

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. Review of Literature

1. Popular Literature.

Popular literature is recognized not just as entertainment but as a cultural space where meaning, ideology, and identity are created and challenged. Storey (2010) contends that popular texts serve as battlegrounds for ideological conflict where dominant and subordinate meanings engage with each other. Instead of merely mirroring reality, these texts actively create social values and influence how audiences perceive identity and diversity. Berger (1996) also highlights that stories in popular literature encompass cultural beliefs that shape daily perceptions. Crucially, this relationship between popular literature and society is not one-directional; while social conditions shape the content of popular texts, those texts in turn reinforce, challenge, or reshape the very social structures from which they emerge.

It is through this reciprocal dynamic that popular literature becomes a legitimate site for social inquiry particularly for examining how phenomena such as otherness are produced, sustained, and contested within a given cultural moment. Consequently, widely-read literature serves as an important avenue for examining cultural negotiation not merely as a textual phenomenon but as a reflection of lived social realities.

In this context, movie can be regarded as a type of popular literature that conveys meaning via storytelling and visual depiction. Movie, as a cultural artifact, not only conveys narratives but also arranges meaning via characters, dialogue, and symbolic frameworks. This renders movie a significant tool in influencing and navigating cultural identities. Particularly in diverse settings like American society, movie frequently showcases conflicts between mainstream and subcultural values, making visible the social hierarchies and power dynamics that structure everyday life.

As a mass cultural form consumed by broad and varied audiences, movie carries particular sociological weight it does not merely depict social conditions but actively participates in constructing public understandings of who belongs, who is marginalized, and how difference is managed within society. This positions movie as a productive source of social data through which the phenomenon of otherness its construction, negotiation, and reproduction can be systematically examined. Consequently, analyzing movie enables a more profound comprehension of how identity is formed and navigated within cultural dialogue, while simultaneously offering insight into the broader social processes that produce and sustain otherness in contemporary society.

2. Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism as a critical framework emerges from the intellectual effort to understand the lasting cultural, political, and social consequences of colonial rule on both colonized and colonizing societies. Rather than treating colonialism as a

historical event that has simply ended, postcolonial scholars argue that its effects continue to shape contemporary power relations, cultural identities, and social hierarchies. Nayar (2010) further contends that postcolonial theory provides the critical tools necessary for examining how marginalized identities continue to be produced and managed within prevailing cultural frameworks, making it an indispensable lens for analyzing cultural texts such as movie.

Said (1978) similarly demonstrates through his concept of Orientalism how colonial discourse constructed the "Other" as inferior, exotic, and in need of Western governance a discursive practice whose legacy remains embedded in contemporary cultural texts. On the other hand, Hooks (1992) argues that visual media, including movie, plays a central role in sustaining these dynamics by controlling how marginalized groups are represented and perceived. In the context of American multicultural society, postcolonial frameworks are particularly productive for examining how racial and cultural minorities navigate dominant White cultural norms a process that is neither straightforwardly resistant nor simply compliant, but deeply complex and context-dependent. It is within this broader postcolonial tradition that Homi K. Bhabha's theoretical contributions become especially significant for the present study.

Taken together, these postcolonial perspectives establish that racial and cultural otherness is not a natural condition but a historically constructed one produced through discourse, sustained through representation, and reinforced through the everyday workings of cultural power. While Said illuminates how otherness is constructed through dominant discourse and Hooks (1992) reveals

how visual media perpetuates its effects, neither framework accounts fully for the active, strategic dimension of how marginalized subjects respond to and negotiate the conditions imposed upon them. It is precisely this gap that makes Bhabha's postcolonial theory the most appropriate analytical lens for the present study. Unlike frameworks that emphasize the imposition of dominant power, Bhabha foregrounds the agency of the marginalized subject through mimicry, hybridity, and ambivalence as a dynamic and ongoing response to cultural inequality. In the context of *Green Book* (2018), where characters do not merely suffer exclusion but actively navigate, contest, and partially subvert its terms, Bhabha's framework offers the most precise and productive tools for analyzing identity negotiation as a lived, rather than merely represented, process.

