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DISSERTATION TITLE:

Engaging the regime of comedy: An analysis of the representation of “blackness” and “whiteness” in Leon Schuster’s: *There is Zulu on My Stoep (1993)* and *Mr. Bones 1 (2001)*.



A dissertation submitted to the Department of English and Communication, Midlands State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts English and Communication Honors Degree.

DECLARATION:

By submitting this dissertation, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof, that reproduction and publication thereof by Midlands State University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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ABSTRACT:

This dissertation is a multimodal discourse analysis of the representation of the fact of “blackness” and “whiteness” in Leon Schuster *There is a Zulu on My Stoep (1993)* and *Mr Bones I (2001)*. By examining the interplay of the multiple modes engaged in the regime of comedy, the study examines how the two dichotomies are represented in the film narrative of comedy. What need to be recognized is the notion that film as text is divorced of meaning. Meaning is constructed by the viewer or reader using his or her “frame of reference”. Each reader or viewer has his or her reading or viewing position. What therefore might be comedy in the film genre can be tragedy to the other. The comical representation of the two dichotomies can be regarded as a way of engaging the politics of representation which can either maintain or reinforce ideologies. It is tantamount to note that black and white notions are relatively different. The two dichotomies are based on totally different principles, to uphold whiteness and defend it is to attack and destroy blackness. As one is the opposite of the other. This is however realized in the “buddy racial films understudy”.

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Lastly, Mai Chaleka – our history from birth has been characterized by the pains which I know, the scars that I saw and the trials that shaped us. Here is a little poem unto thee:

THIS IS OUR TIME:

Though life be insured not

We assured of lots

This is our time, “mother”

Time to turn thy pains into privileges

Time to turn thy scars into stars

Time to turn thy wounds into wonders

This be the time, turn thy trials into testimonies

This is our time

DEDICATION:

This work is a dedication to my late young brother “The General” Blessing Gomo, my strong and faithful mother, Mai R.M Chaleka, Tendai N.Sadziwa and the rest of the Chalekas.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION:

The study seeks to examine the comical representation of “blackness” and “whiteness” through the characters in the film genre of comedy exemplified by Leon Schuster’s *There is a Zulu on My Stoep* (1993) and *Mr Bones 1* (2001). The theoretical analysis of the film genre shall seek to indicate that the regime of representation as to the fact of “blackness” and “whiteness” is much more than the politics of the skin color but that which is psychologically contested. The study in order to explore the fact of “blackness” and “whiteness” shall examine the speech accorded to white or black characters, the skills attached to either “whiteness” or “blackness” and how the different constructions of these two different races draw laughter in the genre of comedy through a process of “mediatization”. Historically, black characters in colonial literature and Eurocentric discourses have been portrayed as “barbaric”, “uncivilized” and “inferior” beings representing the “other”. A film is a text woven; woven of visual and audio textiles. It is critical to find out that, Schuster’s films are an amalgamation of various principles underlying an artistic composition which draws from other texts. *Mr Bones 1* (2001) and *There is a Zulu on my Stoep* (1993) largely draws the fact of “blackness” and “whiteness” from the constructions of texts such as *Heart of Darkness* and *King Solomon’s Mines*. Shohat and Stam (1994) argue that “many third world countries reinforce white hegemony by discriminating against their own cultural production”. The research shall examine how Schuster, instead of deconstructing Western stereotypes, [re]constructs them as satire, a way of laughing at black or African folly. Using the multimodal discourse analysis [O’ Halloran 2004, Kress and Leeuwen 2001, Machin 2007] the study also examines how the facts of “blackness” and “whiteness” are represented using the multiple semiotic modes in the genre comedy. The theoretical approach shall further acknowledge the semiotic approach according to Barthes (1977) in examining how different signs and codes in the genre of comedy represents “blackness” and “whiteness” at both denotative and connotative levels of meaning. The study shall further examine how comedy is not innocent as it is constructed from an ideological position that is, from what can be called the “regime of representation”. The ideology behind comedy shall be examined using the notions of discourse analysis. Shohat and Stam (1994) holds that “discourse analysis allows us to compare a film’s

discourse not with an accessible real but with other socially circulated cognate discourses from a particular continuum like novels”. Discourse analysis shall allow the researcher to question “the pseudo polyphonic discourses that marginalize and disempower black voices” (Shohat and Stam 1994). Whiteness is theorized in the study not merely as skin color but as a social construct which compares the privileges to those socially assumed to be white and those defined socially as. The study shall analyze the visual images of the films understudy in order to establish whether Schuster was able to provide a balanced picture of what constitute “whiteness” or “blackness” in his films.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF STUDY:

Around the period of 1948 in South Africa, “blacks” and “whites” were segregated racially in all forms of their livelihood. The separation of blacks from whites was deliberately systemized. It has to be recognized that, when people of different races clustered Johannesburg from different parts of the continent [s] seeking employment in the mines such as Witwatersrand around the 1948’s, they settled in slums and the result was racial mixing in those occupied slums. The policies of segregation created during this period of the apartheid were attempts to end racial mixing. The white settlers or Boers could not accept being equal with any race separate from their own. The Nationalist party that acquired and gained power in 1948 made it their mandate to maintain the inequalities that existed between “blacks” and “whites”. The Party maintained the apartheid policies by extended the legislation governing the separation of blacks and whites. During this period racial separation through the medium of discrete social institutions (language, culture and education) was also maintained. It is however vital to note that, the aims of the Nationalist party ensured continuation of white hegemony by monitoring black political and nationalist movements. The portrayal of blacks as constructed in Eurocentric perceptions has been maintained in media discourses. Weiner (2004:434) suggest that literary representation of blacks as stud and objects of sex are maintained day-to-day in the media of America. It can be suggested that the notions that assumes a black man as the object of commiserations with no commercial value continue to be maintained in modern film discourse hence a black has been entitled no rights and privileges before a white man in discourses that represents the two notions. It can be pointed out that as negation of the black body continue to be repeated in both literal and

media discourse, such repetition can be argued to be Westernized techniques to reinforce a truth claimed by those who desire to minister their selfish ambitions of superiority against the other. Gabriel (2007:105) argues however that blackness is a carrier of people's historical background, their meaning, way of life and their religion. As a carrier of people's historical narrative one can note that blackness contains a legacy that cannot be speedily wiped out of black people minds. The legacy left behind by the slave period, the colonial period that were violent and the tragic moments left realized by oppressive systems that attempted to maintain white hegemony. The negation of the black body can therefore be regarded as the negation of his historical narrative. An attempt to negate a black man in any discursive practice is therefore an attempt to deny the black man the right to exist and live on the face of the planet earth.

Filming the relations that exist between black and white characters is problematic without preconceived notions of the two. It can be argued that any director who attempts therefore to create a narrative plot of the film genre propagate and maintain certain perceptions and ideas that are preconceived and persuaded by ideologies. In as much as *Heart of Darkness (1902)* by Joseph Conrad tries to show that Africans are barbaric, uncivilized and inferior beings without language. Genres insisting on primitive perceptions about blackness further illustrate that Africans' fact of blackness has not changed. One need to note that identities and perceptions are dynamic, failing to alter the primitive assumptions about the fact of blackness define therefore the discourse that refuse alteration as politicized discourses. Shohat and Stam (1994:35) argue therefore that local movies or films must contain empowering means for societies facing dislocation, mistaken identity and racism. African media need to however confront the genre that distort and relegates them by taking agency through speaking back. Speaking back in film discourse can be directing back in the genre of film. Shohat and Stam (1994:121) further suggest that the colonial patterns continue to exist in some African films. It can be argued that the Colonizer's metaphors and preconceived images about "blackness" and "whiteness" continue to exist disguised as comedy and masked as satire.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Traces of past Western discourses about "blackness" and "whiteness" remain embedded in Leon Schuster's genre of comedy film.

1.4 JUSTIFICATION OF STUDY:

Cinema has become a global sensation mostly for conveying messages to the audiences and for commercial purposes. Shohat and Stam (1994) write that Third World cinema has become far-reaching and is now expanding its “cultural frontiers” to the world. Different genre film such as documentary, thriller and comedy have become the chief diets from which African film directors are representing their concerns. However, some African film critics argue that most films have not entirely departed from constructing black identities as informed by Eurocentric ideas of evaluating the concept of blackness and whiteness. Shohat and Stam (1994) suggest that there exist Euro centrism which he calls “Hollywood centrism” because of the worldwide imitation of the Western’s successive way in constructing identities of the “other”. African history is informed by how Europeans delayed the development of Africa. It can be argued that one of the ways in which Europeans continue to delay African development is using the genre of film to construct identities which negatively paint Africa as a dark continent. Productions of films such as *Hotel Rwanda* and *The Last King of Scotland* can be dismissed because as they are argued to be in favor of Western hegemony promoted through Hollywood film paradigm. Through *There is a Zulu on my Stoep* (1993) and *Mr Bones I* (2001), Leon Schuster can be accused of contributing to the underdevelopment of Africa because of creating a Manichean dichotomy based on black versus white concealed in the genre of comedy. Instead of Leon Schuster’s texts to deconstruct the Western stereotypes he reconstructs a tool that undermines the fact of blackness. An analysis of Third World cinema has been the focus of many studies which examined how African cinema has done little to deconstruct the negative stereotypes brought on them by Western media. The examination of the films under study will be an empowering vehicle for local Medias to create genres that rewrites the fact of blackness. By questioning and examining Schuster’s film genre, the study takes agency on analyzing the politics of representation that continue to be imbedded in African cinema.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The study is concerned with the analysis of *There is a Zulu on my Stoep* (1993) and *Mr Bones I* (2001) by Leon Schuster. The genre of comedy shall be evaluated to examine to indicate how meaning depends on multiple semiotic modes. The two films shall be examined to show how the

fact of “blackness” is represented. The study shall recognize the multimodal discourse analysis and the constructionist theory of representation to examine the meaning implied by the interplay of the “black” and “white” dichotomy. The study shall also make use of Barthes (1977) semiotic analysis to make a critical analysis of the genre comedy.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The study is guided by the following objectives:

- ❖ The study seeks to examine interplay of multiple semiotic modes in meaning construction
- ❖ The study shall further seek to analyze the representation of “blackness” and “whiteness” in Schuster’s film texts
- ❖ The study attempts to examine how the “black” and “white” dichotomies are represented in comic films.
- ❖ The study shall seek to examine meaning at both denotative and connotative level

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

In analyzing the fact of “blackness” and “whiteness” in Schuster’s *There is a Zulu on my Stoep* (1993) and *Mr. Bones I*(2001), the study was controlled by these research questions:

- ❖ How is meaning constructed?
- ❖ How is “blackness” and “whiteness” represented in the genre of comedy?
- ❖ What is the relation between “blackness” and “whiteness” in film narrative?
- ❖ Examine the genre of comedy.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

The study is significant to the following:

1. **Students:**

Students gain insights in the critical appreciation of the genre comedy. As the study shall establish that racial identity is socially and historically constructed not biologically determined

how one film mean is therefore a matter of ideology. The study shall also be useful in developing student's skills of appreciating multimodal texts. It shall also set a yardstick on how they can use different theories of representation to critic a genre comedy.

2. Film analysts

The study shall further develop the visual literacy of those who study and analyze film. As the problem of the 20th century lie in the visual image, the study aid in developing reading literacy of the film texts.

3. Public Actors

The study shall be useful to public actors such as media houses and broadcasting corporations. Media house that create film can gain insight on how the create "counter discourse" in the form of films that can respond to Eurocentric film. Broadcasting houses can however set television programs that analyze and study film so that the audiences stayed informed on the politics of representation.

1.9 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS:

The first chapter is the introduction. It provides a brief discussion on the background of the study, research objectives and goals, the research questions and the scope of the study. The last section of the chapter provides a summation of the key findings of the research as well as a brief discussion of the significance of the study. The second chapter presents review of related literature. It focuses on the theorization of genre comedy. Chapter three provides theoretical framework used in the analysis of data in the research. It discusses the constructionist approach and semiotic analysis. The fourth chapter is the data analysis of the texts under study. The fifth chapter is the last chapter and it shall serve as the conclusion of the research and summates the research findings by comparing the analyses of *Mr Bones 1* (2001) and *There is a Zulu on my Stoep* (1993) in line with the goals and objectives of the research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Literature review attempts to acknowledge earlier research that has been carried out relevant to the research question. It tests the research question against that which is already known about the subject. Sundry published books, journal articles, corporate reports, theses, theories and Internet articles are consulted to enrich the research. Literature review draws the relation that exists between various ideas in terms of their points of convergence and divergence.

