



## **RACIAL PRACTICES IN DEEP SOUTH IN THE 1960s ON MISSISSIPPI BURNING MOVIE: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study analyzes racial practices in the movie *Mississippi Burning*, which portrays racism in the Deep South of America in the 1960s. This study used Jäger and Meier's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and a descriptive qualitative method, which explains and reveals racial practices in the Deep South through Jim Crow Laws and the Ku Klux Klan in the 1960s. Furthermore, the analysis consisted of the scene pictures describing this movie's racial practices. Then, these pictures will be analyzed by elaborating them with the pertinent literature related to the racial practices in the Deep South. After that, the pictures that have already been analyzed will be selected based on non-discursive practices of racial practices, categorized in a table, and drawn conclusions from the analysis. This study shows that Whites engaged in racial practices such as segregation, violence, lynching, intimidation, and burning of Black churches. The Whites used these racial practices in this movie to uphold Jim Crow Laws, White supremacy and prevent blacks from voting and advancement in larger communities.

**Keywords:** *Jäger and Meier's CDA, Jim Crow Laws, Ku Klux Klan, Non-Discursive Practice, Racism.*

### **ABSTRAK**

Studi ini menganalisis praktik rasial dalam film *Mississippi Burning*, yang menggambarkan rasisme di Deep South of America pada 1960-an. Penelitian ini menggunakan Analisis Wacana Kritis (AWK) Jäger dan Meier dan metode kualitatif deskriptif, yang menjelaskan dan mengungkap praktik rasial di Deep South melalui Jim Crow Laws dan Ku Klux Klan pada 1960-an. Di samping itu, analisis ini terdiri dari gambar adegan yang menggambarkan praktik rasial di film ini. Kemudian, gambar-gambar ini akan dianalisa dengan menjelaskan gambar tersebut dengan literatur yang berkaitan dengan praktik rasial di Deep South. Sesudah itu, gambar-gambar yang sudah dianalisa akan dipilih berdasarkan praktik non diskursif dari praktik rasial, dikelompokkan dengan tabel, dan memberikan kesimpulan dari analisis tersebut. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa orang kulit putih terlibat dalam praktik rasial seperti segregasi, kekerasan, hukuman mati tanpa pengadilan, intimidasi, dan pembakaran gereja kulit hitam. Orang kulit putih yang menggunakan praktik rasial ini dalam film ini bertujuan untuk menegakkan Hukum Jim Crow, supremasi kulit putih, dan mencegah orang kulit hitam dari pemilu dan kemajuan mereka di komunitas yang lebih besar.

**kata kunci:** *AWK Jäger and Meier, Hukum Jim Crow, Ku Klux Klan, Praktik Non-Diskursif, Rasisme*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Racism refers to the hatred of another racial group in social construction and behavior between the superior and inferior races (Ghani, 2008: 1113). The facts of racism also can be fundamental because it deals with the restriction of human rights, discrimination, and injustice for an oppressed race. Furthermore, people with the identity of an inferior race in society will be treated differently or badly. The implication of racism also will bring up social problems such as the conflict between two races, hatred, segregation, rights restriction, and death for some involved people. In other words, the superior race has domination to control the inferior race's lives, making the inferior races powerless in society.

This implication of racism can also be seen in the discourse. One of the discourses that can show it explicitly is a movie. For instance, the Alan Parker *Mississippi Burning* movie portrays the racism in the Deep South in the 1960s. This movie contains racial elements such as language that refers to the racial utterances (discursive practice), violent and harmful acts (non-discursive practice), and objects that represent the violent and harmful acts (materialization) related to racism in the Deep South in the 1960s.

In addition, racism has been very controversial, and many researchers discuss it in their papers and research. First, Amelia & Widyastuti (2014) had a *Critical Discourse Analysis of Racism in Django Unchained Movie*. Second, Hafizh (2016) conducted an analysis of *Racism in the Post-Colonial Society: A Critical Discourse Analysis to Jacqueline Woodson's Novels*. Third, Alviniyanti (2019) conducted the analysis of *Racism in the Movie Blackklansman: Critical Discourse Analysis of Van Dijk*. Finally, Taufik & Hasniar (2016) conducted *Racism in 12 Years Slave movie*. Besides, this paper was also a part of the previous writer's thesis on *Racism in the Deep South in the 1960s on Mississippi Burning Movie: a Critical Discourse Analysis Perspective*, which contains discursive practices, non-discursive practices, and materialization (Arrasyid, 2022).

