

RADICAL FEMINIST DISCOURSE CONSTRUCTION IN *MARLINA: THE MURDERER IN FOUR ACTS*: A VAN DIJK CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

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Previous research on gender representation in the film *Marlina: The Murderer in Four Acts* has generally focused on pure textual analysis without considering aspects of audience cognition. As a result, there is a research gap in understanding how ideological discourse is produced and received dynamically. To address this limitation, this study aims to analyze the construction of radical feminist discourse in the film through the interconnection of three dimensions of Teun A. van Dijk's theory: text, social cognition, and social context. The research method used is qualitative descriptive with a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach. The main analysis unit includes 15 selected scenes from the total 93-minute film that represent gender inequality and women's resistance. These textual data were then triangulated with social cognition data obtained through in-depth interviews with two informants, social science student viewers, were used to map the mental schemas of the audience. Research findings at the text level show a sharp syntactic and semantic contrast between the language dominated by masculine tones (aggressive and coercive) and *Marlina's* speech structure, which is minimalist yet subversive, turning domestic symbols (kitchen and machete) into lethal tools of agency. On the social cognition dimension, divergences were found in the informants' mental schemas (single-agent empowerment vs. structural despair due to trauma), proving that the reception of radical feminist discourse is subjective and influenced by the audience's critical literacy. Conversely, in the social context dimension, there was a convergence of audience views confirming structural realities related to the 'vacuum of state roles' and geographic isolation in peripheral areas. This study extends Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis by demonstrating how feminist discourse in film operates simultaneously through textual construction, audience understanding, and bigger social and cultural structures.

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1. Introduction

Women are often portrayed as inferior. This stems from social views that place one gender in a superior position, such as the view that men are superior to women (Ridwan et al., 2026). Based on the passivity perspective in the coding of gender stereotypes, women are often associated with passive characteristics and viewed as vulnerable, weak, and in need of protection. Meanwhile, men are associated with active traits and viewed as strong, protective, and taking on dominant roles (Jing, 2024). This stereotype of women as passive is clearly evident in the division of domestic roles, where women are positioned as homemakers who depend on men as the primary breadwinners. This situation is exacerbated by a society that has yet to value women's roles when they choose to work as independent workers, as a woman's employment is often framed merely as "helping" to meet the family's basic needs (Syafitri et al., 2022). Other studies on the representation of women in the media show how domestic stigma against women can be deconstructed through public figures who play dual roles in both private and public spheres at the same time (Afdholy & Riswari, 2025). This inequality ultimately creates opportunities for various forms of violence against women.

Based on data obtained from the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) at the end of 2023, it was found that there were 401,975 cases of violence against women, with 3,498 cases of psychological violence, followed by 2,081 cases of physical violence. In addition, there were 2,078 cases of sexual violence and 762 cases of economic violence (Putri et al., 2024). However, these figures represent only the cases reported by victims; therefore, there is a high likelihood that the actual numbers are much higher due to various factors, such as social stigma, fear, and distrust of the legal system (Hakim & Kurniawan, 2021).

These cases of violence sparked a movement demanding justice and gender equality. This marked the origin of the feminist movement (Ningrum, 2024). Feminism does not only manifest in the form of physical movements or actions but also extends into the realm of the media. There was also before study of the teen magazine Jackie, the study showed that the media actively reproduces gender discourse that impacts the audience's perceptions and behaviors (McRobbie, 2008). In addition to magazines, feminism is also frequently discussed through films. Films have a wide reach, enabling them to influence viewers. The feminist social movement leverages this capability of film as a medium for advocacy (Firmansyah et al., 2022). Films serve as a unique platform for feminism. This is because films have the ability to evoke intense emotions, challenge social conventions, and depict complex narratives (Wei, 2024).

Feminism essentially highlights the women's movement (Adaruddin, 2020). Thus, in various films, feminist issues are portrayed through narratives, characters, and visual symbols associated with female characters. However, as the film industry has evolved, the portrayal of female characters has shifted from being powerless and at times even oppressed to being highly intelligent, brave, independent, and possessing strength equal to that of men. One such character is Enola Holmes in the film *Enola Holmes*, who is portrayed as an intelligent, brave, and independent young woman (Janice & Mulatsih, 2024). Additionally, in the film *The Great Indian Kitchen*, the main character, Nimisha, is depicted as a wife who faces her husband's family rules specifically, that she must perform household chores and is forbidden from working. These rules make her uncomfortable. Consequently, Nimisha resists and seeks to work in the public sphere (Firmansyah et al., 2022).

The portrayal of women in films also occurs within tense settings and circumstances. The film "Women Talking" tells the story of a group of colonial-era women from Manitoba who come to live in a Mennonite community. This group of women unites to change the situation in which men treat them as animals (Pirzada & Yuliarti, 2024). Through these various representations of women, there are also Indonesian-produced films with feminist themes featuring female protagonists set against tense backdrops. The film of particular interest as the main subject of this study is "Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts."

“Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts” was released in 2017, starring Marsha Timoty, Dea Panendra, Yoga Pratama, and Egi Fedly. Although it was released in 2017, its high quality has earned it numerous awards. This is evident from the film’s 7.1-star rating on IMDb. Additionally, the film was selected to represent Asia’s top 10 films in the BIFF’s special “Wonder Women Movie” program. This credibility convinced the author to review the film in greater depth.

“Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts” addresses feminist issues particularly radical feminism by depicting the resistance efforts of the character Marlina as a victim. Marlina’s story is divided into four acts: The Robbery, The Journey, The Confession, and The Birth. Each act explores the patriarchal conditions women face and their journey in seeking justice. The story centers on Marlina, a widow living in the middle of the savanna in Sumba, far from the reach of those around her. The story begins with Marlina’s husband having recently passed away. The conflict begins when a man named Markus, along with six friends, arrives at Marlina’s home to rob her and attempt to rape her. Eventually, Markus rapes Marlina, but with great courage, she kills him by cutting off his head. In addition, Marlina also killed Markus’s six friends by poisoning the food prepared for them.

After the incident, Marlina began her quest for justice by deciding to take Markus’s head to the police station. Along the way, she encountered numerous challenges. These began with transportation difficulties that forced her to wait for hours until a bus finally passed by. Next, there was a moment when Marlina had to ride a horse to continue her journey. Even upon arriving at the police station, Marlina was not treated well, as it took a long time and involved a lengthy process to process her report.

Additionally, there is the character of Novi, Marlina’s friend, who is depicted as being 10 months pregnant but has not yet given birth, leading her to frequently face unpleasant treatment from her husband. Novi is the one who helps and supports Marlina in escaping from the gang of robbers. Even when a new conflict arises, namely, the appearance of Frans, the youngest member of Markus’s gang Novi steps in. Frans becomes enraged upon learning that Markus and four others have died, so he searches for Marlina while using Novi as a hostage. Novi manages to free Marlina while she is being raped by Frans by decapitating him.