2.1.1 GENRE:

“Genre “as a word is derived from Latin and French languages which defines a class of things (Harris, 1995). Genre is thus a resource based word which is rich with many disparate or related notions which can be conveniently divided and subdivided. Depending on the different disciplines that exist, “*genre*” as a word means different things to different people. In literature the term “genre” though it remains shrouded in sundry debates, some school of thoughts refer genre to poetry, fiction, drama or comedy. It has to be recognized that within the term “genre” other genres continue to exist. It is problematic therefore to draw a demarcation between genres and subgenres. Chandler (2000) argues that there are subgenres, super genres, supra genres and sub-subgenres. In this regard it can be exemplified that within the domain of literature there exist genres such as poetry with subgenres such as the epic, heroic poetry, mock heroic poetry and sonnets.

Genre as stated above means a plethora of things in different areas. It is vital to note that genre is a continuous site of contestation. Scholars of ethnography suggest that “genre serves as a nexus of interrelationships amongst the constituents of the speech event and as a formal vantage point on speaking practice” (Bauman 1999:84). Bauman (1999) suggest that modern approaches argue that genre is however the order of verbal communication style logically connected. What can therefore be understood from Bauman is the notion that, for texts to be classified as genre or under a particular genre they must contain structures that are formally

acceptable and follows a customary way in the making and design of a discourse. Genres therefore have a relation of what Kristeva calls “intertextuality”. Intertextuality views a particular text and its correspondence to a particular text or texts. Wales (1989:259) notes that genre is an “intertextual conception”, the concepts that views genre as related to other genres in relations of borrowing. It can be noted in this regard that genre does not exist in isolation of other “class of things”. They are not an island to themselves but genres correlate with other genres. Generic rules subsist that influences the construction of a particular text. For one to create the genre of comedy, the parameters that classify the construction of such a particular type of text need therefore to be recognized. The rules of the genre of comedy once they are recognized in the construction of two or more genres leads however to the creation of conventional parameters of what defines or constitutes a particular genre.

Chandler (2000) argue that nowadays films are more often than not classified by communicative actors as “thrillers”, “westerns”, “comedy” and “romantic comedy”. While names exist for genres, countless subgenres exist which have been unnamed (Fowler 1989, Wales 1989). What seems to be common among the afore mentioned scholars is the notion that in order for us to classify film as comedy some borrowing and similarities must exist for classification. Miller however holds a different opinion and argues that, the quantity of genres or subgenres in a particular society depend on the diversified way of that particular society (Miller 1984, cited in Freedman and Medway 1994a, 36). It can therefore be noted that, what one society classify as genre depends on how that society is structured. In the African setting, music genres such as *sungura and *kwasa kwasa classify the genre and subgenre of music. In different settings such as America or Europe the music genre can be subdivided into hip hop music, country music and reggae. In societies that have become diversified due to imperialism and colonization both genres can be found with either a new genre or subgenre. The question that remains concerns how we classify genres. Bordwell (1989:147) asserts that one can argue that “no set of necessary and sufficient conditions can mark off genres from other sort of groupings in ways that all experts and ordinary goers would find acceptable”. Though Bordwell’s point of arrival seems convincing, one need to realize that in the classification of films, some scholars have agreed on the classification of film basing on the content, form and various purposes.

2.1.1.1 CONTENT BASED CLASSIFICATION:

Chandler (2000) suggests that some conventional definition of genre attempt to base the classification of genres on content (looking at themes or setting) and form (structure or style) which are shared by texts belonging to them. The attempt to classify genre on content should therefore pay attention to the correspondence that exists between texts in terms of their content and form. If a text borrows from other texts in content and form, the conventional definition however agree that they belong to the same genre category. If *Mr Bones 1* and *There is a Zulu on my Stoep* are related in terms of their recurring themes, the conventional definition classifies these under one genre. It can further be noted that if the film's overall content stirs laughter to the audience the conventional definition also classify the two under the genre of comedy. It can however be established that efforts to classify genres according to their content and form is to a notable degree successive but theoretically unfulfilling. The difference is due to the fact that some films tend to be aligned with one genre in content and the other in genre form classification thereby become problematic.

It can be argued that finding a monolithic and linear definition of genre is a complex and convoluted activity. Several rules of accepting and rejecting rules are engaged and disengaged in the classification of genres. Genres are not however discredited systems consisting of a fixed number of list able items. It is vital to note that genres are involved in a dynamic process of exchange, borrowing and interaction. Despite the complex activity that is involved in the classification of genres, House, P (1989:37) asserts that different genres which are distinct continue to exist. Neale (2005) asserts further that genres are instances of repetition and difference. What therefore constitutes comedy in the film genre must be its latent ability to foreground recognized style or theme continuously that is repeated and relayed in classified comedies. Repeated styles such as humor and satire which prompts the audience sense of humor must be identified in the genre of comedy. Chandler (2000) suggests that texts often exhibit conventions of more than one genre. The genre of comedy can exhibit emotions of horror, pain or tragedy. Chandler's line or argument holds more water when the idea is looked at from the films under study. In *There is a Zulu on my Stoep (1993)* emotions of fear are evoked when there are gun shots in the film. It can however be noted that, the film can therefore belong to a different genre. Classification of genres basing on content can therefore be misleading as genre according to such a classification is misleading.

2.1.1.2 PURPOSE BASED CLASSIFICATION

Despite the controversial efforts to classify genres based on content some scholars agree on the purpose based approach. How we define genres can depend on our purpose. Tudor (1974a) suggests that “genre is what we collectively believe it to be” (cited in Neale 2005). It can be argued that according to the definition given, genres therefore are social constructions and are only identifiable to one social group. What constitute comedy to one group might be tragic to the other. *Mr Bones 1* can be regarded as comedy to those who possess a sense of humor and are compelled to laugh. However, those who find the film genre offensive might therefore portray *Mr Bones 1* as belonging to another genre category. One can realize that Tudor’s point of departure seems convincing though it coexists with its own weaknesses. Genre cannot simply be what a society wants it to be, genres might mean one thing to one society but universal constraints should therefore exist which aids in classification. One can however redefine genres as a class of typical features which are shared between and amongst social groups. Buckingham (1993:137) asserts that genre is not simply given by culture rather it is in a constant process of negotiation and change (cited in Chandler 1997). The differences that exist between and amongst genres are continuously deteriorating due to what can be called “genre imperialism”. This can be defined as the extension of a single genre into another genre leading to the creation of a globalised or universalized type of genre.

Fiske (1987:110) defines “genre as cultural practices” that makes efforts to insert meaning in text for the privilege of both the producer and reader. It can be deduced from the definition that genre can be classified according to space and time in which they occur. According to Fiske (1987) however, genre are determined by spatiotemporal relations. What is implied therefore is the idea that, genre portray and mirror the times they were created. What one calls classical film concerns the time in which they were produced. What can therefore be heed is the idea that time can be argued to be a distinctive feature for the classification of genres. Time can involve a single genre and in that particular genre, subgenres exist thereby classification becomes a dynamic process. It can further be noticed that, though some researcher argue for a purpose based approach that is; what intentions the genre attempts to serve one can however argue for what can be called character or director based approach when it comes to the film genre. Popular film makers such as Tyler Perry will therefore belong to romantic comedy and

Leon Schuster will therefore belong to comedy. Though the above line of argument holds life, it might be challenging to classify popular film makers such as John English (Mr Bean) under the genre of comedy alone as they borrow from other genres such comedy and action. It is complex therefore to depart from the notion that no genre exist in isolation of other genres. Genres are woven from other genres and therefore within a particular genre other subgenres can be identified.

2.1.1.3 SEMIOTICALLY:

Chandler (2007:202) holds that “genres under semiotics are seen as a shared code between the producers and interpreters of a text included within it”. It is however critical to make meaning of genre or the world around us without socially approved codes. It can be noticed however that under semiotics, genres must be understood between and amongst participants involved. For one therefore to recognize a particular film as thriller, the producer and the viewer of the genre must therefore share the same code which should lead the participants to conclude the genre as thriller. Kress et al (1988:107) concur that every text positions its audience differently. Each of this position implies different possibilities of response and action. It can be noted that how we are going to understand a particular text varies accordingly. The viewing of the texts under study provides various meaning to the viewer depending on one’s attitude, beliefs and background against the texts.

Chandler (1997) argues that any text requires what is called “cultural capital “to successively decode the meaning contained therein. Generic knowledge is one of the competencies that are required. It can be noted that film as a genre is not signified according to semiotics, which imply that film does not contain meaning. Meaning is therefore constructed by the viewer or the audience using their frame of references. Our understanding of a particular genre lies not with the signified by the system of signification.

2.1.2 FILM GENRE:

Grant (2012) says that “genre movies are those commercial feature films that through repetition and variation tell familiar characters in familiar situations”. Tudor (1974:80) asserts that in relation to film genres define moral and social worlds. Genres can be argued to contain

perceptions and an idealized world view. One can therefore recognize that what is implied is the notion that genre films are based on shaping the society and encourage that which is moral and acceptable. Genre films are further identified as a tool that shapes society in a way that betters humanity. Leo Baudry (cited in Hayward 1996:162) sees film genre as a “barometer of the social and cultural concerns of cinema audiences”. Film genres as they are regarded as a barometer, one can notice that the gauge can and need to be questioned. The genre of film contains more subgenres such as horror, comedy and romance. These genres can be argued to be focused on the cultural and moral concerns of the audience. Some subgenres such as horror are aimed at developing nervous depressions and emotions of repugnance.

Bennet, A (2005:14) sees film genres as enhanced form of social control which facilitate the creation of an ideology. According to this notion genre positions the audience in order to naturalize the ideologies which are engaged in the text. Genres are used to construct and maintain thereby naturalize ideologies or stereotypes. One can notice that films such as *Mr Bones I* can be argued to be tools maintaining Eurocentric ideologies about “blackness” and “whiteness”. The presentation of either the white or black dichotomy in the film genre can be argued to be a way of creating, maintaining or naturalizing an ideology. Feuer (1992:145) suggest that genre also perform what is called “cultural forum” were cultural divergences meet and set their differences for the purposes of array. It can be argued however that when looked at from the hypodermic needle theory, the media is regarded to have total control over the audience portrayed as helpless. The media according to the theory is perceived to inject the helpless audience with culture, ideologies and stereotypes that cannot be resisted by the passive audience. Feuer’s assumption can be argued to hold little life in line with the idea that film genres cannot be perceived to be ideologically neutral.

Chandler (2000) suggests that some film genres tend to be defined primarily by their “subject matter “for example detective films, some by their setting for example the Hollywood or Western and others by their narrative form and it can be exemplified; the musical. Setting has tended to be one of the effective modes in defining what has been called “Nigerian movies” from Nollywood as well as “Western movies” due to their production in the American setting. Despite the successive defining parameter of “setting based” some film genres have featured in various setting making this classification ineffective such as *Osofia* in London with London setting but

has been named a Nigerian movie.

Altman (1998) emphasizes that genre is a dynamic process, one which is an ongoing process, an unending discursive exchange among competing users that is filmmakers, studios, critics, and audiences. Generic exchange between and amongst genre continue to exist in a dialogical nature. Film genres due to the advancement of new technologies are also constantly changing breaking the barriers that exist between one type of genre and the next type of genre. Film genre borrows from other film genres and no genre exists in isolation of other genres.

2.1.3 REGIME OF COMEDY:

In the genre of comedy, there exists what is called the regime of comedy. The regime of comedy involves what is called 'the politics of representation'. As film is a text, one can realize that it is and involves the politics of representation. Every represented text tries to construct, develop and reinforce a certain ideology. Weedon (2004) says that "comedy as a mode of critique is often ambiguous in its effects". Weedon (2004) further suggest that comedy works as a double-edged sword that has the ability to criticize and strengthen stereotypes. Denzin (2002) suggests that the narrative plot in the "inter racial buddy films where characters are related in companionship in which one is black and the other white; racial separation is treated as a subject of no importance. Denzin (2002) goes on to suggest that comedy often engages stereotypes to generate laughter. It can be noted that comical ways of generating humor through the use of black and white characters can be argued to be political way of reinforcing racial ideologies. How the two are to be represented is a matter of sanctioning Western hegemony. Tsakona and Popa (2011:217) hold that racist jokes may fortify the producer's negative stereotype. The fortification of the stereotypes therefore treats the stereotypes as naturalized notions that are acceptable. Film genres need to however be questioned on their construction of humor or satire out of their comic use of black or white contrast. It can however be noted further that, attempts to question the representation of these phenomena can lead to the subconscious way of laying another foundation of racial prejudice against that which we are criticizing. Racially constructed film genres can be argued to be instruments that the Western Medias use to suppress the minds of those that are negatively represented.

