. Instance One: Celia's Secret

Figure 16

Celia's Shocked State



Figure 17

Minnie Comforting Celia



- **Modes' Description**

The minute 1:24:57 marks the beginning of this scene. Minny and Celia are shown to be involved in an unexpected and unusual situation. Ultimately, the problem within the latter is unsolved. Thus, the scene is concluded with an unresolved and unfortunate ending. Due to their irrelevance and insignificance, the visual, aural, and spacial modes of modality within this scene are excluded from the focus of the description.

As the only forms of modality worth analyzing, both the spoken and body language of the characters are adopted within the denotative process. Minny was searching for her new employer until she slowly reached the bathroom's door. With a tired voice, Celia gently asked her servant to leave the house after hearing her knocking behind the door. Minny sarcastically assumed that her employer ruined her hair color before attempting to forcefully open the door. Celia's response, however, remained the same with more seriousness in her tone. While slowly withdrawing away from the door, Minny's eyes were fidgeting in a suspicious manner. Suddenly, a sound of broken glass was heard inside the bathroom. Minny broke the door to find Celia in a horrific scene. She was covered and surrounded completely with blood. She hysterically shouted at Minny to leave the room immediately while throwing objects at her. With complete silence, the maid slowly made her way through the chaotic floor to reach her employer. Signs of shock and terror are expressed in her eyes and face. Celia wondered for the reason behind this tremendous amount of blood: "Why is there so much blood?" After taking her to the bed, Minny was calming the troubled white woman. With trembled tone and teary eyes, Celia started talking about her marriage and her previous unsuccessful pregnancies. She claimed that her husband married her because she was pregnant. She expressed her fear of the outcome if she is to inform her husband of her inability to get pregnant and deliver. Minny maintained her speechlessness almost throughout the entire interaction while staring at Celia and nurturing her.

- **Modes' Interpretation**

Only certain sections of this scene can be interpreted connotatively. Initially, Celia's aggressive behavior is explained from various angles. The excessive blood loss and the rush of adrenaline in her body caused her to be in a confused and hysterical state. The pressure within her is increasing gradually due to Minny's arrival behind the door. She did not want Minny to find her in such a horrific state and acted hysterically because she panicked that her health problem will get worse. Thus, she repeatedly shouted at her to not stare at her and leave her alone in her misery. She was also attempting to wipe the blood off her clothes and the floor with the towel in her hand. Minny, on the other hand, was in complete shock and speechless from the sight of her employer.

Her initial reaction is completely understandable and reasonable because any human would react in the same manner. She moved and approached Celia very slowly and carefully to avoid causing her more panic. The physical contact with her maid caused Celia suddenly to be simultaneously conscious and oblivious of her surroundings. In other words, she was psychologically numb when she underwent the same traumatic experience. Later, Celia implied that her husband might divorce her due to her inability to give birth. She claimed that their marriage was established on the basis of having children in the future. Minny remained silent and helpless in this scenario due to her unfamiliarity with similar cases. The reason behind her inaction is her self-realization of being emotionally and mentally incompetent to compensate and support her employer.

- **Modes' Explanation**

In this dramatic scene between Celia and Minny, all the racial boundaries that separated them have disappeared. They reached a state of equality in terms of power dynamics. This scenario highlights the sudden manifestation of human empathy, which has freed both of

