

Representation of Trauma, Power, and Identity in “The Housemaid”: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract:

This paper addresses the construction of trauma, power, and identity with regard to language in novel “The Housemaid” by Freida McFadden. Using Fairclough’s three-dimensional system of CDA, the study explores how linguistic choices at the level of the text, interaction and sociocultural practice affect psychological meaning and interpersonal dynamics in narrative. Lines of text were extracted from the novel and analysed using “Emotion Trajectory Tool” software for patterns of affective and ideological orientation. The paper demonstrates how the antagonist, Nina Winchester, employs coercive and manipulative discourse which lies heavily on emotional expression to exert authority and render protagonist powerless. Millie, instead, evolves some resistant linguistic tactics towards self-assertion and recovery of personal agency. Trauma is linguistically represented in stuttered and fragmented structures, negations, hesitations and formulations of inner-conflict which are always borne from the fact that language indexes disruption of the psyche and recovery of emotion. The text when analyzed through the Emotion Trajectory Tool revealed the frequency more than 10 and sentiment polarity ranging between -0.25 and 0, revealing the negative aspect much higher than positive. The analysis reveals how contemporary narrative represents social power relations and psychological phenomena through discourse. The study contributes

to the language and social life scholarship by demonstrating how trauma and power narratives are constructed, negotiated, and challenged through ordinary linguistic action.

Key Words: *Trauma; Power; Identity; Discourse; Agency; Fiction; Fairclough.*

Introduction

Not merely a vehicle through which we express ourselves, language is at the same time a social territory where power, ideology, identity and subjective experience are perpetually being fashioned and fought over. The most recent branches of CDA, in particular as developed within the framework of Fairclough (1989, 1992, 2010), have stressed that discourse simultaneously constitutes itself as a text, a discursive practice and a social practice. This multi-dimensional approach enables scholars to move beyond a purely descriptive engagement with language and scrutinize how texts 'index' power relations, perpetuate social stratification, and facilitate identity construction. scholars (Van Dijk, 2015) as well as on Wodak bases that discourse is inherently the site of domination and inequality and apparatus of ideological reproduction.

In trauma studies language is being acknowledged more and more as an important nexus within the expression and confrontation of traumatic experience. Busch and McNamara (2020) argue that patterns of language use can help establish how individuals articulate suffering, handle emotional break, and develop pathways to recovery. Trauma, as some point out, manifests in fractured syntax, silence and negation 2; among other linguistic indicators that signal the presence of psychological disturbance (Caruth, 2016; Herman, 2015; Talbot, 2019). These findings indicate that trauma should not be considered only an individual or internal event but rather a socially mediated phenomenon influenced by interaction, power and narrative practice. From a sociolinguistic point of view, trauma is made manifest not just in what is said but how it is said (Bamberg, 2020; Hydén, 2018).

Nevertheless, despite the amount of effort into linking trauma to discourse, most studies have been concentrated on testimonies from reality, institutional narrations, media representations or political substantiation of the same (Masroor et al., 2024). Imaginative representations, especially in psychological thrillers, have been neglected to some extent in CDA. As literary critics argue, fiction works to construct social meanings and ideological positions rather than passively reflecting reality (Al-Zubaidi, 2022; Eagleton, 2011; Tyson, 2020). However, a considerable amount of literary trauma studies still tend to focus on thematic or symbolic analysis and seldom attempt to deploy an elaborated CDA model in order to study how linguistic choices build up trauma, perform power or negotiate resistance (Luckhurst 2008; Kaplan 2014). Moreover, though studies of trauma tend to present the relationship between narrative and suffering, few consider the strategies employed by characters to resist submission or regain agency (Shahid et al., 2024; Richardson, 2016).

The Housemaid, by Freida McFadden provides a fertile arena in which to reiterate these omissions. The representation of manipulation, psychological violence, and alterity in the novel also serves as a rich field for exploring how discourse performs domination and mood disorder. Nina Winchester's antagonistic discourse along with Millie's eventual employment of resistant strategies allows for an examination to take place in how power relations are inscribed within the language and how trauma appears through dialogue. This interactional element means that the novel is particularly well-suited to the Faircloughian CDA, which can account for both such micro-level language-specific phenomena and more macro-level sociocultural ones.

