

The Structural Interpretation of Power and Analysis from Multiple Perspectives in The Hunger Games Film Series

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Abstract. After the release of The Hunger Games film series, it sparked a heated and extensive discussion. Many studies suggest that The Hunger Games has rewritten the definition of feminist cinema. Most studies believe that female characters such as the female lead in movies subvert traditional female images.; There is also a type of research that revolves around new worldviews and war views in movies. Unlike Hollywood style heroism, movies do not rely on unnatural powers, making them more in line with the real world and triggering people's thinking. This article aims to analyze the ideas conveyed behind feminism and post-colonialism in this series of films. By deeply analyzing the plot and details of the film, combined with existing research theories, this paper analyzes the foreshadowing of the struggle for feminist and postcolonial discourse power buried in the film, as well as how these contents resist, strike, and weaken hegemonism. The specific plot of this movie is the success of resistance, which also has an inspiring effect in reality, adding a profound influence and significant feature to feminism and post-colonialism.

Keywords: Hunger Games, feminism, post-colonialism.

1. Introduction

The Hunger Games film series is adapted from Susan Collins' novel of the same name. The first novel was published in January 2010, and the adapted film was released in 2012. *The Hunger Games* series, as the first film with a female protagonist, opened up a new path in the film market and inspired women's expression and cognition in movies [1]. The praise and portrayal of feminism in movies are the main elements that spark discussion. In addition, research from different perspectives such as war perspective, war trauma writing, mythological influence, and cultural differences has injected new vitality into this work, especially postcolonial theory, providing a new perspective for the interpretation of *The Hunger Games* [2]. *The Hunger Games* film series is also a product of post-colonialism. In this modern society that focuses on the individual and emphasizes humanistic care, the dual attributes of feminism and postcolonialism portrayed in the film satirize and resist hegemonism. Specifically, the former challenges patriarchy and male discourse power, while the latter challenges hegemony. Their essence is consistent, that is, resistance to hegemonism. This article will use *The Hunger Games* film series as a case study to analyze and interpret the resistance and weakening of feminism and postcolonialism against hegemonism.

2. The Manifestation of Feminism and Post-Colonialism in Films

2.1. Movie Plot

The work tells the story of the establishment of a new country (Panem Kingdom) based on the location and culture of the United States. The country was divided into a capital (Capitol) and 12 jurisdictional areas, with significant material and cultural differences. Great division. The new regime regulations issued by the capital city stipulate that the 12 regions under its jurisdiction must pay tribute to young men and women every year to participate in a live TV program called "Hunger Games". All contestants will fight to the death, and the remaining winner will become very wealthy. The female protagonist Katniss was chosen, and she challenges the powerful in the game with her strength and courage, leading her companions to win the game together and subverting the tradition

of previous years. People who were in suffering and oppression were inspired by it, and under the leadership of Katniss, they gradually overthrew the oppressive rule.

2.2. Feminism

The first wave of feminism occurred in the late 19th century to the 1960s, during which various social progress movements and social, political, and economic reforms emerged in the United States. Under this influence, the initial feminist pursuit was more focused on the equality of various rights between women and men, such as women's right to participate in politics, education, work, elections, and so on. In the subsequent wave of feminism, the renowned feminist scholar Julia Kristeva pointed out in her book "Women's Time" that there are differences between men and women, both physically and psychologically. Ignoring these differences and blindly demanding equality is not advisable. Kristeva believes that it is not about changing patriarchy, but about joining it. Feminism emphasizes equality rather than privilege. Patriarchal society requires women to serve and obey men, but the advanced point of feminism is to demand that men and women maintain equality under certain conditions. In this series of movies, there is no privilege given to the female lead. Not only the female lead, but almost all female characters that appear have broken and subverted the image of male superiority and female inferiority, no longer serving as models of gentleness, obedience, and virtuous wives and mothers. The female protagonist took on the role of supporting the family after her father's death. She was skilled in hunting and using bows and arrows, representing that sports were no longer exclusive to men. In the movie, she is the leader of the rebel army of Panem, and she flexibly enters the forbidden zone of the forest. This rebellious and rebellious spirit, which is unyielding to anyone, is different from the traditional female image. The younger sister of the female protagonist, Primrose, focuses on portraying her transformation from weakness to bravery, and ultimately, she becomes an outstanding rebel medical staff, demonstrating that women can also take on important responsibilities and exert their strength. Similarly, the highest leader of the rebel army, Koin, is a female leader, and the new ruler who overthrew the old regime of the Kingdom of Mercy is the black woman, Paylor. This also shows that the author believes that important leadership positions can also be held by women.