The film “Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts” presents interesting linguistic aspects for study, specifically encompassing macro-structure, superstructure, and micro-structure. The macro-structure of this film relates to women’s struggles against gender inequality. Furthermore, the superstructure in this film pertains to the sequence of discourse, which includes the introduction, body, and conclusion. Next, the microstructure in this film is divided into four levels: semantic, syntactic, stylistic, and rhetorical. The semantic level is further divided into

Building on the previous discussion, various dialogues in the film “Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts” were identified using Teun A. van Dijk’s critical discourse analysis framework. The analysis was conducted to dissect discourses on women within the framework of radical feminism. Furthermore, the study adapted the three critical discourse structures proposed by Van Dijk: textual analysis, social cognition, and social context. In addition to analyzing the textual and linguistic elements used, critical discourse analysis also examines elements of social cognition. The analysis was conducted through an examination of schemas and social context, focusing on the practices of power and access that influence the formation of discourse. These three analyses form an inseparable whole. This is because, to fully grasp the meaning, it is not sufficient to analyze only the textual or linguistic aspects; rather, an analysis beyond the text namely, social cognition and social context is also necessary.

When examining a research subject, comparisons with previous studies are necessary to ensure high-quality research. To date, there have been several studies discussing similar

films, namely those by Taqwa (2023), Sumakud & Septyana (2020), and Al Bahy & Tjahjono (2023). The following is an overview of the studies reviewed. Additionally, as a point of comparison, there is a study by Jufanny & Girsang (2020) that employs a similar methodology.

In her study on gender and radical feminism in the film *Marlina*, Taqwa (2023) employed an interpretive method as part of phenomenology. The study highlighted how violence is portrayed in the film. In the conclusion and discussion, it was explained that women have the right to make decisions regarding everything related to themselves and their own bodies, including killing in self-defense. Meanwhile, the study by Sumakud & Septyana (2020) on women's struggles to resist patriarchal culture which applied Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis to the film *Marlina* focused more on women's struggles and on helping society recognize women's presence within the community. Additionally, the application of Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis categorized the film's participants into three roles: subject, object, and audience. The results show that the overall analysis is consistent: the subject demonstrates resistance to patriarchy through anarchic actions such as poisoning food, decapitating, and threatening with a machete. Meanwhile, the object is portrayed as a supporting actor to the subject.

Based on these three studies, several limitations exist. Specifically, both studies focus solely on the subjects and objects depicted in the film *Marlina*, such as how the meaning of Marlina's actions reflects a particular ideology or worldview. This opens the door for researchers to further explore how the setting and atmosphere serve as factors that also underpin the motives behind Marlina's struggle. Furthermore, previous studies have only examined the raw text of the film's production and have not considered how knowledge produced by external communities might influence the producer in creating that discourse. The researcher believes that the producer's perspective needs to be incorporated when analyzing a specific discourse.

Furthermore, a study by Jufanny & Girsang (2020) discusses toxic masculinity within the patriarchal system using Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis in the film "*Posesif*". The findings relevant to this study indicate that the director and screenwriter of "*Posesif*" employ an ideological framework to critique social issues. This study demonstrates that Van Dijk's approach is relevant to this research because it can analyze the tendencies of creators in the production of texts or discourse. Furthermore, this study serves as a reference for the researcher, both for adapting analytical techniques and for expanding the analysis into other fields, namely feminism.

Based on the statements outlined above, the researcher has two main research questions, namely:

1. What are the forms of radical feminist discourse in the film's dialogue found in "*Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts*"?
2. How is the social cognition of radical feminist discourse in "*Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts*" interpreted?
3. How is the social context of radical feminist discourse in "*Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts*" analyzed?

Discourse analysis can be defined as a study of language that goes beyond mere sentences. Generally, the meaning of a particular term is broadly associated with a wider context that influences the meaning of the entire sequence of expressions (Darma, 2014). It is

important to understand that context greatly influences a text, and discourse analysis allows for a broader consideration of that context.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an approach to analyzing texts, both written and spoken with the aim of uncovering implied meanings. The focus of critical discourse analysis (CDA) differs from that of discourse analysis. In addition to a linguistic focus, critical discourse analysis also examines language within its social context, such as power, ideology, and social injustice. In contrast, discourse analysis focuses solely on linguistic analysis. Critical discourse analysis delves deeply into the elements present within a discourse. It does not provide a ready-made approach or a “how-to” guide for social analysis; rather, it emphasizes that each study must involve the development of a theoretical analysis of the social issues being addressed. This allows for the identification of discourse and social structures that can be analyzed. Furthermore, critical discourse analysis places emphasis not only on written and spoken language but also on visual imagery. Consequently, the analysis of images must also be considered as if they were linguistic texts.

Critical discourse analysis focuses on the power dynamics and inequalities inherent in social phenomena. Consequently, critical discourse analysis can be used to analyze discourse in other fields such as politics, race, gender, hegemony, culture, or social class (Van, 1996). These areas of study are centered on the principles of critical discourse analysis, namely: action, context, history, power, and ideology.

In critical discourse analysis, language is analyzed by relating it to its context. Context here refers to the fact that language is used for specific purposes and practices, including practices of power (Eriyanto, 2001). Essentially, critical discourse analysis examines not only textual elements but also how the context and other factors underlying the discourse are produced, and subsequently connects that discourse to the social life of a particular group. Eriyanto (2001) identifies key characteristics of critical discourse analysis, including:

1. Action

Discourse is a form of interaction in the form of action. The purpose of speaking, writing, and using language is to interact and relate to others. With this understanding, discourse is ultimately viewed in several ways. First, discourse is seen as something that has a purpose, whether it be to influence, debate, persuade, refute, react, and so on. Second, discourse is viewed as something expressed consciously and in a controlled manner.

2. Context

Critical discourse analysis evaluates the context of discourse, including the background, situation, events, and conditions. There are three key elements in the concept of discourse: text, context, and discourse. Text refers to all forms of language—that is, all forms of communication, speech, images, sound effects, and so on. Furthermore, context encompasses the entire situation outside the text that influences language use. Discourse is understood as the simultaneous combination of text and context. Thus, it is clear that the primary focus of discourse analysis is to describe both text and context simultaneously within a communication process.

3. Historical

An understanding of a text's discourse can be gained through its historical context. This historical context refers to the circumstances in which the text was created. If someone conducts a discourse analysis of student leaflets from the Reformation era, an understanding

of the context can be gained by examining the atmosphere of that period—including its economic, social, and political conditions—along with the details found in those sources. Through this historical lens, one can see why the discourse developed in a certain way, why the language was used as it was, and so on.

4. *Power*

Discourse is not viewed as neutral but rather as a form of power struggle. Language users are not merely writers, listeners, readers, or speakers; they are also part of specific social groups. Critical discourse analysis does not limit itself to textual details or discourse structure alone but also connects discourse to specific social, political, economic, and cultural conditions. Power, in relation to discourse, is important to view as control. Control here is not always physical but can also be mental. Dominant groups have greater access to knowledge, money, and education compared to non-dominant groups. This allows dominant groups to act and speak as they please.

5. *Context*

Ideology is constructed by dominant groups to reproduce and legitimize their dominance. Dominant groups persuade the public through communication about the products of their power and dominance, making these appear legitimate. Ideology is intended to regulate the actions and practices of individuals or members of a group (Van, 1996). Ideology causes members of a group to act similarly in the same situations, connect these actions to the issues they face, and contribute to group solidarity and cohesion.

