

UNVEILING POWER THROUGH WORDS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF RACE AND GENDER IN *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*

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Abstract

This study explores a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Harper Lee's seminal work To Kill a Mockingbird, aimed at investigating how language shapes and contests notions of race and gender within the socio-historical framework of 1930s Southern America. Utilizing theoretical perspectives from Norman Fairclough, Teun van Dijk, Judith Butler, and Roger Fowler, the research delves into courtroom exchanges, narrative perspective, and character dynamics. Through this examination, the study emphasizes the presence of power dynamics, racism, and gender discourse within the novel, illustrating that literature can act as a platform for both ideological reinforcement and opposition.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, To Kill a Mockingbird, Race, Gender, Ideology, Fairclough, van Dijk, Butler, Fowler

1. INTRODUCTION

Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) is often considered one of the most significant literary works of the twentieth century, providing a deep critique of the racial and gender disparities ingrained in American society. Set in the 1930s in the imagined town of Maycomb, Alabama, the story depicts a profoundly segregated Southern United States where institutional racism, conformity to gender norms, and economic inequality collide. The narrative is conveyed through the eyes of a young girl, Jean Louise "Scout" Finch, whose naive yet insightful perspective allows for a unique exploration of adult hypocrisy, moral complexities, and social injustices. While it is frequently praised for its moral themes of compassion, fairness, and human dignity, the novel also serves as a strong critique of how systemic inequalities are sustained through ostensibly mundane speech and actions.

This analysis aims to revisit *To Kill a Mockingbird* through the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework to reveal how language constructs, legitimizes, and at times challenges prevailing ideologies concerning race and gender. CDA, as articulated by thinkers like Norman Fairclough, Teun van Dijk, Judith Butler, and Roger Fowler, delves deeper than superficial interpretation to probe the foundational power dynamics that are woven into discourse. It equips researchers with the tools to investigate how linguistic selections mirror larger socio-political structures and contribute to the embedding of dominant values. In contrast to traditional literary analysis, which often regards literature as isolated or self-sufficient, CDA situates textual study within the material conditions and historical contexts that define both the text and its audience.

This study concentrates on three primary discursive areas within the novel: (1) the court trial of Tom Robinson, a Black man wrongfully accused of assaulting a White woman; (2) domestic dialogues between Scout and Aunt Alexandra, which highlight the gender roles imposed on young girls; and (3)

the narrative perspective of Scout, which frequently serves as a battleground for ideological conflict. By examining these areas, the paper aims to illustrate how *To Kill a Mockingbird* both reinforces and challenges societal conventions. For instance, the language utilized in the courtroom exposes the legal system's role in racial injustice, while Scout's defiance of conventional femininity contests rigid gender identities.

The importance of this examination lies in its capacity to demonstrate that language is never impartial; instead, it serves as a battleground where different ideologies are debated, challenged, and replicated. By employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) on a pivotal literary work, this study not only enhances the discipline of literary analysis but also contributes to larger conversations within sociolinguistics, gender studies, and critical race theory. The objective is to transcend interpretations focused solely on characters or narratives and to highlight how the discursive elements of the novel reflect and influence the social hierarchies of its era many of which continue to be alarmingly pertinent in today's context.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine how language in *To Kill a Mockingbird* represents racial and gender identities.
2. To identify the discursive strategies used to construct or challenge power relations in the novel.
3. To explore the role of narrative voice and character interactions in reinforcing or resisting social ideologies.

Research Questions

1. How are race and gender represented through language in *To Kill a Mockingbird*?
2. What discursive strategies are employed to portray power dynamics related to race and gender?
3. How does the narrative voice contribute to the reinforcement or resistance of dominant ideologies?

Rationale of the Study

To Kill a Mockingbird remains a powerful literary work in its exploration of racial injustice and gender norms within a deeply segregated society. Using the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) allows scholars to move beyond surface-level interpretation and delve into how language constructs, reinforces, or resists ideologies of power. This study is timely and relevant in an era of heightened awareness of systemic racism and gender inequality.

The rationale for conducting this analysis is rooted in the need to uncover the subtle and overt ways in which language contributes to the maintenance or disruption of social hierarchies. By focusing on race and gender, this research aims to highlight the intersectionality of oppression as depicted through literary discourse. Moreover, the study contributes to both literary and linguistic scholarship by applying CDA to a canonical American novel, showcasing how literature can serve as a site for ideological struggle and social commentary.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) originated as a multidisciplinary method in the late 20th century, merging ideas from linguistics, critical theory, sociology, and cognitive psychology. This approach arose in reaction to the limitations of conventional discourse analysis, which frequently lacked a critical investigation into the influence of power, ideology, and inequality on language. The founders of CDA

contended that discourse whether oral or written is not simply a neutral conduit for communication but a socially contextualized practice that both reflects and constructs systems of power and resistance. Fundamentally, CDA examines the connections between language and power, focusing on how discourse can sustain, challenge, or alter social hierarchies.

