

E-ISSN : 2962 - 8199

P-ISSN : 2961 - 7502



MUSLIM ENGLISH LITERATURE

Vol 2, Number 1

2023

Published by English Literature Department
Faculty of Adab and Humanities
Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta
Indonesia



Jl. Tarumanegara, Pisangan, Ciputat, Tangerang Selatan, Banten 15419



<https://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/mel/index>



journal.mel@uinjkt.ac.id



Muslim English Literature

Vol 2, Number 1, 2023

E-ISSN : 2962 - 8199

P-ISSN : 2961 - 7502

EDITORIAL TEAM OF MUSLIM ENGLISH LITERATURE

Vol 2, Number 1, 2023

Editor-in-Chief

Hasnul Insani Djohar

Managing Editor

Fauziyyah Imma R.

Editors

Tuty Handayani

Elve Oktafiyani

Febriyanti Lestari

Winda Setia Sari

Alfi Syahriyani

Nina Farlina

Akhmad Zakky

Sari Fitria

International Editorial Board

Peter Morey

Md Mahmudul Hasan

Danielle Haque

Doaa Omran

Önder Çakirtaş

Carimo Mohamed

Design Graphic and Layouter

Agung Mubarok

Nafisanda Reno Naufal

Muslim English Literature is a double-blind peer-reviewed open access journal published by the English Literature Department, Faculty of Adab and Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. It specializes in Muslim World Literature including US-Muslim, British-Muslim, Asian-Muslim, and other Muslim cultures and literature; and is intended to communicate original research and current issues on the subject. This journal warmly welcomes contributions from scholars of related disciplines, including Linguistics and Cultural Studies related to the Muslim world.

Editorial Office:

Muslim English Literature, English Literature Department,
Faculty of Adab and Humanities, Syarif Hidayatullah State
Islamic University of Jakarta. Jl. Tarumanegara, Pisangan,
Ciputat, Tangerang Selatan, Banten 15419.

E-mail: journal.mel@uinjkt.ac.id

Website: <https://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/mel/index>

MUSLIM ENGLISH LITERATURE

VOL. 2, Number 1, 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 01** **Deconstructing Hijabs in Sabyñ Javeri's Hijabistan**
Shenaz Parween
-
- 11** **Gender and Power Relations in Aisha Saeed's Amal Unbound**
Albi Fahri, Ida Rosida
-
- 23** **Hybrid Narratives: Exploring Cultural Fusion in The Goats in the Cemetery by Kanogpong Songsompun**
Amelia Gustiari, Sulastri, Zurmailis
-
- 36** **Love Expressions in Children's Poems before and after 2000**
Syahrani Junaid, Aan Mujizat, Sumarni
-
- 51** **Retaining the Readability of Cultural Words Translation: The Case of Indonesian Subtitles in Breadwinner Film**
M. Agus Suriadi, Alma Nadia Anwar
-
- 65** **The Dynamics of Communication in Ruqyah Sharia on Youtube: A Pragmatics Analysis of Interactions between Ustadz and the Patients**
Darsita Suparno, Akhmad Saehudin, Zam Zam Nurhuda, Mukhammad Lutfi, Sabrina Maharani, Vina Ulva Mahfudhoh
-

Gender and Power Relations in Aisha Saeed's *Amal Unbound*

Albi Fahri, Ida Rosida

Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia

Email: albi.fahri18@mhs.uinjkt.ac.id, idarosida@uinjkt.ac.id

Abstract

This paper discusses the power relation and gender in the novel *Amal Unbound* by Aisha Saeed (2018). This study focuses on the four main characters, Amal, Abu, Jawad, and Baji, in which Abu, Amal's father, has a relationship that puts her as a subordinate one as well as Jawad, who has the power from his economic aspect. The restriction experienced by a female character, Amal, became a gender issue regarding the oppression of women, which must be surrendered to certain power circumstances. This research explores the power relations between female and male characters and their effect on gender. This study uses a qualitative method and applies Michel Foucault's theory of power relations and the concept of gender. The results show that Amal's resistance is echoed in the desire to destroy the power structure that put Jawad as the highest authority holder. Amal prioritizes resistance to free her choice in her gender identity, and power relations are obliged to change with the resistance. Power in this discourse installs itself and produces real material effects, which social power structure and the prescribed gender norms also affect the relationship between characters. Power relations exist as the main female character, Amal has a certain relationship with the other main male characters and another female character. The power comes from the relation then brings oppression toward women. Power is compiled, established, and realized through certain knowledge and discourse. In addition, Amal's appearance, which represents her gender identity, also indicates resistance toward the oppression she experienced. To conclude, subordination and oppression toward women are undeniable, as men are socially and culturally designed to be powerful. Meanwhile, women are powerless.