In analyzing this movie, this study only aims to reveal and analyze how the superior races, or whites, engaged in racial practices toward inferior races, like African Americans and other minorities (non-discursive practices) related to racism in the Deep South in the 1960s in the Mississippi Buring movie using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of S.Jäger and F. Meier.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary methodology that enables finding the truth of what is meant when language or discourse is used to describe and explain. CDA also gives the theory and methods for the factual study of the relationship between social, cultural, and discourse development in a vast, diverse sphere. Moreover, Rogers in 2004 also adds that critical discourse analysis interprets and describes the discourse and explains how and why discourse works.

According to Fairclough in Haryatmoko (2016:4), discourse is a social praxis in symbolic interaction which can be revealed in conversation, writing, utterance, picture, diagram, movie, and music. Critical discourse analysis is interested in analyzing how discourse

and language are used to achieve social goals, including the development of social cohesion and social changes. Critical discourse analysis has two main concepts.

Critical discourse analysis sees discourse as the object being researched. Wodak & Meyer in 2009 stated that scholars worldwide have different views about discourse. In a more German and Central European trend, discourse is viewed as linguistics and rhetoric text, and in an Anglo-American perspective, discourse is related to written and oral texts. The discourse-historical approach relates to the sociocognitive theory of Teun van Dijk (1998) and views discourse as structured forms of knowledge, whereas 'text' refers to concrete oral utterances or written documents. Discourse in CDA is seen as more than a reflection of reality; it is also a tool that shapes reality and allows social reality to exist. (Jäger and Maier in Wodak and Meyer (2009: 36).

Critical discourse analysis is implied in its "critique" in the CDA context. According to Maier & Jäger in 2016, the term of critique in CDA context refers to:

*Expose the evaluations that are inherent in a discourse, to reveal contradictions within and between discourses, the limits of what can be said, done and shown, and how a discourse makes particular statements, actions, and things seem rational and beyond all doubt, even though they are only valid at a certain time and place.* Jäger and Maier (2016: 24)

### **Critical Discourse Analysis for Movie**

Critical discourse analysis has many objects that can be analyzed, such as a document, Parliament debate, discussion paper, speech, cartoon, picture, newspaper, movie, and other mass media. The movie is one of the interesting objects that can be analyzed with critical discourse analysis with the theoretical framework of S. Jäger and F. Maier. (Haryatmoko, 2016: 113)

Jäger and Meier in Haryatmoko (2016: 113) urge that discourses do not exist independently but are related to dispositive elements. According to Jäger, dispositive is a synthetic of knowledge that always evolved and developed into a language (discursive practice), action (non-discursive practice), and materialization. In other words, discourses are not just emphasized the discursive practice (talks and thoughts); they also contain non-discursive practice (action) and discourse materialization (the representation or description of objects which evolve from non-practice discursive).

Jäger and Meier in Haryatmoko (2016: 115) suggest three steps involved in the dispositive analysis or the Critical Discourse Analysis of Jäger and Meier. First, it is important to reconstruct the knowledge built in discursive practice. This analysis is fundamental for the further steps in a dispositive analysis because it already contributes to creating an awareness of essential aspects of dispositive. Second, it needs the reconstruction of the knowledge built in non-discursive practice. Third, it needs the reconstruction of the knowledge built in the materialization that represents the non-discursive practices.

### **Racism**

Racism is a belief that one behavior person is determined by stable hereditary characteristics derived from distinct racial groups; each of these distinguishing characteristics is then analyzed with ideas and inferiority. It suggests a social construct in which some classes are superior to other races. This social construction is a product of economic, social, and political power, contributing to groups that make other groups powerless. (Ghani, 2008: 1113).

