



SCOPE

Journal of English Language Teaching

| p-ISSN 2541-0326 | e-ISSN 2541-0334 |
<https://journal.lppmunindra.ac.id/index.php/SCOPE/>



Research Article

Deconstructing American Stereotypes in The White Lotus Season 2

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KEYWORDS

Stereotypes;
 Critical Discourse Analysis;
 Television Series;
 Asian;
 American.

A B S T R A C T

This study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine American stereotypes portrayed in American television series. Characters from the second season of the acclaimed television series *The White Lotus* are analyzed, with a focus on their physical appearance and personalities. The primary objective is to determine if American media still perpetuates common stereotypes of its people in a recent popular TV show. The research employs descriptive qualitative and descriptive quantitative methodology to provide a thorough analysis. The characters' physical appearance is analyzed based on ethnicity and physical characteristics, while their personalities and sociocultural contexts are analyzed using Norman Fairclough's CDA. The findings reveal a diverse representation of American ethnicity among the characters, although a large proportion of them are portrayed as white. The series' textual analysis shows Americans as sociable, arrogant, open and straightforward. The accurate representation of white characters as wealthy aligns with historical data; however, the increasing wealth among other racial groups highlights the need for broader representation. By addressing these issues, in particular American stereotypes, it will be possible to promote a more accurate, equal and inclusive portrayal of the real American society as media can be extremely important in influencing public opinions and shaping society's perceptions. In conclusion, this research sheds light on the persistence of American stereotypes in American media and highlights the significance of critically analyzing media portrayals to promote more accurate and inclusive portrayals of diverse communities within American society, to erase the stereotypes that have been widely spread around the world.

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INTRODUCTION

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a methodology that examines the utilization of language and communication in society according to Fairclough (2013). Critical discourse analysis has been widely applied in different fields including politics, media studies, gender studies, education, healthcare, and environmental studies. In media studies, critical discourse analysis focuses on films and TV shows, especially concerning essential social topics. Recent studies have used critical discourse analysis

to examine minority and women's representation in movies and TV shows.

A study titled "Deconstructing Concealed Gayness Text in The Film *Negeri van Oranje: Critical Discourse Analysis*" conducted by Setiawan (2018) utilized CDA to examine elements such as the coming out scene, the character's feelings about being gay, and the impact of social aspects in Indonesia on the duration of scenes depicting minority groups, specifically the LGBTQ+ community. Furthermore, Setiawan noted that the use of CDA is considered pivotal in this case to deconstruct the hidden

ideology so that it can be perceived clearly. In a similar vein, Rapo (2021) examined women's representation in the study "Girls on Film: A Critical Discourse Analysis on the Screenplay of Booksmart". Rapo introduced Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) drawing on Feminist media theory by Steiner (2014) and CDA. While CDA examined linguistic choices in the text, discourse, and sociocultural practices, FCDA, building upon CDA, focused specifically on how women were portrayed in the screenplay. The overall finding emphasized that the film achieved realistic depictions of women and girls, ensuring diverse characters that went beyond limiting stereotypes.

However, in the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) studies of major ethnic and racial groups, especially American stereotypes, are limited. As stated by Trebbe et al. (2017), the majority of scholarly research has centered on stereotypes held by majorities about minorities and stereotypes held by various ethnic or racial minority groups toward one another.

According to a study conducted by Hottola (2012), Spanish students concluded that stereotypical depictions of Americans frequently involve a white couple wearing jeans. The male figure is described as being tall and bulky, with short dark hair. The female figure, meanwhile, is depicted with long blonde hair, a rounded face, blue eyes, and an outgoing personality. Additionally, he stated that American media entertainment, as well as more factual news media content, influenced these views. According to Zhu (2016), American characters in Chinese TV series are modern, carefree, and interested in Chinese culture. Using focus groups, Zhu compared Chinese and American stereotypes. The study included undergraduates from two Chinese and US universities. Chinese participants said Americans were independent, sociable, open, arrogant, cold, and distant. The study also found that mass media is not a reliable source for insights on Americans since they provide inaccurate information, such as popular Chinese TV shows that portray Americans positively. In Ito and Bisila's study (2020), Western characters, especially Americans, were portrayed with blond hair, fair skin and blue eyes in Japanese anime.