Gayatri C. Spivak pointed out that people in the Third World are marginalized, subordinate, and seen as "others" who are different from themselves. And among them, third world women have become a silent group due to the suppression of dual power discourse. In this series of movies, the female protagonist is born in the poorest 12th district. Among her companions, Lulu from the 11th district and the newly elected leader of the Benevolent State, Pella, are also female characters. They choose to use their perspectives to narrate the story on camera, and their identities can be mapped to the voices and symbols of third world women in the real world.

2.3. Post-Colonialism

Post-colonialism emerged in the 1970s, and the 2012 film series "The Hunger Games" was a product of the development of postcolonial theory. According to the postcolonial perspective, Western thought and culture, as well as the values and traditions of its literature, and even various forms of postmodernism, are imbued with a strong sense of national superiority. Therefore, Western thought, and culture are always considered to occupy a dominant position in world culture. In contrast, non-Western Third World or Eastern traditions have been marginalized. Or occasionally play a role as the "other" relative to the West [3]. In The Hunger Games, the Kingdom of Panem is like a world, with Caput playing the role of a colonial power (i.e. the Western world), oppressing and ruling over the other twelve regions in terms of system, culture, and ideology [2].

Postcolonial theory originates from a reflection on Western colonial history, focusing on the unequal distribution of power in colonial and colonized relationships, as well as the resulting cultural conflicts and identity reshaping. These theories provide new theoretical tools for understanding the power relations in movies, especially the examination of the congressional district as a power subject, and how characters in the drama seek survival and resistance in the complex relationships of colonization and colonization, upper and lower classes. Loyal host Cesar Freeman's words from the

metropolitan area: 'Over 100000 people are working to get a glimpse of this year's Tributes. And the sponsors get to see the Tributes for the first time. The importance of this moment cannot be overstated. "This reflects that the tribute from the twelve districts is just a plaything for the entertainment of the urban area, and they disdain the tribute, believing that they are always superior to the oppressed people. The hosting of the 'Hunger Games' is a day of hardship for the twelve districts, causing families to break down and people to feel anxious and frustrated. However, for the capital district, it is an incredibly exciting entertainment activity. In *Hunger Games 3: Mocking Birds (Part 2)*, President Snow, the ruler of the Kingdom of Shehui, finally reveals his true feelings to the public: "Our goodness is not like us. They do not share our values. They have never known our comfort and our philosophy. And they despise us for it. Make no mistake. They are not coming to liberate us. They are coming to destroy our way of life. "Every move and gesture exudes a strong sense of superiority.

Postcolonialism emphasizes the protest against colonizers and the restoration of self-subjectivity, constantly striving to make its own region no longer "silent" and rebuilding its discourse power. However, the process of rebuilding subjectivity is often chaotic and confused, requiring constant resistance against authority and oppressive forces [4]. In the first installment, the female protagonist Katniss volunteered to replace her sister. After listening to Katniss' touching speech in "The Hunger Games 2: Spark," there were multiple scenes where the same action appeared. In the original work, it was written as follows: "At first, it was one person, then another, and finally almost everyone raised their left hand. They placed the middle three fingers on their lips and then pointed them at me... It meant gratitude, admiration, and saying goodbye to the loved ones." This action symbolized silent resistance to cruel hunger games, even the capital, and rulers, and was the gaze of the colonized towards the colonizers. From the perspective of postcolonialism, Caput is like an oppressor, while the other twelve districts are objects of oppression and enslavement. Kapit deprived the people of twelve districts of their right to speak through the operation of power discourse, and they had no right to express their dissatisfaction and voices in front of the public [2].

3. Multi-Perspective Interpretation in Movies

3.1. The Role of Feminism

The wise and brave female protagonist Katniss shoots and kills the hegemonic ruler Snow with an arrow, and then a new wise black woman ruler Pella is elected by managers who support peace and equality, representing the end of hegemonism and power politics.