Ghani (2008: 1113-1114) also adds that racism, especially in the United States, is concerned with the dimension of domination, particularly concerning the majority and minority social classes. This influence contributes to attitudes and practices toward specific communities in a multicultural society, often taking racism. Many writers contend that racism establishes and exercises dominance by segregation, rejection, and enforcement. It establishes a society where the dominant group controls the minority group. In racism, the race is a part of the categorization system that classifies populations based on physical attributes such as skin color and others (Hartley, 2002: 192).

This classification shows the superiority of race, which means that people from a particular race claim themselves more superior to another race. The concept of race can be similar to a nation, and race is a product of the extension of its difference from other races in the system. Racism is done with daily practices and behavior, verbal or non-verbal, stereotypes, discriminatory practices, systematic institutional policies, or even segregation.

### **Racism in the Deep South in the 1960s**

In the Deep South or the Southern States of America in the 1960s, whites engaged in racial practices toward Blacks in the segregation of the Jim Crow Laws and the terror of the Ku Klux Klan. Jim Crow Laws segregated, humiliated, discriminated against, and limited blacks' rights (Fremon, 2000). Consequently, Blacks' lives also became powerless and harmed in the Deep South, which led to the human rights issue. This human rights issue also brought to light the Black and White Civil Rights Movement to end Jim Crow Laws. Besides, the Civil Rights movement had been threatened and obstructed due to the Ku Klux Klan's existence, which prevented the Civil Rights movement from outlawing Jim Crow Laws (Etter et al., 2005). The Ku Klux Klan also supported Jim Crow Laws and terrorized Blacks in the Deep South. Moreover, the Ku Klux Klan's existence also led to the casualties and disadvantages of the Blacks and Whites lives who tried to abolish the Jim Crow Laws.

### **Jim Crow Laws**

Jim Crow Laws were statutes that legalized the racial segregation between Blacks and Whites in the United States (Fremon, 2000). The Southern Democratic Legislature legalized it in the late 19th and early 20th to separate the use of the public facility in transportation, church, restaurant, etc. (Bartlett, 2008). One of the things that can be recognized of Jim Crow Laws was the recognizable sign of "white only" and "colored only" in almost public facilities (Fremon, 2014). The impact of this law made the Blacks living in the Deep South humiliated and restricted because the Whites mistreated them in using the segregated public facility (Fremon, 2014). As a response to this harmful law, Blacks in the Deep South had a nonviolent protest of the Civil Rights Movement, which opposed the Jim Crow Laws. After the Civil Rights Movement did its job, the Jim Crow Laws was dismantled and rejected as an illegal statute that segregated public facilities based on skin color (Recchiuti, 2016).

### **Ku Klux Klan**

According to (Etter et al., 2005), Ku Klux Klan, or KKK, was a White supremacy group that opposed the welfare and right of Black people in the United States. There are three phases of the KKK: the resistance movement, the reactionary movement, and the revolutionary

movement. In the resistance movement, this organization formed against the radical reconstruction policies implemented by the Union army and the newly formed Freed Man's Bureau (a conference that guaranteed the south blacks' life). Besides, the white southerner was afraid that Blacks would someday control the south economy. Therefore, they mysteriously spread the terror as a guerilla group on the white and black sympathizers who oppose white supremacy. This phase was over when President Grant legalized the Klan Act and Enforcement Act in 1871 to disband this organization. Then in the reactionary movement, many white people registered as Klansmen after watching D.W Griffith's *Birth of Nation*. This movie described the rise of the KKK to save the whites from black people's brutality. This reactionary movement also had the highest number of Klansmen supporting Jim Crow against Blacks and other immigrants. This movement also fell when this organization was unable to pay taxes. Furthermore, Ku Klux Klan had the last movement of the revolutionary movement. This movement indicated the killing and lynching of Blacks or Civil Rights activists who opposed the Jim Crow laws. This movement declined when the Civil Rights Movement intervened to reject and end the Jim Crow Laws.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses the descriptive qualitative method (Creswell & Poth, 1998). This study uses the descriptive qualitative method to look for racial practices (non-discursive practices) and materialization in the Mississippi Burning film related to racism in the Deep South in the 1960s. There are three steps to conducting this descriptive qualitative method. First, the writer presents the data from the Mississippi Burning movie, such as picture scenes containing racial practices. Second, the writer applies this data's identification, classification, and categorization into non-discursive practices and materializations in the Mississippi Burning movie. Third, the writer briefly describes non-discursive practices and materializations in the Mississippi Burning.