It raised the question of whether American television's portrayal of Americans is also stereotypical. According to Esslin (2017), American television attracts global audiences. American society and culture may be glorified if Americans are always shown positively. This may prevent critical analysis and comprehension of American diversity and complexity. This study used critical discourse analysis to analyze how an American television series represents Americans to fill the gap in research on American stereotypes in American television. Moreover, it reveals whether an American television series perpetuates stereotypes or accurately portrays American diversity.

This study aims to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the television series "The White Lotus Season 2" through multiple lenses, including textual analysis, discourse practice, sociocultural analysis and assessment of sociocultural implications. Specifically, the objectives are to conduct textual analysis to examine the portrayal of American characters' personalities through vocabulary and grammar analysis, analyze discourse practice to understand the process behind creating the series and its characters, conduct sociocultural analysis to explore the broader societal implications depicted in the series and analyze the sociocultural implications of the findings to assess their relevance and impact on American society. By addressing these objectives, a nuanced understanding of how American stereotypes are portrayed in contemporary media and contribute to discussions on media representation and cultural identity.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative and descriptive quantitative research approach, utilizing Fairclough's critical discourse analysis model to analyze the series. According to Farida (2014), qualitative description emphasizes accurate, complete, and in-depth language descriptions of the real circumstances to support data presentation. The use of descriptive quantitative analysis is then employed in this study as a supplementary method to arrive at an objective result (Harahap, 2020). This methodology would entail an in-depth examination of the verbal dialog and visual scenes depicted in the television series.

The White Lotus Season 2 was viewed primarily through HBO GO. Watching on a legal site guarantees access to a reliable source, adding credibility and authenticity to the findings. In addition, the availability of English subtitles allowed for a comprehensive examination of the linguistic elements, including vocabulary and grammar. The data collection started on May 22, 2023, until July 24, 2023. Multiple online sources, including YouTube, Twitter, Rotten Tomatoes and various online magazines and articles, were used to collect secondary data to support discourse practice and sociocultural analysis in this study.

The data collection technique employed in this study entailed the utilization of observation and note-taking techniques while watching The White Lotus Season 2. As stated by Azwardi (2018), the observation technique involves systematically watching both spoken and written language to gather significant information. This method allows a thorough analysis of the series' scenes, dialogue and English subtitles. Azwardi also emphasized that the observation method used note-taking to examine informants' language usage without direct interaction. In this case, the informants were the series' characters.

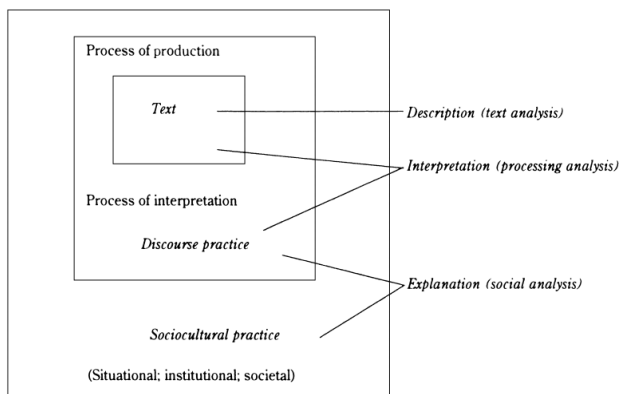


Figure 1. The Three-Dimensional CDA Framework by Norman Fairclough (2013)

As Fairclough's CDA is open to multiple interpretations, there is a modification on how CDA would be applied in this study to align with the objectives of the research (Fairclough, 2013); furthermore, this study also refers to Setiawan's study on how he employed the CDA framework. The text analysis is used to provide an in-depth analysis of how the personalities of the American characters in the series are portrayed, with a focus on vocabulary analysis. Grammar analysis continues to be conducted because it is a component of textual analysis. Then, discourse practice is conducted with only the production aspect in consideration, as the perspectives of people who directly work on the series are necessary for understanding the process behind creating the series and its characters. Due to the fact that the series consists of seven episodes, sociocultural analysis is used to analyze other aspects of the series that correlate with the sociocultural analysis and this study's objectives.