3. Bhabha's Postcolonial Theory

The Following are excerpts from Bhabha (1994) defines identity as the result of continuous negotiation amid unequal cultural dynamics instead of being a static or essential category. Essential to his theory is the concept of the Third Space, a place where meaning and identity are perpetually formed through the interaction of dominant and marginalized cultures. In this context, cultural limits are not fixed but adaptable, facilitating the development of new identities. Based on the theory above this viewpoint contests binary dichotomies like colonizer/colonized or self/other. Consequently, identity is perceived as an evolving and negotiated phenomenon.

Bhabha elaborates on the idea of mimicry, which signifies how marginalized groups imitate the prevailing culture. Nonetheless, this replication is perpetually

partial, resulting in a state of "nearly identical but not entirely." This void reveals the fragility of prevailing power and allows for covert dissent. Furthermore, hybridity refers to the creation of blended identities that emerge from cultural exchanges. These blended identities question the notion of clear or static cultural affiliation.

Another key concept is ambivalence, representing the conflicting relationship between the allure of and opposition to mainstream culture. This situation generates conflict in identity development, as people strive for acceptance while upholding their uniqueness. These ideas are especially significant for examining cultural texts, as they demonstrate how identity is negotiated instead of merely shown. Consequently, Bhabha's framework serves as the primary analytical instrument for analyzing how characters in the movie *Green Book* (2018) maneuver through prevailing cultural systems.

4. Otherness

The concept of otherness involves the way individuals or groups are portrayed as distinct from and lesser than the prevailing group. Otherness is created via discourse that places specific groups as marginalized and inferior within power hierarchies. As a supporting perspective, Hall (1997) emphasizes that difference is fundamental to meaning-making, yet it frequently results in stereotyping and the marginalization of particular identities. This argument strengthens the understanding of otherness as a socially constructed phenomenon, while Bhabha's theory provides the primary framework for analyzing identity negotiation. This idea clarifies how marginalized identities are situated within prevailing cultural systems.

In multicultural societies, the concept of otherness becomes intricate as people manage various cultural expectations at the same time. Individuals from subcultural backgrounds frequently find themselves negotiating their identity within prevailing cultural contexts. This situation generates a conflict between belonging and exclusion, especially when acceptance from the dominant group is restricted. Consequently, otherness involves not just difference but also the power dynamics that shape and uphold that difference. This renders it an essential idea for grasping identity dynamics in cultural materials like movie.

5. Negotiation

Negotiation denotes the dynamic process by which individuals react to prevailing cultural influences by adapting, resisting, or reshaping their identities. Bhabha (1994) highlights that negotiation happens in the Third Space, where meaning is not static but is perpetually created through cultural interactions. In contrast to representation, which often outlines the portrayal of identity, negotiation emphasizes the strategic management of identity in relation to social limitations. This procedure includes intentional decisions that mirror the person's standing within systems of power. Consequently, negotiation emphasizes agency instead of a passive stance.

In the context of subcultural identities, negotiation frequently serves as a survival tactic within prevailing cultural frameworks. People might embrace prevailing cultural standards to achieve acceptance, all the while preserving aspects of their authentic identity. This establishes a state of hybridity and uncertainty, in which identity is not entirely assimilated nor wholly distinct. Various people might

use distinct approaches, like adaptation, resistance, or cultural preservation, based on their social environment. These differences in negotiation approaches highlight the intricacies of identity development in imbalanced cultural contexts. Methodologically, the sociological approach generally uses descriptive qualitative methods with text analysis as the main data. This method is applied by identifying themes, symbols, and language in literary works related to specific social phenomena. The textual data is then linked to the social, political, and historical context through literature studies and relevant social fact tracing. With this method, the sociological approach is able to provide a deep and contextual understanding of the meaning contained in literary works.

B. Review of Relevant Research

Studies on race and cultural identity in cinema have consistently demonstrated that popular movies do more than entertain they actively participate in constructing and contesting the social meanings attached to race, difference, and belonging. Mainstream American movies tend to reduce systemic racial issues to narratives of individual moral growth, allowing audiences to engage with racial difference without confronting its structural roots. Kim (2020), analyzing two movies depicting Japanese colonial rule *The Age of Shadows* (2016) and *Lust, Caution* (2007) demonstrates that the asymmetric power dynamics between colonizers and colonized consistently give rise to identity issues in which the colonized subject must navigate between mimicry, hybridity, resistance, and conformity as survival strategies within the dominant cultural arena. These study collectively establish that movies however sympathetic their intent remain

ideological sites where the terms of racial inclusion and exclusion are negotiated, often in ways that serve the dominant culture's interests rather than those of the groups they represent. Through this approach, previous studies have successfully revealed how literary works voice issues of injustice, oppression, and demands for social change in society. Thus, the sociological approach has proven to be effective in interpreting the socio-political messages implied in literary works and is relevant as a basis for analysis in this research.

