
Representation of Black People in *Dahmer – Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*

Lerissa Daniela¹, Purwanti Kusumaningtyas²

¹Universitas Internasional Jakarta, Bekasi, Indonesia, ²Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, Salatiga, Indonesia

✉ : lerissa.daniela@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study analyzed color-based injustice representation in the Netflix series "Dahmer – Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story" (2020), focusing on the portrayal of black individuals among the victims of Jeffrey Dahmer, a white serial killer. Utilizing Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), specifically Kress and van Leeuwen's three metafunction framework, the study examined dialogues, visual imagery, and gestures across the series' 10 episodes. Findings revealed four main themes: stereotypical depictions of black individuals as impoverished and less educated compared to whites, discriminatory treatment towards them, their vocal response against discrimination, and their collective fight for justice, underscored by the series' emphasis on racial justice and the importance of societal unity in preserving it.

Keywords: *black people representation; discrimination; MDA; three metafunction*

Article information
(Filled by Editorial Management)
Received: 13 Feb, 2024
Revised: 10 Apr, 2024
Accepted: 16 Apr, 2024

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.22146/rubikon.v11i1.94040>

Available at <https://journal.ugm.ac.id/rubikon/article/view/94040>

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INTRODUCTION

The discrimination towards black people in the United States in the late 1980s until early 1990s has been portrayed in the media including movies. Several

researches showed that black people were depicted negatively in movies. African-American characters were described as the object of humor even though the attempts to portray them as equal was made in Hollywood

movies in early two decades of the twenty-first century (Maiza & Adi, 2020). Stereotypical portrayal of black people as being more athletic than intelligent and doing more physical even menial jobs that require minimum education is still easy to find as shown in "Get Out" movie (Marasabessy and Handayani 2019, 79). A study on "Green Book" movie with the setting in 1962 found that African Americans before 20th century were stereotyped negatively, such as criminal, stupid, poor, and uncivilized. Not only stereotypes, the study found discriminative treatment against a black character (Nurwahyuni and Samelia 2021, 50).

Rachman & Ngestirosa highlighted black people's class struggle that was triggered by physical violence committed by white police officers who still viewed black people as murderers, criminals, and misbehaved ones in "Detroit" movie. Black people were prejudiced and intimidated as they were classified as the lower race compared to the whites (Ally, n.d., 113). Jalata added that contribution of civil rights movement played an important role in the black struggle in

United States. This civil rights movement were built among the black community with the same vision, mission and ideology to fight against injustice (Jalata 2002). Therefore, the discussion about how white supremacy victimized black people as being portrayed in a movie is still important to highlight. This paper views *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story* series' exaggeration of white people murdering black people becomes a media of raising public awareness of black lives matter. This study will contribute to the interaction in multicultural society in which colored people should have equal opportunities.

Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story is one of visual media in the form of a series. This serial killer series is taken from the real story of a white man called Dahmer, that happened between 1987 and 1991. The serial killer case was finally revealed in Milwaukee in 1991 with the total of 17 victims as mostly black (16 out of 17), leading to accusations of racism and exploitation. Not only in the area of Milwaukee, this case became the center of news media reports the world over ("Intersectional Experiences

of Violence_ Studying the Serial Murde.Pdf," n.d., 1) (Svetic, 2020). It is important to note that representation in media can have a significant impact on public perception and understanding, as well as the consequences of their representation (Svetic, 2020). Dahmer's case which happened 32 years ago became famous again after the series was released in Netflix in September 21, 2022. From the day it was released, the series became the number one most watched series in 92 countries for more than 700 million hours in Netflix in Sept 21 - Oct 9, 2022. Until November 6, 2022, Dahmer series still became one of the top ten most watched series in Netfilx. This series based on the data acquired from <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt13207736/> has been nominated for several awards in 2022 and 2023 and won two awards in 2023.

The analysis centered to find the answers for the questions about how Dahmer series portray white and black people. As highly mediated texts, films go through careful selection of what to film, where to place the camera, which shots to select, and which sequence to

edit. They represent realities (Chapman 2023). These multimodal semiotic entities become the main focus in Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) (Kress 2011). These entities are designed and arranged as the result of a movie production as the portrayal of the true story. Dahmer series, despite its being a true story, remains a portrayal of what really happened. Its dialogues, gestures and appearance of the characters, the setting (year and location), sound and audio, shots, angles, lighting, and positioning can be analyzed to reveal what they may represent.

METHODOLOGY

Kress and van Leeuwen's three metafunction theory was employed to examine the portrayal of black people in the Dahmer series (G. R. Kress and Van Leeuwen 2021). Their multimodal semiotic resources fulfill the metafunctions of the representation of experiential world (representational metafunction), the interaction between participants represented in a visual design and its viewers (interactional metafunction), and the compositional arrangements of the visual resources (compositional

metafunction) (Feng and Espindola 2013). Representational metafunction consists of three elements, participants, processes, and circumstances, that relate one to the other in a picture or a frame. Participants which may refer to people or objects are divided into two: represented participants (RP) and interactive participants (IP). Represented participants include people, places and things depicted in the images or frames, meanwhile interactive participants are people who communicate with each other through the images as well as frames, producers, and viewers. This paper focuses on the represented participants to highlight the representational and compositional metafunction. Processes refer to the participants when they are connected by vectors, be it their movements and / or gestures. It is concerned with the presented action, experience, and events in certain circumstances.