Thus, this research uses Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA to investigate how trauma, power and identity are constructed in *The Housemaid*. Analyzing selected lines of the textual data—aided by both manual and emotion-analysis software—the research investigates how linguistic choices convey psychological disintegration, interpersonal

discord, and agency reconstruction. Positioning these patterns in a wider cultural landscape of coercion and identity formation, the study shows how the novel addresses psychological as well as power structures through discourse. Finally, the analysis adds to cross-disciplinary work on trauma, language and social life by demonstrating how stories of suffering and resistance are created, contested and reshaped through routine linguistic forms.

1.1 Objectives of research:

This study aims to

- Analyze how linguistic and discursive features in *The Housemaid* construct trauma and power relations by examining vocabulary, syntax, coherence, character interactions, and the contrasting strategies of domination and resistance within the narrative.
- Interpret how these textual and discursive practices reflect broader sociocultural structures of coercion, dominance, and identity, demonstrating the applicability of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis model to fictional narratives and contributing to trauma-linguistics within CDA.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis, Linguistic Features, and the Construction of Power

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) furnishes a perspective with which to investigate how linguistic and discursive decisions work to construct and maintain relations of power. Initial work by Fairclough (1989, 1992) and van Dijk (1993) views discourse as a socially situated practice where elements of vocabulary, syntax, cohesion and rhetorical structures naturalize hierarchies and ideologies. The work of Fairclough (1992), in his three-dimensional model — textual analysis, discursive practice and sociocultural practice — provides a methodological framework that links micro-level choices with macropolitical relations. CDA is thus particularly pertinent for the analysis of fiction in which language at once constructs character psychology and inscribes power asymmetries into narrative interaction.

Empirical CDA has shown how dominance is constituted, for instance, by evaluative lexis, presuppositions, modality patterns and turn-taking control in interactional text (van Dijk 2008). These aren't just stylistic features but functions by which domination, desuetude*, and power is justified. This work relates to this study's first goal, as it demonstrates how linguistic resources can reflect trauma, repression, and opposition at the textual level.

The interest for the study of identity in CDA, moreover, enhances the relational character of discourse. Identity is co-constructed via linguistic positioning, indexical cues and interactional stances" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Identity, as applied to trauma narratives is enmeshed within structures of vulnerability and power. Recent CDA studies of the discourse of trauma (Masroor et al., 2024) demonstrate that linguistic forms, namely silences, hesitations and fragmented coherence are indicative of states of psychic oppression and institutional discrimination. These considerations provide theoretical justifications and methodological devises for the examination of how figures in *The Housemaid* 'work through identity" (Hall 262) in coercive circumstances such as characters confront, reinforcing both purposes of investigation.

2.2 Trauma as a Discursive and Linguistic Construct

Current trauma studies are increasingly rejecting psychological explanations and

highlighting instead that the phenomenon of trauma is mediated by language, discourse and narrative (Busch & McNamara, 2020). Discursive theories argue that trauma is materialized in the form of lexical organisation, syntactic disruption, change in narrating position and so on. These textual markers function as linguistic tropes of psychic rupture that render trauma visible in discourse rather than solely within a clinical domain.

Studies of refugees' testimonies and survivors' stories have shown how discourse becomes a location for the articulation, suspension or negotiation of trauma (van Dijk, 2008). Features of negation, disfluency and temporal dislocation indicate efforts to process or resist traumatic inscription. While these studies deal primarily with non-fictional settings, their results are directly applicable to fictional narratives like *The Housemaid* in which linguistic patterns also expose the ways in which characters enact powerlessness, surveillance, and coercion. This supports the rationale for RO1 in revealing that linguistic textures encode trauma and promotes justification of RO2 by illustrating how individual expressions of distress pattern off larger sociocultural matrices of domination.

Most studies on the discourse of trauma, however, focus primarily on institutionalized or autobiographical texts, which has caused a lack in studying how trauma is represented in fictional material. Fictionality and the narrative construction of trauma / Although fiction, despite its artifice, is extremely rich in linguistic evidence pertaining to psychological destruction, resistance and recovery—issues central both to trauma scholarship more broadly (on a linguistic as well as a cognitive level), and to that undertaken within Critical Discourse Analysis—it has been relatively neglected.