Furthermore, Jäger and Meier's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is used in this study to uncover and analyze racial practices (non-discursive practices in Mississippi Burning. In this research, Jäger and Meier's Critical Discourse Analysis aims to reconstruct non-discursive practices knowledge to reveal the aspects of non-discursive practice (Haryatmoko, 2016: 123 & 135). Therefore, it needs the pertinent literature or previous research that discussed the racial practices in the Deep South, such as journals and articles, to reconstruct the scene pictures containing these racial practices in Mississippi Burning (Haryatmoko, 2016: 124 &135). Moreover, the CDA of Jäger and Meier reveals the reality of racial practices in the Deep South in the Mississippi Burning.

This study uses library research to collect descriptive qualitative data (Zeid in Ilahi & Ruslan, 2019). It emphasizes finding scene picture data related to the racism in the Deep South in the 1960s from the Mississippi Burning movie. his study has data from the *Mississippi Burning* movie in 1988, directed by Alan Parker. This study data, such as picture scenes, contain non-discursive practices and materialization that depict racism in the Deep South in the 1960s.

The writer employs the observation technique to discuss the film Mississippi Burning, which depicts white racism toward blacks in the Deep South in the 1960s. Collecting data in this study requires nonparticipant observation to take notes, analyze, and conclude the racial practices of the *Mississippi Burning* movie (Sugiyono, 2013:145). In this part, this study only

observes the movie by watching it and marking out the data by noting them, such as scene pictures related to non-discursive practice that portrays racism in the Deep South in the 1960s.

Besides, this study uses the document method (Sugiyono, 2013: 240). Applying the document method in this study only saves the picture scene data in the *Mississippi Burning*, indicating non-discursive practice and materialization portraying racism in the Deep South in the 1960s.

The writer uses the interactive technique for data analysis developed by Miles and Huberman (1984) in Sugiyono (2013:246), which consists of these following three steps.

1. Data reduction, the writer only notes the essential answers and filters the scene picture to gain the non-discursive practice in the *Mississippi Burning* Movie related to racism in the Deep South in the 1960s.
2. Data display, the writer will use the table to define and arrange non-discursive practice after the data has been reduced and selected as the category.
3. Conclusion drawing or verification, the writer will conclude and verify the picture scene data based on the non-discursive practice of racism in the Deep South in the 1960s through the *Mississippi Burning* movie.

### **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

This study aims to find and analyze the non-discursive practices and materialization of racism in the Deep South in the 1960s in the *Mississippi Burning* movie. The non-discursive practice in this movie contains six picture scenes representing the four racial practices in the *Mississippi Burning* movie. Namely, one scene represents Whites intimidating and killing Civil Rights workers or minorities; one scene represents Whites segregating the public facilities between them and Blacks; three scenes represent white Klansmen intimidating and lynching blacks; one scene represents White Klansmen burning the Black Churches. In the picture scene in the discussion section, the acronym MB/NDP is also written, where NDP refers to Non-Discursive Practice.

Table 1 Non-Discursive Practices related to the Racism in the Deep South in the 1960s on *Mississippi Burning* Movie

<b>Non-Discursive Practice</b>	<b>Code</b>
Intimidating and Killing the Civil Rights Workers or Minority	MB/NDP 1
Segregating the Public Facility	MB/NDP 2
Lynching and Intimidating Blacks	MB/NDP 3
	MB/NDP 4
	MB/NDP 5
Burning the Blacks' Churches	MB/NDP 6

<b>Four non-discursive practices</b>	<b>Six pictures</b>
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## **A. Non-Discursive Practices related to the Racism in the Deep South in the 1960s**

### ***1. Intimidating and Killing the Civil Rights Workers or Minority***

In scene 07:10, a Civil Rights workers' car, consisting of two Jews and a Blackman, was stopped by the White Klansmen on the night of Mississippi. One of the Klansmen was a Mississippian deputy (Clinton Pell), and he intimidated a Jew in this car. He told the Jew to remain silent and pay attention to what the deputy said. Then, a White Klansman (Frank Bailey) said that this Jewish man was considered the same as the Blacks in Mississippi. At scene 07:54, Bailey killed all three Civil Rights workers with a handgun.