RP's interactional metafunction which pays attention to the interaction between participants in the image or frame (G. R. Kress and Van Leeuwen 2021, 113) includes the image act with the participants' gazes, size

of frame with their social distance, and angle or point of view to provide perspective and express subjective attitude. Horizontal angle highlights involvement, whereas vertical angle exposes power relations. RP's compositional metafunction connects the representational and interactional ones through three interrelated systems: information value, salience, and framing. Information value refers to the placement of elements which associate meaning or portrayal to the various "zones" of the image, such as left and right, top and bottom, center and margin. Salience offers the audience with various degrees of attention for the intended portrayal. It is determined with complex interactions between a number of factors, including "the foreground or background, relative size, contrasts in tonal value (or color, difference in sharpness, and so on" (PP 182). Visual framing needs the selection of the compositional elements to be either strongly or weakly framed to deliver the information visually. Kress and van Leeuwen (p. 206) exemplified that "the more the elements of a spatial composition are connected, the more they are presented

as belonging together, as a single unit of information."

The data which were taken from all ten episodes of "Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story" series which was released on 21 September 2022 in Netflix comprised the selected images and dialogues. They were treated as text with particular content and analyzed with discourse analysis. The data were summarized before being explained together with the secondary data. They were categorized for their themes, which were, then, sorted to focus on the portrayal of black people in the United States, which was still white-dominated (Kuckartz 2019).

Data from all episodes in the Netflix series entitled Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story were categorized into four themes after making sense of the RPs that met the three metafunction analysis. These RPs become a significant representation of black people. They were divided into two: white RPs and black RPs. The white RPs included Dahmer (the main character of the series) and the white law enforcers, consisting of police officers, police chief, judge, and one detective.

Meanwhile, the black RPs included Dahmer's victims and their families as well as their neighbors, the black detective, and an influential American civil rights leader in 1991, Reverend Jackson. The interaction among them, and the composition of the captured scenes, which produce four main themes, were analyzed based on the three metafunction theory (G. Kress and Leeuwen 2006).

DISCUSSION

This section can be divided into several subsections depending on the findings of research.

Color Stereotype: Poor-Black and Sufficient-White

The first theme exposes the portrayal of black people's poverty that made them easily be tricked with trivialities. In this series, two of Dahmer's victims got easily attracted by small things such as beers and small amounts of money. On the other hand, the two white men that Dahmer attracted with the same simple things were not interested in them.

Image 1. The character Konerak was thinking to stay or to go with Dahmer



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 2

Image 2. The character Konerak decided to go with the character Dahmer



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 2

One of Dahmer's youngest dead victims, a 14-year-old Laoisan boy named Konerak, was killed after he accepted the beer and \$100 that Dahmer offered. In Episode 2, Dahmer stated "Are you coming to my place? We're going to have a party." Then Konerak fell silent at the thought of Dahmer's offer which was followed by Dahmer's call "Hey, pay you good money." Then as captured in image 1, Konerak showed uncertain expression before he eventually was following Dahmer to his apartment.

Image 3. The Characters Tracy and Dahmer were talking at the bar



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 1

Episode 1, 08:55. Tracy, the last victim in Dahmer's case, was attracted by \$50 that Dahmer offered when they met in the club. The money was an exchange for Dahmer's offer to take pictures in his apartment. Dahmer convinced Tracy that he was a professional photographer who needed a model. They both just met in the club and Tracy accepted that offer directly with no hesitation. Tracy was in need of that money as he stated that his landlord raised the apartment rent fee.

Image 4. Dahmer's classmate rejected Dahmer harshly



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 3

Image 5. The character of stranger that Dahmer met on the street



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 3

On the contrary, two whites who almost became Dahmer's victims refused his small offerings. The above images taken from episode 3 showed the rejection of two white men toward Dahmer. Dahmer tried to get their attention and to invite them to his house. For the man in the image 4, Dahmer offered a pig corpse from their biology class to him and asked him to dissect it in Dahmer's house. The boy directly rejected it. Dahmer was disappointed because he thought that the boy was fascinated by him during Biology class before.

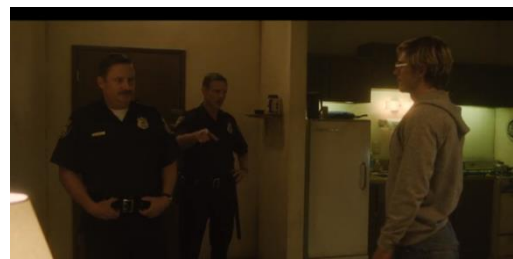
The other man that Dahmer tried to attract, as being shown in image 5, was portrayed as expressing rejection. Even though it is a short scene without any dialogue between them, the scene obviously visualized this first theme. Dahmer observed the young man as he jogged on the street around Dahmer's house. After some

time, Dahmer was trying to approach him, but his sudden appearance from the bush surprised the young man. He looked very surprised and scared, and then ran away even before Dahmer offered anything. Dahmer was disappointed, but he learned the tricks from his first attempt to attract people.