By incorporating the findings of Hottola (2012), Zhu (2016) and Ito and Bisila (2020), this study's foundation has been strengthened with regard to the stereotypes of American physical characteristics and personalities. The physical appearances contain analysis of ethnicity, skin tone, hair color and eye color. The personalities were analyzed using Fairclough's (2013) critical discourse analysis framework. Textual analysis analyzed the characters' personalities, discourse practice analyzed other important aspects and sociocultural analysis examined The White Lotus season 2's sociocultural aspects.

The textual analysis examines the text in detail. Simpson et al. (2019) stated that vocabulary and grammar are all aspects of language. The vocabulary and grammar of the selected dialogues are examined. Fairclough (2013) explained that textual analysis included nonverbal communication like gestures. Nonverbal communication is included in vocabulary analysis. According to Fairclough (2013), the grammatical analysis included transitivity, mood and modality. Discourse practice analysis was the second step. This included investigating the production, distribution and consumption of the show. However, this DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.30998/scope.v8i2.19753>

study only regarded the production aspect as the perspective from the writer and director of the series is essential. Lastly, a sociocultural practice analysis was conducted. Simpson et al. (2019) stated that sociocultural analysis must consider the text's sociocultural implications. The final section analyzed one of the findings and the actuality in America.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The American Characters Physical Appearances in The White Lotus Season 2

The nine main American characters' portrayal in The White Lotus season 2 reveals an effort to represent diverse ethnic backgrounds and physical attributes. The characters, such as Daphne, Cameron, Harper and Ethan embody distinct physical features representative of their Caucasian, Puerto Rican and Asian-American heritages, respectively. Characters like Bert, Dominic and Albie showcase representations of Italian-Americans, incorporating elements such as varying hair colors and aging. The inclusion of Tanya and Portia represents Caucasian characters with different physical attributes, such as hair color and eye color.



Figure 2. American Characters in The White Lotus Season

The American Characters Personalities in The White Lotus Season 2

1. Textual Analysis

The following analysis presents a stereotypical portrayal of Americans through a dialogue that showcases the characters' sociable, arrogant attitude and openness to others. The discovered personalities were based on the findings of Zhu's study.

a. Vocabulary Analysis

1) Sociable

American 1: (1) "Pretend like we never have to go back to America."

Daphne: (2) "Did you **guys** just get here?"

The term "**guys**" is frequently used as an inclusive and informal approach to address a group of individuals. Despite its association with addressing men, the word "**guys**" nowadays refers to anybody and everyone regardless of their gender. In this context, the use of "**guys**" to refer to the two American characters could be interpreted as an attempt to establish an easygoing and friendly atmosphere by ignoring gender-specific language. Daphne's choice to refer to them as "**guys**" suggests a desire to establish familiarity and connection.

American 1: (3) "Yeah, we just flew in this morning."

Daphne: (4) "Oh, I'm so jealous." (5) "We leave in a few hours."

American 2: (6) "So, did you have a good time?"

Daphne: (7) "We had the **best** time." (8) "Have you guys been here before?"

The term "**best**" is utilized to emphasize the unmatched quality of Daphne's experience. It indicates that her experience was not merely enjoyable, but exceptional in terms of enjoyment and satisfaction. While Daphne could have answered the question with the word "**good**," she opted to use "**best**" to emphasize that the experience was incomparable to any other that could have been had.

Americans: (9) "No."

Daphne: (10) "The hotel's **perfect**, and the staff is **excellent**." (11) "The food is **amazing**."

The use of strong adjectives such as "**perfect**," "**excellent**" and "**amazing**" indicates a very favorable evaluation of the hotel, staff and food. These terms convey a high level of approval and admiration. They can also serve as a persuasive language to influence the perceptions of others.

American 2: (12) "We are so excited."

Daphne: (13) "Italy's just so romantic." (14) "**Oh, you're gonna die**." (15) "They're gonna **have to drag** you out of here."