One of the key figures in CDA is Norman Fairclough's, whose three-dimensional framework for discourse analysis (1992, 1995) has become highly influential in the field. Fairclough's views discourse as a form of social activity operating on three levels concurrently: the textual (linguistic characteristics of the text), the discursive (the processes involved in producing and interpreting text), and the social (the wider societal and institutional frameworks that envelop the discourse). Fairclough's model allows scholars to look beyond just the text's surface features and uncover the ideological roles it plays within particular historical and cultural settings.

Teun A. van Dijk enhances CDA by highlighting the cognitive aspects involved in the ways individuals and groups comprehend and create discourse. In his ideological square (1998, 2006), van Dijk details how language often portrays the in-group (us) in a positive light while presenting the out-group (them) negatively, thereby reinforcing binary divisions and social distinctions. His research is especially pertinent when examining racial narratives in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, where language perpetually upholds racial divides and stereotypes.

Ruth Wodak, another prominent scholar, developed the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), which underscores the necessity of historical context in text analysis. Wodak's methodology is particularly useful for examining literature that reflects or critiques specific socio-political occasions, such as the Jim Crow laws and the systemic racism depicted in Lee's work.

Judith Butler (1990, 1993) draws from feminist and poststructuralist theory to provide a vital insight with her notion of gender performativity. According to Butler, gender should not be viewed as a fixed identity but rather as a performative act shaped by consistent discursive practices. When applied to *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Butler's theory proves particularly valuable in examining Scout Finch's challenge against conventional femininity along with the gender expectations enforced by characters like Aunt Alexandra. In Butler's framework, gender is a discursive construction that remains open to both regulation and subversion.

Roger Fowler (1979), who was instrumental in founding critical linguistics, highlighted how grammatical and syntactic decisions like transitivity, nominalization, and modality unveil hidden ideological perspectives. He pointed out that the language's apparently neutral surface is layered with choices that display specific worldviews. For instance, in courtroom discourse or media presentations, the use of passive voice or constructions without clear agents can conceal accountability and uphold dominant narratives.

While many academic explorations of *To Kill a Mockingbird* have relied on moral critique, humanism, or postcolonial interpretations, there is an increasing acknowledgment of the necessity for discourse-focused methods that examine the linguistic frameworks supporting ideological constructs. Moral criticism typically celebrates Atticus Finch's pursuit of justice and the novel's central theme of empathy. In contrast, CDA goes further by questioning: In what ways is justice shaped through language? How are racial and gender identities performed and enforced through discourse? Who is granted the power to express themselves, and who faces silencing or marginalization within the text?

Several recent analyses have utilized CDA to literary works to explore these inquiries. For example, Lazar (2005) employed feminist CDA to expose the marginalization of women in patriarchal narratives, while Huckin, Andrus, and Clary-Lemon (2012) advocated for using CDA on canonical literary texts to uncover hidden ideological frameworks. In the context of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, CDA is instrumental

in illuminating how courtroom language, narrative focalization, and character dialogues portray the racial and gender dynamics of 1930s America. Moreover, CDA serves as a means to investigate the ideological conflicts between what the novel explicitly conveys and what it assumes about justice, morality, and identity.

In conclusion, the body of literature on CDA offers a robust framework for analyzing how linguistic structures encapsulate power and ideology. The contributions of Fairclough, van Dijk, Butler, and Fowler facilitate a multifaceted examination of *To Kill a Mockingbird* that transcends conventional literary analysis. Through this perspective, the novel can be perceived not merely as a moral narrative concerning racism and justice, but as a discursive artifact that engages in the reinforcement and contestation of social norms. Thus, the present study enhances the field by integrating literary analysis with CDA methodologies, providing new perspectives on the socio-linguistic landscape of Harper Lee's seminal work.

Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* has garnered significant academic attention, especially regarding its depiction of racial interactions. Al-Mamoory and Witwit (2021) applied Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis framework to scrutinize the novel's illustration of Black oppression, uncovering how language at descriptive, interpretive, and explanatory levels reinforces systemic racism. Afzal, Dar, and Hussain (2023) employed Wodak's discourse-historical framework to analyze the linguistic formation of racism set against the socio-political backdrop of 1930s Southern America, emphasizing the impact of historical and social contexts on racial discourse.