Teun A. Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Socio-Cognitive Approach/SCA) introduces the concept of social cognition, which holds that analyzing a discourse is not sufficient if it is based solely on the text itself; rather, one must also consider the social conditions specifically, the context in which the text was produced. Van Dijk's research model is referred to as social cognition. Analyzing a discourse requires consideration of all aspects that are systematic and theory-based (Van Dijk, 2007). Van Dijk explains that discourse is constructed across three dimensions: text, social cognition, and social context (Eriyanto, 2001). These three aspects form an integrated whole that is interrelated and inseparable. The text dimension employs linguistic analysis, focusing on how text structure and discourse strategies are used to emphasize a specific theme. The social cognition dimension analyzes the production of a text that involves specific individuals or groups. Meanwhile, the social context dimension examines how discourse develops within society in response to issues. Essentially, Van Dijk links textual analysis which focuses on the text itself with an in-depth analysis of how the text is produced. Van Dijk's analytical model can be described as follows

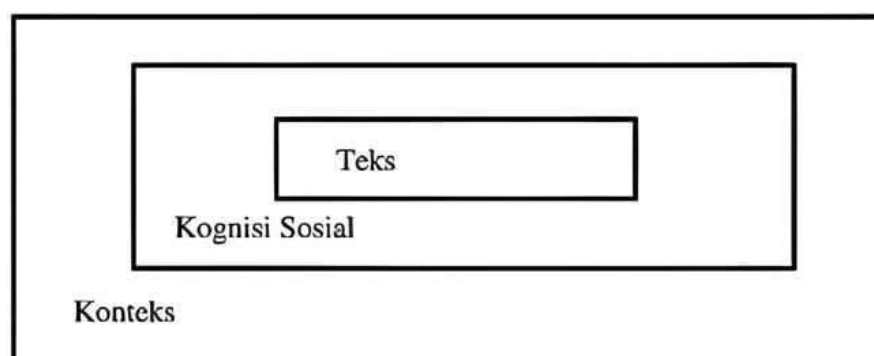


Figure 1. Van Dijk CDA Model (Source: Eriyanto, 2001)

1. Text

Van Dijk views a text as consisting of mutually supportive and interconnected structures. Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis is divided into three levels: the macrostructure, or general meaning, which is used to analyze the topic; the superstructure, which connects the framework of a text and encompasses how the parts of the text are organized into a coherent discourse; and the microstructure, which encompasses meaning based on small parts of a text, including words, sentences, propositions, clauses, paraphrases, and even images. According to Eriyanto (2001), there are six key elements in the formation of a discourse, as follows.

Table 1. Discourse Textual Structure Van Dijk Model

Struktur Wacana	Elemen Penting Pembentukan Wacana	Penjelasan
Macrostructure	Thematic	The topic or theme highlighted in a text.
Superstructure	Schematic	The parts and order in the text that are schematized into a complete text.
	Semantic	The meaning that is intended to be emphasized in the text. Meaning can be given in detail on one side, reduced, or made explicit on the other side.
Structure Micro	Syntactic	The sentences (form, structure, or pronouns) chosen in the text.
	Stylistic	The choice of words used in the text (lexicon).
	Rhetorical	Graphic elements to check what is emphasized and considered important, and metaphor, which is figurative language or expression.

Source: Eriyanto, 2001

2. Social Cognition

Van Dijk explains two important points that must be understood. First, the schemas used as mental structures encompass how we view a person, social roles, and how we view an event. Schemas are shaped by experience and socialization. Second, social representations refer to the views and perceptions that develop within a social group.

Social cognition cannot be separated from mental schemas. These schemas demonstrate that individuals use mental structures to filter available information. Furthermore, the connection between mental structures and social cognition serves to understand the meaning embedded within a discourse. Through the use of these schemas, it becomes clear that a speaker cannot be considered neutral, as they inevitably possess their own ideologies and hold differing perspectives when addressing an issue or, in this case, when interpreting a textual discourse. Mental schemas come in several types: person schemas, self-schemas, role schemas, and event schemas. Furthermore, another key element in social cognition is memory, which consists of short-term memory and long-term memory. The type of memory most relevant to social cognition is long-term memory. Additionally, this model comprises

several major strategies, including selection, reproduction, inference, and local transformation (Eriyanto, 2001).

3. Social Context

The social context reveals the intended meaning and explains how power can be established through discursive practices and legitimation. Two key points in the social context are the exercise of power and access. These two points are explained as follows.

a. The Exercise of Power

The exercise of power is defined as the authority held by a group or its members, whereby one group controls another group or its members. In addition to direct and physical control, van Dijk also understands power as taking the form of persuasion that is, actions by which an individual indirectly exercises control by influencing mental states, such as beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge. Furthermore, the exercise of power also reveals how text production is generally used to shape public consciousness and consensus.

b. Access Influences Discourse

More powerful groups have greater opportunities to access the media and greater opportunities to influence public consciousness. Extensive access not only provides the opportunity to control public consciousness to a greater extent but also determines which topics and what content can be disseminated and discussed with the public.

Radical feminism, as outlined by Kate Millett (2016), comprises eight concepts, as follows: (1) Ideological, which relates to the construction of roles, temperaments, and statuses for women and men. (2) Biological, which relates to the promotion of sexual politics involving the biological differences between the two sexes. The biological perspective holds that sex and gender are cultural and social constructs that can be expressed. (3) Sociological: This relates to the socialization of patriarchy that takes place within the family environment. This socialization then spreads to other segments of society. (4) Class: This explains that women are positioned below men, regardless of their class background. Class also often leads to conflict among women themselves. (5) Economic and educational factors relate to the domestic labor burden upon women. Consequently, women are deemed unfit for public life, go unpaid, are exploited, and face discrimination. Furthermore, women are placed at a lower level in economic and educational fields. (6) Coercion relates to legal relationships involving threats and the power of information, as well as domestic violence and rape. (7) Myths and Religion are linked to beliefs and religious doctrines that portray women's roles as a source of suffering. (8) Psychological factors relate to men's sense of inferiority in controlling women. Consequently, patriarchy serves as a tool for psychological assault that effectively shackles and influences women, both directly and indirectly.

Based on the theoretical foundation outlined above, this study builds a conceptual framework that combines Van Dijk's three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis with the eight concepts of radical feminism proposed by Millett (2016). As shown in Figure 2, the analysis starts with the text of the film *Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts*, examined through its macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure to see how discourse on women's resistance against patriarchy is formed. This textual analysis is then expanded into the social cognition dimension, which in this study is approached from two complementary sources: the film producer's perspective, gathered through interview data, and the audience's perspective, collected through in-depth interviews with two informants. Both sources are used to trace the mental schemas behind the production and interpretation of the discourse, rather than to generalize audience responses broadly. Then, the analysis moves to the dimension of social context, which looks at power and access practices like the patriarchal culture in Sumba and the role of women in Indonesia's film industry that shape and justify the discourse. Finally, these three dimensions are interpreted through a radical feminist lens,

helping the researcher see how the film's discourse both reflects and challenges the ideological, biological, sociological, and coercive aspects of patriarchal domination described by Millett (2016). This framework treats text, social cognition, and social context not as separate pieces, but as a whole that together shows how radical feminist discourse is built within the film.