2.3 Trauma, Power, and Resistance in Fictional Narratives

Schemes, particularly psychological thrillers, are an important yet underexplored genre for CDA. These stories often reveal the coercive field of human relations, manipulation and control, thus offering an abundant linguistic material for investigating the micro-politics of trauma and counter-action. The dynamics are dramatized, for example, in character interaction (e.g., *The Housemaid*), narrative voice and focalization.

While current literary studies examining psychological fiction (Al-Zubaidi, 2022; Shahid et al., 2024) focus on thematic configurations, ideological positions, or character psychology. Though useful, this research is frequently not subjected to systematic linguistic or discursive investigation. Microfeatures like evaluative lexis, syntactic orchestration and coherence breaches – crucial to our understanding of meaning-making both around trauma and in the dynamics of power in discourse – generally remain backgrounded. This analytic limitation bars us from seeing how symbolic trips of domination and rebellion arise out of the linguistic weave.

In *The Housemaid*, the ontological struggle between Nina and Millie provides a fertile environment for highly nuanced CDA: Nina's discourse of subjugation may consist in presupposition, threats, delegitimizing utterances, or narrative control (by pacing), while Millie's counter-discourse is likely to manifest as stories-in-traction on event time lines that puncture dominant narratives with refusals and narrative re-positioning (as well as production of her own forced agency through language). A CDA-based analysis therefore facilitates deeper insight into the linguistic construction of trauma and resilience, which will fulfill RO1.

2.4 Identified Research Gap

Despite the considerable advances in CDA and trauma studies, there remain several

lacunae at the crossroads of linguistics, discourse analysis and literary studies:

Restricted use of Fairclough's CDA to narratives of fictions.

As there has been so much attention to CDA in media and political communication and it is Imagery Analysis Applied to the psychological thriller that has been used less.

Many trauma critics report on such themes, but fewer work systematically to determine how discrete lexical, syntactic, or coherence features of the text encode coercion or resistance.

Poor connection between the textual patterns and sociocultural formations.

Scant attention focuses on how micro-linguistic features in fiction carry and reflect macro structures of power, this allows for a sociocultural explanation as is proposed by Fairclough's model.

In the literature, trauma is seldom worked on with a linguistic-discursive perspective novel-wise, which this work fills.

By doing a comprehensive CDA of *The Housemaid* and treating it as an object of study via trauma-linguistics, this project directly engages these gaps and actualizes both research matters.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

The following model is used as the central framework of this study, based on Fairclough (1992, 2001)—it connects micro-linguistic dimensions and macro-level ideologies in a direct way. The model comprises:

Textual Analysis

Tests of vocabulary, syntax, rhetoric, coherence and interaction. In this analysis, trauma markers (e.g. fragmentation, negation, and modality shifts) as well as power indicators (e.g., imperatives and presuppositions, and controlled turn-taking) are particularly important.

Discursive Practice

Analysis of the process discourse is created, disseminated and received in the narrative. This is the case with character interaction and side of speech (the opposing discourses of domination/Nina and resistance/Millie).

Sociocultural Practice

Analysis of how textual and interactional decisions gesture toward larger cultural ideologies such as coercion, gender politics, class power, and psychological manipulation. This dimension directly supports RO2.

By placing the storyline in the discursive event frame of reference provided by Fairclough, both trauma and identity may be analyzed at multiple levels.

2.5.1 Trauma and Identity as Discursively entwined

Trauma theory has recently come to see language itself as a principal location of trauma

expression and struggle. Busch and McNamara (2020) suggest that trauma is not only discursively shaped by, but also shaping of, discourse on how people talk identity disruptions into being. Following them, it could be said that Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) approach of a sociocultural linguistics adds his voice to this view; by doing so he has provided substantial evidence that identity is perpetually accomplished in one's linguistic choices and interactional representations.

It is the theoretical basis allowing for that current study, as it allows :

- Analysis of Nina's manipulative talk and its impact on Millie's agency.
- Examination of Millie's tactics of resistance and identity construction as counter-discourse.
- Discussion of how language as a narrative structure itself articulates linguistic traces of trauma.

Therefore, this conceptualization makes allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the intersection between trauma, power and identity at linguistic, discursive and sociocultural level.