The use of the contraction "**gonna**" in both phrases (14) and (15) suggests a conversational and informal tone. It suggests that Daphne and the two American women shared a casual and friendly environment. The idiomatic expression "**Oh, you're gonna die**" conveys a strong emotional reaction, in this case humorously and

exaggeratedly. It expresses extreme excitement or anticipation as opposed to a literal meaning of death.

The phrase "**have to**" implies that considerable effort would be required to get the two American women to leave. The term "**drag**" implies a struggle or force to remove them. It implies that physical force or authority would be required to force them to depart.

Americans: (16) "Oh, I'm sure."

Daphne: (17) "Well, I'm gonna get in the water one last time." (18) "But... you guys are gonna have such an amazing trip."

According to Collins Dictionary, "sociable is an adjective that describes a person who is friendly or agreeable; affable" (Collins Dictionary, 2023). Daphne exemplifies sociability as this quality was apparent when she took the initiative to engage in a brief and positive interaction with two unfamiliar individuals upon discovering their American origin. During their conversation, Daphne started with "**Did you guys just arrive?**" and employs a friendly and informal tone by addressing the strangers as "**guys**." She asked, "**Have you guys been here before?**" in order to keep the conversation flowing. She responded to the questions posed by the American women with an upbeat tone and a positive demeanor, using words like "**best**," "**perfect**," "**excellent**" and "**amazing**." She added a casual tone with joking responses such as "**Oh, you're gonna die**" and "**They're gonna have to drag you out of here**". Daphne's constant smile reflected her genuine enthusiasm throughout the entire conversation. She concluded the conversation with well-wishes by stating, "**But... you guys are going to have such an incredible trip**." In conclusion, Daphne's friendliness, ability to start and keep a conversation going and kind closing show she is sociable.

2) Arrogance Attitude

Harper: (19) "I don't know, just everything that's going on in the world"

Daphne: (20) "What do you mean?" (21) "What's going on?"

Harper: (22) "Just, like, the end of the world."

Daphne: (23) "**The world's not ending, it's not that bad**." (24) "**Honestly**, Cam and I don't even **watch the news anymore**."

Daphne provides an alternative viewpoint by stating, "**The world's not ending**." It implies that the situation is not as serious as Harper had

previously mentioned. The phrase "**it's not that bad**" suggests that she underestimated the severity of the global situation. It implies that Daphne views the world's problems from a more optimistic perspective and tries to reassure her.

The use of "**Honestly**" at the beginning of the phrase suggests that Daphne is about to share an honest opinion. The expression "**watch the news**" refers explicitly to the visual consumption of news content via television or video platforms. It suggests attentively watching news broadcasts or programs. The word "**anymore**" emphasizes the change in behavior indicating that they previously watched the news but no longer do so.

Cameron: (25) "Yeah"

Ethan: (26) "You don't follow the news?"

Daphne: (27) "No."

Ethan: (28) "What?"

Cameron: (29) "Like, I'm just **so over the whole news cycle**, you know?"

(30) "It's like, **gimme a break.**"

The expression "**so over**" incorporates a wider range of emotions. It suggests not only fatigue but also a feeling of being fed up with the news. "**The whole news cycle**" encompasses the continuous flow of news stories and updates. Cameron conveys being overburdened or exhausted by the repetitive and endless nature of news coverage.

The use of "**gimme**" rather than "**give me**" indicates an informal or slang tone. It contributes to a conversational and informal mode of expression. The phrase "**gimme a break**" by Cameron expresses frustration or irritation. It suggests that he is expressing a desire for a break from the ongoing news cycle.

Daphne: (31) "They're just trying to **freak everybody** out."

In this context, the term "**freak**" functions as a verb. It involves causing or provoking a sharp emotional response, commonly associated with fear and anxiety. Daphne's use of "**freak**" suggests a negative intent towards all individuals, possibly for manipulative purposes. "**Everybody**" refers to every person, particularly those who follow the news.

Cameron: (32) "Yeah, they're just **polarizing society** by **making us glued to their apocalyptic soap opera**, you know?"

