

Social Practices in the Hunger Games: Mockingjay Movies

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ABSTRACT: *This article specifically explores social practices in The Hunger Games: Mockingjay movies by utilizing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The study draws on both primary and secondary data. The primary data was derived from The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1 and Part 2. Conversely, the secondary data include the Mockingjay novel and relevant scholarly sources including scientific articles. The data collection was done through documentation and observation methods. Then the collected data was analyzed using van Dijk's (2015) CDA through content analysis. The informal method was applied to present the data analysis. The finding revealed that the discourse structures operated across three text dimensions: macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure. From those three dimensions, this article highlighted how the use of language serves to construct and reflect underlying social practice. Moreover, the analysis identified three key social practices depicted in the movies: power dynamics, revolutionary movement, and the tension between collective and personal agenda and interest.*

KEYWORDS—*Critical Discourse Analysis, Discourse, Discourse Structure, Power, Social Practices.*

I. INTRODUCTION

According to van Dijk (2015), social practices encompass structured, socially shared activities involving communication, interaction, and behavioral patterns that are both influenced by and embedded within broader social structures, ideologies, and power dynamics. In this context, discourse both shapes and is shaped by social practices, illustrating the interaction between language and society. As one of the key focuses of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) study, social practices offer valuable insights into how language operates within a wider social context. Through CDA, we will have the capacity to apprehend how language can be used to abuse or maintain power and empower people to critique what they are told and why. Various forms of discourse – including newspaper articles, political speeches, advertisements, social media content, song lyrics, and literary works such as novels and movies – lend themselves to CDA.

Mass communication serves as a platform for transmitting and receiving various types of information, with movies being one of its most widely consumed forms. A movie offers an alternative medium for both delivering information and education, offering a more engaging option compared to traditional news and text, which are often perceived as outdated and monotonous. For instance, The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, is one of many literary works that powerfully portrays social practice in the realm of societal topics including politics, propaganda, gender, poverty, and oppressive governments. Once a novel, this literary work was considered successful and was given the same title when it was adapted to the screen but divided into two parts of movies. The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1 (2014) and The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2 (2015). These movies serve as ideal data sources as they provide compelling depictions of social practices, power dynamics, and resistance, all of which are bolstered by the actions and language use of the characters.

Extensive research has been conducted within the realm of CDA. For instance, Li and Zhang (2019) applied Fairclough's (1995) CDA framework alongside Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG)

to examine Trump and May's political speeches at the United Nations (UN). This article's mixed-methods research approach showed that to accomplish interpersonal goals that support their political objectives, both Trump and May mostly utilized medium-value modal operators. Additionally, both of them used a few pronouns that serve to define power dynamics and promote diversity.

A distinct approach to CDA was taken by Peng, Wu, and Chen (2024), who focused on Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) by Lazar (2017), which has its roots in Fairclough's Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA) to CDA (2013). This qualitative research aimed to analyze the gendered discursive practice of male Chinese sports fans concerning elite sportswomen during the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. Specifically, it investigates how these fans sexualize sportswomen and trivialize their accomplishments. The result revealed that male fans' referential and prediction techniques objectified Zhang Yufei's physical appearance. The negative comments questioned her athletic physique and reflected patriarchal beliefs that impede women's accomplishments. However, prejudices regarding women's inadequacy in sports were reinforced by the frequent comparisons made between male football players.

Yu, Lu, and Hu (2021) conducted mixed-method research which aimed to examine the linguistic differences in news media reporting on the COVID-19 pandemic in China and the UK. This research was grounded in Fairclough's CDA (1995). The finding indicated that China Daily tended to use more neutral and objective language, which focused on cooperation and sharing experiences of pandemic control. On the other hand, The Guardian used more negative and conflict-driven terms, particularly before the UK's lockdown, emphasizing social conflict and criticism of the government's pandemic response. In addition, the linguistic choices were influenced by each country's distinct sociopolitical ideology, in which Chinese media discourse focused on unity and national cooperation (collectivist ideologies), whereas the UK media highlighted individual freedom and criticism (liberal ideology).