Different Justice Treatment between Whites and Blacks

Multimodal resources analysis reveals two oppositional themes related to colors being portrayed in several episodes. One is how white law enforcers, such as police officers and court judges, treated white people differently from black people. These law enforcers tended to put more trust in white people. In contrast, the law enforcers in this series were depicted to take black and colored people for granted.

Image 6. Two policemen were investigating Dahmer in his apartment



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 2

In episode two, as represented by the frame in image 6, it showed Dahmer and two police officers, who both are white. The officers checked Dahmer's apartment after they got a report from Glenda. She called the police after finding a Laasian young man, named Konerak, almost naked and unconscious, lying in front of the apartment trying to escape from Dahmer's apartment. However, the police officers let Dahmer bring Konerak back into his apartment again. The officers and Dahmer were represented in two different vectors. The officers were more relaxed than Dahmer who looked stiff and awkward. The first officer who was standing in front of the other was gazing at Dahmer while the other one was gazing and pointing at Konerak. They appeared having no suspicion of Konerak's situation and the circumstances around Dahmer's apartment. They did not even ask specific questions or check the apartment in detail.

The position and lighting of each sides emphasized the representation. The officers on the left side of the frame appeared smaller than Dahmer on the right. They were in a darker spot than Dahmer, too.

It indicated that Dahmer, who was white, is the vocal point of this scene. The scene explicitly depicted how white law enforcers trusted white people better than colored.

Image 7: A policeman stopped Dahmer while driving



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 3

The white police officer trusted Dahmer, so that he did not arrest him in minute 47:27 of episode three. Image 7 depicted how he trusted Dahmer just because he was white. The circumstance was Dahmer was driving very late at night and he was drunk. He had a plastic bag containing the dead body he was going to dispose of. The police officer stopped him on suspicion of him being drunk. However, the policeman did not arrest him. He did not even check the plastic bag. Instead, the police only stared at Dahmer and stated "And I'm not gonna fuck that up by arresting you tonight, okay?" (47:27) The frame depicted Dahmer as the foregrounded RP while the

policeman was the backgrounded one. The contrasted lighting coming from the brightness behind the car and the police officer's torch focused on Dahmer. Besides that, Dahmer being placed in the center of the frame in a close-up angle exposed his vocal position. This episode explicitly represents the privilege of being white.

Dahmer, who was a serial killer of 17 victims, was not immediately arrested because the enforcers did not investigate further of what was going on despite the suspicious circumstances. This was not because Dahmer was smart in hiding his crime but because the law enforcers, the white ones, had more trust in Dahmer who was also white.

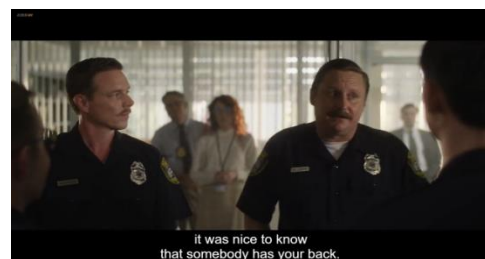
In episode five, Dahmer was arrested and on trial for the attempted murder of a Laosian young man. The judge of the court who had the highest power in deciding the attempted murder case did not send Dahmer to jail. Instead, the judge stated enthusiastically "You need a second chance. And this is your lucky day because I'm gonna give it to you. And on the other side of this, hopefully you will have learned your lesson and

you'll get your act together. Now I see that you have steady employment so the court is willing to grant you work release of up to 40 hours per week. And while the court is obliged to inform your employer of this arrangement, I'm willing to do you the favor of leaving out the exact nature of your misconduct." (39:44)

The statement above shows the law enforcement officers' negligence towards Dahmer's case. And, it was simply based on skin colors. In other words, it was racially discriminative.

Other depictions on how white police officers have more trust on their race are clearly shown in the following frames.

Image 8. Characters Policemen talk each other in the police office



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 8

Image 8 was taken from episode eight. This image showed important RPs which were the white police officers. These two police officers were the same

officers shown in image 3 who let the Laoisan boy named Konerak back to Dahmer's apartment and finally got killed. They were supposed to be suspended for being careless in handling Konerak's murder case, but unfortunately, they were not. Their police status was reinstated. The statement in image 8 which was uttered by one of the officers "It was nice to know that somebody has your back." (42:39) was a satire directed to their police Chief who tried to suspend them. They were supported by the Milwaukee Police Association. The scene portrays the chief himself as being blurred behind those two officers. He could still hear the statement clearly, but the visual portrayal did not expose his presence.