them from the imposed constraints and societal norms. The viewer may think that Celia's outburst and her act of throwing things at Minny are signs of her authority, but a closer look at the context may show the exact opposite based on the reaction formation theory. The latter is a defensive psychological strategy, which dictates that individuals unconsciously behave in a way that contradicts what they truly desire (Vinney, 2021). No one had ever seen Celia in such a vulnerable situation. She was surrounded by blood and did not know exactly what to do except screaming and throwing things on her maid. On a deeper level, she wanted to be rescued, not the other way around. Despite being ordered to leave, Minny's decision to help Celia is what establishes an equal power relationship. This scene showed us the ability of human compassion to transcend and penetrate the boundaries set by society. Celia and Minny formed a profound bond because of this incident despite their different racial and socio-cultural backgrounds. This human connection goes beyond the traditional relationship between a white woman and her black maid. Moreover, the choice of the bathroom as a setting for this scene highlights the obvious opposition and rejection of the systematic racism and dehumanization suffered by black people. The bathroom, which at the beginning of the movie was a sacred place that cannot be shared by whites and blacks, turns into a place of cooperation and unity, completely contradicting Hilly's segregation project. The latter was initially proposed under the name "Home Health and Sanitation Bill," which aims mainly to continue the division between the two races and show their superiority over them. In this scene, the power of empathy and human connection between black and white individuals play an important and decisive role in overcoming all the differences imposed by the policies of racial discrimination.

b. Instance Two: Skeeter and Aibileen's Interview

Figure 18

Skeeter Interviewing Aibileen



Figure 19

Skeeter's Joyfulness with Aibileen's Cooperation



- **Modes' Description**

At 42:50, an interactional conversation occurs between Skeeter and Aibileen. The latter invited her friend after accepting her proposal. Despite the initial tension and stressfulness between them, their interview ended on a successful note. Three main modes of communication are highlighted within the scene: the linguistic, gestural, and visual aspects.

The linguistic-gestural codes of the characters are the first elements to be described within this scene. Skeeter initiates the scene with the following question: "What does it feel like to raise a white child when your own child's at home being looked after by somebody else?" Aibileen remained silent while staring at her son's picture. When Skeeter asked about the latter's identity, Aibileen confirmed her guest's suspicion. After addressing her by "Ma'am", Aibileen sat and stared at Skeeter stressfully and uncomfortably. Skeeter asked her interviewee not to address her by "Ma'am" in her own house. Then, Skeeter resumed the interview process by asking further questions. Aibileen abstained from answering while displaying signs of stressfulness and anxiety in her face. She suggested sharing the stories from her notebook. She seemed surprised when Skeeter accepted her proposal. She enthusiastically started narrating her first experience as a house servant. She explained the reason behind helping those children. Their mutual affection increased her self-confidence. She ended her speech with the joke about her skin color. Laughter and signs of relief are expressed in the faces of both Aibileen and Skeeter. The last mode to describe is the color code of the characters and setting. Only a single color is significant within the scene. Different shades of yellow were displayed in Aibileen's dress, Skeeter's hair, the eggs and the table.

- **Modes' Interpretation**

Several symbolic meanings can be deduced from this scene. Skeeter's first question made Aibileen nostalgic and numb at the same time. Her abstention is explained as a result of

remembering the traumatic loss of her son. Skeeter's overwhelming questions made her uncomfortable and anxious. They were too straightforward and direct for Aibileen to process and answer. The sum of her life experience as a housemaid cannot be rendered in simple short words. Thus, an alternative solution had to be suggested to break the redundancy and formality of this interview. Formulating the answer in narrative form made Aibileen more expressive and fluent in her speech and facial expressions. Based on what she said so far, Aibileen suffers from motherhood complex. Due to her traumatic loss of her son, she found emotional compensation in raising other people's children. Her joke at the end was intended to express her acceptance of the current situation and to strengthen their friendship. In other words, the initial stressfulness and negative pressure between Aibileen and Skeeter quickly reduced and disappeared. The atmosphere became more positive and joyful. As for the yellow color, two distinctive meanings are found through two sequential phases. According to *Meaning of Colors in Color Psychology* (n.d.), the yellow color expressed at first Aibileen's fear and cowardice. Skeeter's acceptance to change interviewing method was the climax point. The energetic and joyful states of Aibileen are conveyed within the same color at that moment.