These prior researches collectively contribute and have some relevance to this current research, such as giving a comprehensive exploration of the application of CDA in various contexts. However, those earlier research scopes remain limited to the lack of bridging between the role of language in shaping the discourse and the wider application of CDA (macro). In addition, none of the antecedent research has addressed CDA, which delves extensively into certain social practices. Therefore, this gap underscores the urgency of this present study, which aims to explore social practices in literary work, particularly in *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay* movies.

II. CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

This article is rooted in van Dijk's (2015) CDA. van Dijk et al. (2015, 466) explain that CDA is discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. This theory focuses on the relationship between discourse, cognition, and social context. Below is the CDA model by van Dijk.

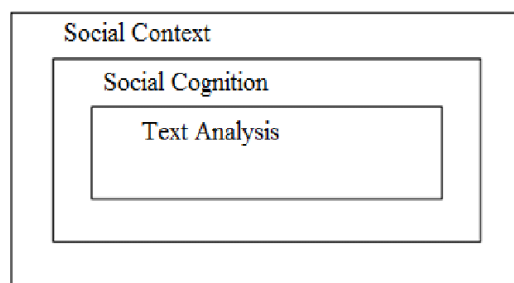


Figure1. CDA Model by van Dijk.

From the figure above, van Dijk elaborates more on the text analysis into three text dimensions: macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure. Macrostructure refers to a discourse's overall meaning or thematic organization. Furthermore, this structure is concerned with broader topics, themes, and main ideas that are conveyed. Superstructures, conversely, describe the format or schematic organization of different types of

discourse. This comprises, for instance, a headline, lead paragraph, body, and conclusion. Microstructure deals with linguistic elements within the discourse, such as semantics, syntax, stylistics, and rhetorics.

Social cognition serves as the essential interface that connects discourse as language use and social interaction within social situations and social structures. This refers to the collective knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and ideologies of the individuals that impact the production and comprehension of a discourse. Dimension of social practice pertains to various strata of social organization, encompassing specific situations, situational contexts, and broader social or group contexts. Discourse is conceptualized as an integral component of the broader discursive formations in society. Therefore, research must include an intertextual analysis to investigate how discourse on certain issues is created within the social context.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Data

The data utilized in this article are qualitative, derived from *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1* and *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2* movies. The story was set in Panem, a dystopian nation in North America consisting of a wealthy and authoritarian Capitol and 13 districts. Historically, these districts engaged in multiple uprisings against the Capitol under the authoritarian rule of President Coriolanus Snow. But, since District 13 specialized in nuclear power, the Capitol surrendered and agreed to make a peace agreement. On the other side, every year, the other 12 Districts must select two candidates, a boy and a girl at the maximum age of adult teenagers via lottery to participate in a compulsory televised battle royal deathmatch called *The Hunger Games* until only one candidate survives and declared as a winner. Katniss Everdeen, did another way round after she won her first *Hunger Games* (the 74th *Hunger Games*) by destroying the arena during the 75th *Hunger Games* (the *Quarter Quell*) and was rescued underground to District 13 and met President Alma Coin, the leader of the district. Recognizing her influence, Coin sought to position Katniss as the face of rebellion, or “*The Mockingjay*” against the Capitol. This aimed to witness the fall of the Capitol’s and Snow’s authoritarian rule and to replace it with a new era of Panem under Coin’s presidency.

These movies provide complex and multidimensional data sources. This richness aids in the analysis of both linguistics and cinematic techniques that depict social practices in a discourse. By illustrating complex social and political issues in a style that appeals to the audiences, these movies have the potential to bridge the gap between scholarly and public understanding.

3.2 Analytical Approach

This article highlights a qualitative research design, with a particular emphasis on phenomenological qualitative. Creswell (2022, 61) defines the phenomena as the exploration of the human experience of a concept. Human experiences with these concepts can be realized through language beforehand. The data collection was conducted through observation and documentation methods. The analytical process began with an in-depth viewing of *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay* movies on Netflix to gain a comprehensive understanding of the stories. Subsequently, the English subtitles were transcribed to collect the data utilizing note-taking and recording techniques. Cross-referencing was carried out to ensure accuracy and completeness by contrasting the movie scenes with the subtitles. The notes that were collected in the earlier steps were thematically categorized into categories such as structures and social practice. The content analysis method was used to analyze the data. The CDA theory by van Dijk (2015) was applied to identify the obtained data. This step began with identifying and classifying the data that indicates structure and social practice. The data reduction was done in the next step to focus on the most relevant examples of structure and social practice. The triangulation technique was applied to enhance the research’s validity and reliability. Lastly, the result of data analysis was presented using an informal method (descriptively).