Andri and Tuaderu (2019) utilized Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and symbolic violence to investigate how societal frameworks and ingrained standards sustain racism, showcasing the societal effects on personal conduct and convictions. In exploring gender dynamics, Devi (2020) examined the depiction of gender roles in the novel, particularly through Scout's experiences, revealing how they contest traditional Southern gender expectations and providing insights into the challenge of gender stereotypes. Nurdinsyah et al. (2020) performed a transitivity analysis to scrutinize the portrayal of Tom Robinson, demonstrating how choices in language shape the representation of Black characters and their experiences with social injustice.

3.METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore the ways language constructs, reflects, and contests power structures, ideologies, and social disparities in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The intention is to assess how the discourse throughout the novel either perpetuates or challenges societal beliefs concerning race, gender, and justice. The qualitative aspect of this investigation stems from CDA's emphasis on grasping the wider sociocultural effects of language use, as opposed to merely quantifying linguistic traits. This methodology facilitates a thorough examination of how particular narrative and dialogue selections inform the reader's perception of racial and gender issues prevalent in the 1930s Southern United States.

Research Gap

Although past research has thoroughly examined *To Kill a Mockingbird* through various lenses of Critical Discourse Analysis, an important void persists in the intersectional exploration of race and gender within the text. In particular, a thorough investigation is missing that highlights how language shapes and sustains power relations where racial and gender identities intersect. Furthermore, the perspective of Scout as a child narrator presents a distinct opportunity to analyze how innocence and societal conditioning affect the internalization and perpetuation of cultural norms, yet this dimension has been inadequately explored. Additionally, the marginalization or silencing of characters like Calpurnia and Mayella Ewell within the narrative framework has not received adequate attention

through a CDA lens. Tackling these gaps will enhance our comprehension of the intricate relationship between language, power, race, and gender in the novel.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study utilizes an interdisciplinary mix of critical discourse theories to examine how the language in *To Kill a Mockingbird* shapes, maintains, or contests prevailing ideologies related to race, gender, and authority. The theoretical base is largely derived from the insights of Norman Fairclough, Teun A. van Dijk, Judith Butler, and Roger Fowler. These scholars offer crucial conceptual and analytical frameworks for investigating the linguistic and ideological foundations of Harper Lee's storytelling.

3.1 Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

Norman Fairclough (1992, 1995) viewed discourse as a type of social act that is influenced by and also influences the social environment. His Three-Dimensional Model of discourse analysis facilitates the examination of a text across three interconnected dimensions:

Textual Analysis centers on the minute linguistic characteristics of the text, including vocabulary, grammar, syntax, metaphors, and cohesive elements. This level aids in revealing how ostensibly neutral linguistic forms encapsulate ideological stances. For example, in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the deployment of racial epithets, the language of the courtroom, and narrative focus through Scout's viewpoint can be scrutinized for their underlying ideological roles.

Discursive Practice analyzes the ways texts are created, disseminated, and interpreted. In literary contexts, this entails considering the author's purpose, storytelling techniques, genre norms, and intertextual references. It also encompasses reader interpretation and how different audiences might view the text based on their sociocultural contexts. This dimension is essential in assessing how Harper Lee, as a white Southern novelist during the Civil Rights era, constructs a narrative of racial injustice from the perspective of a child.

Social Practice investigates the wider societal and historical frameworks within which the discourse exists. This level assesses the social, political, and cultural conditions of 1930s America, especially in relation to the Jim Crow laws, systemic racism, gender expectations, and the economic repercussions of the Great Depression. It also takes into account the environment of the post-WWII 1960s Civil Rights Movement, the period during which the novel was released, to analyze its potential as a dissenting text against prevailing ideologies.

3.2 Teun A. van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model

Teun van Dijk (1998, 2006) enriches critical discourse analysis through a socio-cognitive lens, highlighting the significance of mental frameworks, ideologies, attitudes, and stereotypes in influencing and being influenced by discourse. Van Dijk argues that language mirrors and solidifies ideological stances that are cognitively encoded and socially shared.

A key element in van Dijk's framework is the "ideological square," which delineates four strategies:

- Highlight our good attributes/actions.
- Highlight their negative attributes/actions.
- Downplay our negative attributes/actions.
- Downplay their positive attributes/actions.