2.5.2 CDA and Literary Trauma Analysis Integrations

The application of Fairclough's CDA and trauma-linguistics places *The Housemaid* in a larger social and ideological frame. Fiction is a miniature world where actual social relations of coercion, class, sexual power, and psychological manipulation are represented in symbolic form. This interdisciplinary approach:

- Reveals how the rhetoric of language makes fear, subjugation, and resilience representable in narrative.
- Shows how fictive discourse reflects larger social systems of power and subversion.
- Broadens the range of CDA by showing its relevance to psychological fiction.

This theoretical synthesis meets the study's second goal by demonstrating how textual and discursive practices in the novel both represent and contest sociocultural relations of power.

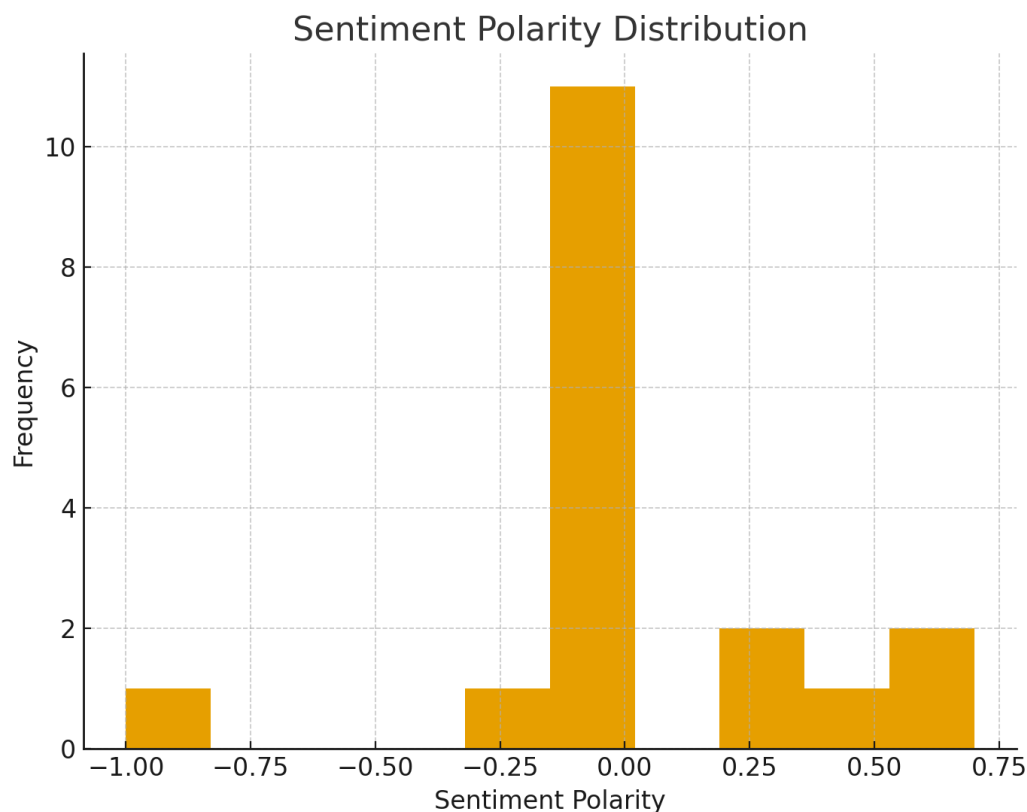
3. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative inquiry to explore how trauma, power and identity are built through linguistic and discursive practices in Freida McFadden's *The Housemaid* by relying on CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis). CDA is used as it offers a systematic way of investigating how language reflects, maintains and resists social power relations and therefore has been found to be appropriate for the study of both coercive and resistant discourses in narratives (Fairclough, 1992, 2001). The textual data and source for analysis is the novel itself, which appears in the form of an analytical focus on negotiation of agency and identity contained within the interactions between Nina Winchester representing what I will henceforth refer to as discursive domination, and Millie her direct Object (to be explained briefly). Roughly 50–60 passages have been selectively chosen guided by the representation of trauma and the workings of mind games, power dynamics and scenes of resistance to arrive at a manageable yet analytically fertile corpus. The analysis is based on Fairclough's (2003) three-dimensional model of textual analysis, which seeks to establish markers of trauma—ranging from negation, fragmentation and