The expression "**polarizing society**" implies that news is causing a division within society. It implies that the entire news cycle contributes to the formation of ideologies, resulting in increased disagreement between individuals. "**Glued**" implies that it attracts and retains people's attention. The phrase "**making us glued**" conveys the idea that people are becoming engrossed or captivated by "**their apocalyptic soap opera**" in this case. This expression is a metaphor for the news situation. Cameron implies that the news portrays a catastrophic or devastating situation in a melodramatic and exaggerated manner, causing alarm or concern.

Daphne: (33) "Yeah. And **even if it was as bad as they say it is**, I mean **what can you really do, you know?**" (34) "**We vote, we donate money.**" (35) "**You can't obsess**"

The phrase "**even if it was as bad as they say it is**" suggests that Daphne has doubts about the extent or accuracy of the information presented by the news. She suggests that the situation may not be as dire as it appears. "**What can you really do, you know?**" demonstrates a skepticism regarding the efficacy of prospective actions. The news, in Daphne's opinion, exaggerates or sensationalizes the world's problems, leading her to doubt the need for significant concern or action.

The verb "**vote**" refers to the act of participating in an election by voting for a candidate or choice. The phrase "**We vote, we donate money**" highlights Daphne's belief in the significance of civic engagement. It suggests that participating in the democratic process by voting and making donations of money is already sufficient enough for addressing societal issues. In reality, someone as wealthy as Daphne and Cameron could do much more. Those with substantial financial resources have a greater capacity to influence change, such as actively advocating for systemic changes, utilizing their platforms to raise awareness or investing directly in projects that address societal issues.

The statement "**You can't obsess**" presents a counterargument to those who actively seek to improve the world. Daphne implies that while taking action is essential, maintaining a balanced perspective and avoiding becoming excessively consumed with or fixated on the world's problems is also crucial.

Cameron: (36) "Did you vote, babe? Be honest."

Daphne: (37) "I did"

Cameron: (38) “Doesn’t matter”

The words **"doesn't matter"** imply that Cameron maintains his previous stance that the topic under discussion is unimportant. He disregarded the significance of voting, implying that he does not care whether Daphne votes or not.

Daphne: (39) “I voted. Didn’t I?”

Merriam-Webster (2023) defines arrogance as an offensive attitude of superiority, exaggerated self-worth and contempt for those perceived as inferior. Daphne and Cameron exhibited arrogance throughout the entirety of the following conversation. Initially, Daphne's dismissive hand sway supported her statement, **"Honestly, Cam and I don't even watch the news anymore,"** setting the tone for their arrogance shortly after she said, **"The world's not ending, it's not that bad."** They went on to express their disgust for the news cycle, stating that they were **"so over"** it and disregarding it with phrases such as **"gimme a break"** with Cameron rolling his eyes and the news is trying to **"freak everybody."** Their criticism of the media implied a belief that it **"polarizes society"** by **"making us glued"** to what they perceived to be an **"apocalyptic soap opera"**. It became evident that their indifference came from a sense of privilege and detachment, despite the fact that at first, it appeared to come from ignorance. This perspective was exemplified by Daphne's remark, **"even if it was as bad as they say, what can you really do, you know?"** and Cameron emphasized his arrogance by rolling his eyes and making a sarcastic open-palm gesture. Their proposed contributions with **"we vote, we donate money"**, betray a disregard for proactive action and they view those doing more than them as obsessive with the comment **"you can't obsess."** Moreover, when Daphne forgot whether she had voted, Cameron responded apathetically, **"doesn't matter,"** while chuckling. In conclusion, Daphne and Cameron's dismissive hand motions, sarcastic expressions and dismissive statements showed arrogance.

3) Openness to Others

Albie: (40) “My dad, uh, has **cheated on my mom a lot.**”

The verb **"cheated"** suggests that he engaged in infidelity, signifying an act of betrayal in the context of marriage. **"On my mom"** indicates the individual who was the victim of the father's infidelity. The phrase **"a lot"** intensifies the frequency of Dominic infidelity, insinuating that it happened multiple times.

Portia: (41) “Mm-hmm.”

Albie: (42) “And he **just got caught again.**”

"just" implies that the deed of being caught occurred recently. The phrase **"got caught"** implies that his dad has discovered cheating **"again"**.