Within this broader context, the construction of otherness in visual and cultural texts has received growing scholarly attention. Said (1978) demonstrates through *Orientalism* how colonial discourse constructed the "Other" as inferior and exotic a discursive legacy that continues to shape contemporary cultural representations. Media frequently relies on binary contrasts such as civilized and primitive to structure cultural hierarchies. Hooks (1992) adds that visual media plays a particularly powerful role in sustaining these dynamics by controlling how marginalized groups are perceived and represented. Together, these studies confirm that otherness is not a natural condition but a structurally produced one manufactured through discourse, sustained through representation, and reproduced through the everyday workings of cultural power.

The application of Bhabha's postcolonial framework to movie analysis has produced a productive body of scholarship on how identity is negotiated through mimicry, hybridity, and ambivalence. Al-Maliki (2025), in a systematic review of transnational cinema scholarship, demonstrates that the practice of transnational cinema encourages cultural hybridity while simultaneously challenging established

national identities confirming that movie functions not merely as entertainment but as a site in which identity is actively constructed, contested, and negotiated across cultural boundaries. While the concept of the Third Space are to show how characters develop new identity formations through negotiation rather than fixed cultural positions. Studies on mimicry in postcolonial movie including Anggraeni's (2022) analysis of *My Name Is Khan*, confirms that mimicry, as theorized by Bhabha, is never a complete replication of dominant cultural norms the colonized subject's imitation is always partial, and it is precisely in this incompleteness that resistance becomes possible, as the gap between imitation and original exposes and subverts the authority of the dominant culture. Khan et al. (2024) argue that hybridity represents the continuous negotiation between indigenous and colonial cultural influences, resulting in fluid identities that simultaneously become sites of resistance and internal conflict. Rather than producing fixed identities, hybridity reflects the dynamic process through which postcolonial subjects negotiate multiple cultural positions. These studies establish that mimicry, hybridity, and ambivalence are not abstract theoretical constructs but observable, analyzable phenomena within specific cinematic texts.

Research on *Green Book* (2018) specifically has generated significant scholarly debate, yet reveals a consistent analytical limitation. Li and Chen (2021) analyzes the movie through Bhabha's postcolonial framework, arguing that it embodies the hybridity of identities through the tension between Shirley's Black identity and his immersion in White cultural spaces, positioning him as a figure who is simultaneously inside and outside the dominant culture. Movie reduces

complex racial dynamics to a story of individual transformation, while other analyses view Shirley's formal speech, classical music repertoire, and dignified comportment as a form of mimicry a calculated effort to secure acceptance within dominant cultural spaces while preserving personal dignity. Hall (2014) further notes that the movie's engagement with the Jim Crow South requires navigating racialized landscapes that were systematically hostile to Black travelers. While these studies offer valuable readings of the movie's racial politics, they consistently concentrate on how identity is represented rather than how it is actively and strategically negotiated by the characters themselves.

Scholarship addressing identity negotiation as a dynamic and strategic process provides important additional groundwork for the present study. McCluney et al. (2019) demonstrate that racial identity negotiation in professional environments is not a single event but a sustained process of code-switching adjusting speech, appearance, and behavior across repeated encounters findings that resonate directly with Dr. Don Shirley's character arc across the *Green Book* narrative. Negotiation in racially stratified environments requires marginalized subjects to continuously recalibrate their public identity in response to dominant cultural gatekeeping, weighing the professional benefits of such adaptation against its accumulating psychological cost. Negotiation in racially stratified environments involves three overlapping phases challenge, breakthrough, and normalization in which marginalized subjects must continuously recalibrate their public identity in response to dominant cultural gatekeeping. Research on Black women in professional contexts further confirms that identity negotiation is a conscious

process of shifting one's cultural behaviors to present a self that is acceptable to dominant others a process that carries significant psychological cost even when it succeeds. Movies function as cultural education, shaping how audiences understand identity and diversity making the negotiation rendered in cinematic texts not merely fictional but socially instructive. These studies collectively confirm that negotiation is not passive or incidental but deeply intentional, strategic, and costly a repertoire of responses developed under conditions of structural inequality.