- **Modes' Explanation**

By observing the dialogue between Skeeter and Aibileen, it becomes clear that the relationship between them regarding power dynamics is reciprocal by nature. They cooperate to achieve common goals that may seem different on the surface, but they work together to achieve the desires of both parties equally. Skeeter needed Aibileen's stories in order to write her book while Aibileen also achieves her goal by making her voice heard, revealing the truth about the lives of black maids. The comprehension of this relationship can be simplified by relying on Avelino's classification of power relations and dynamics. It

falls under the third category “power with” that is based on joint cooperation between individuals, not on oppressive authority that forces others to cooperate (Avelino, 2021).

Furthermore, the power they possess can be attributed to the fact that both Skeeter and Aibileen have qualities associated with referent power. The latter is based on the respect and admiration one has earned from others over time (Kovach, n. d.). This cooperation provides several advantages to both parties while also requiring certain sacrifices in order to achieve them. We find that social exchange theory explains the relationship between Aibileen and Skeeter in this context more clearly. This theory says that all relationships between individuals require sacrificing something of value as a cost in order to obtain something else of value as a reward (Nickerson, 2023). According to the context of the previous theory, Aibileen puts herself in a risky situation that threatens not only her job but also her life by co-writing the book. Skeeter, on the other hand, faces the risk of criticism and animosity from the whole white community. Despite all these obstacles, their relationship endured and became stronger. Such cooperation is essentially formed to bring valuable rewards that far exceed the sacrifices they made.

c. Instance Three: Minny's Welcoming Feast

Figure 20

Minny Shocked by Celia's Surprise



Figure 21

The Married Couple and Minny Sharing Food Together



- **Modes' Description**

The last scene to be analyzed begins at 2:07:30. The figures describe the first encounter between the Foote couple and Minny. Celia and her husband prepared a celebratory feast to officially welcome Minny into their home. They undergo emotional conversation before sharing the food together. The final modes of modality to be examined are a composition of both the linguistic and physical behavior of the character.

This scene comprises multiple linguistic and gestural signifiers. Both Minny and Johnny arrive at the scene while Celia was preparing the dining table. The latter informed her maid that she cooked all the food on the table. She stated that it is a token of thanks and appreciation. Minny stared at both of them with a confused look on her face. She rhetorically wondered whether she is no longer employed by them. The couple responded differently to her question. While Celia shook her head negatively, Johnny lightly giggled before confirming her assumption. He offered her a contract to function and serve under their roof permanently. Minny stared at them silently with appreciation and gratitude on her face. Celia and her husband approached their maid when she complemented the food. Johnny smoothly pulled the chair for Minny to sit. Celia started plating while discussing the food quality with her maid. The scene ends with Aibileen's prologue about the fate of Minny's marriage and family. She claimed that Minny was encouraged by Celia's feast to make such decision: "She took her babies out from under Leroy and never went back."

- **Modes' Interpretation**

There are multiple signified meanings throughout the entire scene. At first, Minny interpreted the situation in a doubtful way. She thought that the party was organized to discharge her from service. She was also terrified because she expected problematic consequences due to not informing Celia's husband about her employment. However, the couple immediately reassured her with the reverse. Johnny was not displeased nor upset with Minny. He offered her a lifelong contract for a specific reason. He wanted her to keep

nursing and accompanying his wife because she proved to have positive impact on her recently. She basically cured her loneliness and developed her sociability. Minny was overwhelmed with positive emotions. Celebrating her achievements and officially accepting her as part of their family made Minny speechless. She changed the focus of the conversation by complimenting the food. The couple understood her inability to directly express her gratitude and emotions. By approaching her and serving her food, they displayed their affection and respect for her. This kind act had a great impact on Minny. She usually provides pieces of advice and supports others in times of need. This time, however, she took Celia's suggestion into consideration to be applied to her marriage and family.