According to Longman Dictionary (2023), openness is the characteristic of being truthful and willing to discuss a variety of topics. In the following dialogue, Albie exemplified this personality. The scene took place during a dinner between Albie and Portia, during which Albie revealed personal information about his family to Portia only one day after their first encounter. Albie confessed openly that his father had a history of infidelity, stating that he had **"cheated on my mom a lot"** and **"just got caught again."** Despite the sensitivity of the topic, Albie conveyed his story with a neutral expression and multiple nods. In conclusion, Albie's openness revealed that he was comfortable talking about his life, even the serious stuff, which fostered honesty and meaningful conversation.

b. Grammar Analysis

The scope of grammar analysis includes multiple aspects. This study analyzes the transitivity, mood and modality grammar of selected dialogues by Fairclough's CDA (2013).

1) Transitivity

According to Crystal (2023), transitivity is a grammatical category used to examine the structures of clauses and sentences, specifically the relationship between the verb and its dependent elements. This classification includes transitive and intransitive verbs. Transitive verbs possess the ability to take a direct object, which is essential for conveying their complete meaning. On the other hand, intransitive verbs do not require a direct object to convey their full meaning; they often express emotions or describe conditions. Based on the aforementioned dialogues used for vocabulary analysis, it can be discovered that there are a total of 16 transitive and 15 intransitive verbs.

Table 1. Transitivity Analysis

Transitivity	Number of Sentences
Transitive Verbs	(6) (7) (15) (17) (18) (19) (20) (24) (26) (30) (31) (32) (34) (36) (40) (42)
Intransitive Verbs	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (10) (11) (12) (13) (14) (21) (23) (35) (38) (39)

2) Mood

According to Crystal (2023), various verb tenses, including indicative, subjunctive, and imperative, are used to denote mood. Crystal offers comprehensive definitions for each of these moods. The indicative mood includes the verb forms and sentence structures used to express declarative and interrogative statements, conveying facts, statements or opinions presented as real or actual events. In contrast to the indicative, the subjunctive mood includes the verb forms and sentence structures used to express various subordinate clauses, which are characterized by uncertainty and ambiguity. While Imperative mood consists of verb forms and sentence structures that are typically used to convey commands or instructions. Based on the preceding dialogues used for vocabulary analysis, it can be discovered that there is a collective of 35 sentences exhibiting indicative moods and one imperative mood.

Table 2. Mood Analysis

Mood	Number of Sentences
Indicative	(2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (10) (11) (12) (13) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (19) (20) (21) (22) (23) (24) (26) (29) (30) (31) (32) (33) (34) (35) (37) (38) (39) (40) (42)
Imperative	(36)

3) Modality

According to Crystal (2023), modality is a term used in grammatical analysis to denote differences in mood indicated by the verb. These modalities are conveyed predominantly by a particular group of auxiliary verbs, including may, will and can. The subsequent analysis presents one sentence utilizing modality grammar.

Table 3. Mood Analysis

Modality	Number of Sentence
	(35)

2. Discourse Practice

Mike White, The White Lotus' writer and director, has overseen the show's creative direction since season one. White (2022) called the show a realistic satire of wealthy people. The program's goal in his interview with Katie Couric is to reveal private topics that are usually discussed behind closed doors. Avoiding simple communication, the interactions are complex and surprising. In The White Lotus season 2, characters discuss sexual themes, illustrating the purpose of discussing private topics. In a family dinner scene, Albie asked Bert about his sexual

function. Harper, Ethan, Cameron and Daphne also discussed their college sexual experiences. The unpredictable and multilayered moments were seen in the pilot episode when Daphne, said, "**You're gonna die. They gonna have to drag you out of here,**" and shortly after she said these lines, she found a deceased individual in the water required the help of authorities to recover.

In discussing The White Lotus's characters, White used Portia as a narrative device to explore her perception of Tanya's negative character traits, imagining that if Portia had Tanya's traits, she would be more organized and able to navigate her life better than Tanya. In the first season, Tanya was unpredictable and inconsistent, challenging the stereotype of women as victims or saviors. Like Tanya, Portia feels lost. Portia, as a representative of Generation Z, is portrayed as unsure of her direction and without specific goals for navigating a process of self-discovery. White was inspired by the younger generation's bravery to experiment with new identities.