Feminist writer Elena Ferrante showed a clear feminist tendency in interviews, and the two female characters she portrayed in the "Naples Quartet" also have a strong sense of femininity and self-awareness. They refer to each other, assist each other, and fight to the death for survival throughout their lives [5]. In the movie, there are many scenes of "girls help girls". In the setting of the character's background, the female protagonist's family loses the only male pillar, her father, so she takes on the responsibility of raising her mother and sister. It can be seen as a microcosm of the family, reflecting the social operation of denying and challenging the male centered patriarchal system. In *The Hunger Games*, Lulu, Effie Trench, and Joanna, as black girls from the Third World, white women from the Congressional District, and champions of *The Hunger Games*, respectively, have helped the female protagonist Katniss. They also symbolize women from different classes, whether they are from the bottom, top, or same level, they are willing to support and help the female protagonist. This unity between girls breaks the stereotype of "women's opinion" and "gossipy women" that belittle female images. Not only can boys have brotherhood, but girls can also unite, understand the big picture, and resist and accomplish the same thing together.

The resistance to feminism is reflected in the transformation of understanding and thinking about gender relations. Kristi Loobeek discusses the embodiment of feminism throughout *The Hunger Games*, especially in the lead female character Katniss Everdeen, and argues that Everdeen can be seen as a manifestation of third-wave feminism in its fluidity of sexuality and support of female empowerment. Loobeek also advocates a further study on the male protagonist Peeta who shows

many feminine features, which can broaden gender studies [6]. There is a traditional impression of "polygamy," but in this series of films, women's views on polyamorous situations, marriage, and other sexual relationships are indirectly mentioned. The female protagonist had no choice but to form a couple with tribute from the same district in the Hunger Games, but in their hometown of the 12th district, the female protagonist already has a family like boyfriend. In the public eye, the mainstream of "palace intrigue" dramas is usually due to the inclusion of multiple wives and concubines, and this drama reverses gender and depicts the thinking of girls in the face of polyamorous situations. In the movie, there is no melodramatic plot of two men fighting for favor from beginning to end, or the female lead "bringing both of them into the harem", which means that there is no pathological catering to the simple matrilineal social system centered on women. If this only turns the movie into a "pleasure story" for women, then the form of hegemony will still exist, just changing from male to female. What the movie aims to convey and objectively depict is the widespread existence of multiple pursuers, regardless of gender, and the need to present equality and respect for individuals.

In the beginning, the female lead actively expresses to her boyfriend that she does not want children, while the male partner wants children, demonstrating the trend of declining female fertility in the current era. The willingness of men to have children is higher than that of women, and the cost of childbirth is different between men and women. Childbirth will bring career interruption, glass ceiling effect, and childbirth punishment to women, which may be the reason for the difference in fertility willingness between men and women [7]. In addition to considering material conditions, in certain environments, if women believe that the results of education cannot bring happiness, they can only choose to curb fertility from the source, which is also the most intuitive resistance to hegemonism.

3.2. The Role of Postcolonialism

There are two representative figures of hegemonism in the film. The first one is President Snow, who oppressed the supporters of the Hunger Games who had favored the Panem for many years. His characteristic is to choose to ignore the suffering of the working people at the bottom to satisfy himself and his colleagues' enjoyment. As soon as there is opposition in each district, we will kill them to the death. The second is the commander-in-chief, Koin, who led the rebel army against Snow's tyranny. "... She never liked you. She doesn't like anybody, Either she can't control... One way or another, this war is going to come to an end. They promised a free election. Maybe she's starting 'to see you as a threat.' At the end of 'The Hunger Games 3: Mockingjay (Part 2)', Koin drops bombs into the crowd, hoping Snow's children will continue to play the Hunger Games, etc., all of which indicates that she doesn't care about the lives of innocent people but just wants to enjoy herself as a hegemonic ruler. One characteristic of the ruling process was that the connections between the districts were cut off, and there was only one railway connecting all the districts from the capital to the first to the twelfth districts. At the same time, news was also blocked by the capital. In the process of fighting for freedom, the rebel army must first awaken and rebuild the people's independent consciousness step by step. In the initial capital, they used various excuses to reverse the order of priorities, believing that the revolution of the rebel army led to poverty and hardship in various places. "I am done being a piece in his game. District 12, District 2. We do not fight. Except the one the Capitol gave us. Why are you fighting the rebels? You're neighbors. You're family.". This seems to be an activity in the cultural field, but fundamentally it is a political activity. The struggle in the cultural field is essentially the anti-cultural hegemony struggle of oppressed, excluded, and ruled "marginalized" groups on the edge of society. It is to replace the distortion of one's own mistakes by the ruling class and mainstream culture with a more authentic and correct "representation" of oneself and one's relationship with others [8].