It can be pointed out that genre analysis suggest that the normalization of the “black” and “white” dichotomy through stereotyping can highly be recognized in comedy discourses because generic resolution deject viewers’ critical engagement with the questioning the differences in such discourses. Allen, R (1992) argues that the “genre positions the interpretive community in such a way as to naturalize the dominant ideologies expressed in the text”. It can be noted that film genres contains an implied meaning, the narrative plot of a particular film genre therefore creates a reading framework that focuses the viewer on a particular meaning. A film might use two main characters one black and the other white. It is however on these characters that the plot shifts and centers to help the viewer acquire the implied meaning. Comedy can however be argued to contain inoffensive humor. Though humor is added in the narrative plot it only saves to savor or relish the politicized ideology. Despite the notion that humor is added, one can as well note that its main purpose is to only lessen the pedigree of racial assassination being committed against the misrepresented.

2.1.4 BLACKNESS AND WHITENESS:

Film discourse has become a vital location in which black and white dichotomies contend self against the other. Films have been examined however in their various genres by many scholars. Genre horrors have been examined by film critics such as Dyer (1988). Shome (1996) focus analysis on action genres whilst Penley (1997) focus attention on pornography. Some scholars however examine how race is constructed in film discourses. Giroux (1997a, 1997b) examine the use of “blackness” and “whiteness” relations film discourse *Dangerous Minds*, arguing that “whiteness” is a colonial product. Giroux (1997) unveils the culturally constructed ideologies of whiteness and blackness in the popular film discourses. Whiteness in the film serves as a yard stick to civilize all non whites. The significance of the film critics is however premised on examining the predicament and representation of blackness in different film genres.

Fanon (1952) however suggest that in the society in which multiple races exist, a black man is faced with legitimized challenges in the construction of his self confidence. A black man remains consciousness of whatever he is doing. He can never feel free around a white as he tries to follow that which is approved by him. Fanon further suggest around a white man, the black man’s rules of engagement are substituted as the black man makes efforts to please the

other. Fanon (1952) says that “the behaviors of a black man are constructed out of implicit knowledge”. The knowledge however tells the black man how he must use the fork and knife to eat. The implicit knowledge also instructs the black man how he politely request for something. It can be noted however that the conscious knowledge is however a blueprint of what is recognized by the white man as acceptable. What Fanon implies is the notion that a black man in front of the white man exist for the “other” who is superior and suspend the “self” that is inferior. It can be argued however that non white manner of conduct around a white man stems from the inside self that has become Westernized psychologically. If the mind submits to Western ideologies then the whole body will not refuse to display the colonial effects of the conquered mind. It can be argued however that the man of color in a sense makes himself abnormal to show the white man that he is at once the perpetrator and the victim of a delusion. Blackness therefore has been made to be a programmed object working under the system of controlled programs to please the other and not self. It is however no coincidence that in the film genre such worldly assumptions and constructions are relayed to confirm the ideology.

Hall (1997) asserts that “things do not mean” we make meanings of things according to the attachments that we associate things with. What is black therefore is the attachment that we associate with blackness. What we associate with blackness therefore is matter of ideology, what can be called the regime or politics of representation. The idea can also be extended to what we associate with whiteness. The associations we give whiteness as a society are what can be called the agreed codes. The codes are however socially determined, in order for white to mean pure codes are attached that are politically manipulated by different societies. It can be pointed out that codes or signs make meaning out of their relation with other signs. What it means is that, black cannot mean outside its relationship with what is white (Hall, 1997). The two are binary opposite and one will mean the opposite of the other. If white signify purity, cleanliness, and superiority black will therefore signify impurity, dirty, evil and inferiority. The meaning making however is a process that involves what can be defined as the regime of representation because the production of meaning is ideologically driven. This study shall however attempt to show that what is black or white therefore is a result of the “regime of representation”. The construction of what is white or what is black in the genre comedy is driven by the attachments that Schuster has associated with the two phenomena’s.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

This section elucidates the theories and concepts that are recognized in the research under study. The chapter shall therefore discuss the constructionist theory of representation and visual semiotic analysis. The vantage and drawback of each theory as well as the concepts included in the theories shall be discussed.

2.2.1 CONSTRUCTIONIST THEORY OF REPRESENTATION:

Hall (1997:24) holds that there are three theories of representation of meaning. The three can be listed as reflective, intentional and the constructionist approach. Theories of representation explain how language works in meaning making. For the purposes of the topic understudy, the research shall acknowledge the constructionist approach of representation. The constructionist approach suggests however that “things don’t mean” Hall (1997, 25). Hall says further that “meaning is constructed using representational systems” (1997, 25). Meaning is a construct of the author’s intentions through a system. A representational system ranges from language which is a system of linguistic code to visual which therefore is a system of images and sound systems. What need to be pointed out is the notion that how a particular film is narrated is a result of the author’s engagement with his perceptions, ideologies and frame of reference. Meaning however lies not with the objects created by the social actor but meaning becomes a reciprocal process between the author and the reader or viewer.

2.2.2 Multimodal Discourse Analysis:

“Discourse analysis largely made contributions to the study of language ‘in use’ with descriptions of language forms and patterns of interaction recognizing the contexts of use” (Brown and Yule 1983). Multimodal discourse analysis has taken a new paradigm of looking at various different semiotic resources that are contained in different texts. In the study of discourse, “multimodality has combined language and technology to extend the study of language per se to the study of language in combination with other resources, such as images, gesture, symbols of science, action, sound and music” (O’Halloran 2011). It can be pointed out that a multimodal is therefore a text that integrates two or more semiotic modes. Multimodal analysis shows therefore how the two or more semiotic resource relates in the meaning making process.

The film medium, as a classic type of multimodal discourses, “parallels a significant dimension of our experience of the world: it involves sequences of change and repetition in the visual and auditory realm” (O’Halloran, 2004). Film can be considered as a “multimodal articulation of multiple and integrated discourses” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001). It is vital to point out that a film is system of signification that articulates experience; the experience is however articulated through the use of various intertwined semiotic resources using combination of the linguistic, visual or images; sound and gesture. How these different semiotic resources interact with each other to make meaning becomes one of the research objectives of multimodal discourse analysis. The existence of these factors in the film texts lead one to draw the fact that film has become an obvious candidate for consideration as a multimodal artifact.

Film discourse as a typical form or example of multimodal discourse is widely discussed from the perspective of literary criticism, aesthetics and philosophy. Any solitary use of theories to analyze the various modalities contained in any multimodal discourse would be inadequate and less comprehensive. To better scrutinize the fact of ‘blackness’ and ‘whiteness’ in the film discourse, two most commonly applied approaches are integrated which are Halliday’s (1978, 1985) social semiotic approach and Kress and van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) multimodal discourse analysis or contextual approach and these are separately used in verbal and visual analysis. The study shall however make an inclusion of, Barthes’ visual semiotic analysis to unveil meaning making at both denotative and connotative level. It can be pointed out that effort to promote a comprehensive understanding of the films under study, from the perspective of linguistics, as well as a composite multimodal appreciation of meaning grounded in both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects led to the integration of these. The integration however, has benefits in overcoming the shortcomings caused by the fact that each theory only works on one modality.

The study shall recognize and analyze the linguistic and non-linguistic resources that exist in the film texts. Focus shall also be given to the visual images guided by visual grammar, paying attention to verbal text and other semiotic modes in the multimodal discourse. To comprehensively understand multimodal analysis in the film discourses, it is worthwhile to conduct an integrated analysis of various modalities by combining the existing analysis methods.

Therefore, the centre of attention would be uniformly put on visual, verbal (spoken language) and aural (sounds) analysis of film discourses *Mr Bones 1* and *There is a Zulu on my Stoep* in an attempt to make the provision of a comprehensive appreciation of the films.

For the linguistic analysis of film *Mr Bones 1* and *There is a Zulu on my Stoep*, Systemic Functional Grammar is adopted (Halliday, 2004). According to Halliday, language is a systemic resource for expressing meanings in context and linguistics is the study of how people exchange meanings through the use of language. Halliday suggests the application of systemic-functional grammar to understanding the quality of texts, why a text means what it does and how language “mean” according to its users and its functions. In this study, this theory is applied to analyze the linguistic text of English transcript chosen from the film.

The non-linguistic analysis of film texts *Mr Bones 1* and *There is a Zulu on My Stoep* deals with both visual and speech aspects. Kress and van Leeuwen’s (1996) visual grammar will be applied in the study. O’Halloran (2008) suggests that language and visual forms of semiosis differ from each other in a primary sense. Though Visual Grammar is developed on the centre of systemic functional grammar, it applies a different mechanism in analyzing visual images. It can be pointed out that Visual Grammar allows the insights of meaning making through the analysis of visual images, making it possible to understand the images without linguistic aid. However, for a broader appreciation of how the fact of ‘blackness’ and ‘whiteness’ is constructed in the film, the thesis is analyzed by the interplay of both linguistic and non-linguistic resources.

2.2.3 VISUAL SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS:

The word semiotics comes from the Greek word *seme* which means an interpreter of signs (Cobley and Jansz 1997). Semiotics is an analysis of signs or the study of the functions of sign systems. Semiotics involves studying representations and the process contained in representational practices (Chandler, 2010). Semiotics however regard that “reality” always involves representation. In this regard semiotics treats signs as representing other things. The basic semiotic concept however suggests that things or signs do not ‘mean’ anything in themselves but are invested with meanings by cultures and societies. What is real therefore is a product of sign systems. It is vital to note therefore that a film in this instance is not a mere form of harmless entertainment, a film is however a system of signification that articulates experience.

The fundamental premise of semiotics is that the whole of human experience with exception is an interpretive structure mediated and sustained by signs. It can be noted that semiotics demonstrates that filmic meaning is a result of a system of codes. Codes are conventions that define the meaning of signs. “A sign can contain multiple meanings depending on the different codes used to interpret the meaning of images” (Moore 1998:212). The semiotic analysis examines the cultural and social meaning of codes (Scholes, 1982; 1985). The meaning of signs depends on the relationship between the signifier (images) and the signified (implied meaning) and the referent (what the image) refer to.

Barthes studies visual semiotics and deal with individual bits and pieces within images. Batherian visual semiotics concentrate on what in the case of language we would call lexis, it has however more to say on what can be called visual lexis (van Leeuwen and Jewitt 2001). In Barthes’ visual semiotics, the key ideas are the levels of meaning. His ideas centre on two different levels of signification: denotation and connotation.

DENOTATION:

Leech (1974:10) defines denotation as “the conceptual meaning”. It refers to the world’s direct and specific meaning (Hurley 2008). Denotation refers to the physical reality of the object that is signified. It raises the questions of “what” or “who” is being depicted here? (van Leeuwen and Jewitt 2001). To Barthes, denotation is a relatively trouble-free issue. There is no encoding into some kind of language like code which must be learnt before the message is deciphered. Denotation can be noted when someone is able to recognize that in *Mr Bones 1 (2001)*, the white man who plays the sangoma role is Leon Schuster or that the King in the film is black. What we only recognize is what we already know which we call the literal message as opposed to the symbolic one (Barthes 1977:36). It is important to note that under denotation, the meaning identified is universal among all cultures. It can be exemplified, if one succeeds in recognizing that a group of people wearing white garments are Chinese that is denotative meaning. Barthes (1977:166) claims that denotation is the underlying meaning and he calls denotation the “first order of the signifying system”. It is at this level that a sign consists of a signifier and the signified.

CONNOTATION:

Connotation refers to the second level of meaning or the additional meaning given to an image or text. The connotative meaning is constructed through cultural associations which cling to the represented people, places and things through specific connotations and specific photographic techniques amongst many (Leeuwen and Jewitt 2001). Connotation is arbitrary in that the meanings brought to the image are based on rules or conventions that the reader has learnt. The consistent use of soft focus, for example, in film and advertising has found its way into our consciousness to the degree that it is universally read as sentimental. As conventions vary from one culture to another, then it follows that the rules on how to read these images, will also vary between communities (Crow 2010). Under connotation, the meaning of images are social and ideological, one interprets a text according to his or her frame of reference. Using the example rendered above, connotation as it is the second level of meaning allows a Chinese to note that wearing white garments mean funeral or death in their culture. To a Western, the group of Chinese wearing white garments can signify a wedding therefore connotative meaning is not universal and varies across cultures. Meaning decoded from the image by the reader depends upon his or her acquired rules and conventions. Connotation however involves conventional signs (Cobley and Jansz 1997). Barthes suggests that the two levels of meaning can also be used in analyzing visual signs and the researcher shall use Barthes' visual semiotic analysis to critic the films under study.