Mike White expected Harper to be viewed like Aubrey Plaza. Aubrey Plaza is known for her distinctive combination of sarcasm, dry humor, monotone delivery and captivating on-screen presence. Her fresh, genuine demeanor has earned lovers and critics. Harper revealed more vulnerability as the story went on, suggesting her hard façade was a mask. White paid particular attention to the theme of relationship dynamics, with the example of how Harper kept comparing her own relationship with Ethan to the dynamic between Cameron and Daphne. Harper has criticized Cameron and Daphne since the first episode, calling them fake. As expected, Cameron and Daphne's marriage is not as romantic as it seems. Ethan and Cameron, who worked in technology and finance, represented new money. In the end, Ethan discovered that Cameron invited him on vacation because he wanted Ethan to participate in insider trading and invest in his company, considering Ethan had just sold his company for millions of dollars. White recognized these interpersonal dynamics from living in a neighborhood with attorneys, banking experts and entertainment business professionals.

The Di Grasso family—Bert, Dominic, and Albie—illustrates male sexuality, desire, and relationships with women. These characters reflect different generations as they handle modern relationships, sex, and women. Di Grasso's men regard women very differently. Bert, the grandfather, often sexualizes women and engages in flirtatious behavior by addressing them as darling. In contrast, Albie, the grandson, adopts a different approach. He respects women and understands the significance of consent.

The Sociocultural Aspect of The White Lotus Season 2

The portrayal of American characters in *The White Lotus* season 2 based on the textual and discourse practice revealed that the series continues to uphold the stereotypes of Americans. The characters are predominantly featuring white wealthy individuals, reflecting the historical trend of white households consistently holding a substantial majority of household wealth in the United States. As outlined by USAFacts (2020) data, over three decades, white household ownership of wealth declined marginally from 90.7% in 1990 to 85.5% in 2019, with slight increases observed among Black and Hispanic households. Despite this, USAFacts (2020) reveals the average net worth per capita remains significantly higher for white Americans (\$437,000) compared to Black (\$105,000) and Hispanic (\$53,000) individuals. However, US Census Bureau (2022) indicates higher median incomes for Asian (\$101,418) and white-headed (\$77,999) households compared to Hispanic (\$57,981) and Black-headed (\$48,297) households. While the accurate representation of white characters as wealthy aligns with historical data, the increasing wealth among other racial groups highlights the need for broader representation in portrayals of affluence. The limited representation of characters of color in positions of affluence within the storyline perpetuates certain stereotypes and narratives. It can reinforce the idea that success, luxury and wealth are primarily associated with whiteness.

Discussion

The primary objective of this study is to determine whether or not American television series continue to apply common stereotypes or more accurately reflect the diversity of American people and life. The analysis included an examination of the physical appearances and personalities of the American characters in *The White Lotus* season 2. Based on an analysis of their physical appearances, the ethnicity of the American characters in *The White Lotus* season 2 is quite diverse. However, eight out of ten characters are white, including Italian-Americans, who in America are also considered white. Daphne's white skin, blue eyes and blonde hair correspond with the findings of Berg (1990), Hottola (2012) and Ito & Bisila (2020) studies. Cameron and Daphne share the same characteristics as the stereotypical American couple, as characterized by the research findings of Hottola's study.

The personalities of the American characters in the series correspond to Zhu (2016) research. The series vocabulary analysis revealed Americans as sociable, arrogant and open. Daphne, who is sociable, was observed striking up a discussion on the beach with two strangers. Cameron and Daphne exhibited a sense of arrogance when they confessed that they no longer followed the news and made negative comments about it. Albie's revelation of his familial issues to Portia, even though they had only met the

day before, exemplified the openness of the American people. He disclosed that his father is a serial cheater, which in Asia, such as Indonesia, is considered a very private matter that only trusted and close individuals would know.