- **Modes' Explanation**

This scene can be considered as a direct depiction of equal power relations between black and white people. What distinguishes it from the other scenes is the way Mr. Johnny behaved toward Minny. It was this act that played an important role in fostering an unexpectedly equal power dynamic alongside his wife Celia. Throughout the movie, there was a complete absence of white men and their condescending behavior toward the black maids except Johnny. His benevolence can be attributed to various reasons, one of which is his participation in providing what is necessary to prepare the food. This act highlights the clear disparity between blacks and whites. Johnny, who belongs to an affluent white family, owns resources that are not accessible to Minny. This advantage reflects the racial power dynamics that were prevalent during the early 1960s. However, Johnny contradicts these dynamics by placing great importance on preserving and valuing Minny's service and her well-being above all racial norms. It is not surprising that Minny shows doubt due to the unexpected feast that was set for her specifically.

In the previous analysis, one of the manifestations of white power over black people is sitting around a fancy table with all kinds of food while the black maids are serving them.

So, Johnny was motivated by Minny's care for Celia. His actions to strengthening the bond of equality with Minny were intended as a direct challenge against the white conventions of society. All of his motivations can be analyzed through the theory of reciprocal altruism. The latter is a generous act of concern that occurs between human beings with the expectation of receiving altruistic behavior in return at a later time (Seegerstrale, 2016). The validity of this theory in explaining his motivations is evidenced by his assurance to Minny that she could have a lifetime contract to work in his house if she wished to. Celia, on the other hand, has created a stronger relationship with her. She used the fried chicken as a symbolic request for Minny to accept her new permanent employment and reinforce the sense of appreciation for each other's presence. Put simply, they both transcended the cold employer-employee relationship into a friendship, where power relations are equal.

2.4. Discussion of the Findings

After identifying the workings of power and power relations within the chosen scenes under the three main categories, it becomes clear that the dynamic of “white's power over” has manifested under the “white supremacy” category. However, it is not only the result of the process of socialization i.e. just ideas and traditions that are haphazardly accepted and passed down from one generation to another; it is also the result of a strategic authoritarian ideology and social conditioning. It seems that white people are programmed to believe that they are better than blacks, even without many of them being consciously aware of it or having evidence to prove the validity of their sense of superiority. The main cause behind all of their superior behavioral patterns is the power elite in society, such as Jim Crow, who is mentioned in one of the scenes that represents the ruling class in society. The power elite are all white people with privileges. Their social positions enable them to direct and control political discourse and mass media reporting, making it easier for them to control black people as well as the white group as a whole. Through their persuasive influence on cognitive processes (stereotypes and ideologies), they shape the discriminatory practices of white people.

On the other hand, in the “black retaliation” category, it is concluded that blacks' adoption and exercise of power is not an attempt to disrupt the social order. Their resistance is formed not to claim superiority over whites, but to reduce the degree of injustice inflicted on them while ensuring security. On a deeper level, it is clear that the black race embraces their inferiority and contributes greatly to the survival of these oppressive policies and white supremacy. The rebellion of blacks against whites is a manifestation of their fondness to imitate and follow the oppressor.

In the third category, the results indicate that the power of intimacy, affection, and human connections is the only antidote that can awaken the mind from the anesthesia of policies that promote racial disempowerment and inferiority. The empathy that establishes harmony is the ability of a white person in certain circumstances to look at the world through the lens of a black person and the latter's faculty to do the same. At this point, a deep human bond is formed, and the social programming moves from the subconscious to the conscious to finally transcend formal social control.

The main objective of this study is to analyze and interpret the different power relations between the two races. This study has selected ten scenes from the movie "*The Help*". After the careful analysis of the selected sampling material, interesting results were produced to answer the research questions. The first one clearly states: "What is the nature of relationships between the different social groups within the movie?" The manifestation of power relations between the whites and blacks occurred in three distinctive manners.