Keywords: *Foucault, Gender identity, Gender Oppression, Power Relation, Resistance*

Introduction

Power and gender exist in every aspect of social life. Foucault argues that power is not displayed from the outside and is not owned by an individual, class, or group, nor is it centered on law, the economy, or the state. Understanding power relations and changing them to make them more equitable is fundamental to making sense of the world. On the other hand, subjective for everyday relationships, including economic exchange, knowledge relations, sexual relations, etc. (Kiguwa 231). Therefore, power is essentially a decentralized idea that is not only found in a vertical structure but can be found horizontally. Free from any influence, power can also construct gender roles to regulate human life in society.

The idea of gender roles here is not just binary oppositions such as male and female, man and woman, nature and culture. Butler, cited in Cinar, argued that gender must be broadened by accepting deviations, forms, and views that do not fit into norms (54). This has become the basis that gender is not a concept that was born naturally but rather carried a pragmatic life constructed in society. Therefore, the only basis for identity and gender is action. The appearance of gender identity can be seen from the words or the attitude directed at us as well as the attitude. Power relations is one of the studies of postmodernist criticism. Postmodernist thinkers integrate knowledge into human needs to stop the theory of modernity that was previously considered to be established. Postmodernism is a theory that seeks the relation between power and knowledge. Power exists because knowledge forms and controls it, so to know is to have power. One of the main thinkers who popularized this idea of relations in power was Michel Foucault, a French philosopher. He has made a major conceptual breakthrough in thinking about power as a distributed commodity in society concerning a disciplinary regime of self-regulation and others (Rapaport 51). To understand power relations, researchers must investigate the forms of resistance and the efforts to change these relationships (Ikävalko & Kantola 3). The dismantling of oppositions and the exposure of hidden hierarchies is one of the main concepts and ideas in power relations.

Power relations appear in one's society, and it also appears in literary texts such as novels. In addition, the novel also functions as a medium for recording objects and mimicry that is contained in the real world. The novel's author, Aisha Saeed, caught the reader's attention regarding the discourse of power relations. She is an award-winning Pakistani American Muslim writer, teacher, and attorney, and she was a New York Times bestselling author of books for children and also selected as a Global Read Aloud for 2018 and was the winner of the South Asian book award. *Amal Unbound* tells about the struggle of a child named Amal, a 12-year-old girl from a rural area in Pakistan, who is 'forced' to sell herself to be free from her father's debt enslavement. She had to live as an underage slave servant to the landlord, so her dream of pursuing a teacher had to fail due to dropping out of school. In this story, Amal also experiences various pressures and obstacles to continue her interest in education. Still, the main character continues to look for means of escape and be critical even though she comes from a lower social structure.

Contextually, the level of education, especially for women in Pakistan, is very low. According to the 'Global Gender Gap Report 2021' published by the World Economic Forum (WEF), Pakistan is ranked 153 out of 156 countries in the gender parity index (*Global Gender Gap Report 2021*, n.d.). Pakistan ranks seventh among eight countries in South Asia, only better than Afghanistan. Women in Pakistan are neglected in all walks of life. The worlds of men and women are different regarding education, employment, and health. This research indicates that women face discrimination in pursuing professional degrees to hold high positions (Batool & Shaheen, 2013). This also shows that the power relationship between educational institutions and Pakistani society is very strong, so awareness of the importance of quality education is mandatory. The need for understanding inclusive education plays an essential role in determining the quality of



one's social life. One of the ways to make people aware and disrupt an unbalanced system is to use literature as a reflection of our society so that people have more criticism of the social structure.

There is great importance in the criticism and problems that Saeed brings to this novel. How can a little girl be trapped in a culture that legitimizes the oppression of women and resists all acts of power? With the character of Amal, Saeed wants to deliver criticism towards gender issues in Pakistan. The urgency that is built from this novel about education awareness and gender equality has prompted literary researchers to discuss it more deeply. This happened because Amal is restricted in her desire to pursue her dreams and get a proper primary education at her age. And more specifically, from this restriction, a gender issue arises regarding the oppression of women, which must be surrendered to certain power circumstances. This is the reason why the writer wants to investigate the novel.

Amal Unbound talks about many issues, such as an imbalance in the education system, feudalism, violence, and the marginalization of women. Presented from the point of view of the main character Amal, Gender-based power relation becomes a critical concept to understand for the substance of the novel in the author's criticism about the relation between the existence of power and gender. The writer's main concern about this novel is how the major characters subconsciously give each other a power related to the main character Amal. And how the main character Amal realizes the state of her oppressed gender and wants to do resistance from her oppression.

Scholars have discussed the previous research on Aisha Saeed. First, the research was written by Patimah et al (2021). The research findings indicate that Amal's character experiences various manifestations of gender discrimination, such as marginalization, violence, stereotypes, and subordination (Patimah et al., 2021). The second research was written by Asif et al. (2021). Using comparative analysis, the authors redefine and reconceptualize women's status, explaining their strengths and granting them subject status. In their findings, Asif et al. argues that there have been many attempts to undo the patriarchal male coercion and explore the conscious and unconscious reasons for the objectification of women (Asif et al., 2021). These are studies that have similar objects. However, no research has comprehensively discussed power relations based on gender in this corpus. Therefore, this paper focuses on *Gender-Based Power Relations in Aisha Saeed's Amal Unbound*. This study poses one primary research question: How were the gender-based power relations shaped between Amal and the other characters in *Amal Unbound*?