Visual semiotic analysis shall be used to explain how meaning is created through complex semiotic interactions (Van Leeuwen 2005). To establish the objectives of the study, the semiotic analysis shall take three dimensions that are discourse, genre and modality. Discourse dimension is the key to examining how semiotic resources are used to construct the “what” of representation. Genre shall focus on the “how” of the genre comedy. Modality being the last dimension shall be used as the semiotic approach to the question of “truth” or the “politics” of representation (Van Leeuwen 2005). Chandler (2000) also suggests that modality refers to the reality status accorded to or claimed by a sign, text or genre. As the film is a multimodal text containing two or more semiotic modes, the semiotic analysis shall however examine the semiotic modes such as linguistics (vocabulary and grammar of the oral), visual (color, viewpoint of still and moving picture) and gestural (body language).

STRENGTHS:

- ❖ The visual semiotic analysis helps to denaturalize theoretical assumptions in academia
- ❖ Semiotics offers the promise of a systematic comprehensive and coherent study of communication phenomenon as a whole not just instance of it. The semiotic analysis provides us with a potentially unifying conceptual framework and a set of methods and terms for use across the full range of signifying practice which includes gesture, dress, photography, film and television (Hodge and Kress 1988)
- ❖ “No discipline concerns itself with representation as strictly as semiotics does” (Mick 1988:20)
- ❖ Semiotics foregrounds and questions the process of representation
- ❖ Semiotics searches for the connotative meaning or the second order of meaning
- ❖ It can also help to us realize that whatever assertions seem to us to be “obvious”, “natural”, “universal”, “given” or “incontrovertible” are generated by the ways in which sign systems operate in our discourse communities.

WEAKNESSES:

- ❖ Semiotics is often criticized as 'imperialistic', since some semioticians appear to regard it as concerned with, and applicable to, anything and everything, trespassing on almost every academic discipline (Chandler 2010)
- ❖ The pragmatic testing of semiotic claims requires other methods.
- ❖ Semiotics is heavily dependent upon the skill of the individual analyst. Less skilful practitioners can do little more than state the obvious in a complex and often pretentious manner (Leiss et al. 1990, 214)
- ❖ Eco (1976:7) argues that semiotics attempts to make assumptions about things.

3.0 SUMMARY:

The chapter gave a detailed analysis of the relevant literature review acknowledging earlier research that has been carried out relevant to the research question. It tested the research question against that which is already known about the subject. Varied published books, journal articles, theories and Internet articles have been consulted to enrich the research. Literature review draws

the relation that exists between various ideas in terms of their points of convergence and divergence. The chapter further gave a discussion of the theories that informs the research understudy. The theories discussed in the study involve multimodal discourse analysis and the visual semiotic analysis according to Barthes. Informing the theories are other concepts of mentioned scholars in the study. In the next chapter, the different methods used to gather data relevant to the study are discussed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION:

This chapter seeks to explain the methodology used in the study as well as the methods used to gather data for analysis. The study is based on textual analysis and data analyzed is gathered through extracted scenes from the film texts.

3.1 DATA COLLECTION:

The multimodal analysis of the fact of 'blackness' and 'whiteness' in the films under study is conducted in the following procedure:

3.1.1 Primary Research:

In an attempt to provide first hand contact with films under study, the researcher shall acknowledge primary research. Working with the primary texts shall provide first hand information of the film as well as first hand analysis. It can be pointed out that working with primary texts assist in obtaining data which is not informed of other people's perspectives. Primary research shall involve studying the primary texts, analyzing and responding to these. The method is however hands on research helping the researcher to work directly with the primary texts (Rys, Meyer and Sebranek (2012:105)

3.1.2 Scene Extraction:

The study shall extract relevant scenes from *Mr Bones 1*(2001) and *There is A Zulu on my Stoep* (1993). Scene selection shall be based on the relevance of the scene to the fact of 'blackness' and 'whiteness'. The selected scenes shall be due to how the fact of 'blackness' or 'whiteness' has been relayed in the genre film. Extraction of scenes shall be done using computer software such as Power Director 9.0.

3.1.3 Coding

The extracted or selected scene from the film discourses shall be assigned titles such as Extracted scene 1, Extracted or Selected Scene 2. Coding assists the researcher to explain data using the codes accorded to the selected scenes.

3.1.4 Transcription

The relevant selected scenes extracted from the films shall be transcribed for analysis. The transcripts in theselected scenes with language are shown as follows:

Mr Bones 1(2001)

SELECTED SCENE 1:

Baby Bones: *[plane crushes and the lion approaches the scene]*

King: *“The little boy is already a man. He has chased the lion into the cave” [in Zulu]*

SELECTED SCENE 2:

[Lareti is tied on a tree and the lion approaches]

Lareti: *“Help...Vince! [crying]”*

[Lion keeps roaring, Vince appears]

Lareti: *“Vince help me!”*

[the King and his villagers approaches the scene as Lareti keeps crying]

Lareti: *“Bones!”*

[Bones reaches the trumpet and is ready to blow, Vince Lee reaches for the gwarra stick instead and Bones stops]

Vince Lee: *“I say hara! I say hara!!, I say haraa-a-a-a-!!!”*

[Vince Lee chases the lion and follows it to the cave]

King: *“Maybe he is my son”*

Vince Lee: *“and don’t bring your ...”*

Bones: *“My father, your son has chased the lion into the cave!”*

Villagers: “yeah-eah-eah” [raising their gwarra stick]

SELECTED SCENE 3:

[Lareti is talking to Mr Bones and Zacks calls Lareti]

Zacks: “*Hey Lareti, get your ass over here!*”

Mr Bones: “*aww, you have a donkey?*”

Lareti: “*oh no no, the word ass mean something totally different here*”

Mr Bones: [nods in showing he has understood]

[Zacks drags Lareti away and she groans result of the handling]

Later on Lareti is dressing up in Zacks bedroom

Zacks: “*Now go back to fat mama like you always do, nxaah!*”

SELECTED SCENE 4:

This extract is an amalgamation of extracted scenes which shows the achievements of Mr Bones in the film genre.

There is a Zulu on my Stoep (1993)

SELECTED SCENE 1

Young Zulu and Young Rhino are playing the gwarra game

Young Zulu: “Ah, missed!”

Young Rhino: “come on, come on”

Young Rhino: “*haikhona!”

Young Zulu: “I am number one Rhino!”

Young Rhino: “mess your butter face!”

[Young Rhino throws the gwarra and misses young Zulu]

Young Zulu: “Haikhona!”

[Young Zulu throws and hits Young Rhino as he bends and he groans with pain]

Young Zulu: “Laduma!”

SELECTED SCENE 2:

*[young Zulu and Thandi plays *nhodo whilst young Rhino and Jambo rifle]*

Jambo shoots and misses the tin

Young Rowena: “missed”

Young Rhino: “bad lucky”

Jambo: “bloody wind”

Young Rowena: “show him Rhino”

[Rhino gets Rhino to shoot and hit the hits the tin]

Young Rowena: “nice shooting Rhino, Hey Zulu come here”

[Young Rowena drags Zulu and put him in front of the old and abandoned van and Jambo places the tin on Zulus head as Young Rowena threatens young Zulu with the gun]

Young Rowena: “stand still boy if you run you dead”

Young Zulu: “No, no, please, Rhino, no!!!”

Young Rowena; “shut up!”

Young Rhino: “Listen Rowena”

Young Rowena: “if you shoot you can kiss with my mouth open”

SELECTED SCENE 3:

[Rowena is watering the lawn and she is attacked by a black man (robber), she however takes him to the ground]

Rowena: “Come on, get up!”

Robber (Moses): “thank you madam”

[Rowena hits him again and takes out a money from her bosom]

Robber: [groans on the ground]

Rowena: “we will go over the house breaking routine Shadreck that will be all”

Moses: “yo-o you are welcome madam”

SELECTED SCENE 4:

[Zulu and Rhino are changed in terms of their skin color, Zulu is given an artificial white man’s color skin and Rhino wears the artificial black man’s skin to outwit Diehard and Rowena]

SELECTED SCENE 5:

[Zulu is invited for dinner at Rowena’s house in his covering and he is left alone before the dinner is ready and starts to examine the objects in Rowena house in her absence. He however touché ones of the objects in the house and a cage opens and one of the house dogs comes out in full speed attacking Zulu and he jumps for his life. Rowena comes out in full speed and yells]

Rowena: “Nigger down! Nigger down!”

SELECTED SCENE 6:

[Rowena enters the kitchen and she talks to her maid]

Rowena: “is everything ready?”

Maid: “yes ma’am”

Rowena: “go light the fire quickly, move! move!”

Maid: [speaks in Zulu]

Rowena: “I told you not to talk that jungle buddy stuff around me”

Advantages of transcribing:

- ❖ The actual process of making detailed transcripts enables you to become familiar with what you are observing (Rapley 2007). The continued process of listening and watching the recording again and again allows the researcher to notice the interesting and often subtle ways that are engaged in the film thereby allowing the researcher to gain greater insights and interpretation of transpired events.

Challenges:

- ❖ Despite the advantages to audio or video transcription, many challenges to this method of data representation through transcripts remain which includes issues of efficiency, accuracy and trustworthiness.
- ❖ The transcription process is intensive and tough (Roulston, Demarrais and Lewis 2003:657)

3.2 DATA ANALYSIS:

The collected data of various modalities are analyzed in this part. Having gathered the verbal, visual and auidal data, the study shall arrange the data into separate folders. Extracted data from *Mr Bones 1* shall be placed in one folder whilst data form *There is a Zulu on my Stoep* will be placed in the other folder. The gathered data shall be analysed to examine how “blackness” in the person of Vince Lee and the Fat One in *Mr Bones 1(2001)*is relayed. In the same manner how blackness is also relayed in *There is A Zulu on my Stoep(1993)* in the character of young Zulu and Zulu through the interplay of multi modalities. Data analysis for each film discourse shall be conducted in separate chapters using the concepts and ideas of theories included in the study as follows.

3.2.1 Multimodal Analysis:

The study shall examine data paying attention to the multimodal components or semiotic resource of the extracted scene. These shall be examined in terms of how they relate in the making of meaning. Attention will however be paid to the visual, linguistic, and audial aspects of the film discourse.

3.2.2 Visual Semiotics (Barthes)

By using this theory data shall be analyzed first at denotative level and at the second order of meaning which is the connotative level.

3.2.3 Synopsis:

Each data analysis chapter shall contain a synopsis of the films under study as data analysis of the two films shall be conducted in separate chapters.

3.2.4 Concluding

By analysing the gathered data from the extracted scenes in the film genre, and paying particular attention to the various semiotic resources, the conclusion would be drawn on how Schuster has represented the fact of “whiteness” and “blackness” in the genre film. The study shall also indicate that the various semiotic resources imbedded in the film genre makes us laugh at the denotative level hence taking a connotative approach of the film under study will awaken us to multiple interpretation of the regime of comedy contained in the film genre.

3.3 SUMMARY:

The chapter explained the methodology that has been used in gathering data for analysis. It indicated how data has been gathered using different methods. The proceeding chapter analyses the gathered using the theoretical framework recognized in the study. The proceeding chapter shall however start by analyzing the film *Mr Bones 1 (2001)* and examine the fact of blackness and whiteness using the concepts of the selected theories.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION:

This chapter seeks to examine the semiotic and visual analysis of the two text understudy that is *Mr Bones 1*(2001) and *There is a Zulu on my Stoep* (1993) by Leon Schuster. The chapter shall establish using the analytical concepts, how the film genre engages different modes in the construction of the fact of “blackness” and “whiteness”. The chapter shall further attempt to show how comedy is ideologically structured in the film narrative. The study shall however examine the disparities that exist between the binary opposites “blackness” and “whiteness” in the films discourse.