The first and most common relationship is based on the "white supremacy". The movie clearly explains that the black women and men need to be employed by the whites in order to survive in the American society. Most of The Caucasian race views this dependability as an opportunity to oppressively exploit and offend the African Americans. The second relationship is both positive for the blacks and negative for the whites. This category is called "black retaliation", in which these powerless people tend to resist this racial discrimination of the whites by using the same power tools against them. As for the third and last relationship, it is entitled "grey harmony". The two opposing races eventually gained equal powers, which resulted in two dichotomous sub-consequences. On one hand, they connect with each other positively based on a mutual respect and sometimes benefits. It creates such a peaceful atmosphere for a healthy interaction between the blacks and whites. On the other hand, the balanced share of power automatically neutralizes the conflict

between the opposing ideologies. However, it does not eliminate the negative view and feelings towards the other race within individuals themselves. It forcefully puts them in unharmed, yet stressful situations against each other.

The second research question aims to identify the forms of modality within the scenes: “what are the different modes that enabled the analysis of these power relations?” Analyzing each scene can be difficult without the proper guiding equipment; thus, the modes of communication are critical for the interpretation process of power dynamics. The movie is approached from four main channels. The linguistic mode is the most prominent aspect within all the scenes. The characters of one race infuse their ideological beliefs within their utterances so they can be perceived implicitly by the other race. However, the verbal language can be often insufficient or complicated to interpret. Hence, the physical movements of the body compliment the latter for an easier procedure of deciphering the implied meanings. The gestural mode of the characters portrays a stronger picture of the type of relationship between them. The next mode of modality is linked to the visual aspects of the scene. The dress code and color palette of the characters reflect their ideological personality that determines the kind of relationship between the whites and blacks. The last form of modality involves the physical distance between the characters on the filming set. This spacial mode directly associates the solidness or fragility of the relationship between these racial. The more distance increases, the weaker the bond becomes between them and vice versa.

The last question to answer is:” what are the psychological motives behind creating these power relations?” There are certain ideological grounds that influenced these social groups to treat and perceive each other differently. The main psychological motive is the representation of whites as the positive self and the blacks as the negative other. Oppressing the blacks is meant to maintain and preserve power and authority only for the white

individuals. They avoid sharing power with other races as a basic life principle because their white dominance may get weakened and overruled through time. As for the rebellion of the black community, it is a reasonable reaction to withstand and cease the constant racial dictatorship of the whites. Their aim was not to switch social roles with the white oppressor. They were simply calling for safety, self-sufficiency, and independent co-existence with the whites. The movie ends with the failure of both parties to establish proper equality. An alternative solution was formed instead in order to avoid the possibility for an open racial war, which is to create a harmonious environment for both races to live and function.

Although the results accumulated from the multimodal analysis of the movie are solid, they are yet to be acknowledged and referenced by other researchers in the future. Such conclusions must undergo a comparative analysis with the previous answers of relevant studies in order to be credibly validated. Both findings of the present research and the previous studies share a similar conceptualization about the different facets of power relations among these ideological communities.

According to Syafik (2023), the power dynamics between white women and black women can be either bi-directionally contradictory or directionally compatible. The results indicate that the first type of relationship is naturally negative from both ideological sides. It is based on Newton's third law, where racial actions are countered by anti-racial reactions. The white individuals tend to be superior by psychologically cornering the black people. The latter, on the other hand, resist such oppressive method with rebellious attitudes and defensive demeanor. Such unstable connection will eventually evolve to annihilate both ideological groups. This logical reasoning led to the emergence of the second form of power relations. Based on Avelino's table (2011), a synergetic atmosphere had to be established in order for both ideologies to co-exist and function properly together without destructive consequences. Instead of one-sided dependence, white women and black women share a

mutual dependability on each other. Thus, the previous studies agreed that equality has been achieved at the end of the movie. Whereas the current analysis concluded that they are living under an illusion of equality.