Based on these findings, a significant gap remains in existing scholarship. While prior studies have identified mimicry, hybridity, and ambivalence as features of texts such as *Green Book* (2018), none have analyzed how these three Bhabha's concepts operate together as an integrated analytical framework for understanding identity negotiation as a dynamic, character-driven process one in which adaptation, resistance, and cultural preservation function simultaneously and in tension rather than as separate, sequential strategies. Existing studies of *Green Book*, moreover, tend to treat identity as something portrayed rather than something practiced focusing on the movie's racial symbolism without examining the specific scenes, dialogues, and character interactions through which negotiation is enacted as a lived process. This study addresses that gap directly, treating *Green Book* (2018) not as a text to be read for its representation of race but as a site in which the negotiation of otherness through Bhabha's framework of mimicry, hybridity, and ambivalence can be systematically identified and analysed.

C. Theoretical Framework

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straightforward imitation but as a complex negotiation strategy in which partial imitation of dominant norms simultaneously enables access and signals resistance. Khan et al. (2024) emphasize that hybridity is not merely the combination of two cultural traditions but a dynamic process of identity negotiation in which postcolonial subjects continuously navigate the tensions between colonial influences and indigenous cultural values. Consequently, hybridity becomes both a space of resistance and a source of internal conflict. These studies establish that mimicry, hybridity, and ambivalence are not abstract theoretical constructs but observable, analyzable phenomena within specific cinematic texts.

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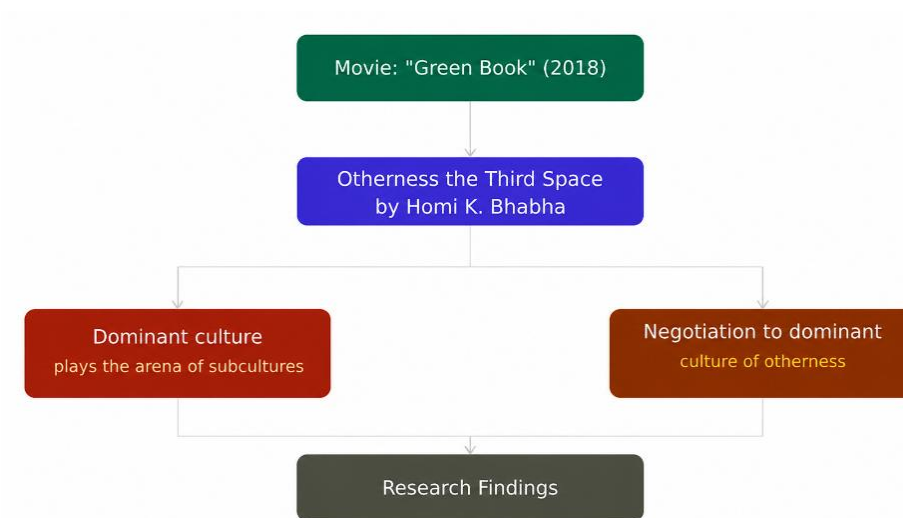


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework of the Study.

The conceptual framework of this study is based on Homi K. Bhabha's theory of Otherness and the Third Space, with the movie *Green Book* (2018) serving as the object of analysis. Accordingly, the analysis focuses on two interconnected dimensions. The first dimension is the dominant culture, which refers to the prevailing social norms, values, and power relations that position certain groups as culturally superior while marginalizing others. The second dimension is the negotiation toward the dominant culture of otherness, which examines the ways in which the characters identified as the "Other" negotiate, challenge, accommodate, or transform these dominant cultural values through their interactions. The relationship between these two dimensions reflects Bhabha's concept of the Third Space, where new meanings and hybrid identities emerge as a result of cultural negotiation. Therefore, this framework guides the analysis in identifying how processes of otherness and cultural negotiation are represented throughout the film, leading to the research findings.