4.1 MR BONES 1:

SYNOPSIS:

The narrative of *Mr Bones 1* (2001) revolves around four identified main characters namely Bones, Vince Lee, the “fat one” and the King. After a plane crash a little white boy becomes part of the Kuvuki people. He grows up in the society and despite his efforts he fails to play the “*gwarra” well. Despite his failure he however succeeds in telling the “bones”. The king of the land names him Bones after this successive achievement in the film’s plot. The king sends Bones to the city of the Sun (Sun City, a South African city) to look for his only son. In the city of the sun, Bones mistakes Vince Lee as the prince and makes all efforts to take him home. After Vince Lee fails to convince the King that he is the son, the King decides to be buried alive. Before he is buried, Vince chases the lion into the cave and the King assumes him to be the son. Upon his return the Kings asks Bones to cast the bones again. The “fat one” falls on the ground with the little duiker horn around his neck. The fat one convinces the King beyond reasonable doubt that he is the real son. The film narrative ends with Vince’s Lees return to the Sun City where he wins the golf match.

4.1.1 A son from the gods



SYNOPSIS:

In selected scene 1, a baby appears on a plane seat with khaki clothing. The baby is white. A lion from the jungle comes to the scene after the plane crash. As the baby watch the lion approach, he does not cry, scream or exhibit any phobia characteristics. The lion stops from a short distance while the African villagers approach the scene to find out what has occurred. As the King and his unit of the army reach the scene, they are however welcomed by an extraordinary and unique experience, an infant chasing the lion. The King in this instance articulates that the little boy is already a man.

ANALYSIS:

Valicha (1988:10) says that “film is a system of signification where meaning or significance is conveyed through the use signs”. As a system of signification, film narrates experience; the above scene extracted from Mr. Bones 1 is a product of signification. In the film narrative, the system of signification is however composed using several codes to produce a conventional fact of “blackness” and “whiteness”. The construction of the *Selected Scene 1* can be argued to be a product of the regime of comedy. The regime of comedy as a genre acknowledges how the

different frames of references come into play in the construction or decoding of meaning. The frame of reference accordingly comprises of different background experiences, attitudes and values of an individual (Cleary, 2004:12). In the genre comedy however, the plane crash and the realization of the white baby on a red seat are however codified elements that exist in the system of signification to articulate meaning. These signifiers can be decoded in different ways depending on one's frame of reference. By examining the different modes engaged in creating the above scene one can therefore note that Schuster's perceptions of what is "white" and "black" is conventional. It can therefore be argued that, Eurocentric perceptions have always treated the white society as the "omnipotent" and the rest of the world as the "other" (Said 2006). The relation of the self and the other as it is the relation that characterizes the history of humanity should not be avoided in the decoding of the *Selected Scene 1*. As signs do not mean outside contexts, the Selected Scene therefore in isolation of the context of use is devoid of meaning. It is the relation that the above signifier that has in the world that the selected scene comes to mean.

Machin (2007) asserts that the meaning of a sign like green lies not in itself but through its belonging to a system. The multimodal analysis of the visual mode codified in the film discourse helps to understand how Schuster constructed the "blackness" and "whiteness" dichotomy. The visual mode of the above scene examines codified signs such as *a plane crash*, and secondly *a white infant is on the red seat*. It can be noted that such a structured narrative technique is conventional. In the white baby, Schuster can be argued to have created the fact of "whiteness" which is associated with valor, purity and innocence. The film records the baby sitting on a red seat. The "*red seat*" can be argued to be a sign which signifies. One can therefore argue that the codified "red seat" from the plane is a signifier of royalty. In the history of mankind, Kings and Queens of the royal families occupied red seats and wore red robes which signified royalty. The significance of the "red seat" occupied by the baby in *Mr Bones 1 (2001)* can be argued to be a signifier signifying royalty in the form of "whiteness" that now exist in the African society. The connotative and visual semiotic analysis of the selected scene which involves signs of a "white baby" on a "red seat" can be argued to imply the fact that white babies are born great whilst black people achieve greatness through determined effort as observed in the narrative. It can be pointed out that the fact of "whiteness" in the narrative is however contrasted with the fact of "blackness" in the character of Vince Lee.

Furthermore, Schuster reinforces the fact of “whiteness” and its greatness by allowing the baby in the scene to chase the lion into the cave without the presence of any weapons. Absence of weapons indicates uncontrolled heroism that can be equaled with ordinary heroism.

Multimodality as a way of analyzing images has been inspired by linguistic analysis allowing us to reveal what is offered to us as certain and what is concealed (Machin, 2007:45). An analysis of the single mode engaged in the film narrative is therefore a simplification of ideas and an error of assessment. Schuster engages the linguistic semiotic mode in the narrative to construct the two dichotomies under study. Barthes (1977:38) holds the notion that “images are polysemous on their own” which means that they are endowed with many meaning potentials. Barthes (1977:38) further says that “language however comes in to rescue the image” from multiple meanings which the image can convey. Schuster however renders the African king the linguistic semiotic mode in the form of speech to rescue the images in his film narrative from multiple signifieds in his development of the fact of “whiteness” which he intends to construct. The Kuvukiland King in the film discourse is allowed language mode in which he says:

“The little boy is already a man

He has chased the lion into the cave”

The speech is articulated in Zulu, an African language but English subtitles are provided so that through subtitles Western and African audiences understand the meaning being relayed in the comedy genre unmistakably. It can be noted that the above sentences include what have been termed modal auxiliaries. “Modal auxiliaries are however verbs or adjectives that express a kind and level of truth” (Machin, 2007). It can be noted therefore that the adverb “*already a man*” in the narrative suggest that before the white baby chased the lion he was by nature a man, chasing the lion was only a way to remove any doubts. Chasing the lion into the cave is used as one of the criteria that define if one is man in the narrative. Having satisfied the examiners through this ability the King does not however delay to title the little boy a man. The regime of comedy engaged through the visual and linguistic modes constructs an ideology that uplifts “whiteness” from birth. The ideology forwarded by Schuster in the scene associates “whiteness” with an inborn greatness. Schuster can thus be criticized for constructing a system of signification that assumes whites to be the architects of greatness and royalty. Leon Schuster does not treat the

chasing of the lion as a single entity in his film narrative. He however proceeds to show how the two dichotomies can be contrasted in chasing the lion to the cave. This he juxtaposes in how Vince Lee chases the lion.

The assumed African prince Vince Lee in the film discourse is given a scene in which he has to chase the lion. Hall (1997) suggests that signs can be understood according to their proportional relation to other signs. For one to construe what the fact of “whiteness” is, the fact of “blackness” must be engaged to mean the opposite. Schuster however uses Vince Lee a black man to construct the opposite of “whiteness” using the same system of signification that is, the chasing of the lion. It can be examined below:



When Lareti is tied to the tree, Vince Lee is compelled to rescue her. Lareti exhibits fear and tears flow on her cheeks. Vince Lee appears at the scene holding a **gwarra* stick. His composure and equanimity is threatened, the whole manhood in him is called to act. The “black man” however instead of taking courage exhibits fear. As Lareti realizes that Vince was delaying she

calls out to Mr Bones. Vince Lee after having gathered his composure eventually manages to chase the lion to the cave.

The multimodal analysis of the above visual mode questions the codification of the above scene in the film narrative. Vince Lee's face is characterized by irrational fears through wide eyes, raised eyebrows and lack of composure. It can be noted that this is however the opposite of what has been offered by Schuster in *Selected Scene 1* in which the little white boy exhibits a contrasted face characterized by laughter, sparkling eyes and easiness. It can further be noted that when Lareti calls Mr Bones to help, the lion looks at the same direction and sees Mr Bones, its previous hero. It however fears for its life and decides to run back to the cave. One can therefore argue that Mr Bones was the lynch pin behind Vince Lee's successive endeavor. What Vince Lee can be argued to have done in the narrative is to finish a task that is already half done. It can be argued therefore that what Schuster signified in this instance is the notion that "blackness" without "whiteness" cannot complete the notion of greatness.

Machin (2007) suggests further that multimodal analysis should pay attention to the participants involved as they are carriers of meaning. The participants involved connote certain meanings that can be examined. In the chasing of the lion in *Selected Scene 1*, the protagonist is a white little boy whilst in *Selected Scene 1 (B)* the protagonist is a black man. The difference between the two is age and skin color. One chases the lion as a little white boy whilst the other as a black adult. It can be argued that "whiteness" is however elevated in the chasing of the lion whilst "blackness" is relegated using the same act. By using age a factor in the act, it is vital to not that Schuster conveys the meaning that what a black man can do at adulthood, whites can do at an early stage. Vince's reliance upon Bones in chasing the lion conveys the notion that blackness is state of dependency. This notion is also evidenced by the presence of weapons when Vince chases the lion. The white baby chases the lion without any weapons unlike the black man who dependant on the *gwarra stick to scare the lion off.

Schuster does not however treat the visual semiotic mode in isolation of other semiotic modes. He engages the linguistic semiotic mode in a similar way as in *Selected Scene 1* to rescue the sundry meaning potential of the visual semiotic mode. The same King now old, after Vince chases the lion to the cave articulates that:

“Maybe he is my son”

The linguistic semiotic mode introduced above raises more questions than answers. In the preceding scene when a “white baby” chased the lion, the King immediately pronounces the little boy a man. In contrast however, when a “black man” chase the lion the modal auxiliaries “*maybe he is my son*” are codified to articulate meaning. The adverb “*maybe*” employed above suggest lower modality which means that there is less certainty in what has been done by a “black man”. The implied meaning therefore suggests that despite all efforts made, the chasing of the lion by the black man was not convincing. It can also be noted that the pronoun “*son*” used for the black man and the pronoun “*man*” for the white boy suggest opposed meanings. The former suggest that Vince Lee despite his age remains a “son” which can be treated metaphorically to suggest that one is a boy though by age he is a man. The later however is named a “man” though he is a boy which also has metaphorical connotation of being a grown up even though one has not.

It can therefore be argued that the black man’s chasing of the lion only removed a sense of doubt in the King neither did it bring a sense of conviction. It can be noted that Schuster’s construction of the fact “blackness” in the genre comedy relay the notion that “whiteness” is a symbol of honor, royalty and heroism coupled with greatness from birth whilst on the other hand “blackness” been treated as a signifier of an inferiority complex which is dependent and lacks valor.

4.1.2 THINGS FALL APART

SELECTED SCENE 2



SYNOPSIS:

In the selected scene 2, the village *sangoma casts his bones after the King's request and he tells the King that maybe there are twins in Thandi's body. The King is frustrated by the interpretation and tells the *sangoma, "You are a bloody fool". At the same instance young Bones breaks the water and comes to the scene to apologize. In the same instance he takes over from the village *sangoma and finishes the proceedings of the whole job. Having satisfied the King with his readings of the bones, little bones is entitled the roles and duties of the *sangoma and earns a new name.

ANALYSIS:

To uncover the relation between the fact of "blackness" and "whiteness" in the *Selected Scene 2*, visual grammar is applied to analyzing the above images as they exist in the selected scene in terms of representational meaning, interactional meaning and compositional meaning which were developed on the basis of Systemic Functional Grammar's three metafunctions. Kress and

Leeuwen (1996) points out that, "...narrative patterns serve to present unfolding actions and events, processes of change, transitory spatial arrangements." It can be realized that *Selected Scene 2* contains chosen images as screen-shot from the selected scene to represent narrative processes. In the visual image there are identified objects such as "participants" (Kress and Leeuwen 1996:46). The selected images involve three participants, the old *sangoma, the King and the young white boy. It can be noted that the old *sangoma connotes or signifies the African tradition. Having failed to satisfy the King, he called a fool which signifies that the African tradition cannot however be trusted. As the fact of "blackness" is characterized by the African tradition, one can therefore note that Schuster metaphorically implies the fall of African traditional method and cultural penetration.

Thibault (2000:321) points out that multimodal analysis does not accept the notion that the meaning of the text can be divided into a number of separate semiotic channels or codes. "The meaning of a multimodal text is instead the composite product of the ways in which different resources are co deployed" (Thibault 2000:321). It can however be examined that Schuster in the film narrative involves the linguistic mode for the construction of "blackness". The *sangoma is told in the narrative, "*you are a bloody fool*". This is said in Zulu but English subtitles are provided by Schuster. The adjective "*bloody fool*" can be argued to be a profane description of a person. The language mode is articulated out of anger which therefore implies that the *sangoma is an extreme fool connoting notions of barbarism and stupidity. By constructing a *sangoma who is portrayed as an extreme fool Schuster can be criticized to have rendered the black man's work uselessness and a fiasco.