In the process of colonial rule, emphasizing the confidence and superiority of one's own culture while belittling the culture of the colonized is a means and way of governance. Said first took a multicultural stance and adopted a cultural "hybridization" strategy to oppose cultural hegemony. He emphasized the importance of adhering to the position of cultural diversity and hybridization and

regarded this position as an effective way to break free from cultural hegemony [9]. In the movie, the chattering bird brooch brought by the female protagonist from the 12th district to the capital city is a cultural hybridization and implantation, showcasing the characteristics of the 12th district to the capital city and showcasing them to the people of the whole country through the city and hunger games. This is a symbol of cultural resistance to hegemony and the struggle for cultural independence in colonized areas. In the subsequent movie plot, the rebel army also seized on the characteristic of chirping birds as a symbol and signal of rebellion. In the later stages of the war between the rebel army and the capital city, the leader of the rebel army, Koin, repeatedly organized Katniss to shoot promotional videos, continuously strengthening the cultural confidence of the masses, achieving the restoration and reconstruction of local traditional culture, and laying a solid foundation for the later resistance against the colonizers in the capital city.

These behaviors even gradually accumulate unconsciously, eventually reaching the level of a powerful resistance and counterattack by the colonized. In the movie, Katniss and her companions successfully win the hearts of the people, lead the rebel army to victory, and personally end the life of the hegemonic ruler, becoming a rebellion against hegemonism.

4. Discussion

In reality, there is neither such a vicious hunger game nor the need to solve hegemonism and power politics through killing. The methods used by feminism and postcolonialism to consolidate their discourse power, in reality, are "dissolving the center" and "diversification". By comparing the original works, it is found that the novel has many delicate psychological descriptions, and the film's shots have infectious and impactful power, which can directly bring people emotional value: anger towards the congressional district, sympathy for the impoverished and underprivileged people, and fear of killing. The alienation of time and space often brings visual sensory impact and can also make the audience feel the philosophical and fate reflections in the text [10]. Focusing the camera on these sharp contradictions amplifies the hidden social issues in reality and further conveys deeper ideas. In the plot of this movie, the female protagonist plays the role of a "Mockingjay" in Panem and the rebel army, and this movie also plays the role of a "tongue learning bird" in reality. Just like the saying in the film 'Fire is catching', it has an inspiring effect on feminism and postcolonialism. And multiple news reports indicate that the movie did indeed have a positive impact. The Hunger Games promoted the rise of female archery. After the release of the first Hunger Games movie, many archery vendors experienced a significant increase in business, with their courses fully booked and their recurve bows out of stock for a long time [11]. In a 2016 report, about half of the female archers surveyed were influenced by "The Hunger Games" and started engaging in this sport [12].

In the fast-paced era, we should not only focus on short, flat, and fast-paced film and television works but also on more profound and excellent works that can explain valuable and meaningful truths in a simple and understandable way. Especially, we should pay attention to the difficulties and pain points of vulnerable groups, and stimulate people's resonance and thinking.

5. Conclusion

This film is not only a product of the times but also promotes and advances women's independence and liberation. The research findings of this study indicate that feminism and postcolonialism have resisted and weakened hegemonism, leading to the conclusion that films, as cultural carriers, have stimulated and diffused the development of feminist and postcolonial ideas, thereby promoting resistance and weakening against hegemonism. This study provides valuable reference significance for future research in this direction, mainly affecting the analysis of films containing feminist and postcolonial elements, which only express a single praise or criticism, "yes" or "no", and accuracy or inaccuracy, but ignore the role of these works in resisting and weakening the "dissolution center".

Future research should focus more on exploring and encouraging feminist and postcolonial works for in-depth exploration.

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