IV. RESULT & DISCUSSION

4.1 Result

[4-1]

[00:05:00 – 00:07:25]

Plutarch: There she is. Our Girl on Fire. Madam President, may I present you with The Mockingjay.

President Coin: What an honor it is to meet you. You're a courageous young woman. I know how disorienting this must be. And I can't imagine what it's like to live through the atrocities of those Games.

Plutarch: Katniss, President Alma Coin.

President Alma Coin: Please know how welcome you are. I hope you'll find some comfort with us. We've known loss in 13, too.

Plutarch: This is history. Right here at this table.

President Coin: I apologize. I wish you had more time to recover, but unfortunately, we don't have that luxury. Please, have a seat. Are you aware of what's happened? When you fired your arrow at the force field you electrified the nation. There have been riots and uprisings and strikes in seven districts. We believe that if we keep this energy going, we can unify the districts against the Capitol. If we don't, if we let it dissipate, we could be waiting another 75 years for this opportunity. Everyone in 13 is ready for this.

Katniss: What about Peeta? Is he alive

Plutarch: I don't know. And I wish that I did. But there's no way for me to contact my operatives inside the Capitol.

Beetee: The Capitol has always suppressed communication between the districts. But I know their system very well. I managed to break through. All we need now is the perfect message.

Plutarch: Katniss, here's what we need to do. We need to show them that the Mockingjay's alive and well and willing to stand up and join this fight. 'Cause we need every district to stand up to this Capitol. The way you did. So we're gonna shoot a series of propaganda clips, propos, I like to call them, on The Mockingjay. Spreads the word that we're gonna stoke the fire of this rebellion. The fire that The Mockingjay started.

Katniss: You left him there. You left Peeta in that arena to die.

Plutarch: Katniss, there are so many...

Katniss: Peeta was the one who was supposed to live.

President Coin: Miss Everdeen. This revolution is about everyone. It's about all of us. And we need a voice.

Katniss: Then you should've saved Peeta.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Discourse Structure

Discourse structure encompasses three levels of analysis: macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure. The analysis of discourse structure in The Hunger Games Mockingjay movies is presented as follows:

4.2.1.1 Macrostructure

Macrostructure is a discourse's overall meaning or thematic organization. Moreover, it pertains to the broader topics, themes, and ideas expressed in a discourse. From the scene above, the central theme revolves around the strategic planning of the rebellion movement against the Capitol which President Alma Coin initiates with the assistance of the Capitol's former Gamemaker, Plutarch Heavensbee, and later focuses shifts to Katniss Everdeen's role as the

symbol of rebellion, ‘The Mockingjay’, which aims to inspire the districts through propaganda clips.

4.2.1.2 Superstructure

Superstructure pertains to the schematic structure of discourse. Based on the macrostructure earlier, it can be formulated that the discourse began with Plutarch introducing Katniss to President Coin intending to establish familiarity before executing the rebellion agenda. Coin explained that what Katniss did in the arena was profoundly influential and electrified the nation. As a result, this urged the necessity of quick action. The discourse type was formal because it showed a persuasive dialogue aimed at executing certain social practices (rebellion). The brief introduction then referred to the proposal where Plutarch and Coin planned to create *propos* using Katniss as a symbol of unity and the central figure of the rebellion, ‘The Mockingjay’. However, the conflict immediately started when Katniss resisted because she pointed out Peeta’s abandonment by the leaders and how his safety was threatened, and this created tension between her personal concerns and Coin’s collective goal for revolution. The discourse reaches a resolution when Coin attempts to reframe the discussion, emphasizing the collective necessity of the revolution over individual interest, though Katniss remains steadfast in her refusal to comply.