In the *Selected Scene 2*, image 3 the white boy comes to the scene and starts apologizing for breaking the waters. The water that spills on the old *sangoma and the apology that the white boy gives can be argued to be signifiers codified by Schuster in his film narrative. The spill of water can be argued to be a metaphor of coup of the *sangoma's profession. Zusne (2008:41) points out that "spilled waters cannot be gathered", this however means that by losing his role the old *sangoma cannot recover it. The apology by the white little boy can also be argued to be a signifier of the moral value that "whiteness" holds. These modes involved by Schuster in his narrative are as political as white is to "blackness".

Multimodality in the analysis of visuals needs also to be extended to nonverbal signs that are noted in the film narrative. Nonverbal sign can also be argued to be carriers of information. Cleary (2004:22) points out that “facial expressions may well be the most important nonverbal code...” It can be noted that in the above *Selected Scene 2*, image 2 shows the King's facial expression towards the old *sangoma and the expression signifies anger and disgust. In contrast the King's facial expression in image 4 signifies joy and gladness towards the white boy. It can be argued therefore that, by constructing the King being disgusted and annoyed by the *sangoma Schuster can be criticized for portraying “blackness” as foolishness and annoying whilst “whiteness” is portrayed as being an enlightening force. Schuster further gives the King the following articulated sentence:

*“From now on your name will be Bones
It will be so”*

It can be noted that the above sentence can be regarded as a confirmation and completion of the ritual taking place. “*It will be so*” suggests however that the fact of “whiteness” has been elevated and the King has confirmed that. This confirmation of “whiteness” over “blackness” marked the condemnation of “blackness” and the end of it. It can therefore be argued Schuster’s conventional mode of the film narrative signifies politicized notions of black and white dichotomy.

4.1.3 WOMAN OF COLOR AND **THE WHITE MAN:**

SELECTED SCENE 3



SYNOPSIS:

In *Selected Scene 3*, whilst Lareti talks to Mr Bones, Zack calls Lareti to get her ass over where he is. Desiring to know, Mr Bones asks whether Lareti now owns a donkey. Lareti however tells Mr Bones that the word “ass totally means something different here”. Zack drags Lareti away and after a few shots Lareti is dressing and immediately she leaves Zack’s bedroom.

ANALYSIS:

The relation between a woman of color and a white man can be argued to be a relation of honor and degradation. One honors the “other” by degrading the “self”. In the text therefore a woman of color honors the white man by degrading herself. Fanon (1952:29) in *Black Skin White Mask* suggests that “a woman of color is never altogether respectable in white man’s eyes”. The fact of “blackness” is treated however as the incarnation of a complete fusion in the world, an abandonment of an ego in the heart of the cosmos (Fanon 1952:29). It can be noted that in the selected scene, Lareti a pretty young lady of color is portrayed to have a relationship with a white

man. The relationship can be argued to be premised on principles that raise more questions than answers. Lareti is called as she talks to Mr. Bones. The white man on top of his voice cords calls Lareti to get “*her ass*” over where he was. The linguistic mode implied in the film narrative needs examination in relation also to other gestural and visual modes of modality relayed.

The language semiotic mode realized through diction such as “*ass*” impacts negatively on women, specifically black women. Halliday (1970) cited in Goodman and Graddol (1996:53) suggest that “every semiotic mode has resource for constructing relations” between participants of a text and “relations between these communicating participants and what they are representing creates an attitude to the subject they are communicating about”. This however is the interpersonal metafunction of language. The world Schuster creates in his narrative characterized by white people can be argued to treat black women as the “*ass or donkeys*”. It can be argued that in the eyes of a white man, a woman of color exists as a sexual object that is designed to gratify the sexual desires of the white man. “Blackness” honors the white man by degrading self.

An examination of the visual and gestural mode in the film narrative indicates Lareti being pulled away by force and in her unwillingness. Her innocence is thwarted so that she becomes an object of commiserations. On her way Vince Lee endeavors to tell Lareti to meet him later but Lareti fail to answer.

The multimodal analysis of the scene suggests volumes. Though Vince Lee makes an effort to distract Lareti the woman of color does not answer. Fanon (1952:33) asserts that a woman of color finds it impossible to marry a black man not because they do not possess good qualities but because to them it is much better to be white. Such a psychological phenomenon is displayed in the film as Lareti pays no attention to what the man of color was suggesting and instead throws herself in the white man’s hands to be dragged like a no human.

In the scene however, the woman of color is then dragged away like a donkey being led to the slaughter house. Despite the struggle and agony she encounters, Zack does not pay attention or show a little respect to how he pulled her. After the sexual encounter which is not however displayed in the plot, Zack with a reckless tone accompanied by a click tells Lareti,

“Now, go back to your fat mama like you always do!”

TABLE 1

Now	go	Back	To	Your	fat	mama	like	you	always	do
Adverb	verb	Adverb	preposition	Pronoun	adjective	noun	adjective	pronoun	adverb	auxiliary

The Linguistic analysis of the above sentence as relayed in the plot can be analyzed at the ideational level. The ideational metafunction of language is a semiotic system that is able to represent ideas beyond its own system of a sign (Machin, 2007). Our experiences in the world we are living can be expressed in language.

Syntactically, this sentence is in the passive voice and in the declarative form. The passive voice is calling for an action to be followed. The adverb “*now*” used in the sentence suggests time, the present time and also introduces a rebuke or remonstrance. The following verb “*go*” used in the sentence structure calls the third person to action and in this experience to leave, move away or disappear to a place further away. It can be noted that the verb is however followed by the adverb “*back*” calling for a previous place. By combining the adverb, verb and another adverb the sentence can therefore give the following meaning, “*At the present time move away to a previous place*”. The sentence further includes the preposition “*to*” indicating destination and the pronoun “*your*” referring to Lareti’s mother. It can be argued therefore that, Zack brings out the implication that Lareti should instantly leave his bedroom to her earlier position and that is where her mother is. The pronoun “*your fat mama*” further shows that Zack is not related to Lareti’s mother in any way only Lareti does. This can be argued to suggest that though Zack and Lareti had a closer social conduct, outside that relation no other relations exist neither can Zack call Lareti’s mother his mother in law.

The semiotic analysis of this linguistic mode suggests therefore that after having been sexually gratified by Lareti, the woman of color was no longer useful. It can also be argued that the combination of the adjective, pronoun, adverb and auxiliary in the sentence:

“...*like you always do*”

As used in the observed discourse, implies that after repeated and occasional sexual encounters with the white man, the woman of color always and must return to her mother where she belongs. Here the use of language aids in putting the world of the two into our minds and we conceptualize this relation in different yet similar ways.

The custom of leaving Zack's bedroom after every intimate encounter can be argued to be a confirmation of the ideology that "blackness" and "whiteness" cannot harmonize. Fanon (1952:34) holds the view that "white men do not marry black women". But black women have consented to run the risk, what they must have is "whiteness" no matter the price. "Blackness" therefore according to the extracted scenes can semiotically be argued to be a state of degradation. When we contrast the fact of "whiteness" and "blackness" in relation to the relationship between a white man and a woman of color one can note that the former is honor and the latter is degradation. It can be argued that societies based on totally different principles cannot peacefully coexist, to uphold one and honor it, is to attack, degrade and destroy the other. A woman of color honors Zack by attacking and destroying herself. Her value and identity is thwarted and made insignificant. Schuster's construction of the fact of "blackness" can therefore be argued to have failed to depart from Eurocentric perceptions of "blackness" and "whiteness". The woman of color can be argued to have been constructed in the film discourse as a signifier of the inferior being, degraded and an object of commiserations characterizing the fact of "blackness" as relayed by the system of signification constructed by Schuster.

Hall (1997) suggests that "things" do not mean we construct meaning from objects or things using our frame of reference. It is vital however according to this concept to bring in our background experience to the analysis of this genre comedy. Wetmore, K (2003:33) says that "black women are perceived as an object of sexual pleasures...women of color are therefore objects on which white men may slake their lust". It is however no coincidence that Schuster engages such Western perceptions in his construction of "blackness" in his narrative. Looking at the background of South Africa, Sarah Baartman a Xhosa young lady was taken to Europe by white men. Wetmore (2003:33) asserts that "Baartman was placed on public display because of her enormous buttocks and enlarged genitalia which were seen as common in African women and emblematic of African female". After her death she was disfigured and put in museum until

South Africa claimed her body to render her a decent burial. With such a background Schuster can be criticized to have done little or nothing to uplift the woman of color in his film narrative. One can therefore critic *Mr Bones 1* (2001) to have failed to depart from Eurocentric perspectives on the fact of “blackness”.

Fanon (1952:42) points out that, “the Negro enslaved by his or her inferiority, and the white man enslaved by his superiority alike behave in accordance with a neurotic orientation”. Their relation fails to be at par as long as the woman of color’s affective self-valuation is constrained by her skin color and cultural complex. As the plot progresses and comes to an end, Vince Lee manages to secure his position as the husband of the woman of color. The film’s plot ends with Lareti having Vince Lee’s pregnancy. The modal analysis of such a plot can be argued to be an implication of the fact that what black women expects is some who can give them babies and relegate them to household chores. The visual semiotic mode brings out Lareti with a broad smile and expecting a baby. It can be argued however that such a mode involves what Hall (1997) calls the regime of representation. After having been used up by the white man, the man of color takes Lareti despite her previous relations with the white man. Schuster can be argued to imply that the black man comes after the white man. The construction of the hierarchy suggested by the plot suggests a society with a white man at the top and a black man at the bottom. However one can therefore question the fact of “blackness” and “whiteness” as relayed in the selected plot.

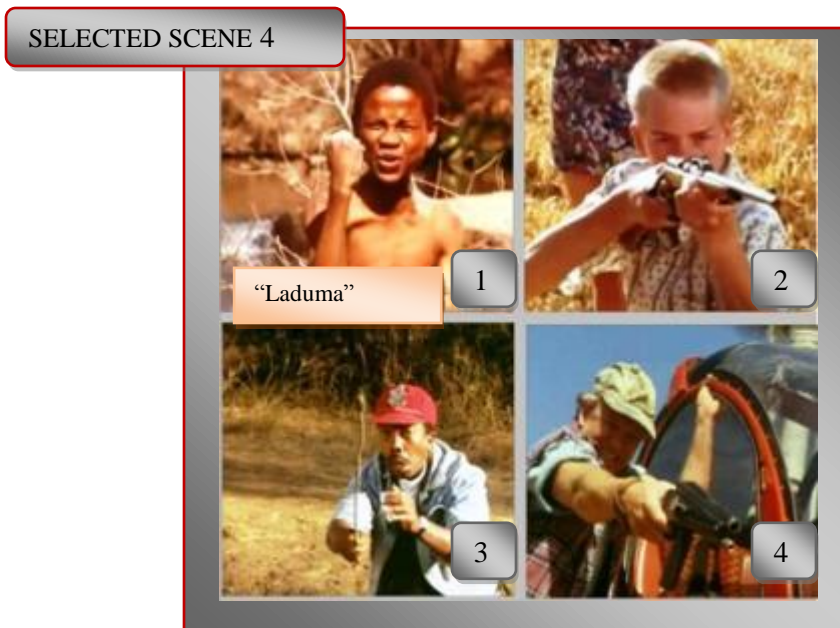
4.2 THERE IS A ZULU ON MY STOEP (1993)

SYNOPSIS:

The narrative ponders around the friendship between Zulu Rakabela and Rhino Labuschagne, the main characters of the film. Despite the close friendship shared by the two, their union is however tested by Rowena (Rhino's childhood sweetheart). Rowena drags Zulu to the scene and places a tin on his head facing the barrel of Rhino's rifle. Due to fear of losing his life and Rhinos fear of losing his sweetheart, their friendship turns to foe ship. After twenty five years, the narrative shifts to another setting that is America where Zulu is a prisoner and is deported back to South Africa to serve out a sentence for car theft. While in South Africa, Rhino faces financial constraints. He however adopts a ten year old black girl Tienkie.

Diehard a member of the T.I.R.D (Threatened Immigrants Right Wing Defense) is assigned to transport Zulu from the airport. Diehard has bought a Scratch and Win ticket and finds himself with a chance of winning R500 000 on a show at the Lost City. Upon his arrival and transportation Zulu steals Diehard's car and the ticket and heads off to claim the money for himself. Zulu by default meets Rhino after Zulu is recognized as a poacher by Tinkie. The two agree to share the money equally from the scratch and win ticket. Rhino as he foregrounds Zulu wins R500 000. Diehard and Rowena chases after them. During the chase, Zulu and Rhino decide to change their skin color to outwit Diehard and Rowena. Tienkie befriends Prince William. Diehard captures Zulu and Rhino and ties them on a plank overhanging a cliff. Tienkie and William play a series of pranks to rescue the two. The elephant waiting her mate assist in serving Zulu and his pal. The story ends with Tienkie realizing that Zulu is her real father and the two friends reunite again as the film ends.