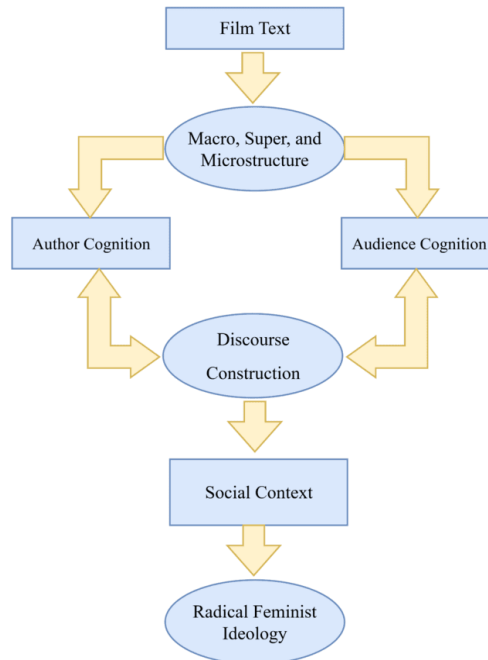


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework (Source: Primary Data)

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative method with Teun A. Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis approach. Qualitative research is an investigative effort that applies natural elements with the aim of defining an event that occurs and is carried out by involving various available methods (Denzin & Lincoln (1994) in Anggito & Setiawan, 2018). In the other hand, Critical discourse analysis is a linguistic study that includes steps in presenting a text (social reality) for discussion and explaining the relationship between language, society, power, ideology, values, and opinions (Indriyawati & Hudiyono, 2023). The discourse observed is about the struggle of the character Marlina in the film *Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts*. The researcher accessed this film through the Netflix streaming application. This film is one of many that raises issues of gender inequality. The researcher considers this film the most relevant and one that has attracted a large audience, as proven by the awards it has received. The selection of scenes in the film was done based on three inclusion criteria. First, portraying gender inequality, especially oppression against women. In addition, the researcher also chose scenes that show women's efforts to struggle or Marlina's character's acts of resistance against situations of oppression. Lastly, scenes that visually include symbols relevant to feminist discourse (such as props, settings, or body gestures).

Based on these criteria, the researcher identified 15 scenes from a total of 93 minutes of film duration, which were analyzed further. This data would later become the main instrument for the researcher in answering the existing research questions.

Furthermore, the researcher also collected data through in-depth interviews with two informants. The selection of these two informants was done using a random sampling technique with the criterion that they had watched the film *Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts* in its entirety. Both informants are 19 years old and have an educational background as social science students, making them relevant informants. The researcher realized that the

limited number of informants could potentially reduce the variety of meanings that could be found in more depth. Therefore, the informant interview data was used as supporting data to strengthen the interpretation of social cognition at the text level and interview with a film producer.

Data analysis was done in three stages following Van Dijk's dimensions. First, the researcher coded at the text level by identifying microstructure elements (diction, language style in dialogues), superstructure (storyline schema), and macrostructure (the main theme of feminist discourse) in selected scenes. Second, the researcher analyzed social cognition by linking the findings at the text level with interviews with the film producer and informants to identify the knowledge schemas underlying the discourse construction. Third, the researcher analyzed the social context by reviewing literature on patriarchal culture in Sumba and the position of women in the Indonesian film industry, to understand the power relations and access that influence the production of this film's discourse.

Lastly, to maintain the credibility of the research, the researcher carried out data source triangulation, which means comparing findings from the film text analysis, producer interviews, and audience informant interviews to see the consistencies and differences in the meanings that emerged. In addition, the researcher engaged in self-reflection by being aware of their position as a student studying gender issues, which could potentially lead to interpretive bias regarding feminist discourse in the film. Therefore, to minimize this bias, the researcher consistently referred back to Van Dijk's theory whenever making interpretations.

3. Results and Discussion

The core of Teun Van Dijk's analysis is to combine these three dimensions of discourse into a single analytical framework, namely text, social cognition, and social context (Saadillah & Haeniah, 2020). Based on data obtained from the film *Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts*, these three aspects show the representation of a woman's struggle against the patriarchal system through acts of resistance and the right to bodily autonomy.

1. Text

a. Macro Structure

Macro structure focuses on the general meaning or main discussion of a text (Fendi Setiawan et al., 2022). The main theme raised in the film *Marlina* is the resistance of women against a culture of violence and patriarchy. Marlina is a widow who lives alone in the hills of Sumba, becoming a victim of violence and rape by a group of men. However, instead of being portrayed as a passive victim, Marlina decisively kills the perpetrators of violence and then embarks on a journey to seek justice.

Table 2. Macro Structure

Violence Against Women As a Product of Patriarchy

1.



Scene Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts Minute: 22:07

In the film *Marlina*, Marlina (the female lead) interacts with Markus (the leader from a group of bandits) regarding her late husband's funeral debt. Initially, it is explained that Markus only took assets from Marlina's residence, but over time Marlina experienced sexual violence, both physical and psychological, through verbal and nonverbal actions.

Markus occupies the bedroom and tells Marlina to accompany him to sleep. Marlina, who does not want to accompany him to sleep, is forced by Markus until he slaps the right side of Marlina's face.

2.



Scene Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts
Minute: 08:18

Markus: "You are the luckiest woman. Tonight you get a bonus, seven men." Rather than merely reporting this line, the analysis should unpack its ideological mechanism. This utterance exemplifies what Van Dijk terms the ideological square: perpetrators' actions are minimized through euphemistic reframing, while the victim's position is discursively obscured. By labeling an impending gang rape as a "bonus," Markus's discourse commodifies Marlina's body, measuring her worth through the quantity of male attention rather than her autonomy. This linguistic strategy produces a discourse of female dehumanization, in which women are constructed as objects of exchange. The beneficiaries of this discourse are the male perpetrators, whose dominance is legitimized through language that frames coercion as generosity. At the level of power, this scene demonstrates how patriarchal control operates not only through physical force but through discursive normalization rendering sexual violence linguistically palatable by disguising it as a reward.

Women's Resistance and Agency

1.



Scene Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts
Minute: 25:12

Beyond describing the act, this scene should be analyzed as a reclamation of the instrument of domination. The machete, initially a symbol of the perpetrators' capacity for violence and control, is discursively repurposed as the means of their downfall. This constitutes a symbolic reversal of the power vector Van Dijk associates with control, illustrating that dominance, once seized by the object of oppression, can destabilize the very structure that produced it.

2.



Scene Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts
Minute: 15:02

The kitchen and the act of cooking represent a site historically coded as a domain of female subordination and domestic obligation. By transforming this same site into an instrument of resistance, the discourse inverts the ideological coding of domestic labor: what is conventionally represented as passive service becomes an act of lethal agency. This reversal disrupts the dominant narrative schema in which women are cast as compliant caretakers, and instead constructs a counter-discourse of covert resistance. The beneficiary of this discursive shift is Marlina herself, whose repositioning from object to agent challenges the patriarchal assumption that domestic roles preclude power.

Stigmatization of Women Who Resist

1.