Image 9. Two policemen received awards from police association



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 9

Image 9 minute 21.01, which was taken from episode nine, showed the two police officers were presented the

Milwaukee Police Association's Officers of the Year Award as soon as their status was reinstated. As the represented participants, they were positioned at the center of the frame with all the tonal contrast and light pointed at them indicating them as the focal point of this scene. The shot was taken in medium full shot and wide frame to show the support from the attendees who were all whites. This awarding took place in a ballroom where all the Milwaukee Association's Officers stood and gave them a round of applause for the award given to them.

The circumstances shown in image 8 and image 9 indicated law injustice towards black people. They also depicted law enforcement's negligence in carrying out their duties. Ironically, they even highlighted the award-giving. White support white theme is magnified with the portrayal.

The last portrayal of sub-theme one can be found in episode 9, when two white policemen were arresting Glenda's daughter named Sandra. She was reported by a white man for breaking his camera. Sandra broke his camera because the young man and his friends were playing "killing" in front of

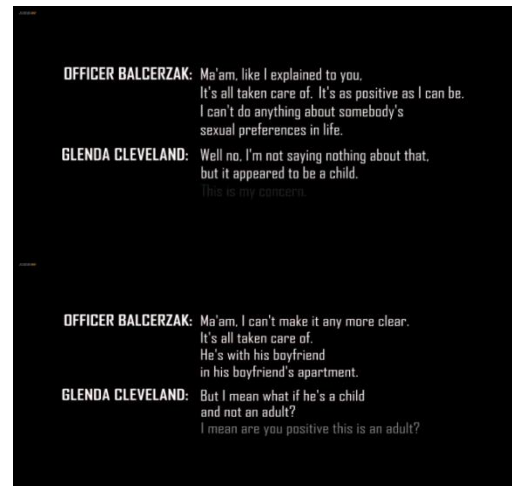
Glenda's apartment. Sandra got so mad and lost her control that she broke his camera. After the incident, when Sandra and her mother, Glenda, entered their apartment, two officers appeared there and arrested her. They said "I got a complaint from a young man, said your daughter assaulted him and destroyed his camera. He's pressing charges." (35:21)

The police officers came and arrested Sandra after the white boy's call to the Police. The scene did not show him calling the Police. The absence of the scene seemed to highlight the officers' quick response. It indicated the officers' in-favor attitude to the white boy's report. With the highlight of the non-present action of calling the Police, again, this episode portrayed the theme white-support-white.

In addition to that, the way white law enforcement officers put more trust on their people is not implemented to the colored people. The following images depicted law enforcers in Dahmer's series as taking black and colored people for granted. This issue has become one of representation of black people in this

series in Milwaukee in 1991 which was proven by the following frames.

Image 10. Phone call conversation between Glenda and Officer Balcerzak

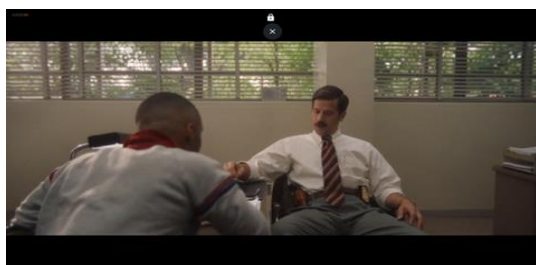


Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 2

Image 10 portrayed the situation when the film highlighted the true phone conversation between Glenda and John Balcerzak, the Police Officer, who checked Dahmer's apartment after a report about the 14-year-old Laosian boy, Konerak. The boy was murdered by Dahmer in his apartment. This conversation followed the scene discussed previously with image 6. The use of the transcript together with the record of the phone call visualized the true event. It exaggerated Glenda's anxiety which was neglected by the white police officer. During the conversation, she repeatedly asked for confirmation of

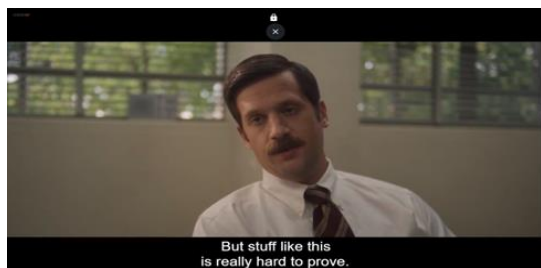
Konerak's condition. The officer also repeatedly said that everything was under control, even though they did not really investigate the condition. He simply said that it was a personal issue of two adults without checking Konerak's ID. However, Glenda was suspicious that Konerak was just a teenager. Therefore, this portrayal emphasized how white police officers took black people's report about Dahmer's case for granted.

Image 11. The character policeman talked to character black man



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 5

Image 12. The character black man is reporting Dahmer to the policeman



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 5

Image 11 and 12 were taken from episode five. During the conversation in image 12,

minute 31:35, the gestures of the two represented participants with different colors in the frame spoke about the different treatments. The white police officer was shown from the front angle most of the time, compared to the black man. Furthermore, the medium shot frame showed how the policeman sat back casually on his chair. He just took a short note on his notebook and played with his pen. The officer's gestures and facial expressions seemed to undermine the black man's report. The close-up single shot in image 11, minute 31:46, showed the policeman's facial expression closer as he stated "But stuff like this is really hard to prove." He has not done any investigation but he made a statement already.