Furthermore, the current findings of this research proved to be more reliably valid when applying multimodality in the analysis. The results of the previous studies were reached through the dependability on a single mode of communication. Febby (2016), for example, examined the spoken language of the white characters and how they addressed the black servants in order to deduce the implied racial discrimination. They completely excluded the influential interchangeability of the other modes, which led them to make several misinterpretations along the way. Such a complex relationship between these social groups cannot be expressed within the boundaries of verbal language. To avoid similar issues, the multimodal approach compensated these linguistic gaps in meaning with other modes of communication, such as the physical movements of hands and facial expressions. The cooperative application of multiple forms of modality stabilizes the analytical journey and directs it towards accurately detailed conclusions. It is true that these researchers reached the same end results, yet their lack of multimodality weakened their validity and reliability.

As for the last question, the findings of this research and theirs have distinctively controversial understanding of the psychological impulses behind creating these power relations. It is universally agreed by all researchers that the white community maltreated the colored community in order to secure their influential hegemony in the society. The breakthrough points between opinions are found in the last analytical categories: black retaliation and grey harmony. Febby (2016) regarded the black resistance as an attempt to switch power roles with the other ideology. They also concluded that seeking revenge on their oppressors is the primary cause behind the retaliation of the colored people. The findings of this study refute such deductions by attributing a pacific explanation to these

movements. They are simply demanding to be treated equally, to be immune from racial mistreatment, and to live peacefully with the whites.

Conclusion

This chapter follows the methodological process used by this study to reach the results that help to answer the underlined research questions and objectives. This study employs qualitative research methods in its investigation of the Self and Other representations embedded within the communicative modes of the movie *The Help*. The first part of this chapter is dedicated to explain the methodological steps followed by this study. It employs principles of Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis to determine and examine representations of the Self and Other manifested within the power relations of blacks and whites incorporated within the movie. The analysis of the selected materials and the discussion of the findings are detailed in the second chapter. The results deduced from this thorough analysis showcase that positive self-representation is displayed by the white ideology while the black community is represented as the negative other. This dichotomy leads to the notions of white supremacy and black retaliation. Despite reaching harmonious equality at the end, the white ideology is still specified with the major portion of accessibility to power resources, control, and manipulation over the black race.

General Conclusion

The current study employs a multimodal critical discourse approach to analyze different power relations and their socio-cognitive infrastructure within the movie “*The Help*”. This work was primarily selected due to its controversial foundations that are relevant to implementing racial and anti-racial principles in Hollywood movies. Such topic has never received enough consideration to receive a proper investigation. Furthermore, this work adopts a multimodal framework within the critical analysis to investigate the way these power relations are developed and expressed through different modes of modality. This study aims to identify and analyze these forms of communication to highlight the basic ideological conceptions of the movie characters. This research is required to achieve certain objectives, which correspond to the previous research questions, for a complete logical analysis. The first objective is to investigate whether the social interactions between these racial communities are positive, negative, or neutral by nature within the movie. Another end to reach is the identification of the different interchangeable modes of communication that allowed the manifested power dynamics to be analyzed critically. Extracting the ideological motivations behind the interactive actions of white and black participants is the last objective of the study. The findings of this work will be of significant importance for specific individuals. This study is also beneficial for CDA practitioners because it expands their analytical perspective through the multimodal approach. The results are even used by movie makers as a credible source to avoid misrepresentation of ideologies.

In the theoretical part, the concept of power was briefly examined, including all of its significant developments throughout history. Such notion is initially linked to the human’s basic need to survive. The definition of power eventually became correlated to the human’s insatiable desire to dominate and control others with the passage of time. Subsequently, the evolution of the notion of power and its uses were thoroughly examined, in which the shift

in the fundamental human needs and the advancement of human societies transcended beyond the mere necessity of cooperation for survival. The emerging result was the inclination towards controlling and dominating others emerged, accompanied by the pursuit of acquiring substantial resources to maintain authority. Consequently, the attention was directed towards theories that perceive power as a quantitative capacity. Finally, the analytical attention switched towards the modern utilization of power through language in discourse. It is based on strategic persuasion to shape public opinion and influence people's cognitive processes without relying on coercion.