Society considers Marlina "abnormal," portraying women who oppose the patriarchal system as deviants. Women are portrayed as entities that can be manipulated and controlled like commodities and have no right to determine their own lives. Marlina's form of resistance was to report the sexual violence to the police. However, Marlina did not receive any

Scene <i>Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts</i> Minute: 55:02	help, only inappropriate comments. Police: "If he was old and skinny, why did you let him rape you?"
2.  Scene <i>Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts</i> Minute: 43:52	This sentence describes an unequal social relationship where a woman is positioned as the weaker party, forced to fight, and if she doesn't fight, she is considered guilty. Marlina, who defended herself against what happened to her by killing the perpetrator, is considered a sinner.

b. Superstructure

Superstructure is the framework of a text, describing how the structure and elements of discourse are arranged in the text as a whole, illustrating the general form of a text. Superstructure explains the framework of a text or narrative flow by covering the presentation patterns that become the writer's strategy in composing a message, by determining which parts need to be emphasized at the beginning of the story and which parts should be used as the ending. This film is divided into four acts (The Robbery, The Journey, The Confession, and The Birth), which symbolically describe the process of a woman's transformation from a victim to a powerful subject.

c. Micro Structure Dimensions

1) Semantics

Micro Structure is related to how a setting navigates the direction of the audience's gaze. The setting also plays a role in investigating how someone marks the meaning of a particular phenomenon. Based on the relevance of the semantic definition to the topic, from the outset this film takes a setting that becomes the foundation for the discourse that the director wants to construct. In this regard, the setting of the film *Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts* brings the audience's perspective to the reality of gender inequality in the domestic and social spheres experienced by rural women. The arid and isolated geographical setting of Sumba becomes a metaphor for the marginalization of women who are far from access to legal, social, and economic rights. The dry and desolate landscape emphasizes Marlina's emotional isolation as a woman living alone under a patriarchal system.

Table 3. Semantics Setting

	Setting
1.  Scene <i>Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts</i> Minute: 02:46	Choosing a geographic setting far from legal, social, and economic access isn't just an aesthetic choice; it's a discourse strategy that makes women's isolation seem natural creating the impression that the absence of protective institutions (like the police or community support) is a rural reality, not the result of structural failures in the legal and social systems. This kind of discourse benefits the patriarchal status quo because it turns structural oppression into something that seems 'situational'

caused by geography, rather than by a system that leaves women unprotected.

Atmosphere

1.



Scene *Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts*
Minute: 12:43

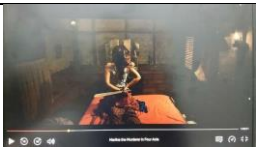
A group of men entered the house and seized Marlina's rights. That background is used to show male dominance.

Not only the setting, but details also play an important role in semantic structure. Judging from the film *Marlina*, detailed emphasis is widely used to construct a certain reputation for the main character. Marlina is described not as a hysterical, traumatized woman, but as a calm and assertive figure who takes her steps with full awareness. Details such as the scene where Marlina prepares chicken and soup for the perpetrators before the murder, or the scene where she covers Markus' head with a plastic bag, show the social irony that a woman who usually plays the role of a domestic servant is now controlling the space and situation. The highlighting of these details builds an image of a female subject who is aware of her bodily power, different from the stereotype of weak women in conventional films.

Table 4. Semantic Detail

Marlina Took Markus's Life During the Abduction of Women

1.



Scene *Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts*
Minute: 25:02

Details on Marlina's decisive and direct actions.

Women's Resistance and Agency

1.



Scene *Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts*
Minute: 55:02

Details are placed on the police's dismissive attitude.

Novi (Marlina's friend) Experienced Domestic Violence

1.



Scene *Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts*
Minute: 69:07

Details on Novi's fears and situation.

Then, the meaning is also explained in this structure. The element of meaning sees information that benefits the communicator being explicitly and clearly described. In this film, the director's intention is evident through the symbol of the head that Marlina carries throughout her journey, which is not only evidence of murder, but also a symbol of women's freedom and resistance to male domination. Through non-sensationalized imagery, Mouly Surya delivers the idea that violence against women transcends individual experiences, representing instead a systemic issue that necessitates unified opposition.

Table 5. Meaning		
Marlina is Carrying the Perpetrator's Head		
1.	 Scene <i>Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts</i> Minute: 35:00	Showing that a woman can be an active subject.
Novi Gave Birth Amidst Chaos		
1.	 Scene <i>Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts</i> Minute: 86:48	Indicating the reality that women bear structural pressure.

Additionally, preconceptions refer to unverified assumptions employed as foundations for formulating ideas. The film challenges the societal preconception that women should remain submissive, compliant, and refrain from opposing male dominance. In contrast, Marlina subverts this notion by featuring a female protagonist who assumes a position of authority. Consequently, the film's semantic elements work to deconstruct traditional narratives of female inferiority and promote fresh perspectives on women's empowerment and control over their own bodies.

Table 6. Pre-conceptions		
Speech to Novi		
1.	 Scene <i>Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts</i> Minute: 29:26	"You are a disobedient wife" (said to Novi) This sentence is an example of a patriarchal role schema that treats obedience as a moral duty for women in marriage. It creates a narrative that legitimizes a husband's control over his wife by framing her 'failure' to give birth as personal disobedience rather than a biological process beyond Novi's control. The ones benefiting from this narrative are the husband's authority structures, which get moral justification to blame the wife for something she can't control.
Initial Except		

<i>"I'm a widow, living alone."</i>	
The acknowledgment of the status of 'a widow living alone' works in two ways in discourse: first, it marks Marlina as a socially vulnerable figure according to patriarchal logic (without a male protector); second, it is precisely this acknowledgment that triggers Markus's predatory actions meaning, this discourse implicitly reveals how a woman's marital status is read as an indicator of vulnerability that can be exploited. The beneficiaries of this social scheme are the perpetrators, who gain mental justification to target unprotected women as 'safe' subjects to dominate. Ironically, Marlina's honest admission contrasts with her previous lies about being alone (as recorded in the transcript) the tension between lying and admitting can be further analyzed as a women's self-defense strategy in predatory situations, not just as a plot detail.	
1.	 Scene Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts Minute: 07:02

The Perpetrator's Words

The perpetrator said, " <i>We need women here.</i> "	
This sentence represents an explicit articulation of a patriarchal-collective ideology: using the phrase 'we need' positions the group's needs as justification for the presence (and exploitation) of women, reducing women to objects for fulfilling men's collective needs rather than subjects with their own will. This discourse structure produces normalization of collective objectification not just one actor seeing women as objects, but the sentence implies a group consensus that women's existence is legitimate to exploit collectively. It reinforces patriarchal power by distributing the legitimacy of violence collectively, blurring individual responsibility behind the 'needs of the group'.	
1.	 Scene Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts Minute: 12:48

2) Syntax

The syntax in this film shows how sentence structure reflects the comparative relationship between genders. In many scenes, the dialogue of men, especially the dominant Markus, has a structure of command, threat, or claim of ownership. In contrast, Marlina uses short and economical sentence structures. Her syntax does not indicate submission, but rather measured determination, where her actions are more dominant than her words.