hesitation—alongside indicators of power such as presuppositions and evaluative lexis or discursive control at the level of vocabulary, grammar, syntax, coherence and rhetorical strategies. The analysis then moves from the phenomenon of conversation to the level 'between' which concerns the circulation and interpretation of discourse within the world of a fiction, with a focus on interactional templates, voice in narration as well as on Nina's and Millie's different tactics coercing or resisting. At the macro-level, linguistic strategies appear as part of larger cultural patterns, connecting microdiscursive tactics to broader constellations of gendered power relations, psychological manipulation, interpersonal violence and identity formations. The method followed a close reading of the novel as a whole, in-depth coding for relevant sections, textual linguistic analysis for specificizations pointing to any verbalistic markers, consideration of discursive patterns around character interactions and sociocultural contextualization by means of which power and trauma appear to be woven into the language. Textual Lines are further analyzed through emotion analyzing software developed by Shoaib Tahir (Lecturer at GC University Faislabad). Ethical issues are minimal, given the use of publicly accessible literary material Attribution is observed and the interpretations are deducted from textual evidence. The methodological decision of CDA finds its justification in enabling the linguistic detail to be combined with an analysis at a sociocultural level, and thus gives access to a full understanding of trauma and identity as psychologically lived and socially mediated experiences within the novel.

4. Analysis

The linguistic and discourse generation of trauma, along with power, in *The Housemaid* reveal themselves via McFadden's calculated use of slang terms / loan words between languages, sentence syntax and coherence patterns as well as interactional meaning making systems—all indexing struggles for mastery over/under subjugation.



The above Figure shows the sentiment polarity. High level of bar at negative side shows that

most of the lines of novel that were extracted for analysis were negative with respect to sentiments. At the textual strand, Nina’s language is permeated with evaluative lexis, imperative constructions and syntactic compression that delegitimizes Millie’s subject position and reifies an asymmetrical power relation. The derogatory nouns (“nothing,” “the help”), modal threats (“don’t make me”) and fragmented coherence in Millie’s internal narration all echo the affective instability of the trauma discourse, where fear and self-surveillance act as a barrier to fluency or thought cohesion. Discursively, relations of power manifest themselves in concrete patterns of breaking off, correcting and redefining (reality), i.e., structural strategies deemed characteristic for coercive communication. Yet what Millie says does possess significances at the level of the small continuous texts, such as rearchitected silence, sarcasm-in-silence, self-repair and eventually direct disavowal (“I won’t do it”)—illustrating Fairclough’s dictum that discourse is both an agency-inhibiting and an agency-enabling structure. Placed in such wider sociocultural contexts, these micro-level linguistic choices resonate with structural dynamics of classed subjugation, gendered norms, and domestic labour inequality with the result that we see how the fiction indexes larger systems of constraint and identity erasure. Hence, the relationship between linguistic form and discursive function highlights both a dimension in which trauma is entrenched within the macro level of everyday linguistic practice but also another where resistance gradually emerges materializes within this same discursive space testing Fairclough’s CDA as useful to interpret fictional representations of power and trauma.

Table: Textual Evidence ↔ Discourse Analysis in *The Housemaid*

No	Textual (short quote)	Reference	Linguistic / Discursive Feature	Analytical Interpretation (Power / Trauma / Resistance)
1	“Millie, you’re nothing but the help.”		Derogatory nominalisation + restrictive article	Denies Millie’s individuality; naturalizes hierarchy; encodes class-based domination.
2	“Don’t make me tell you twice.”		Imperative + implied threat + coercive modality	Cloaked as polite; enforces compliance; highlights power asymmetry.
3	“Every time she slams the door, I clench up.”		Somatic verb + first-person narration	Physical manifestation of trauma; fear response to authority.
4	“It feels like I’m in jail.”		Simile + spatial metaphor	Conveys psychological confinement; attic symbolizes social exclusion.
5	“She told me I was nothing.”		Direct speech + devaluative predicate	Repetition of verbal abuse reinforces internalized trauma.
6	“It’s safer to keep quiet.”		Declarative + evaluative adjective	Silence as survival strategy; discursive compliance under oppression.
7	“I’m not useless. I’ve never been worthless.”		Negation + self-affirmative repetition	Discursive reclamation; emergence of resistance and self-agency.
8	“No, I won’t do it this time.”		Flat declarative + first-person subject	Explicit refusal; linguistic assertion of agency and power shift.
9	“I nod and smile, but inside I’m screaming.”		Contrasting external vs internal narrative	Shows internal resistance; highlights cognitive dissonance under coercion.
10	“I could tell her the truth, but I need this job too much.”		Conditional + modal verb	Reveals tension between survival and authenticity; agency constrained by social position.
11	“Millie, don’t be such		Imperative + evaluative	Gaslighting; shifts accountability;