Picture 1. Whites Klansmen Intimidate and kill the Civil Rights Workers or Minority (MB/NDP 1)

The Klansmen killed the Civil Rights workers because they were implementing the agenda of the third generation of the KKK. One of the agendas referred to the anti-Civil Rights agenda. The anti-Civil Rights agenda consisted of killing, intimidating, and terrorizing Civil Rights workers. They also burned and bombed buildings that were related to the activities of the Civil Rights workers, for instance, the church in the Deep South. (Etter et al., 2005).

Generally, the Civil Rights workers were also the targets of the Ku Klux Klan because of their agenda to create and implement desegregation that ended segregation in the Deep South, which ruined the Ku Klux Klan's power to oppress the Blacks. In other words, the Klansmen's violence toward Civil Rights workers was also directly used to deny and restrain the rights of African Americans, which harmed their lives in the Deep South through segregation (Popham, 2016).

Furthermore, the Civil Rights worker's agenda had an impact on the Blacks' lives in the Deep South. It could have been worse for the Blacks in the Deep South because the Ku Klux Klan hated the Civil Rights worker's agenda. For instance, one of the Civil Rights agendas called "Freedom Summer" in Mississippi in 1964, which aimed to try to end the political disenfranchisement of Blacks in the Deep South, impacted the burning of Black houses and churches that the White mob and the Ku Klux Klan had done (Simkin, 2020).

### ***2. Segregating the Public Facility***

In scene 15:03, two agents from the FBI came to the restaurant filled with Whites and Blacks Mississippians eating together with the segregated seat and table. The Whites ate near the restaurant's front room, and Blacks ate near the back of the restaurant room.



Picture 2. Whites segregate the Public Facility between Them and Blacks (MB/NDP 2)

This segregation was a Jim Crow Laws implementation in the Deep South, where Blacks and Whites sat separately or used separate public facilities. Whites in the Deep South used Jim Crow Laws to maintain white supremacy. The Whites believed that they were the superior race chosen as an intelligent race, while the Blacks believed they were cursed to be servants or worse. They also believed that creating a society between Whites and Blacks in sexual relations would create a "mongrel race," which would destroy America. Consequently, the Whites did some acts to prevent the problem that led to the destruction of America. Namely, they used violence or segregation to keep Blacks at the bottom of the racial hierarchy (Pilgrim, 2012).

The practice of Jim Crow could be seen in the segregation of public places and the control of Blacks. Whites would have first priority in using a good facility, while Blacks would have second priority in using a public facility. In the Deep South, Blacks had no right to offend, comment on, or do suspicious acts toward Whites' lives unless they were imprisoned or lynched by Whites (Pilgrim, 2012: 1).

### 3. *Lynching and Intimidating Blacks*

The Klansmen committed violence against the Blacks in Mississippi. In scene **19:00**, the Klansmen caught, pursued, and tortured the Black Mississippian in the evening who already talked to the FBI agent in the segregated restaurant in Mississippi.



Picture 3. The Violence of White Klansmen toward Blacks (MB/NDP 3)

In scene **52:50**, the white Klansmen used the mask and held the blunt weapon to attack and intimidate the Black church congregation in the evening. One of the Klansmen warned the Black Mississippians not to tell the FBI about the missing three Civil Rights workers and their oppression in Mississippi.



Picture 4. The Violence of White Klansmen toward Blacks (MB/NDP 4)



It also happened in scene 1:21:23; the White Klansmen burned the farm of a Black family in a rural area of Mississippi. This Black family had already contacted the FBI, which one of the Ku Klux Klan hated. One of these Black family members who had that farm, a father, told his son to wake his family and move to a safe place. Based on the picture below, a father decided to use a gun to repel the Klansmen, and suddenly, he got hit and lynched by the Klansmen. Afterward, he survived because his son released him from the hanging or lynching.