Table 7. Syntax

<i>Coherence</i>	
1.	 Scene Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts Minute: 10:05 A group of men entered Marlina's house. Markus: "<i>We are ten people. We will take your livestock. Then you prepare food.</i>"
<i>Active and passive sentences</i>	

1.  Scene Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts Minute: 55:45	Police: <i>"If you were really raped, you should have come sooner..."</i> Procedural language that focuses on tool/administrative limitations, without any empathy or urgency, syntactically produces discourse of institutional impartiality, which in practice reproduces patriarchal dominance by letting justice be delayed without clear accountability.
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Negation

1.  Scene Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts Minute: 71:27	Novi who lied. Novi: <i>"I'm fine."</i>
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Minimalist syntax in films acts as a strategic tool for discourse, enabling the expression of implicit opposition to dominant power structures. Thus, the power relations in *Marlina* are not constructed through many words, but through the sharp contrast between the aggressive dialogue of the men and the strategic silence of the women.

3) Stylistics

The film's stylistic elements feature a detached, unemotional, and concise manner of speech, emblematic of Marlina's persona. Far from indicating fragility, this approach portrays a woman suppressing her pain as she reasserts authority over her physical self.

Terms like "debt," "head," and "road" serve as symbolic representations of women's lived realities. The incorporation of straightforward vocabulary underscores themes of rural life and customary practices, while simultaneously highlighting that violence against women extends beyond urban contexts, manifesting as a widespread societal issue.

The abrasive and profane dialogue employed by the male antagonists is intentionally juxtaposed against Marlina's sparing word choice, forming a stylistic device that illustrates dual realms: one of masculine domination and the other of feminine defiance.

Table 8. Stylistic

	<i>Lexicon</i>
1.  Scene Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts Minute: 44:12	Novi: <i>"You're a widow, so you should understand the situation."</i> This sentence is important to analyze lexically because the word 'should' functions as a marker of normative obligation that links a widow's status to certain expectations of understanding/tolerance toward oppressive situations. This diction implicitly repeats the same scheme as Marlina's sentence in scene 07:02 namely, that being a widow carries a social burden in the form of expectations for extra compliance or understanding of circumstances that disadvantage them. Interestingly, this sentence is spoken by Novi (another woman) to Marlina, not by a man this can be read as evidence of the internalization of patriarchal

discourse by women themselves, where women also reproduce normative schemes that oppress their peers, a phenomenon often referred to in feminist studies as internalized patriarchy. This is quite a strong point for discussion in social cognition because it shows how patriarchal schemes are not only produced by men but are also reproduced across genders.

4) *Rhetoric*

Ensure it's formal, clear, natural. Use academic tone suitable for papers. Rhetorically, the film *Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts* features an abundance of visual symbolism. A central motif is Markus's severed head, carried by Marlina in a plastic bag, which symbolizes the breakdown of patriarchal authority. Beyond serving as proof of a crime, this element acts as a rhetorical tool that consistently emphasizes women's ability to regain command over their physical selves and honor.

Another key visual element is the arid scenery of Sumba, representing the estrangement of women within a society lacking solidarity. The sequence depicting Marlina's passage along an extensive and deserted path establishes a feminist discourse, demonstrating that women's adversities frequently unfold in isolation and absence of external aid.

Table 9. Visual

Marlina rides a horse while carrying Markus's head

1.	 Scene <i>Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts</i> Minute: 46:40	The film continuously shows this object throughout Marlina's journey, and the discourse repeatedly reinforces Marlina's position as a subject who has taken control, while also challenging the audience to keep confronting the consequences of patriarchal violence that are usually made invisible in mainstream narratives.
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Expressive rhetoric, such as Marlina's blank face after killing Markus, is not intended to normalize violence, but to show that trauma does not always manifest itself in dramatic expressions, an idea that is widely discussed in contemporary feminist studies.

Table 10. Expressive

Marlina's Flat Expression While Serving Poisoned Soup

1.	 Scene <i>Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts</i> Minute: 20:20	Marlina's expression appeared flat as she served dinner to the members of the gang.
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Marlina after killing Markus

1.	 Scene <i>Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts</i> Minute: 25:18	This rhetorical element should be read as a rejection of the dominant trauma representation schemes in conventional cinema, which usually show victims with dramatic-emotional reactions. By showing calmness instead of hysteria, this discourse produces an alternative representation of women's trauma, one that doesn't need 'visible' emotional
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validation to be considered legitimate.

2. Dimensions of Social Cognition

Referring to Van Dijk's framework, social cognition is shaped through the interaction between mental schemas (person, self, role, and event schema) and discourse processing strategies (selection, reproduction, inference, and local transformation). Interview data in this study showed significant findings: both informants constructed opposing cognitive schemas regarding identical events, indicating that the film's discourse is open to multiple interpretations and is greatly influenced by each reader's ideological framework. The following is a film interpretation on mental schema.

a. Event Schema

Both informants highlighted Marlina's emotional state, but they constructed opposing event schemas. Informant 1 interpreted Marlina's calmness as a suppression of active fear:

"Fear. [...] The following scenes show Marlina's calm attitude, but in every action, there is fear within it."

In contrast, Informant 2 rejected the premise of fear and constructed a clinical dissociation schema:

"Emotional numbness and dissociation due to severe trauma. [...] Her emotions are completely drained, leaving only emptiness and a mechanical instinct to survive without normal emotional expression."

This difference shows two different cognitive strategies: Informant 1 makes inferences from general social norms (a woman alone = vulnerable = fearful), while Informant 2 applies a clinical psychological framework (numbness, dissociation) as a lens for interpretation showing that the informant's mental schema is also shaped by the psychological knowledge/literacy they bring while watching, not purely from the film text itself.

b. Self Schema

The sharpest contrast appears in the interpretation of Marlina's act of killing. Informant 1 constructs a framework of agency and empowerment:

"A sense of relief that Marlina could get out of that situation, along with a sense of satisfaction."

"[...] there's also a form of struggle. Marlina's actions [...] were done to fight for her right not to be hurt and not to be seen as 'cheap.'"

Informant 2 explicitly rejects this empowerment framework and constructs a scheme of despair and loss of agency:

"Horror and deep tragedy. [...] There's no sense of satisfaction, only sadness over the destruction of humanity in that extreme situation."

"I don't quite agree if this is directly called a 'planned rights struggle.' Marlina acted because she was trapped with no choice. [...] This is despair that crosses moral boundaries because formal law is absent."

This conflict is an important finding for the radical feminist framework in this study: Informant 1 represents an interpretation aligned with the radical feminist thesis (women actively reclaiming control over their bodies and rights), while Informant 2 represents an interpretation closer to a fatalistic structural critique that Marlina's actions are not a victory, but evidence of a system failure that forces women to cross moral boundaries. These two perspectives don't actually cancel each other out; instead, they show two sides of the same critique of patriarchy: one emphasizes women's capacity for resistance, the other emphasizes the structural conditions that force that resistance to happen.

c. Person Schema

The symbol of Markus's head also carries a contrasting meaning. Informant 1 interpreted it as a symbol of reclaiming power:

"This scene also shows that Marlina has taken back control over her power and her body. Besides that, it can also show Marlina's form of revenge against the rapist."

Informant 2, on the other hand, saw the same symbol as a representation of an unbroken traumatic attachment:

"The head that is carried everywhere symbolizes that even though the perpetrator is physically dead, the shadow of sexual violence trauma will continue to linger [...] The head is a symbol that she is trapped with her memories, not just a symbol of victory or power."