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, this model can be applied to investigate how discourse delineates the in-group (the white elite of Maycomb) versus the out-group (Black individuals, particularly Tom Robinson). By analyzing courtroom exchanges, neighborhood rumors, and character dynamics, this examination uncovers how language perpetuates racial hierarchies and moral contrasts.

Van Dijk examines the dynamics of access and authority within discourse, focusing on who holds the right to speak, which voices are pushed to the margins, and the manner in which social power is

navigated through communication. These observations are crucial for assessing how figures such as Atticus Finch, Judge Taylor, and Bob Ewell are afforded discursive power, while Black individuals, despite their inherent moral strength, face linguistic oppression or constraints.

3.3 Judith Butler's Theory of Gender Performativity

Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity (1990, 1993), rooted in poststructuralist and feminist ideas, particularly those derived from Michel Foucault, posits that gender is not an immutable identity but instead a continuous enactment formed through repetitive linguistic and social behaviors. Language, actions, fashion, and societal expectations all play a role in the performance of gender.

When applying Butler's theory to *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the character Scout Finch represents a challenge to conventional gender roles. Her tomboy tendencies, aversion to dresses, and resistance to embodying the "Southern Belle" image confront the prevailing norms of femininity in the deeply patriarchal environment of Maycomb. Individuals like Aunt Alexandra reflect the regulatory discourses aimed at modifying or controlling Scout's conduct, supporting Butler's claim that gender is upheld through social conventions and performative practices.

Butler's framework also allows for a more profound analysis of the ways masculinity is formed in the novelties Atticus's composed rationality, Jem's journey into adulthood, or the damaging hyper masculinity exhibited by Bob Ewell and how these portrayals connect with race and class.

3.4 Roger Fowler's Critical Linguistics

Roger Fowler (1979) was among the pioneers who formulated a method to scrutinize the ideological aspects of literary works using linguistic instruments. His contributions to critical linguistics, which notably influenced the emergence of CDA, highlighted how aspects of syntax and semantics disclose power dynamics and ideological leanings. Key analytical techniques proposed by Fowler include:

- **Transitivity:** Who performs actions upon whom? This examination centers on agency and accountability. For instance, the portrayal of Tom Robinson as "attacking" or "being attacked" significantly shifts views on culpability and victimization.
- **Nominalization:** The transformation of actions into nouns (e. g., "the accusation" instead of "Bob Ewell accused Tom") often strips away agency and obscures the intricacies of power relationships.
- **Modality:** The employment of modal verbs (e. g., must, may, should) indicates levels of certainty, obligation, or possibility. For example, phrases like "he must have done it" within courtroom discourse suggest guilt prior to verdict and highlight underlying assumptions.

Fowler's conceptual framework is particularly beneficial for examining how Harper Lee's stylistic choices, especially regarding the third-person narration and courtroom exchanges, linguistically shape concepts of justice, bias, and societal structure.

4.1 Data Selection and Sampling

The data for this study was gathered through purposive sampling, a non-random method that identifies specific texts or instances in the novel relevant to the research queries. This technique guarantees that the chosen excerpts are abundant in discourse elements essential for analysis. The research emphasizes three main discursive areas in the text:

1. Courtroom scenes featuring Tom Robinson: The trial represents a crucial event within the novel, placing racial, social, and ethical ideologies at the forefront. The courtroom acts as a microcosm of the broader societal tensions between whites and blacks, using language to establish guilt, innocence, and racial justice.

2. Encounters between Scout and Aunt Alexandra: These interactions delve into gender norms, expectations, and family dynamics, particularly Scout's confrontation with societal gender roles and Aunt Alexandra's attempts to impart traditional femininity. These exchanges illuminate the performative

dimensions of gender as articulated by Judith Butler and indicate how language upholds or contests gender roles.

3. Narrative accounts by Scout Finch: Serving as the narrator, Scout offers a viewpoint that reveals her growing comprehension of race, ethics, and societal structures. Her youthful innocence provides an exceptional perspective that uncovers adult biases and injustices, highlighting the significance of her narrative voice in grasping the ideological mechanisms of the story.

4. 2 Analytical Framework

This analysis employs linguistic instruments from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and critical linguistics to investigate the selected excerpts. Such instruments allow for the examination of the deep-seated ideologies and power relations embedded in the language of the novel. The principal instruments utilized in this analysis include:

1. Lexical Choice and Modality:

Lexical choice refers to the precise words and phrases selected by the author to express specific meanings, feelings, or ideological stances. Within the novel's context, terms like "nigger," "good ol' boy," or "innocent" carry heavy ideological connotations that reveal racial biases or ethical evaluations. The modality of language, which encompasses the employment of modal verbs (for instance, "must," "may," "should"), is essential for interpreting the level of certainty, obligation, or possibility suggested in assertions. For instance, the modal verb frameworks applied in the courtroom regarding Tom Robinson's guilt or innocence can expose latent assumptions concerning race and justice.