4.2.1.3 Microstructure

The analysis of microstructure is presented in the table below:

Observed Matters	Elements	Example from Dialogue	Analysis
Semantics	Background, details	Plutarch: There she is. Our Girl on Fire. Madam President, may I present you with The Mockingjay.	The phrase ‘ Our Girl on Fire ’ underscores Katniss’ symbolic role as the icon of rebellion, while ‘ The Mockingjay ’ directly connects her to the revolution’s narrative and ideology.
Syntax	Sentence structure	<p>President Coin: I apologize. I wish you had more time to recover, but unfortunately, we don’t have that luxury. Please, have a seat. Are you aware of what’s happened? When you fired your arrow at the force field you electrified the nation. There have been riots and uprisings and strikes in seven districts. We believe that if we keep this energy going, we can unify the districts against the Capitol. But if we don’t, if we let it dissipate, we could be waiting another 75 years for this opportunity. Everyone in 13 is ready for this.</p> <p>Katniss: What about Peeta? Is he alive?</p> <p>Plutarch: Katniss, here’s what we need to do. We need to show them that the Mockingjay’s alive and well and willing to stand up and join this fight. ‘Cause we need every district to stand up to this Capitol. The</p>	<p>President Coin’s speech exhibits a formal, polite, yet complex structure, with an underlying tone of persuasion. She mostly utilized complex sentences to link one idea to another. For example, she started a brief and polite introduction and linked it to what Katniss did in the Quarter Quell and how it affected the districts. She somehow aggressively wanted to rush to her main agenda of rebellion and to put Katniss as the icon of it.</p> <p>Katniss, on the other hand, is concise and directly addressed to her personal interest, which is Peeta’s safety. She emphasized that the one who was supposed to live and deserved to be the icon of rebellion was Peeta.</p> <p>Whereas, Plutarch’s sentences are</p>

		<p>way you did. So we're gonna shoot a series of propaganda clips, propos, I like to call them, on The Mockingjay. Spreads the word that we're gonna stoke the fire of this rebellion. The fire that The Mockingjay started.</p>	<p>mostly declarative and practical. He was there to help Coin to achieve the rebellion's act. Moreover, it was his job to explain how the propaganda would be executed.</p>
Stylistics	Word choice	<p>Plutarch: Our Girl on Fire</p> <p>President Coin: And I can't imagine what it's like to live through the atrocities of those Games.</p> <p>Katniss: You left him there. You left Peeta in that arena to die.</p> <p>President Coin: This revolution is about everyone. It's about all of us. And we need a voice.</p>	<p>The possessive pronoun 'Our' in Plutarch's statement, signifies that Katniss, as 'The Mockingjay', is a collective symbol belonging to the people rather than an individual acting solely for herself.</p> <p>President Coin strategically frames The Hunger Games as evidence of the Capitol's cruelty through the phrase 'the atrocities of those Games.' This created a polarization between Capitol and Coin's regime. Capitol's regime was characterized as brutal and oppressive, whereas Coin positions herself as a leader embodying purity and socialist ideals.</p> <p>The words 'left' and 'to die' in Katniss' statement convey that Coin and Plutarch were evil because they did not save Peeta from the arena. From these word choices, it can be seen that Katniss' interest is only for her own unlike Coin and Plutarch's.</p> <p>The words 'everyone', 'us', and 'we' in Coin's statement indicate that her interest was for the collective purpose of serving and providing security for the people.</p>
Rhetorics	Graphic, metaphor	<p>Plutarch: There she is. Our Girl on Fire. Madam President, may I present you with The Mockingjay.</p> <p>President Coin: Miss Everdeen. This revolution is about everyone. It's about all of us. And we need a voice.</p>	<p>The metaphor 'Our Girl on Fire' symbolizes Katniss' role as the icon of revolution. This also shows her defiance and resilience in spreading the rebellion she inspires.</p> <p>President Coin's statement includes rhetorical strategies that aim to persuade Katniss to agree to be the face of the rebellion. She emotionally emphasized</p>

			the usage of <i>pathos</i> in her statement by saying that the revolution is about everyone and not only for individual interests. President Coin did a repetition in the words ‘everyone’, ‘us’, and ‘we’, which have the same meaning and refer to one goal, which is the collective goal of revolution.
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Table 1: Microstructure Analysis

4.2.2 Social Practice

Three types of social practices are found in this scene, namely power dynamics, revolutionary movement, and collective versus individual interest and agenda.