This is one of the strongest findings in this study because it shows that a single symbolic element can produce two completely opposite mental models one based on a victory/liberation scheme, and one based on a trap/permanent burden scheme. It supports Van Dijk's argument that social cognition is subjective and shaped by each individual's experiences and socialization, rather than a single inherent meaning in the text.

d. Local Transformation

Regarding the question about changes in perspective after watching, both informants showed different types of cognitive response patterns. Informant 1 experienced a genuine schema transformation:

"Yes, my perspective changed to a better understanding. [...] women who experience sexual violence have to struggle twice as hard. Besides surviving the violence, women also have to try to convince the world that the violence they experienced really did happen."

Meanwhile, Informant 2 did not go through a transformation, but rather a reinforcement of an existing schema (reproduction), a different cognitive pattern:

"My perspective didn't completely change, but this film strengthened my belief that geographical and structural isolation really causes victims of violence to lose their agency, pushing them to take extreme actions beyond normal human limits just to survive."

This difference in cognitive patterns is methodologically important: it shows that a film's discourse doesn't impact viewers' social cognition in a uniform or automatic way. Informant 1, who seems to start watching with an unsolidified initial schema regarding sexual violence issues, actively undergoes a schema transformation. On the other hand, Informant 2, who already seems to have a well-developed structural analytical framework, uses the film to confirm the schema they already hold.

e. Memory and Social Cognition Strategy

Besides mental schemas, another important element in social cognition is memory, which consists of short-term memory and long-term memory with long-term memory being the most relevant in shaping social cognition, because this is where accumulated social knowledge and experiences over time are stored and used to interpret new information. In this study, long-term memory clearly distinguishes how the two informants make sense of the film: Informant 2, for example, consistently interpreted events in the film through pre-established structural knowledge frameworks (geographical isolation, state void, gender power inequality), indicating that their interpretation was shaped by long-term knowledge of structural issues stored before watching the film, rather than knowledge that was newly formed instantly (short-term memory) while watching.

The four social cognition strategies identified by Van Dijk, include selection, reproduction, inference, and local transformation were all found in this study's data. Selection appeared when Informant 1 specifically highlighted the position of a 'woman alone' as a key element of fear, choosing that detail from the whole narrative to support her vulnerability schema. Reproduction appeared when Informant 2 stated that the film 'reinforced my existing beliefs,' showing how old schemas are reproduced rather than replaced. Inference appeared when both informants deduced the motives behind Marlina's actions self-defense and the fight for rights according to Informant 1, desperation with no choice according to Informant 2 without either of them receiving an explicit explanation of those motives from the film's dialogue. Finally, local transformation was most evident in Informant 1, who explicitly mentioned a shift in her perspective after watching the film.

3. Social Context

The social context within Van Dijk's framework reveals the intended meaning while also explaining how power is constructed through discursive practices and legitimacy. Two key points analyzed are the exercise of power and access influencing discourse. Similar to the dimension of social cognition, the two informants once again show contrasting readings of the social reality reflected in this film providing a richer picture of how social context is interpreted differently by individuals with different ideological frameworks.

Exercise of Power

On the issue of law enforcement, Informant 1 interprets state power as an institution that is formally adequate but weak in implementation:

"Actually, legally, women like Marlina have received sufficient protection. However, in practice, that protection is still not fully adequate. This can happen because many victims still do not know how to use the protection access provided."

On the other hand, Informant 2 constructs a scheme of state power that is much sharper not just weak, but potentially repressive and misguided:

"There's absolutely no place for it, and the law will immediately criminalize it. In the real world, our rigid legal system would instantly label Marlina's act as a premeditated, brutal murder without even considering the trauma context or gender power imbalance behind it."

This difference shows two different models of power in the cognition of the two informants: Informant 1 sees state power as a power that fails to protect (a power of protection that is unfulfilled), while Informant 2 sees it as a power that actively dominates (a power of control that actually targets the victim). This is relevant to Van Dijk's concept that power is not always in the form of direct physical control but also includes control over the narrative of truth. In this case, who has the right to be defined as the "perpetrator" versus the "victim" by the formal legal system.

At the community level, informal social power (not the state) is also understood differently. Informant 1 highlighted power based on individual stigmatization:

"Women who become victims are often still blamed, with reasons like their clothing being too revealing or their reactions during sexual violence being seen as not resisting."

Informant 2 highlighted power based on collective bystander complicity:

"...how the surrounding community or neighbors often choose to stay silent and turn a blind eye to domestic violence happening right in front of their houses because they consider it a private matter."

Both forms of power, either active stigmatization and passive allowance. Both can serve to perpetuate patriarchal dominance, though through different mechanisms: one through direct judgment of the victim, the other through non-involvement that indirectly protects the perpetrator.

a. Access Influences Discourse

When it comes to access to public discourse and social recognition, Informant 1 highlights how society gives a divided judgment toward women who resist:

"...for some people, it is worth appreciating because they are brave enough to fight back and stand up for themselves. However, there are still some people in society who judge that what the victim did was excessive to the point of violating norms..."

Informant 2 paints a clearer picture of the social labeling that corners them:

"Society tends to immediately give a bad label or call the woman 'wild,' 'cruel,' or 'deviant from her nature' because she dares to break the male dominance chain in a radical way."

The difference in labeling intensity is important: Informant 1 still sees a space for appreciation alongside judgment, whereas Informant 2 emphasizes that access to public discourse tends to be dominated by narratives that disqualify women who resist radically a form of restricted access to social legitimacy for women who don't fit into the passive 'ideal victim' mold. When it comes to structural criticism of the state, both informants actually converge, even if they stress different aspects. Informant 1 highlights the critique of geographical isolation:

"The injustices experienced by women as victims usually occur in remote areas and they don't have access to adequate social or legal protection."

Informant 2 expands this critique into a more explicitly conceptualized idea, namely 'state absence':

"The main message is a critique of 'state absence.' The government needs to realize that neglecting security and justice infrastructure in remote areas can force citizens to revert to primitive jungle law to solve crimes."

This convergence is analytically important: although the two informants differ sharply in how they interpret Marlina's psychology and actions (the social cognition dimension), they both agree at the social context level that women's access to state protection in peripheral areas is the root of structural problems. This shows that even though social cognition is individual and variable, the socio-structural context surrounding the production and reception of this film is understood relatively consistently by both informants strengthening the validity of the argument that issues of access and structural power in this film it is indeed conveyed effectively to the audience, regardless of their different psychological interpretations of Marlina's character.

Forms of Radical Feminist Discourse in the Film Dialogue "Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts"

Findings at the text level show that the discourse of radical feminism in this film is constructed through four interrelated main discursive mechanisms. First, at the macrostructure level, the radical feminist discourse is manifested through the overarching theme of women's resistance to violence and patriarchal structures, in line with the ideological and sociological concepts in Millett's framework (2016) where women's roles, temperament, and status are constructed through patriarchal socialization, but are later deconstructed through Marlina's actions rejecting a submissive position.

Second, at the semantic and syntactic microstructure level, there is a consistent contrast pattern between men's language structures (imperative, threatening, claiming ownership such as in the utterances "*We need women here*" and "*You are the luckiest woman... seven men*") and Marlina's language structure which is minimalist yet firm. This pattern represents Millett's coercion dimension, a relationship built through threats and information power, which is then turned around through Marlina's nonverbal actions (poisoning, beheading) as a form of resistance that actually 'speaks' louder than the verbal dialogue itself. Third, the rhetorical elements, especially the symbol of Markus' head and Marlina's flat expression construct a radical feminist discourse that challenges the conventional representation of sexual violence victims as people who have to appear to suffer dramatically to be considered legitimate victims.