Fairclough's *Critical Discourse Analysis* (2013) divides grammatical analysis into transitivity, mood and modality. Crystal (2023) explained that there are two categories of transitivity, transitive and intransitive verbs, as well as three moods, indicative, imperative and subjunctive. While modality is shown by a certain group of auxiliary verbs, such as *may*, *will* and *can*. American characters in *The White Lotus* season 2 employ the same amount of transitive and intransitive grammar. In the dialogues used to analyze their personalities, 16 transitive and 15 intransitive words were identified. According to Fairclough's (1992) grammar analysis which correlates with Halliday's grammar theory, more use of transitive verbs expresses more directed action processes (Matthiessen & Halliday, 2014). The analysis of mood grammar reveals that there are 35 indicative moods and one imperative mood. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), the majority of use of indicative mood rather than subjunctive or imperative indicated giving information or raising questions in a straightforward manner rather than with an irrealis sense (hypothetical or unreal situations) or requesting goods and services. Therefore, American characters are direct when providing or requesting information. Furthermore, they also rarely used modality in their conversation, with only one example found. Based on Halliday and Matthiessen, the modality analysis indicates that Daphne's confident personality is evident in her use of "can't" to convey high probability in her statement.

The production aspect of discourse practice revealed that White (2022), the show's creator and director, intended to give a voice to a wide range of individuals through the series. The program enables viewers to observe private moments in which the individuals' public personas play no role. White drew inspiration from the individuals and events around him to create the series. The sociocultural perspective of the series acknowledges the historical accuracy of portraying the majority of American characters as wealthy and white. However, given the increasing affluence among Asian, Hispanic and Black communities, there is a rightful demand for greater representation that reflects this evolving diversity.

The use of Fairclough's CDA three-dimensional model facilitates a structured and systematic analysis. This method allows for a step-by-step analysis, starting from specific elements and gradually expanding to a broader context. Following the model, this study analysis begins with individual characters, followed by their spoken

dialogues for textual analysis, exploring the perspectives of the show's creators for discourse practice, and finally, the overall show theme for sociocultural analysis. The sociocultural analysis was intended to focus on one of the characters, Portia. Portia, an American Generation Z, took the viewers' attention and became viral because of her personality and fashion choices. Despite the potential depth of sociocultural insights offered by Portia, the rule of Fairclough's CDA three-dimensional model prevents sociocultural analysis from focusing solely on one character.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that the ethnicity of the American characters in *The White Lotus* season 2 is quite diverse in ethnicity with five Americans, one Puerto Rican American, one Asian American and three Italian Americans. However, the majority of the characters are white races. Daphne's blonde hair, white complexion, and blue eyes are the epitome of American stereotypes. Cameron and Daphne resemble the classic American couple. The personalities of the American characters through textual analysis of the selected dialogues showed that American characters are still stereotyped as sociable, arrogant, open and straightforward. The discourse practice disclosed that Mike White intends to represent numerous individuals and reveal private moments in which the public personas played no role. White drew inspiration from the people around him. Moreover, the results of the sociocultural of the series acknowledge the historical accuracy of portraying the majority of American characters as wealthy and white. However, given the increasing affluence among Asian, Hispanic and Black communities, there is a rightful demand for greater representation that reflects this evolving diversity.

The study's findings have provided insight into how Americans are portrayed in *The White Lotus* season 2. The show's portrayal of the physical appearances, personalities and sociocultural through CDA has shown the persistence of American stereotypical depictions in the world's largest and most influential media, the American media. By addressing these issues, it will be possible to promote a more accurate, equal and inclusive portrayal of the real American society as media can be extremely important in influencing public opinions and shaping society's perceptions. Hence, the study's findings draw attention to the persistent existence of American stereotypes in media and highlight the importance of analyzing media portrayals. These studies are crucial for promoting more realistic and inclusive depictions of diverse communities within American society, to erase the stereotypes that have been widely spread around the world.

Throughout the research process, limitations and constraints have been acknowledged. Firstly, there is a limited time and recent studies available for conducting this research. Additionally, without American residency or firsthand experience in the United States, the understanding of American stereotypes and the real conditions in America is solely reliant on relevant studies, reputable news sources and insights from locals on social media.

This study can be utilized as a reference for future researchers interested in employing CDA, particularly in the context of American stereotypes as portrayed in American media. Alternatively, other aspects of the series, such as the dynamics of relationships among American characters or language analysis based on gender and background.

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