4.2.1 ON GUNS AND *GWARRA STICK:



ANALYSIS:

In the above selected scene, the black and white dichotomy is engaged differently in the narrative film in constructing “blackness” and “whiteness” as shown above. Leon’s construction of these two dichotomies cannot according to semiotics be rendered “immaculate”. As extracted from the film text, it is vital to note that film as a text is a tissue of various signs drawn from multiple discourses to form a meaning potential text that can be interpreted in sundry ways. The signs however are drawn and combined according to ideologies and rules of representation to create discourses that indicates power. At this stage it is vital to acknowledge Barthes level of meaning that is denotative and connotative. The above selected scene shall be analyzed at both levels to show how the dichotomies understudy are engaged in *There is a Zulu on my Stoep* (1993).

Denotative:

At the first level of meaning one can note that, Fig 4.2.1 contains Young Zulu throwing his *gwarra at Young Rhino and in image 1, Young Rhino cries out loud “*laduma” with a happy face being displayed whilst the right hand is tight fully folded and raised. The denotative level also shows us in image 2, Young Rhino holding his gun on position and ready to take the can

down as relayed in the film whilst Zulu cries and wet his pants. Image 3 displays Zulu after some years holding the *gwarra again and ready to throw it at Rhino in image 4.

Connotative:

The connotative level of meaning being the second level of meaning contains the hidden meaning (Machin 2007:27). Analysis of the above selected scene shall be conducted by paying attention to the carriers of connotative meaning. Machin (2007) describes the carriers of connotative meaning as the building blocks of discourses. From the above selected scene it can be argued that the dichotomies under study have been differently constructed as a way of presenting knowledge of power. In the scene, young Zulu celebrates his success over young Rhino in the *gwarra game this however can be argued to be a biased triumph over young Rhino who in the second image celebrates his triumph over young Zulu in using the gun. The former's triumph is over the combination of mud and a long stick that can be portrayed as a primitive tool, lacking invention, construction and the power of the mind. The later however is triumph in using a gun which is a model of human invention, a signifier of a sophisticated and advanced society.

Machin (2007) asserts that by looking at the carriers of connotation one is therefore able to draw the hidden meaning implied or hidden in the images. It can be noted that young Zulu by only being identified with a primitive tool, the *gwarra stick, one can argue that he is an epoch signifying a subject not yet domesticated by European signification or a subject who is not yet codified by Western ideologies. Zulu's world can however be perceived as a world characterized by chaos and unscientific methods. Hall (1997:235) suggests that the differences that exists matters due to the fact that differences are essential in meaning making without which meaning could not exist. Saussure argues however that we know what is black not because there is essence in "blackness" but because of its contrast to what is white (cited in Hall 1997:324). It can therefore be pointed out that meaning is relational and dependent. It is therefore the difference in objects that young Rhino and young Zulu use in the film texts that which signifies and carries the fact of "blackness" and "whiteness". Derrida (1974) holds the point that there exist power relations in binary opposites.

As the film narrative structure continues in another time line, Schuster shows how "blackness" and "whiteness" is different by further constructing separate skills for Zulu and

Rhino. Zulu develops his childhood skills of throwing the *gwarra whilst Rhino develops the use of a gun. The repetition of these narratives can be argued to be a way of repetition to emphasize the fact of “blackness” and “whiteness”. Repetition in the selected scene can be argued to be a narrative technique that Schuster adopts to reinforce the fact of “whiteness” as opposed to “blackness”. It is important to note that the construction of “self” can only be conducted by making the “other” less valuable and primitive. By looking at the images one can argue however that “blackness” has been relegated whilst “whiteness” has been elevated. As one class in the genre narrative is associated with the ability to use machines, guns in particular whilst the other is associated with primitive tools, one can therefore argue that one society is assumed to be dominant, civilized and informed whilst the other can be argued to be uninformed lacking scientific ideas and unindustrialized. The former therefore is however the elevated “whiteness” and the latter is relegated “blackness”. Leon Schuster can therefore be criticized to have engaged the regime of comedy in the film genre.

4.2.2 BLACK SKIN WHITE MASK

WHITE MASK BLACK SKIN

SELECTED SCENE 5



SYNOPSIS:

In the above selected scene, Zulu and Rhino in order to outwit Diehard takes cover in what can be argued “masks”. Zulu takes cover in the white mask and thereby wears a red suit. Rhino on the other hand wears a black mask and he therefore takes on African attire. Zulu in the narrative mimics white style and behaviors whilst Rhino takes on the style and black peoples behavioral

patterns. In Fig *Selected Scene 5* image 1, Zulu in his white mask is allowed into Diehard's house. Upon their arrival at the farm, Zulu is told that the dogs which are called "niggers" only go for "blacks". Whilst in the house, Zulu starts to look around as noted above. He however makes a mistake of touching one of the house's objects and the cage automatically opens and the "nigger" comes out in its full speed to attack. Zulu is saved by Rowena who calls out "Nigger down".

ANALYSIS:

In the above selected images from the extracted scene, it is tantamount to note that the construction of "blackness" and "whiteness" can be argued to have been politicized. What needs to be pointed is the notion that film as a system of signification is politically contested. As a system of signification, one can note that film is formed of signs that are never innocent but are invested with signs and symbols that are ideological in nature. At the denotative level, one will realize a black man taking on a white mask to outwit Diehard and secondly dogs only chasing after a black man.

Connotative Level:

At this level of meaning it is important to however bring in our frame of reference in decoding the meanings that are contained in the images. The implied meanings contained in the above selected scene can be unveiled by looking at the various forms or modes that makes the film a scheme of signification. One can note that the above scene is not signified which means that it is not "meaning" and meaning lies not with the film but with the reader or viewer. Film as a multimodal text contains two or more semiotic modes. Machin (2007) holds that modality however aids us in analyzing images to reveal what is offered to us as real or concealed. It can be noted that Barthes' concept of connotative level of meaning together with the multimodal discourse shall be used to examine the above scene.

By examining the various semiotic modes involved in the film narrative one can unmask the politics of comedy included in the film. The visual images relayed in the film can be argued

to convey a second order of meaning which is political in the creation of how black and white mean separately. It can be argued that changing of the skin color through the use of masks during the film narrative signifies the change of identities. The question that needs to be raised therefore is how is the white man going to behave in the black skin? And how is the black man going to behave under the white mask? The narrative of the genre comedy answers these questions however. Rhino due to the new mask and a new identity he has now assumed, his behavioral patterns alters to suit the socially acceptable and conventionalized behavior of a black man. Rhino therefore becomes humble; he starts to make continuous mistakes as a black man and he tries to change his accent adopting terms like *“please my Master”*. Schuster can therefore be criticized for attempting to construct “blackness” as a state inferiority.

The visual mode in the narrative is also codified with gestures that articulate conventional meaning. Kress and Leeuwen (1996) use the notions vectors to describe visual verbs (Machin, 2007). Vectors are to Kress and Leeuwen visual verbs. They aid in identifying the subject, what he or she is doing as well as the intended goal. Rhino as he is one of the subjects display some gestural patterns that need to be examined. When he assumes a new skin color, Schuster portrays Rhino with the following non verbal signs:

SELECTED SCENE 6



It can be analyzed that the above gestural signs displayed by Rhino are codified for information. Rhino licks his hand which is now covered by a black mask and he also raises his attire to check his belly. The above gestural patterns at the second level of meaning can be argued to imply that to the white man a black skin is a trap, an entrapment of to subjugation. Rhino is the only

character who is worried over the change of identities. It can therefore be pointed out that Zulu enjoys the new identity because with it comes white civilization, superiority and mastery.

Furthermore, it is also profound to note that the change of skin color entailed the change of dress code. Perumel (2007) holds that dress code define power relations. Schuster gives Rhino African attire because Rhino is now under the black skin and Zulu is given a red jacket and black pants. These opposed states of dressing creates a discourses that have conventional notions. The conventional characteristic of African attire worn by Rhino is lack of professionalism and recognizable occupation. The only profession that Rhino is identified with in the narrative due to his dress code and skin color is that of a chauffeur. In contrast however, Zulu with his Western type of dress starts to drink wine and talk business with other white people such as Prince Williams. It can therefore be realized that the visual mode engaged in the narrative associate “blackness” as a state of degradation and lack of recognizable profession.

In *Selected Scene 5*, image 3 the linguistic mode is engaged in the film narrative to give information about “blackness”. When the dog was after Zulu in Rowena’s house, she comes and yells:

“Nigger down; Nigger down!”

By combining the language mode and the visual mode in the film narrative, one can note that Schuster does not depart from politicizing his film narrative. Rowena when she articulates the command need “*nigger down!*” the first to immediately go down is Zulu and she also commands “*nigger down!*” and the dog eventually goes down. It can be examined that Schuster can be therefore be criticized to have created a social structure with a black man at the bottom of the dogs and white people on top.

4.2.3 HOUSE BREAKING ROUTINE WITH SHADRECK

SELECTED SCENE 7



In *Selected Scene 7*, Rowena waters her lawn alone. Without knowing a man attacks her from behind and she fights and wins the battle. Before the narrative shifts, Rowena pulls a note from her bosom and throws it to robber whom she calls “Shadreck”. She however tells Shadreck that they will go over the house breaking routine on Monday.

ANALYSIS:

Hall (1997) holds that representation engages the differences with the other to produce meaning. It can however be pointed out that the “politics is mediated by modes of representation and thus by all mechanism involved in text construction (Shapiro, 1989:319). For one therefore to understand the above selected scene from *There is a Zulu on my Stoep (1993)*, the visual and language mode codified must be analyzed.

The visual mode codified creates dramatic irony in the film narrative. Schuster uses irony in his narrative in which Rowena waters the lawn without an expectation created in the viewer. It can be pointed out however that the irony used in the narrative signifies the state in which the world is at peace if uninterrupted. By being undisturbed the visual narrative indicates how a white society represented by Rowena could enjoy the joy and security of being at home. It is not however long that Schuster introduce an ugly face in the person of a black man who attempts to rob Rowena. It can therefore be argued that by introducing a black man making an attempt to rob a white woman, Leon Schuster can be criticized to have negatively portrayed the fact of blackness. O'Flaherty (2015) asserts that “the black person has better prospects as a robber and is more likely to become a robber... similarly the white person is more likely to be robbed”. It can be argued such ideologies and perceptions about the fact of blackness are however codified in the film narrative to normalize and naturalize them.

It can be argued that the visual mode that included the dramatic irony by introducing a black robber gives the implication that the world without blackness could have been pure; the presence of a black man means therefore that the world is characterized by both good and evil.

By overcoming the black man, Rowena can be argued to have been codified as a sign that implies the notion that evil can always be overcome by good. As this evil is portrayed in the fact of blackness, Schuster can be accused of relating the notion that black is evil and must be overcome.

As Shapiro (1989) suggest, all mechanism involved in the text must be examined to understand the meaning and politics of a text, the language involved in the scene also funds the meaning relayed. The language employed should also be examined as one of the modes. Rowena says:

“We will go over the house breaking routine on Monday Shadreck!. That will be all”

It can be examined that the language employed in the creation of the above multimodal text contains meaning. The irony employed in the narrative is described by the character as a “routine”, this however suggest that there are continued attacks expected from Shadreck. It can however be argued the pronoun “we” used by Rowena raises questions. It can be pointed that the pronoun used in the narrative indicates the relation that exist between Rowena and Shadreck. Rowena using the pronoun refers to herself and Shadreck. What this implies therefore is the idea that the routine was an agreed arrangement between Rowena and Shadreck.

Of vital to note is the fact that the arrangement however uplifted one subject by objectifying the other. Shadreck can be argued to have been treated as an object of no commercial value that can be trodden at any given moment. He is beaten and lies on the ground groaning, Rowena does not however sympathize with him but throws a note at him as payment. The surprise attack can be argued to have been used by Rowena as way of developing her defensive mechanism against robbery committed by black men. What therefore can be noted is the fact that “blackness” is however constructed as evil characterized by black men as potential robbers. “Whiteness” is however represented as the opposite of what black is. It is portrayed as having the potential not to rob but to be robbed.