The black man's gestures as he was reporting about what happened to him in opposition to the white police officer. He leaned forward to the officer as he told that he turned out unconscious after he drank the beer Dahmer gave him. He wanted the police officer to investigate and ask his grandma, who witnessed what happened. The scene exposed the black man's back most of the time while he was closer to the camera.

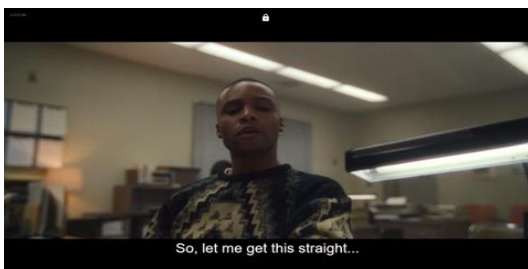
The positions indicated how colors matter. The white officer was clearly shown, while the black victim was only shown by his mere presence. The black man was not portrayed with his expressions. Again, this scene depicted how black people were taken for granted.

Image 13. The character black man followed up his report to the policeman



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 6

Image 14. The character black man felt disappointed with the policeman

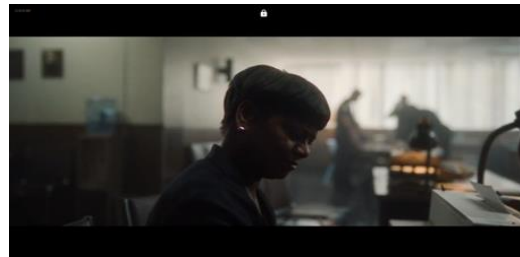


Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 6

Two days after, as being shown in image 13 and 14, the representation of the participants, setting, circumstances, and gestures remained the same. In minute

34.01, which highlights the officer's statement "...you should know, getting arrested doesn't suddenly make you guilty of everything," indicated the emphasis of how the white officer stereotyped the black man as a criminal. While the black man had never been arrested or even jailed, the white officer's remark showed his ignorance. Again, color seems the determining factor for the white officer to make such judgmental statements and remarks.

Image 15. The character mother reported her missing son to the police officer



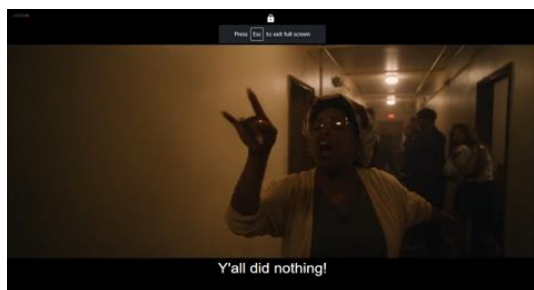
Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 6

The same unjust treatment toward black people was shown in image 15 taken from episode six. It exposed Tony's mother, in a single close-up shot from the side angle with a shoulder camera level. Her appearance and the blurry circumstances at the back have the same color tone. This interactional representation focused on her facial expression as she reported her missing son to

the policeman. Her facial expression was the visualization of sad and disappointed feeling after the policeman asked if Tony had any history of drug abuse or gang violence. Stereotype toward black people prevails in the sixth episode. Color matters more than gender.

Being ignored for some time by the white officers, the black people came to speak up for their rights. In episode five, the black male victim who received stereotyping after his second report of being abused eventually stated that "... you're gonna take the word of a white guy who's got a criminal record over the word of a black man who doesn't have a criminal record..." (34.14). He was upset and was portrayed as putting hope no more to the white officer to proceed with his case.

Image 16. Glenda shouted on the isle of her apartment



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 7

Image 17. Glenda shouted to the policeman



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 7

In episode seven, the scene where Glenda, Dahmer's neighbor, shouted out, pointing out that she reported several times about Dahmer and his victims, but they were all neglected. She regretfully stated, "I called you all for months! For months! And now you finally came? And it's too late! You all came too late!" It happened when Dahmer's fourteen dead victims were found in his apartment, next to hers. In episode two, her phone call report was shown with her unseen in the scene. This time, Glenda was depicted as being very brave to speak up to the officers after the case was revealed. The scene was even shown in a close-up shot to her emotional face in the middle of the frame. It emphasizes the colored's beginning to voice their concerns.

Mutual Support among the Black and Colored People

The second theme of this research showed how black and colored people responded to the injustice toward them. They fought against injustice in the pattern from the sporadic, individual, unorganized fight into mutual supports among the colored. The latter was depicted as involving neighbors and friends as well as influential figure. When it was unorganized, they were neglected, but when they started to organize themselves to move, their voice became louder. The depiction of Rev. Jackson speaking up in strategic locations (government, streets [as the representation of grassroots people], and an important sociocultural site [church] became the peak of the struggle. However, that was not the end. They sustained their support within the community to heal their trauma.