2. Transitivity and Passivation

Transitivity in grammar pertains to how actions are assigned to agents and patients within a sentence. The selection of transitive versus intransitive verbs can indicate who possesses power and agency in a discourse. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, one can analyze who is depicted as the subject (agent) of actions and who appears as the object (patient). This distinction holds particular relevance in courtroom scenes, where Tom Robinson is seen as the victim of actions yet lacks agency in those actions, subtly reinforcing racial hierarchies.

Passivation consists of converting an active sentence into a passive structure, frequently to shift accountability or emphasis. This tool proves effective for examining how the actions of characters are portrayed and how blame or accountability is allocated. For example, employing passive constructions to outline Tom Robinson's purported crime may detach white characters from the perpetration of violence or injustice, thereby obscuring their culpability.

3. Use of Pronouns and Narrative Point of View

The utilization of pronouns (such as "we," "they," "he," "she") serves as a potent linguistic tool for defining distinctions between in-groups and out-groups. By scrutinizing how Scout Finch, in her role as narrator, employs pronouns to characterize various figures, one can investigate how the text shapes identities based on race, class, and gender. The transition from inclusive pronouns ("we") to exclusive ones ("they") aids in illustrating how the racial divides between white and Black characters are formed. The narrative perspective is integral to grasping the ideological position of the novel. Scout's viewpoint as a young, white girl offers a viewpoint that is simultaneously innocent and perceptive, allowing readers to confront challenging themes of racism, injustice, and moral growth through the eyes of a naive character. This narrative decision reveals the glaring contradictions in adult actions, especially concerning racial biases.

4. Evaluative Language and Metaphors:

Evaluative language consists of terms and phrases that express the speaker's feelings regarding an event, individual, or concept, often influencing how the audience interprets it. Within the novel, terms like

“honest,” “good,” “dirty,” and “immoral” possess significant evaluative impact and illustrate how characters are assessed morally or ethically based on their racial, social, or gender identities.

Metaphors serve as another potent method for examining how the text creates meaning and ideology. For example, the “mockingbird” metaphor symbolizes innocence and virtue and is utilized throughout the novel to investigate the destinies of characters such as Tom Robinson and Boo Radley, who suffer unjustly due to societal biases. Such metaphors effectively underscore the moral teachings of the novel while also reflecting the social inequities of the era.

4.3 Data Collection and Procedure

The research entails an in-depth analysis of crucial excerpts from *To Kill a Mockingbird* that relate to the three identified discursive realms: the courtroom, the interactions between Scout and Aunt Alexandra, and Scout’s narrative perspective. These excerpts are scrutinized using the linguistic tools mentioned earlier, with special emphasis on how language shapes racial, gender, and moral ideologies. The analysis is performed manually to provide a more intricate understanding of how particular linguistic elements contribute to the broader ideological themes of the text.

4.4 Limitations

While Critical Discourse Analysis offers a robust framework for exploring the ideological functions of language, it is vital to recognize the constraints of this study. The qualitative method is fundamentally subjective, depending on the researcher’s interpretation of the text. Furthermore, the focus is restricted to a limited number of selected passages, which might not encompass the entirety of discourse present in the novel. Nonetheless, the chosen texts are representative of key themes and power relationships that define the novel, and the results can be extrapolated to the larger work.

5. Analysis

In this section, we seek to deepen the analysis of *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, employing Critical Discourse Analysis to investigate how the novel’s language either sustains or contests ideologies pertaining to race, gender, and social justice. Through careful examination of chosen passages, we will explore how language acts as both a mirror and a reinforcement of the power dynamics that prevailed in the Southern United States during the 1930s.

5.1 Racial Discourse in the Courtroom

The courtroom sequences depicted in *To Kill a Mockingbird* serve as some of the most striking illustrations of racial bias and institutional injustice portrayed in the narrative. Throughout Tom Robinson’s trial, language plays a crucial role in reinforcing racial hierarchies. The prosecuting lawyer, Mr. Gilmer, employs demeaning and infantilizing terminology to undermine Tom Robinson’s dignity, thereby solidifying the racial chasm.