This private possession of power eventually affects the nature of relationships between the most and least powerful individuals to a certain degree. Hence, the combination of these key words (power and relationship) establishes the concept of “power relations”, which is a fundamental foundation for every society to exist and function. This notion is displayed within the communicative behavior of participants towards each other. The accessibility degree to the sources of power determines the nature and durability of these power relations. Such complex relationships are generally implemented within movies, which invites MCDA practitioners to decipher the interactive discourse and the other modes of modality for a complete understanding of the former. However, they can never proceed with their analysis without the direct association of power relations to ideology. Their inseparable correlation insures the continuity of unequal power distribution. They are the source of many ideological conflicts between different races and ethnicities. Such case is founded within the movie “*The Help*” that portrays the oppressive dominance of the white ideology over the black individuals. This oppressive strategy is met with the latter’s resistance and attempts to achieve equality.

As for the practical part of the current study, the research design is based on a non-numerical descriptive approach to address the previously stated research questions and

objectives. This qualitative framework is selected for its creative flexibility that provides an in-depth analysis of power relations within the movie “*The Help*”. A set of ten scenes have been carefully depicted from the entire movie as the sampling material of this study. Content analysis is required as the main data gathering tool to critically analyze and deconstruct the power dynamics between the blacks and whites. The findings of the study can be summarized into three major points. The white ideology aims to maintain superior power and dominance over others. They achieve such goal through the application of the psychological pressure on the colored ideology. The black individual resists this oppressive attitude not as a revengeful attempt to forcefully exchange power roles with the white individual, but as an attempt to establish equality and co-exist peacefully with them. Despite their failure to achieve the previous goals, the power relations between both races eventually reached a harmonious stability that neutralized the discriminating behavior of the whites.

- **Suggestions for Future Research**

After reaching these results, the study provides several suggestions for those who aim to conduct the same type of analysis. They should take the following two elements into consideration:

- The current study investigates the power relations that are implicit within the sample of ten scenes from the movie “*The Help*”. Researchers must offer a comprehensive analysis of how ideologies function and their impact on shaping societal members' behavioral patterns. This can be accomplished by utilizing psychological theories such as Carl Jung's theory of collective unconscious.
- The present research adopts a multimodal approach within its critical analysis of power relations. Future studies could depend more on a comprehensive analysis that

is based on Kress and Leeuen's systematic functional visual elements and Halliday's systematic functional Linguistics.

- **Limitations**

Certain limitations occurred within the present study that restricted the ability to overgeneralize its findings. Since the methodological approach of this work is purely qualitative, these results are feasibly limited to the current case study and cannot be generalized. The generalizability of these findings is limited due to the following two reasons:

1. The biased nature of the sample size and the sample selection procedure. This study has opted for analyzing just ten scenes out of the entire movie, which makes the sample size not representative. The selection procedure of these samples may seem to be random, yet they are thoroughly selected according to the researcher's standards and needs. The selection of this sample, however, is systematically unstructured and does not follow any universal criteria.
2. The subjective nature of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Such problem emerges due to the researcher's personal understanding and perspective(s) within the analysis.

Another limitation can be attributed to time insufficiency. A considerable amount of time is consumed when accumulating the necessary scenes for the analysis. Furthermore, it takes much more time and effort to critically analyze scenes from a single perspective of modality, let alone the cooperative insertion of other modes within the analysis. Despite the accuracy of the results, making mistakes and the possibility for a late delivery of the final product is inevitable.