Image 18. Reverend Jackson is speaking with his activist partner



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 7

Image 19. An activist partner who speak to Reverend Jackson about Dahmer



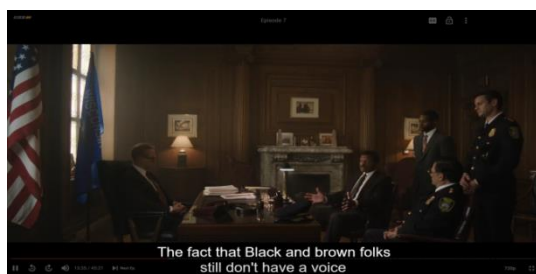
Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 7

In episode seven, an American civil rights activist and a Baptist minister named Jesse Louis Jackson, also known as Reverend Jackson (Kipling, 2022), came to Milwaukee after he knew Dahmer's case had been published in the mass media. Image 18 and 19 highlighted the expressions of Reverend Jackson and an unnamed activist who accompanied him, on their way to the Mayor's office in Milwaukee to fight for justice. They were captured in a close-up angle with dark lighting, which gave the

image of the gloominess and almost-hopeless struggle to gain justice. It exaggerated Reverend Jackson's statement in minute 11.48, "... this Dahmer case, it is our fight. If you want to slay a dragon, son, you got to attack it from all angles and injustice is one hell of a beast." It was after the young man questioned Reverend Jackson's agenda to be involved in Dahmer's case. He thought that Dahmer's case did not fit to their civil rights agenda.

This scene portrayed how Dahmer's case has become a significant issue to push the national justice movements. The influential figure's visit to Milwaukee highlighted the importance of mutual support among the marginalized community members.

Image 20: A meeting in the office of Milwaukee's Mayor



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 8

The scene in image 20, minute 13.01 exposed Reverend Jackson's meeting with the

Milwaukee's Mayor, Mayor John. O Norquist, and Police Chief Philip Arreola. Reverend Jackson headed there to point out the negligence of police officials in Milwaukee related to Dahmer's case. His goal was to discern whether discrimination or racism may have played a role in the investigation and how the police failed the victims.

The RPs in this frame showed the same vectors of gestures, which indicated the same positions between them. Reverend Jackson became the focal point of this frame and the others were portrayed as paying full attention to him when he was speaking. This gives an image that he was considered as important as the other RPs, regardless of his skin color.

Reverend Jackson spoke a lot about his intention of visit and he spoke as if he represented the black people's voice until that time.

"... I was shocked by the Dahmer murders like everyone else. But the more I learned about the case, the more I realized it was not just a gruesome horror show. It's a metaphor for all the social ills that plague our nation. Bad policing, underserved

communities, the low value we assign our young black and brown men, especially if they happen to be gay. The fact that black and brown folks still don't have a voice and when we do speak up, we're too often ignored. And I'm hoping that as the leaders of this fine city, that both of you would take swift, immediate action to address and riddle these wrongs." (minute 13.01)

He frankly pointed to the unfair treatments the black and colored ones have received. However, the Chief Head's response was far from his expectation as he was accused of complicating things in Milwaukee by his presence. He was even blamed for inflaming the racial tension toward black people there. On the other hand, Reverend Jackson did not flinch at the accusation; instead, he stated the incompetence of the law enforcement system and asserted his position as a civil rights leader who could address the black community's concerns there.

"With all due respect, Chief, I think we are well past that. You got Black and brown folks angry at the police, calling for justice. You got a city that's been traumatized by these horrific murders, yes. But also years of

poverty, high unemployment, discrimination, police brutality. Yes Chief, I did come to Milwaukee to be an agitator. To hold you gentlemen accountable and demand an end to this pattern of racism and neglect. Also came here to do whatever's in my power, as a leader, as a Cristian, to help this broken community heal. So, like it or not, gentlemen, you're not getting rid of me." (minute 13.10)

Unlike the previous themes portrayed in the other scenes of different episodes, the visual display of the heated conversation here exposed a shift of relation in which both The Chief Head and Reverend Jackson were positioned as equals.

Image 21. Reverend Jackson with all the Dahmer's victims and their family members



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 8

Image 22: Black people of Milwaukee were marching on the street



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 8

Image 21 and 22, which were taken from episode eight, showed the human rights movement led by Reverend Jackson. Image 21 showed the represented participants, who were all black, standing tall and walking confidently. The RPs' presence in a different setting shows the position of the RP. In this case, Reverend Jackson is obviously portrayed as a leading figure in the scene (Image 21), being placed in the center of the frame. His medium-full shot angle showed his significant influence to the case, the people, and even the movement.

The mother of one of the victims who was holding his left arm magnified his importance there. As the representation of the unfairly-treated people, the woman's presence next to him indicated the discriminated people's trust and reliance on this leading figure.

The setting in place of this moment plays an important role in exposing this part of shifting circumstance where the discriminated colored people spoke up even louder. Unlike the previous scenes that portrayed the unfair treatments towards the colored, this scene looks bright with the exposure of the shiny weather on the day. The contrast and sharpness of the natural light pointed at the RPs with their fighting spirits. From the low angle in image 21, the camera moved to the high angle in image 22 to show more RPs who were bringing posters showing that they demanded justice toward Dahmer's case. All RPs' gazes were facing forward, which indicated demand and support for their act. They listened to the leading figure's speech as they were following him to the church.