These findings expand on the results of Sumakud & Septyana (2020), who used Sara Mills' approach on the same film. Sara Mills categorized discourse participants simply into subject-object positions, concluding that Marlina, as the subject, shows resistance through anarchic actions, while the object is positioned as a supporting figure. Although these findings are consistent with our research at the textual level, Van Dijk's approach allows for deeper analysis: instead of stopping at "who is the subject and who is the object," this study can reveal why certain linguistic patterns (syntactic contrasts, choice of words like "head," "debt," "road") specifically function to reproduce or challenge patriarchal ideology at a more granular language structure level, a dimension untouched by Mills' subject-object framework.

a. Social Cognition Interpretation of Radical Feminism Discourse

The sharp contrast between the two informants. Informant 1 who constructs a scheme of empowerment and rights struggle (in line with the core thesis of radical feminism that women can reclaim control over their bodies and fate), versus Informant 2 who constructs a scheme of structural despair and traumatic dissociation (emphasizing that Marlina's extreme actions are the result of systemic failure, not personal triumph) shows that radical feminist discourse in this film operates on two complementary levels of meaning: the agentic level (women as actors who resist) and the structural level (women as victims of the system forced past moral boundaries).

The findings regarding long-term memory are also significant, these differences in interpretation are partly shaped by the knowledge frameworks each informant had before watching. Informant 2, for example, consistently applies a structural analysis framework (state absence, power inequality) which indicates literacy regarding previously formed social critical discourse.

This is where the main theoretical contribution of this research lies. Both Taqwa (2023) and Sumakud & Septyana (2020) didn't include the social cognition dimension in their analysis at all. They stopped at a textual analysis of 'how Marlina is represented,' without touching on how that discourse is interpreted differently by audiences. Jufanny & Girsang's (2020) study on the film *Posesif* did use Van Dijk's framework, but it focused on the social cognition of the discourse producers (the director and screenplay writer), not on the audience's social cognition. This research fills that gap by showing that the audience's social cognition leads to significant variations in interpretation of the same ideological constructions, a new insight that neither Sara Mills' purely textual approach nor Van Dijk's earlier study, which only looked at the production side of discourse, could reach.

b. Analysis of the Social Context of Radical Feminist Discourse

Unlike the social cognition dimension, which shows sharp divergence between informants, the social context dimension actually shows convergence. This is seen from the fact that both informants agree that geographic isolation, weak law enforcement in peripheral areas, and social stigma toward sexual violence victims are structural realities accurately reflected in this film and still relevant to the current conditions in Indonesian society. This convergence is methodologically important: it shows that the structural elements in the film's discourse tend to be understood relatively uniformly by viewers, unlike the psychological-interpretive elements, which are much more influenced by personal ideological frameworks. The findings about the concept of 'state vacuum' articulated by Informant 2 also reinforce the class and economic dimensions in Millett's (2016) framework showing that the oppression of women in this film is not just about interpersonal gender relations, but also about economic-legal access which is structurally uneven between central and peripheral regions.

4. Conclusion

This study set out to examine how radical feminist discourse is constructed in *Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts* through Van Dijk's three-dimensional framework of critical discourse analysis.

First, regarding the forms of radical feminist discourse present in the film's dialogue, this study finds that the resistance discourse is built through four interconnected textual mechanisms: the big-picture framing of women's struggle against patriarchal violence, a consistent syntactic contrast between the commanding, threatening words of male characters and Marlina's minimalist but determined speech, symbolic reversal of tools of domination (like the machete and the kitchen being turned into a site of resistance), and rhetorical techniques especially the severed head motif and Marlina's emotionless expression that challenge traditional portrayals of the 'legitimate' victim. Altogether, these mechanisms align with several of Millett's (2016) ideas about radical feminism, particularly the ideological, sociological, and coercive sides of patriarchal control, while also creating a counter-narrative that shifts women from being objects to being agents.

Second, when it comes to understanding social thinking, this study shows that radical feminist ideas in the movie don't create one clear meaning for everyone. The two people interviewed had very different mental takeaways from the same scenes; one saw it as empowering, in line with radical feminism's idea of reclaiming control over one's body, while the other focused on despair and feeling powerless because of bigger systemic issues. This shows that social understanding works on a personal level, shaped by what each viewer already knows, rather than everyone getting the same message from the film. Both viewpoints, though, still fit into a bigger critique of patriarchal dominance, just differing on whether the resistance is seen as a personal victory or a sign of systemic violence.

Third, with respect to the social context analysis, this study finds that the exercise of power and unequal access to legal and social protection as depicted through the film's remote setting, institutional apathy, and pervasive victim-blaming reflect structural realities that both informants recognized as consistent with conditions in Indonesian society. Unlike the divergence observed in social cognition, the social context dimension revealed convergence between informants, suggesting that the structural critique embedded in the film's discourse is communicated relatively consistently to audiences, even as its psychological and ideological interpretation remains highly individualized.

This study contributes to feminist communication scholarship by demonstrating that Van Dijk's sociocognitive model of critical discourse analysis offers analytical reach beyond what purely textual approaches, such as Sara Mills' subject-object framework, can provide. While prior studies on this film (Taqwa, 2023; Sumakud & Septyana, 2020) successfully identified patterns of resistance at the textual level, they did not account for how such discourse is variably interpreted by audiences, nor how structural context shapes the conditions under which that discourse is produced and received. By incorporating audience social cognition an element largely absent even from prior Van Dijk-based studies on Indonesian film (Jufanny & Girsang, 2020), which focused solely on discourse producers this study extends the applicability of Van Dijk's model to audience reception research within feminist media studies, illustrating that ideological texts can simultaneously sustain multiple, even contradictory, interpretive positions without undermining their underlying critique of patriarchal structures.

This study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the analysis is confined to a single film, which limits the generalizability of findings regarding radical feminist discourse construction to other cinematic works or genres. Second, the audience social cognition data were drawn from only two informants; while their contrasting interpretations proved analytically valuable in illustrating the individualized nature of social cognition, this sample size cannot be considered representative of broader audience reception patterns, and the interview data are treated as illustrative rather than generalizable evidence. Third, as the researchers themselves occupy a position informed by gender studies, there remains a possibility of interpretive bias in the textual analysis, which was mitigated only through consistent reference back to Van Dijk's theoretical framework rather than through independent inter-coder verification.

Future studies are encouraged to extend this analytical framework through comparative research designs, examining how radical feminist discourse is constructed across multiple films with differing social and cultural settings, or across different feminist theoretical lenses (liberal, socialist, or intersectional feminism) applied to the same text to identify which framework yields the most explanatory power. Additionally, future research employing a

larger and more demographically diverse sample of audience informants would allow for a more robust investigation of how social cognition patterns vary across gender, educational background, and prior exposure to feminist discourse. Finally, further inquiry into the discourse production side through direct engagement with filmmakers, as opposed to secondary interview data would allow for a more complete application of Van Dijk's model across both the production and reception ends of discourse.

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