Mr. Gilmer’s recurrent use of the word “boy” when referencing Tom Robinson is a purposeful act that treats Tom as a child, robbing him of his adulthood and autonomy. Within the context of the racially charged American South of the 1930s, the term “boy” was frequently utilized by white individuals to demean Black men, asserting their dominance and characterizing them as inferior, immature, and unaccountable for their actions. This linguistic strategy transcends mere semantics; it mirrors a structured racial hierarchy wherein Black individuals were viewed as subordinate to their white counterparts. Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework aids in understanding how this type of discourse functions as a social practice that benefits the prevailing group. The prosecutor’s deliberate choice of language strengthens the perceived ideological superiority of white individuals, mirroring the societal norms that dictated race relations in the South.

Furthermore, the concept of the “ideological square” (Van Dijk, 1998) is essential for comprehending the dynamics of racial discourse during the trial. In this ideological square, the in-group (whites) is

depicted as virtuous, ethical, and blameless, whereas the out-group (Black individuals, as represented by Tom Robinson) is illustrated as menacing, criminal, and inferior. This dichotomy is reinforced by Mayella Ewell's testimony, in which she characterizes Tom Robinson as **"strong"** and **"aggressive,"** employing racial stereotypes that assert an image of Black men as inherently threatening to white women. Through such discourse, Mayella contributes to the broader racial narrative that frames Black men as dangers to white supremacy.

Utilizing Fairclough's framework, we can also analyze how the language in the courtroom is organized to accentuate the existing power dynamics. The prosecutor's formal language stands in stark contrast to Tom's more casual speech, while the manner in which courtroom language casts Tom as "other" significantly highlights the moral and intellectual superiority attributed to white individuals by the legal system. This imbalance reflects the ingrained racial prejudices present in legal proceedings and the wider societal context of the era.

5. 2 Gendered Discourse and Identity Construction

Beyond racial discourse, *To Kill a Mockingbird* delves into gendered communication, particularly illustrated by the relationship between Scout Finch and her Aunt Alexandra. While Scout embodies a burgeoning resistance to traditional gender norms, Aunt Alexandra represents the conventional, stringent roles that women were expected to fulfill in the Southern society of the 1930s. Through their exchanges, the novel explores the intricate negotiations of gender identity within a conservative landscape.

Aunt Alexandra's frequent use of commands like **"you must"** and **"you should"** strengthens the enforced gender roles that Scout is expected to embody. These directives aim to compel Scout into a performance of femininity, which she finds unappealing and is not inclined to adopt as she resists the conventional notions of women being submissive and proper. Judith Butler's (1990) theory of gender performativity provides a valuable lens through which to comprehend this conflict. Butler posits that gender is not an inherent trait but a performance crafted by societal norms, demonstrated through recurring actions, dialogue, and behaviors. In Scout's interactions with Aunt Alexandra, one can observe how the imposition of gender performance seeks to govern the young girl's identity as a means of preserving social structure.

Scout's defiance of these gender expectations is clearly illustrated by her dislike of dresses and her wish to engage in activities deemed "unladylike." Specifically, her unwillingness to wear dresses, along with her tendency to fight and play with boys, emphasizes her challenge to these culturally imposed gender standards. This can be interpreted as a form of resistance against the expectations of femininity that her aunt insists upon.

Moreover, Roger Fowler's (1979) examination of nominalization in language sheds light on how gender roles are linguistically constructed. For example, Scout's actions her preference for pants and engaging in physical play are frequently labeled as **"unladylike"** and **"inappropriate."** In this context, nominalization transforms behavior into a concept charged with social meaning, thereby portraying Scout's rejection of gender norms as unnatural and transgressive. Fowler's insights into modality further clarify the compelling nature of Aunt Alexandra's language. The phrases "must" and "should" reveal an underlying ideological assumption, reinforcing the societal expectation that Scout adhere to the gendered persona her aunt promotes.

Through this discourse on gender, Lee's novel underscores the societal pressures that women and girls face to conform to established norms and illustrates how these expectations can be challenged and

defied. Scout's eventual pushback against Aunt Alexandra's vision of femininity represents the rising empowerment of young girls in confronting restrictive societal roles.

5.3 Narrative Voice as Ideological Commentary

The narrative voice in *To Kill a Mockingbird* is one of the most significant elements for challenging societal standards. Scout Finch tells the story both as a young girl experiencing the narrative and as an adult reflecting on those experiences. This dual viewpoint enables readers to perceive the events from both a naïve, childlike perspective and a more seasoned, critical lens.