Picture 5. White Klansmen Lynch the Blackman (MB/NDP 5)

These Blacks faced intimidation and lynching by Klansmen because one of them had already spoken to the FBI about Blacks' oppression by the Klansmen, which indirectly ruined the Ku Klux Klan's agenda to oppress the Blacks. It was also happening at the same time because the Klansmen had the purpose of preventing and oppressing blacks from voting.

According to Popham in 2016, the Klansmen would oppress, intimidate, and kill people who tried to ruin the Ku Klux Klan agenda to uphold the segregation of their White supremacy beliefs. As a result, Blacks in the Deep South who indirectly contacted Northern states or Civil Rights workers who potentially ended segregation would be lynched by the Ku Klux Klan.

John Simkin (2020) also added that lynching or hanging the victim's body was one of the effective methods of the Ku Klux Klan to prevent Blacks from voting. It also contributed to the significant impact of oppressing the number of blacks who registered to vote. According to his statement, he said:

*In the 1950s the emergence of the Civil Rights Movement resulted in a revival in Ku Klux Klan organizations. The most of important of these was the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan led by Robert Shelton. In the Deep South considerable pressure was put on Blacks by Klansmen not to vote. An example of this was the state of Mississippi. By 1960, 42% of the population were black but only 2% were registered to vote. Lynching was still employed as a method of terrorizing the local black population. (Simkin, 2020: 1)*

In other words, the Ku Klux Klan's lynching of blacks would make Blacks afraid of the voting registry. Besides, it would make them think twice about registering to vote when they saw the "message" of the hanging black bodies for those who did vote to register.

#### **4. *Burning the Blacks' Churches***

In scene 36:13, the US reservation army came to find the corpses of three Civil Rights workers in the Mississippi Swamp. At the same time, in scene 36:21, the Klansmen burned the Black churches with explosives, Molotov cocktails, and gasoline. They also repelled the black priest who stayed in the Black Church.



Picture 6. White Klansmen Burned the Blacks' Churches (MB/NDP 6)

The Klansmen had burned the Black churches to prevent the Blacks from doing the activities that advanced their lives in social, economic, and politics. Besides, the Klansmen also burned these Black Churches related to the Civil Rights movement.

According to SimmsParris in 1998, the Black churches served a purpose in the Deep South for the advancement of Blacks. In her journal, she stated:

*Black churches were organizational sites for social and political activities, centers for economic development and growth. As microcosms of the larger society, Black churches provided an environment free of oppression and racism for African-Americans. In Black churches, African-Americans were consistently exposed to social, political, and economic opportunities which could be sought and had by all members equally.*(SimmsParris, 1998:134-135).

The function of the Black church could be used for the Civil Rights movement. The Civil Rights workers used this place as the institutional center for Blacks mobilization to desegregate the Jim Crow Laws and against the oppression of the Whites. The Black church for Blacks could also be the organized mass base, meeting place, and epicenter of their social equality and political struggle. Somehow, the function of these churches became the target of racially motivated violence, namely the Klansmen burning black churches as an assault on the Blacks and Civil Rights workers (SimmsParris, 1998: 139). Therefore, Klansmen made the agenda for anti-Civil Rights to burn the churches that Civil Rights preached about (Etter, et al., 2005).

In this movie, the Whites had racial practices toward Blacks as their hatred and domination in the Deep South by using Jim Crow Laws and Ku Klux Klan. These racial practices aimed to show their white supremacy, that the Whites were a pure race that could dominate other races and did not want to be mix races. Besides, they also hate the other race development welfare that could threaten the white supremacy.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this research, the *Mississippi Burning* movie explicitly portrays the racial practices in the Deep South in the 1960s. there are four non-discursive practices in this movie. White Klansmen in the Deep South committed violent and harmful acts by intimidating and killing the Blacks and other races who tried to prevent the desegregation of Jim Crow Laws and registering Blacks from vote registering; maintained Jim Crow Laws by segregating public facilities in maintaining white supremacy; committed lynching toward Blacks to spread the terrors that forbade them in vote register; Burning Black churches as the Whites hatred of Blacks community in developed the Blacks advancement and desegregation of Jim Crow Laws.

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