Image 23. Reverend Jackson gave speech in the church



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 8

Image 24. Reverend Jackson gave speech in the church



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 8

Image 23 and 24 were still taken from Episode eight which were shown in minute 13.30 - 15.35. This moment presented Reverend Jackson giving his speech in the church in front of Milwaukee citizens. He was accompanied by Milwaukee's Mayor, Mayor John O. Norquist, and Police Chief Philip Arreola on the stage. He was giving his speech from the pulpit, while the governmental authorities were sitting on the sides of the highest place in the church. The low angle of the camera in image 23 magnified Reverend Jackson's authority in that place.

Image 24 portrayed the same position from a different angle. Reverend Jackson was shot close up on his back, so he appeared as a silhouette. The background was the audience that filled the whole space of the church. The audience was depicted as being crowded in the church, but they were not clear by faces. They were simply

portrayed as a group of abundant people. This scene provides the view of Reverend Jackson's salience who had the most important hierarchy among the other elements in the frame (van Leeuwen, 2021).

The picture emphasizes his speech about his visit as not to sow division, but to call for accountability of the Milwaukee law enforcement. He strongly made his point by saying,

"... Now, some folks have asked me, Reverend why are you going out to Milwaukee? Dahmer's been caught. Aren't you just stirring up more division? To those folks, I say, I come here today not to sow division, but the call for accountability. Dahmer's crimes weren't committed in a vacuum. Many people, including officers of the law, turned a blind eye, which is why he was able to do what he did for so long."

On behalf of Police Chief Arreola, Jackson added that the Police Chief would conduct a thorough investigation of the case. As an American civil rights leader, Jackson stated they would keep fighting and urged decisive action until justice prevails for all Milwaukee citizens. His impassioned

speech was greeted with thunderous standing applause from all the audience there.

This scene indicates the holistic fight of colored people against injustice. The presence of the leader exposes and emphasizes the significance of unity and synergy of all elements to fight for justice. The series depiction of Reverend Jackson's strategic moves to pursue equity by interfering with the case of murder by Dahmer defined the holistic fight back of the marginalized communities there.

Image 25. Detective Murphy and Detective Kennedy investigated Dahmer



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 9

Image 26. Dahmer was investigated by Detective Murphy and Detective Kennedy



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 9

Image 25 and 26 showed two shots in medium close-up angle of the Detective Dennis Murphy and Detective Patrick Kennedy who investigated Dahmer. Even though Kennedy, the white detective, was closer to the camera, he appeared to be the backgrounded RP. He was blurred, while Detective Murphy, the black one, appeared clearly focused despite his being in the corner of the room. The line of the room's corner speaks about the voiceless of the used-to-be marginalized one.

The series seems to have a certain agenda by characterizing Detective Murphy as a black character instead of white as the true one. Murphy was portrayed to be more emotional than Kennedy during the investigation. This exposes the color-based solidarity,

even though his words sounded professional as he stated "You purposefully moved into an apartment in the black community... To an area that was under-patrolled and underserved, and you knew that, isn't that right? Easier to get away with things there, easier to hunt." As Murphy was saying it, Kennedy, the white officer, looked down. He did not face Dahmer as before as shown in image 26.

Image 27. Glenda and neighbors talked and slept together on the isle of apartment



Source: *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, Episode 9.

Daily interaction may become one of the ways for black people to show mutual support. The portrayal of the people sleeping in the isle of the ground floor, bringing their blankets and pillows, exposed the solidarity among them after Dahmer was sentenced to prison. Glenda felt traumatized after the whole incident of Dahmer's murder that happened next door to her apartment. She

was afraid of sleeping alone in her room because she was still haunted by the sound of the drills, the smell of the chemical substance Dahmer used to erase his tracks of killing, as well as the screams of the victims. She could hear all those noises from her room, and it left her with fear.

Dana and the other residents of the apartment spent seven nights sleeping outside their apartments to accompany Glenda. Dana validated the good action Glenda did on Konerak, the Laoisan boy, at that time as she stated "I read about you in the paper, trying to help that boy. That was a good thing you tried to do." However, Glenda responded that the Dahmer's case still brings them to the inconvenient feeling as she said "Yeah, well, good as it was, what it gets us? Still can't sleep in our own bed."

This scene may not be as strong as Reverend Jackson's negotiation, march and speeches in public, but it highlights the traumatic impact of the murder. The seemingly simple interaction between Glenda and her neighbor, Dana, becomes the portrayal of the sustainable support among the black people in their fight against

injustice. The process of healing was significant after the harsh fight that involved Glenda, as a double minor citizen for her being a black woman. The fights that eventually brought the issue to national level might have caused her trauma. The highlight of trauma healing indicates the importance of sustainable support among discriminated people.

**Holistic Fights Against Injustice and Discrimination:
[1] Important positions of black people; [2] The significant role of the white police officer**

The sustainability of racial justice should be preserved within societal connections of both groups. Black people in this series are depicted as positioned in significant roles in order to support their community. However, the role of whites becomes also important. Fight against injustice requires both sides, blacks and whites. The discriminated ones must shout and the discrimination actor must stop.