From Fairclough's model in 1995, we can observe how Scout's narration highlights the contradictions and inconsistencies inherent in adult convictions and actions. As a young girl, Scout finds herself often confused by the biases and unjust behaviors she witnesses, and her innocent inquiries and insights act as a window into the irrational nature of the adult world. For instance, she is puzzled by the racial discrimination that drives Tom Robinson's trial, questioning why individuals perceive him as guilty solely based on his race. Her perspective makes the absurdity of racial inequality evident.

Nonetheless, the adult Scout's reflective storytelling allows readers to grasp how these contradictions become ingrained and accepted by society over time. Her unique position as both an observer and critic of these social issues enables the novel to offer a compelling commentary on the evolution of time and the moral development that arises from confronting injustice. Fairclough's three-dimensional framework underscores the significance of historical context in shaping the narrative. As she matures, Scout reflects on past events with the clarity of hindsight, providing a richer understanding of the societal influences that molded her childhood.

Van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework from 1998 further illuminates how Scout's growing comprehension of race, justice, and morality mirrors larger ideological transformations. Through her development, readers observe the entrenchment of ideologies as she shifts from a child bewildered by racism to an adult who acknowledges its harmful effects on society. This evolution parallels how ideologies are internalized and perpetuated through communication.

In Scout's narrative, we also witness how ideological commentary functions not only on a personal level but also within a societal context. Her insights critique the entrenched racism that infuses the legal system, the family structure, and daily interactions. By revealing these contradictions through her candid yet perceptive voice, Scout serves as a channel for social critique and ideological challenge, urging readers to scrutinize the ideologies that uphold racial injustice and gender disparity.

Utilizing Critical Discourse Analysis, this comprehensive examination has investigated how the language in *To Kill a Mockingbird* contributes to the formation, questioning, and reinforcement of ideologies surrounding race, gender, and justice. The dialogues in the courtroom, gendered language, and Scout's narrative perspective all play crucial roles in uncovering the social practices that support racial and gender hierarchies in the Southern United States during the 1930s. By analyzing how these linguistic choices influence societal norms and ideologies, we achieve a deeper awareness of how language serves not only as a mirror of society but also as a tool for the perpetuation of power and ideology.

This examination underscores the significance of Harper Lee's novel in modern dialogues surrounding social justice, illustrating how the themes of racial bias, gender expectations, and ethical dilemmas that the book tackles still hold relevance today. The work serves as an influential instrument for social commentary, emphasizing the enduring impact of conversation in influencing our views on race, gender, and identity.

6. DISCUSSION

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, language is an influential instrument for both establishing and challenging power dynamics. Viewed through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the narrative reveals that linguistic characteristics do more than merely depict reality they actively influence and mirror the societal frameworks and power relationships that characterize the culture in which they exist. Each theoretical approach utilized in this study Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model, Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model, Butler's Gender Performativity theory, and Fowler's insights on Critical Linguistics uncovers varied aspects of how language operates to maintain or contest ideological supremacy.

6. 1 Fairclough's Linguistic Reflection of Social Structures

Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model, which examines texts through textual, discursive practice, and social practice levels, is essential for grasping how the book mirrors social hierarchies. Fairclough's posits that language acts as a means of social engagement it not only mirrors society but also contributes to its formation. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, this is most prominently illustrated in the courtroom sequences and the racial terminology employed during Tom Robinson's trial. The formal legal language is utilized to sustain and assert the ideological dominance of the white characters, while simultaneously denying Black characters, such as Tom Robinson, their agency and humanity.

By applying Fairclough's model, one can also discern how the social context of the 1930s Southern United States characterized by institutional racial inequity and white supremacy shapes the language within the text. The formal language used by the prosecuting attorney serves not just to bolster white authority but also to dehumanize Black individuals, transforming Tom Robinson's trial into a display of racial power dynamics. The language of exclusion and differentiation created through discourse is vital in maintaining entrenched societal structures. It is not solely the substance of the language that is significant, but also its form the construction of sentences and the vocabulary choices that reinforce prevailing power relations and ideologies.

6. 2 Van Dijk's Racial Framing and Ideological Control

Van Dijk's socio-cognitive discourse model aids in understanding how language is employed to build and reinforce racial frameworks or prevailing ideologies surrounding race. The courtroom sequences, especially during Mayella Ewell's testimony, illustrate how divisions between in-groups and out-groups are crafted through discourse. Mayella's characterization of Tom Robinson as "strong" and "dangerous" invokes entrenched racial stereotypes that portray Black men as violent and menacing to white women. These narratives, propelled by language, resonate with the wider ideological construct of white supremacy that underpins much of the social fabric in the Southern United States.