4.2.4 LANGUAGE QUESTION

SELECTED SCENE 8



SYNOPSIS:

In the above selected scene, Rowena walks into her kitchen where her maid is preparing dinner. She asks the maid if everything is ready and she is told that all is ready. Rowena however tells the maid to go and light the fire quickly to which the maid responds in Zulu.

ANALYSIS:

The fact of “blackness” and “whiteness” in the film narrative is also indicated by what can be called the question of language. How African languages in the film discourse are engaged in conversations in relation to Western languages reflects a discourse that needs to be analyzed. The multimodal discourse analysis does not only present us with a platform to examine a single semiotic mode engaged in the film discourse, it however encourages us to examine other semiotic modes that have been engaged in the film discourse to construct what is comedy. Machin (2007) points out that all semiotic systems are social semiotic systems that allow us to negotiate social and power relations. Schuster engages modes such as the visual, gestural and verbal to construct the fact of “blackness” and “whiteness”.

By using the multimodal discourse analysis of the visual mode one can therefore note that the type of dressing accorded to the above women signifies the relations of power. In the above scene Rowena dresses herself neatly in an expensive dress whilst her maid is in her apron. Perumel (2007:260) asserts that “variables such as dress sense ... frame pedagogic and professional relations. It can be pointed out that Schuster by portraying black women as maids and giving them such type of dress can be argued to be implying the notion that black women are capable of being domesticated and achieve their profession as maids. Maynard (1994:41) further says that “fashion does not represent a unified message about style. Rather it generates a profusion of meanings”. It can be pointed out that the intended meaning therefore implies that “blackness” and “whiteness” esteem different positions in society. The former assumes a profession that does not require professionalism whilst the latter treats the subjects as professionals due to the type of dressing they have been awarded by Schuster.

The linguistic mode engaged in the regime of comedy cannot be treated in isolation of other semiotic modes. Schuster includes the language question to construct the fact of “blackness” and “whiteness” in the film discourse. Language being a podium of contestation and struggle is

included further manipulate the notions of “whiteness” and “blackness”. It can be noted that when the maid responds to Rowena in Zulu she raises her voice and shouts;

“I told you not to use that jungle buddy stuff around me!”

Rowena in her efforts tries to discourage the use of an African language by her maid. Tiffin et al (1995:261) asserts that the control over language can be achieved by displacing native language and this becomes a yard stick to the control of that their culture. It is tantamount to note that the fact of “blackness” can only be measured by the ability of one to control and exercise his or her language. As the maid refuses to suspend her language for the other, one can note that the maid however was trying to regain her identity imbedded in language which the Rowena’s language tries to disperse. By using Rowena in the narrative to use force upon her maid so she abandons her language, Schuster can be criticized to have elevated “whiteness” thereby relegating the fact of “blackness”.

Language therefore creates a discourse, a discourse which creates or recreates “blackness” (Tiffin et al, 1995). It can also create a discourse which can deconstruct the fact of “blackness” or “whiteness”. Ngugi (1981) holds that language is endowed with the capacity to migrate one from self and accept the other, from one world to other worlds. It can be argued that the above sentence articulated by Rowena can be tabled as follows:

<i>I</i>	<i>told</i>	<i>You</i>	<i>not</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>use</i>	<i>that</i>	<i>jungle</i>	<i>buddy</i>	<i>stuff</i>	<i>around</i>	<i>me</i>
Pronoun	verb	Pronoun	adverb	ve rb	noun	adj	noun	noun	noun	preposition	pronoun
As the subject	instructed	Object	prohibit	Previously mentioned			wild or ruthless	informal address	various items	place	

TABLE 2

noted that Rowena’s above sentence can thus be rephrased as the following:

I previously instructed and prohibited you from using the informal language in my house.

Kachru (1990) cited in Tiffin et al (1995) asserts that “English is an instrument of power and domination. Cultural and social implications accompany the use of an external language but the native language are losing in this competition”. It can be pointed out therefore that the relation between the fact of “blackness” and “whiteness” is represented by the relation that exists between Rowena and her maid. As “blackness” and “whiteness” cannot be at par, Rowena as the

owner of the house can be argued to have been equaled with the maid. Rowena as she tries to force her maid to uphold her language one can therefore argue that language based on totally different typologies and principles cannot peacefully coexist to uphold one language and defend it is to attack and destroy the other. The question of language engaged in the comedy as represented by the above selected scene has been used by Schuster to relay the fact of “blackness” and “whiteness” the central question being language. “Blackness” has therefore been regarded to have inferior languages that should not be used as they are “jungle buddy stuff”.

4.3 CONCLUDING:

The chapter examined the fact of blackness and whiteness by analyzing the various semiotic modes engaged in the film narrative. The study in the chapter indicated how Schuster imbedded the multiple modes in elevating whiteness by downplaying blackness. The linguistic, visual and other modes have been analysed to show how they contribute to semiosis in the construction of “blackness” and “whiteness”. The chapter showed how Schuster engaged the politics of representation in his construction of the film narrative as a way of indicating the idea that societies based on different principles cannot peacefully be at par. Schuster therefore can be criticised for upholding and defending “whiteness” by attacking and destroying the fact of blackness. The proceeding chapter is the concluding chapter of the thesis under study.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION:

This chapter seeks to conclude the thesis understudy. As a result of the systematic control and guidance of the theoretical framework rooted in Barthes semiotics analysis and visual grammar the thesis engaged a multimodal discourse analysis to examine the fact of “blackness” and “whiteness” in Leon Schuster’s *There is a Zulu on my Stoep (1993)* and *Mr Bones 1 (2001)*. The following results emanates from the examination and discussions carried out in the previous chapter:

5.1 CONCLUSIONS:

Firstly, the study showed that an analysis of all the semiotic modes; non linguistic and linguistic engaged in the film presents a comprehensive analysis and appreciation of the films. By examining the modes that exist in the film texts, the study showed that the fact of “blackness” and “whiteness” is relayed using multiple modes. The analysis therefore after having examined and discussed the modes showed how the interplay of all modes elevates “whiteness” by relegating “blackness”. Schuster uses the multiple modes in the film narrative to show how “blackness” means the opposite of “whiteness”. In his film narrative, Schuster can be criticized to have constructed the fact of “blackness” using the visual, linguistic and some non linguistic codes by reinforcing and naturalizing the fact of “blackness”. The fact of “blackness” created in the through multiple modes contains politically conventionalized perspectives. It is vital to point out that the meaning of “blackness” and “whiteness” in the film discourse lies not in a single mode but in the interplay of multiple modes that are used by the film Director in his construction of this film genre. What constitutes “blackness” lies not in what Zulu or Vince Lee as the black characters do in the film narrative but in what they say, how they act and other non verbal codes that surround them as given by the creator of the film narrative itself.

Secondly, the study also established the notion that “meaning is relational” (Hall, 1997). The fact of “blackness” depends on the differences it has with the fact of “whiteness”. As Schuster uses

the dual opposites in the film narrative, one can therefore argue that Schuster was involved in the construction of what “black” or “white” is through the relation each has to the other. Bakhtin (1981) [cited in Hall 1997] asserts that “we can only construct meaning through a dialogue with the other”. It can be concluded that in the film discourse Schuster uses “blackness” as the opposite of “whiteness”. By involving the two dichotomies in his film discourses Schuster can be criticized for showing that, “blackness” is “degradation”, “benighted”, “unsophisticated”, and “primitive” whilst it can also be “objectified”. The notion is however indicated by the fact of “whiteness” which he engaged in the narrative to mean the opposite of what he implies. The fact of “whiteness” is however treated as a state of “honor” and not “degradation”, “enlightened”, “modern” and having “prowess” and “efficiency”. It can further be noted that in his narrative by engaging the relational technique Schuster’s comedy can be regarded as a politicized phenomenon.

Bakhtin further asserts that “meaning is dialogic which means that everything we say and mean is modified by the interaction and interplay with another person. Meaning arises through the difference between participants in any dialogue (Hall, 1997:236)”. One therefore can point out that; the relation between the texts under study is dialogic in nature, the notions about “blackness” and “whiteness” in *There is a Zulu on my Stoep (1993)* have been maintained and carried forward in *Mr Bones I (2001)*. Schuster maintains relations of “blackness” and “whiteness” as his narrative technique to create the meaning of what black and white is. However one can note that as “meaning is relational and dialogic in nature” (Hall 1997), Schuster established therefore that societies based on totally different principles cannot be equaled hence this is done by elevating “whiteness” and downgrading “blackness” as discussed in Chapter 4.

Thirdly, by examining the film genre the study through the use of the multimodal discourse analysis indicated that comedy entails the politics of representation. As discourse is about the production of knowledge through language (Hall, 1997:44), one can note that through the creation of film discourse, Schuster was involved in a discursive practice in which he created knowledge about “blackness” and “whiteness”. The knowledge created through the use of the film discourse governs and shapes our perceptions of what “black” and “white” is. Foucault (1972) holds that outside discourse “blackness” and “whiteness” cannot mean. *There is a Zulu on*

my Stoep (1993) and *Mr Bones I* (2001) as discursive practices construct knowledge which involves the politics of representation. Representation of comedy engages the selection of how Schuster combined the various modes and codes in the creation of a film discourse, followed by how these selected elements are organized to form a system of signification that contains focused signifiers. By including and excluding some statements about “blackness” or “whiteness”, by necessitating and eliminating subjects who can act or behave like either “black” or “white” characters Schuster can be argued to have entailed the regime of comedy in the construction of texts under study. Foucault (1980:131) holds further that truth is constructed by an interchange of various constraints. What Foucault is suggesting however is the notion that truth is not a universalized entity. What is “true” in one society can be falsity in another. Having examined the multiple modes used by Schuster in his creation of comedy, one can therefore conclude that what Schuster calls comedy can critically be redefined as “tragic”. Tragic in which the black man is allowed to look at the narrative plot of his fellow beings with an eye of an ignorant tourist who should felicitate his own identity assassination.

Lastly, a comprehensive discussion of the films under study indicates therefore that the “problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line” (Du Bois, 1997a). It can be pointed out that politics in terms of representation between “blacks” and “white” in Western discourses can be argued to be insisting on maintain the image of black people as inferior beings representing the other. Texts such as *Heart of Darkness* (1902) by Joseph Conrad have been criticized for giving a distorted picture of “blackness”. Leon Schuster however in his film narrative fails to depart from the Western perceptions of “blackness” and “whiteness”. What chapter 4 established in the analysis is the notion that, “blackness” is still relegated as state of an inferiority compared to “whiteness”. By continuing and imbedding the Western ideologies about “blackness” and “whiteness”, one can note that the 21st century is also characterized by the problem of the color line. Achebe cited in Gikandi (1991:19) questions that “When you see an African what does it mean to a white man?” It can be argued therefore that “African identity has always been a product of European gaze (Appia 1992:81). It can be noted that knowledge of what is “black” and what “white” has always been politicized by Western discourses. It can be noted that, in his construction of the two dichotomies Schuster does not neglect to further

maintain such Western notions this is due to his failure to successfully construct that which sustains the life of the fact “blackness”. Leon Schuster in his texts under study owes much to the elevation of hegemonic pose of what can be identified as “white” and the relegation of what can be preconceived as “blackness”. After having failed to do enough justice in his film narrative, one can therefore point out that the problem of the color line still exist in the 21st century though narratives and discourses now imbed these as “comedy”.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ❖ As film genres now engage what has been called the “regime of comedy”, the negation of either the fact of “blackness” or “whiteness” exhort political intervention as representation is a political act (Coole, 2000:11). Political intervention required however should be in the same discourse of film. Films which elevate the fact of “blackness” by deconstructing and questioning the politicized and distorted images of what is black should be directed to preserve black identity.
- ❖ Visual literacy amongst viewers and film critics need to be developed so that both public actors and viewers will be able to combine all the semiotic modes in constructing meaning relayed by the interplay of these semiotic modes.
- ❖ As genre analysis suggests that the normalization of the “black” and “white” dichotomy through stereotyping is highly recognized in comedy discourses because generic principles deject viewers’ critical engagement with questioning the differences in such discourses. The study encourages popular public actors and film analysts be involved in the creative construction of comedic film in which the black man has “agency” and is “speaking back” to Western discourses that undermine the fact of blackness.
- ❖ As “blackness” is being perceived as an object that works under the control of Western stored programs to please and certify the “other” and “not self”, the study encourage fellow black men and film critics to look at how “black” and “white” dichotomies are represented and create “counter discourse” that deconstruct the Westernized ideologies.

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