The last theme of the study found seven black people with significant positions in the Dahmer series. The previously discussed Reverend Jesse Jackson and Glenda Cleveland

were two of the most obvious significant characters. Three bystanders were found meaningful in bringing forth the positive portrayal of black characters. Episode 3 highlighted a black woman boss of Dahmer's mother. She was promoted to a higher position in the women's therapy field in a different workplace, and Dahmer's mother substituted her. Episode 4 depicted a black man as the Dean of the college where Dahmer studied for a while. The Dean invited him and his father to announce about Dahmer's low GPA which made him get expelled. A black woman court secretary appeared once in episode 5. She was portrayed as frowning in confusion when the Judge, who was white, decided that Dahmer would get his second chance to prove that he was not guilty. Episode 6 briefly presented a black pediatrician, Dr. Weeks, who diagnosed Tony, one of Dahmer's dead victims, with deaf. His role as a doctor in Milwaukee city in the 1990s was proof that black people had equal access to higher education at that time. Despite his skin, he was an important figure with a degree. Those characters display non-stereotypical black characters. It means that the series attempts to

bring forth the colored achievement that should have made them treated as equals.

Detective Murphy who investigated Dahmer also displayed the attempt to portray black people's achievements. He appeared as professional and capable as the other officers which were white dominated. The professionalism becomes further highlighted with the fact that the series modified Detective Murphy's characterization from a white officer into a black one. This characterization twist becomes one of the series' efforts to visualize the mutual support among black people. He was also characterized as being more dominant than his white partner officer during the investigation sessions. Such modification becomes the series' loud voice of fighting for equality among people of various colors.

To achieve sustainable racial justice, the role of white people became also important in supporting the discriminated party (McCoy, 2020). In the series, the whites were portrayed to support the black people with their authority as part of law enforcement. Detective Patrick Kennedy's character, the partner officer of

Detective Murphy, became important in taking care of Dahmer's case. In episode 5, while Murphy took a dominant role in the investigation process, Kennedy's quietness indicates the portrayal of the white's willingness to be less dominant. Silence becomes one of the ways to show it. That magnifies the picture that the white can contribute to the building of justice among people of various colors.

There is also Chief Arreola, the Police Chief of Milwaukee, who has become a significant figure who took firm action against the Dahmer case. As the previous discussion about Chief Arreola's support that was visually shown on the scene of Reverend Jackson's delivering his speech in the church in front of the Milwaukee citizens, in the other part of the episode, the Police Chief was depicted as using his authority to suspend two of his subordinates who neglected Glenda's report about Konerak which made him get killed by Dahmer. Even though their police status was reinstated after they got the support from the police associations, as explained in theme one image 3, Arreola's action to punish them depicted his

partiality for the blacks. In episode 9, Chief Arreola, represented the Milwaukee's government to present the Citizens Merit Award to Glenda Cleaveland. He stated that Glenda was considered as one of 'heroes' of the city for all the reports she did to the police officers about Dahmer's case, especially when she tried to save Konerak. Even though he was the Police Chief of the city, but he was not fully supported by the police associations, especially in this Dahmer case where he was portrayed 'fighting' by himself. The scene of Glenda's awarding moment happened at the same time as the two policemen were also given the Milwaukee Police Association's Officers of the Year Award. The scenes were go back and forth between Glenda and the two policemen. Their awarding moments were shown very contradictory. Chief Arreola presented the award to Glenda in a small room with few other citizens attended. Meanwhile the Milwaukee Police Association presented the awards to the top policeman in a fancy ballroom as aforementioned in image 3. It portrayed that Chief Arreola did not get full support from the official institution systematically, even though

he was the Police Chief of the city.

This highlights the series' attempt to propose the significance of the white's roles in fighting for justice. It repeats the same pattern of the colored's struggle against discrimination where they began with individual sporadic fights and were ignored. The Police Chief might be the pioneer of the same path of the fighting pattern for the white's struggle to end racial discrimination.

CONCLUSION

Multimodal discourse analysis with its three metafunction framework, especially the analysis of the series' representative participants, circumstances, gaze, angles, social distance, information value, and salience, revealed how black people in the *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story* has been represented. Dahmer's series portrayed the blacks and the whites with a progressive thought on the side of the blacks. It began with the stereotypical portrait of the different colors, highlighting the blacks as the poor and the less educated than the sufficient whites.

Discriminative treatments were another portrayal that was strongly shown in the series. However, the series offered another depiction of the black and white's experiences in the case of their rights. The series magnified the significance of the blacks and their fights for justice, even though the modification of RPs from the white into a black police officer. Such modification became the peak of the voicing of the equal rights between the two groups. The holistic fights of the blacks for their rights became evident in the portrayal of the important figure to support the justice seeking, and the series was closed with the highlight of sustainable racial justice. In other words, the series had the intention to voice up the necessity of unity and mutual support in the society for preserving justice.

COMPETING INTEREST STATEMENT

Herewith the author declares that this article is totally free from any conflict of interest regarding the assessment, review and revision, and publication process in general.

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