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Résumé

La présente recherche est une étude multimodale du discours critique qui cherche à étudier les façons dont différentes formes de relations de pouvoir sont représentées dans le film *The Help*. Ces relations de pouvoir s'expriment généralement à travers les représentations dichotomiques du Soi et de l'Autre, qui sont intégrées dans les modes de communication du film. Par conséquent, l'objectif principal de ce travail est d'identifier ces modes de communication, d'examiner leur représentation des relations de pouvoir entre ces groupes idéologiques, et de conclure l'importance d'une telle procédure analytique critique dans la promotion de l'égalité raciale. Cette étude a adopté un modèle de recherche qualitative, dans lequel l'analyse multimodale du discours critique (MCDA) nécessite l'utilisation de l'analyse de contenu comme principal outil de collecte de données et d'analyse. L'échantillon sélectionné pour cette analyse est un ensemble de dix scènes extraites du film d'aide. Les résultats obtenus montrent la disparité entre les représentations de cette polarité raciale. Le « moi » positif est adopté par l'idéologie blanche tandis que le « autre » négatif est attribué à la communauté noire. Ainsi, les notions de dominance et de résistance naissent de cette disparité entre les représentations. Une coexistence harmonieuse est atteinte à la fin pour stabiliser les relations entre les deux races. Cette forme d'égalité, cependant, est toujours une illusion que les Blancs utilisent pour éteindre des résistances similaires et maintenir leur contrôle et leur manipulation sur les Noirs. En conséquence, cette étude actuelle a offert peu de suggestions pour de futures recherches qui contribueront à la fin permanente de cette suprématie blanche et à la réalisation de la véritable égalité idéologique.

Mots-clés : Analyse du discours critique multimodal, pouvoir, relations de pouvoir, idéologie, domination, résistance, harmonie.

الملخص

البحث الحالي هو دراسة خطاب نقدي متعدد الوسائط سعى إلى اكتشاف و تحليل الطرق التي م من خلالها جسيد الأشكال المختلفة لعلاقات القوة في فيلم The Help. يتم التعبير عن علاقات القوة هذه شكل عام من خلال التمثيلات الثنائية للذات والآخر، والتي يتم دمجها في أساليب التواصل للفيلم. والتالي، فإن الهدف الأساسي لهذا العمل هو حديد انماط التواصل هذه، وفحص صويرها لعلاقات القوة بين هذه الجماعات الأيديولوجية، واستنتاج أهمية هذا الإجراء التحليلي النقدي في تعزيز المساواة العرقية. اعتمدت هذه الدراسة صميمًا حثيًا نوعيًا، حيث يتطلب تحليل الخطاب النقدي متعدد الوسائط (MCDA) استخدام تحليل المحتوى كأداة رئيسية لجمع البيانات و تحليلها. العينة المختارة لهذا التحليل هي مجموعة من عشرة مشاهد م استخراجها من فيلم The Help. ظهر النتائج المتحصل عليها التفاوت بين مثيلات هذا القطبية العرقية. يتم بني «الذات» الإيجابية من قبل الأيديولوجية البيضاء بينما تُنسب «الأخرى» السلبية إلى مجتمع السود. والتالي، فإن مفاهيم الهيمنة والمقاومة ولد من هذا التفاوت بين التمثيلات. م الوصول الى التعايش المتناغم في نهاية المطاف لتحقيق الاستقرار في هذه العلاقات بين كلا العرقين. ومع ذلك، لا يزال هذا الشكل من المساواة وهمًا يستخدمه البيض لإطفاء مقاومات ممالة والحفاظ على سيطرهم و هيمنتهم على السود. نتيجة لذلك، قدمت هذه الدراسة الحالية بعضا من الاقتراحات للبحوث المستقبلية التي ستساهم في الإنهاء الدائم لهذا التفوق الأبيض و تحقيق المساواة الأيديولوجية الحقيقية.

الكلمات الرئيسية: تحليل الخطاب النقدي متعدد الوسائط، القوة، علاقات القوة، الأيديولوجية، الهيمنة، المقاومة،

الانسجام.