Through Van Dijk's framework, it becomes clear that language operates as an instrument for ideological dominance. Mayella's speech, rife with accusations and racially charged language, establishes a context in which Tom Robinson is presumed guilty solely based on his race, thereby deepening the racial chasm between whites and Blacks. This racial characterization positions Black individuals as fundamentally inferior and criminal, thereby legitimizing biased practices and strengthening systemic racism within the judicial framework. Furthermore, the manner in which the trial is linguistically presented exemplifies ideological reproduction, where the conversation surrounding race functions to sustain and propagate societal conventions.

6. 3 Butler's Gender Performance and Resistance

Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity allows us to explore gender as a dynamic, not a fixed or innate identity, but one that is enacted through continuous behaviors, actions, and verbal expressions. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Scout's interactions with her Aunt Alexandra, especially concerning gender expectations, highlight how language upholds conventional gender roles in the Southern context. Aunt

Alexandra's prescriptive phrases such as “you must” and “you should” compel Scout to adhere to these roles, reinforcing a notion of femininity characterized by passivity, submissiveness, and compliance. Yet, through Butler’s perspective, we can also witness Scout's defiance against these imposed roles. Her aversion to dresses and her inclination towards more boyish activities signify a form of resistance against gender constraints. Scout’s behavior pushes back against the performative standards of femininity dictated by her aunt and society. Butler’s notion of performative resistance posits that Scout actively challenges the traditional gender expectations placed upon her, asserting her autonomy in rejecting the anticipated norms.

Thus, language transcends being a mere reflection of social structures; it becomes a domain where gender identities are contested and negotiated. Scout’s defiance represents not just a repudiation of gender norms but also an assertion of her will, serving as a potent critique of the stringent gender expectations of her era. By expressing her identity in a non-conformist manner, Scout stands against the ideology that aims to confine her identity and actions based on her gender.

6.4 Fowler’s Syntax and Ideological Reinforcement

Roger Fowler’s insights on critical linguistics illuminate how sentences and language choices function as conduits for ideological reinforcement. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the configuration of sentences the application of transitivity, nominalization, and modality demonstrates the way language constructs and solidifies social norms and hierarchies.

For example, Aunt Alexandra’s frequent use of nominalization when discussing Scout’s behavior terms such as “*unladylike*” and “*disrespectful*” show how language categorizes and pathologizes actions that stray from gender conventions. This use of nominalization not only identifies Scout's behavior but also frames it as problematic within the gendered landscape. Likewise, the modality presents in Aunt Alexandra’s instructions conveying certainty or obligation compels Scout to internalize these gender norms as immutable.

Fowler’s framework also emphasizes how the transitivity in courtroom dialogue illustrates power relationships. The way the prosecutor employs both active and passive voice affects the attribution of actions among various social factions. Within the trial, Tom Robinson is depicted as the passive target of accusation she endures actions instead of being the initiator. This portrayal aligns with the era's racial beliefs, which frequently characterized Black individuals as submissive victims within the system, while white individuals were seen as powerful actors.

7. CONCLUSION

This research has examined how Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird* employs language to mirror and confront the beliefs surrounding race and gender through a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) lens. By analyzing particular excerpts from the text, such as the courtroom sequences featuring Tom Robinson, the domestic exchanges between Scout and Aunt Alexandra, and Scout’s narrative perspective, this exploration uncovers how language acts as a medium through which power relations are formed, perpetuated, and challenged.

The courtroom sequences are a significant illustration of how language supports racial hierarchies, with Tom Robinson rendered childlike via the persistent use of the label “boy” and dehumanized through racially charged rhetoric. Conversely, Scout’s conversations with her aunt disclose how prescriptive language solidifies gender roles, while simultaneously providing a pathway for defiance as Scout contests the societal expectations imposed upon her. According to Butler’s theory of gender performativity, Scout’s dismissal of conventional feminine roles signifies a form of gendered defiance, subverting her society's anticipations.

Moreover, this research underscores how CDA enhances literary criticism by demonstrating that discourse does not simply mirror societal standards but actively performs and resists them. Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model, Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive approach, Butler's notion of gender performativity, and Fowler's emphasis on critical linguistics each offer distinct perspectives on how language in *To Kill a Mockingbird* acts as a means of both social control and resistance.

In this study, Harper Lee's novel serves not only as a reflection on racial and social justice but also as a deep investigation into how language critically influences and sustains societal frameworks. By employing CDA, this analysis has shed light on the complex ways language represents larger social ideologies and functions as both an instrument of oppression and a platform for resistance, providing a deeper understanding of the novel's themes and its enduring significance in conversations regarding race, gender, and power in society.

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