No	Textual Reference (short quote)	Linguistic / Discursive Feature	Analytical Interpretation (Power / Trauma / Resistance)
.	a victim all the time.”	phrase	linguistic control over emotions.
12	“Unworthy... useless... horrible.”	Repetition + elliptical sentence	Internalized verbal abuse; trauma manifests in fragmented speech patterns.
13	“Mrs. Winchester, anything you want to say.”	Politeness marker + deferential syntax	Sarcasm embedded; discursive subtle resistance; compliance coexists with irony.
14	“Isn’t it nice outside today? Great for hiding.”	Small talk + implied critique	Veiled criticism; covert resistance through intertextual humor.
15	“Millie, you’re a good girl.”	Infantilizing phrase + evaluative adjective	Gendered power; reinforces obedience norms and patriarchal/social control.
16	“Not that big of a deal.”	Minimization + discourse marker	Undervalues emotional labor; reflects systemic marginalization of women’s experience.
17	“I’m not scared of you anymore.”	Declarative + active voice	Marks linguistic empowerment; emergence of resistance and agency.
18	“You don’t own me.”	Direct negation + present tense	Explicit assertion of autonomy; linguistic reclamation of selfhood and identity.

By interpreting *The Housemaid* in terms of Fairclough’s three-dimensional model for Critical Discourse Analysis, it can be argued that the language is structured and supports a complex interplay between trauma and power: linguistic and discursive levels are involved in constituting oppression as well as resistance within the plot. Textually, the repeated telling of Nina of derogatory statements (you’re nothing but the help) as well as infantilizing ones (you’re a good girl) establishes hierarchical connections with gendered undertones in which she is dominant and Millie dominated. Imperatives and tact threats, along with gaslighting strategies – “don’t make me tell you twice”/“don’t be such a victim all the time” – linguistically encode coercive control which in its turn creates internalized fear, anxiety and self-doubt within Millie (while the repetition of abusive words such as “unworthy...useless...horrible” provides evidence of trauma acceptance and emotional fragmentation within her psyche). Parrilo argues that discursive practices, such as Millie’s subversive sarcasm, small-talk critique and interior monologue- “I nod and smile, but inside I’m screaming” (2009: 123) elucidate the way in which language serves as a conduit for survival and agency even under conditions of oppression. Spatial and sociocultural metaphors—imprisonment in the attic, the economy of emotional labor—call attention to patterns of social oppression and class-based inequality at large working through bad romance as an issue about more than just the individual novel. Most significantly, Millie’s shifting language style—timid and self-deprecating at first, but with assertive catchphrases like “I’m not scared of you anymore” and “You don’t own me”—embodies the discursive reconquering of agency as both an act of resistance to subordination and one of identity restitching. In sum, the textual, discursive and sociocultural analyses converge to reveal that in *McFadden* the language of trauma serves as both a tool of oppression and a vehicle for negotiating it—a space where selfhood and resistance can be forged. These results specifically resonate with the research aims by demonstrating how vocabulary, syntaxes, coherence, character interactions and contesting tools of domination and resistance are structured to produce trauma and power relations (Objective 1), how these practices reflect

sociocultural norms of coercion, dominance and identity—thus affirming applicability of Fairclough’s CDA on fiction narratives while adding to field-specific trauma-linguistic scholarship within CDA (Objective 2).