4.2.2.1 Power Dynamics

President Coin and Plutarch represented the authority and leadership in rebellion, while Katniss played the role of the face of the rebellion, or ‘The Mockingjay’. She is also an emotionally driven figure, who is being manipulated for her symbolic value. In addition, from the scene above, President Coin and Plutarch utilized language to put Katniss for their propaganda and revolutionary agenda which reflects an unequal power relationship where the political leaders aim to control Katniss’ role and manipulate her emotions for the collective goals. Moreover, Coin was repetitive by emphasizing ‘everyone’ and ‘revolution’ to represent her collectivist ideology which dismissed Katniss’ loss and anger in favor of a grand political goal.

4.2.2.2 Revolutionary Movement

Secondly, President Coin and Plutarch's discussion of creating propaganda clips or *propo*s reflected social practice. They emphasized the urgency of this act, asserting that the nation requires a revolution against the Capitol and that Katniss, as The Mockingjay, is essential to achieving this goal. In realizing this, Plutarch highlights the strategic role of media and symbolism in the revolution, positioning them as central tools for shaping social practice. This approach not only seeks to control the narrative but also to manipulate public emotions across the districts, reinforcing the leaders’ ability to mobilize support for the rebellion.

4.2.2.3 Collective versus Individual Interest and Agenda

Third, the tension between collective action and individual sacrifice is evident in this scene. Katniss must deal with her personal loss of Peeta and the anger towards President Coin and Plutarch, while at the same time, she must become a pillar of rebellion to end Snow’s tyrannical and authoritarian governance. On the other hand, President Coin and Plutarch focused on collective goals, framing the revolution as something that involves everyone, and for everyone. This focus was on unity, strategy, propaganda, and revolution which aligns with the social practice of political leadership in a revolutionary context. They framed the rebellion and the people as a collective effort, by using strategic language to appeal to Katniss and the masses and build a sense of inclusivity. Meanwhile, Katniss’ response highlights the tension between individual and collective social practices, as she resists sacrificing personal concerns for the broader revolutionary agenda.

V. CONCLUSION

To conclude, this article presents an analysis of social practices. The analysis was rooted in van Dijk’s (2015) CDA theory which is further divided into two practical analyses, namely: discourse structures, including

macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure; and social practices. The macrostructure discovered the topic of the discourse which is the strategic planning of the rebellion movement against the Capitol which President Coin and Plutarch initiated and later focusing on Katniss' role as the symbol of rebellion, 'The Mockingjay', which aims to inspire the districts through propaganda clips. The superstructures delved deeper into how the discourse is systematically organized, which is further delivered into several layers of analysis namely the introduction between President Coin and Katniss, the description of the action plan and revolution, conflict, and resolution. Seek a deeper analysis such as semantics, syntax, stylistics, and rhetorics. The microstructures discovered that the role of language plays a huge role in shaping and is shaped by social practices.

Whereas the analysis of social practice was divided into three layers of analysis, namely power dynamics, revolutionary acts or movements, and collective versus individual states. This involved the strategic use of language to manipulate emotions and show a sense of inclusivity. The power dynamics were clearly shown by the authorities of President Coin and Plutarch and their aim for a collective goal which is a revolutionary act. On the other hand, Katniss was the one who was suppressed and emotionally manipulated. However, the discourse also showed a contrast states between collective and individual interests. Katniss tended to show her personal interest while President Coin and Plutarch highlighted a sense of inclusivity and collective goals.

This article sheds light on how discourse shapes social practice, particularly through the lens of CDA in fictional media. By applying CDA, it explores how language serves as both a tool of power and a means of persuasion, in this context, political agenda. These insights can be especially useful for scholars, media analysts, and educators who examine discourse, media influence, and political communication. That said, this study has its limitations. Since the analysis focuses solely on *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay* movies, its findings may not be fully applicable to other political or fictional contexts. Additionally, while van Dijk's CDA framework provides a strong analytical foundation, a deeper integration of Fairclough's approach could have offered further insights into ideology and hegemony. Future research could build on these findings by comparing the discourse in *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay* to real-world political propaganda or exploring how different audiences interpret the movie's messaging.

Beyond academic discussions, this research has practical applications. It can contribute to media literacy efforts by helping viewers critically assess political discourse in popular culture. Educators might also find it useful for illustrating how language and power interact in storytelling and propaganda. Additionally, policymakers and communication strategists could gain valuable insights from this study, particularly in understanding how persuasive language influences public opinion and mobilizes collective action.

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