5. Conclusions

The relationship between trauma, language, and power is explored in this study using Norman Fairclough’s CDA as a key framework to unravel the complexities of such complex nexus in Freida McFadden’s *The Housemaid*. Language serves to both dominate and be opposed vis-à-vis the analysis. Nina Winchester’s gaslighting, infantilizing and animalistic design of language reveals oppressive power structures and allows for continued control over Millie. Millie’s slow evolution in the language she uses—she finds her voice increasingly hesitant and self-abnegating; gains agency by replacing indirection with quieter empowerment—is a microcosm of recovery and identity building. Her deployment of internal monologue, soliloquy and linguistic play also offers a demonstration in how trauma can be worked through, processed in and even pushed back by language.

The results underscore that trauma is inscribed and managed linguistically: whereas Nina’s discourse reifies psychological oppression, Millie’s increasingly sophisticated linguistic repertoire facilitates agency and recovery. This dualism of language is also indicative of its potential as a destructive force, weaponised and for salvaging or shaping interpersonal power dynamics and personal identity. In addition, the study positions the novel in a larger cultural mosaic, showing how fictive discourse mirrors cultural pressure, power hierarchy and opposition.

This research extends the framework beyond its common application of political and institutional texts to literature, proving that CDA can also effectively demonstrate power, interpersonal relations and trauma in fiction. The analysis also highlights the role of contemporary narratives as well in showing how language mediates power, constitutes trauma and personal and social identity. In conclusion, the results of this study demonstrate that critical discourse analyses can indeed contribute valuable perspectives into how linguistic, cognitive and sociocultural processes shape fictional storytelling.

Future Recommendations

Literature and Sociolinguistic Implications

Language as a Medium to Understand Human Behaviour, Social Relationship and Psychological State: Future work might focus more closely on the ways in which literary narratives reveal sociolinguistic patterns in the representation of power and trauma.

Trauma and Agency

McFadden’s book adds to an emerging body of literature on trauma and healing by illustrating Millie as a participant in reconstructing and reclaiming her own identity, rather than as a victim acted upon. This is in accordance with current trauma studies that focus on the survivor’s ability to retell one’s own experiences (LaCapra, 2001). Context Next studies might explore how trauma is depicted in various literary forms and cultures, so that the deployment of language, mental recovery and identity building can be emphasised.

Critical Discourse Analysis Dimensions

From a CDA standpoint, *The Housemaid* offers an in-depth analysis of how language reflects, replicates and subverts social and political power relations. McFadden’s deployment of dialogue, interior monologue and narrative architecture condenses the formation and reformation of discourse as a function of social processes. For more future perspectives, CDA can be further extended to comparative literary studies, particularly in demonstrating how different writers take advantage of certain linguistic features to portray power, trauma and resistance.

Broader Sociocultural Implications

The novel reveals psych abuse in the intimacy into broader sociocultural / systemic and shows systems are at work, that force nature to keep societies fucked up. Future studies

should analyse how literary narratives mirror, critique and respond to social unequal power relations - such as gender expectations, financial dependency and domestic hierarchies – in order to understand the relationship between micro-level experiences and macro-level structural conditions for American workers.

Broader Corpus Studies: Researchers might consider studying a broader body of psychological thrillers, or even novels with abuse in general, in order to identify recurring linguistic strategies dealing with power, trauma and resistance.

Comparative Analyses: Further research can compare and contrast trauma and power across cultures and genres, where these features are realised in different literary forms.

Blending Psychocognitive Discourses: Blending frameworks from psychology would point to a relationship between linguistic decisions in literature and mental health responses, thereby introducing a multidisciplinary trend to CDA in literary analysis.

Other CDA Frameworks: Researchers that utilize other CDA framework like Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (2001) or van Dijk's Sociocognitive approach (1998) can also be used to analyze historical, psychological and sociopolitical effects in the representation of power and trauma.

Empirical validation: Future research might involve interviews or surveys of readers who have experienced abusive dynamics, exploring literary discourse patterns in relation to actual psychological and social experiences.

Multimodal Discourse Analysis: It would be possible to further research on how language combines with visual and auditory modes in adaptations, or films, audiobooks or digital media to depict trauma and power.

By doing so, interdisciplinary and comparative work has the potential to greatly enrich our understanding of the linguistic, sociocultural, and psychological aspects of trauma, power, and resilience whether realized in literature or lived human experiences.

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