Method

This study focuses on the four main characters, Amal (female), Abu, Jawad, and Baji (male) as they are presented in the novel *Amal Unbound* by Aisha Saeed (2018). The restriction experienced by a female character, Amal, became a gender issue regarding the oppression of women, which must be surrendered to certain power circumstances. This research explores the power relations between female and male characters and their effect on



their gender. The study uses qualitative and applies Michel Foucault's theory of power relation and the concept of gender. To analyze the data, this research describes power relations based on Foucault's view of power on text data and then identifies the gender features in five characteristics of power. Then, find the relationship between power and gender by using Butler's concept of gender to investigate any discrimination experienced by the main female character, Amal. Next, examine Amal consciousness about discrimination and her efforts trying to resist it. In the end, the researcher concluded by building a link between the texts and character implications from data that has been analyzed.

Results and Discussions

The notion of power, according to Foucault, is completely different from the general understanding that society has understood so far. In general, power is accepted and discussed as the power or influence a person or institution possesses to impose his will on other parties. In this context, power is defined as repressive and sometimes even oppressive. There is dominance between the subject and the object of power (Syafiuddin 151).

Power is channeled through social relations that produce forms of categorization as a controller of behavior such as good and bad, and so on. Then Foucault put forward five strategic power models: "First, power is not a metaphysical property possessed by individuals but rather exists only in and through its exercise. Second, power is found not only in the sovereign or the state but also spread throughout the social body; hence, when we study power, we should focus on the points where it becomes "capillary". Third, power comes from below, which is to say that it is generated in the myriad mobile force relations that are spread throughout the social body. Fourth, power relations are "intentional and non-subjective" By intentional, Foucault means that power relations have a point or an aim, that they are directed toward a certain end; by non-subjective, he means that they are neither possessed nor controlled by individual subjects. Thus, rather than attempting to discern the intentions of the one who 'has' power, an attempt that would lead us "into a labyrinth from which there is no way out," we should investigate "the multiple peripheral bodies, the bodies that are constituted as subjects by power- effects". Fifth, and finally, "where there is power, there is resistance", and resistance is always internal to power relations (Allen 183).

Gender is first and foremost about sexual differences; then it becomes a social phenomenon about norms, positions, rights, and responsibilities between men and women. Gender is a social construction that has become naturalized in our society. In comparison, gender comes from a social construction that has been assimilated into society. Discussing position within a society is always talking about power. The social power structure and the prescribed gender norms play an important role in understanding gender-based power relations (Maji 2).



Domestic Power Concerning Abu

Abu is a father of five children and a farmer from Nabay Chak who works on his own family's land. Abu is shown as a hard-working and firm person towards Amal as the first child. The relationship between Amal and her father plays a crucial role in the initial construction of her gender identity. A father-son relationship is most common when the father acts as a protector, and the child is powerless. Nevertheless, Abu/Malik illustrates the power imbalances in his environment when he faced Jawad as the highest power holder in his territory. This contradicts his firm nature and portrays a strong father ready to defend his child because he was hopeless and gave up his eldest daughter to become the slave of the Jawad family.

Looking at the relationship with Amal, Abu's position in terms of power still shows that he is a father who decides what is best for his daughter. Understanding violence against women from a patriarchal perspective is considered most effective when "coercive control" is used. Coercive control is a multi-faceted form of oppression rooted in patriarchal social structures and meant to harm women's autonomy, dignity, and equality while establishing a hierarchy of male dominance (Mondal & Paul 2).

"But in any case, remember, you have already learned a lot. More than many of the neighborhood girls. You can read and write. What more do you need to know?" (Saeed 34).

In the novel quoted above, the writer confirms Foucault's view of the subjectivization of power. In this notion, there is a similar tendency to subject it to specificity to the point where the prohibition is accepted, the point where people say yes or no to power (Foucault 182). In the data, Amal faces a situation where Abu gives power subjectivization about his understanding of gender construction. Looking at the setting of the place in the novel, it is explained that there are no women with an education level equal to or even higher than men, which has become a matter of discipline and normalization.

"But did it have to be this way? If I were a boy, would I be staying home to fold laundry and iron clothes? If I were a son, would he so casually tell me to forget my dreams?" (Saeed 43).

The sovereignty over the power possessed by Abu, made Amal conscious of the gender roles that occur in her family environment. The data excerpt above shows that the change in Amal's character initially started with a great ambition to continue learning until she became pessimistic about power. Amal thought being a woman would be useless, so she experienced double standards in her gender roles. Due to patriarchal social structures, young girls are often denied educational and economic opportunities. Parents typically marry off their daughters at a young age to reduce the economic burden on the family. In traditional marriage, women's responsibilities have been to produce children to extend the family lineage, raise them, cook food, and perform other domestic duties (Mondal & Paul 4). As a result of gender-based sexism and cultural attitudes acquired through



differential socialization and day-to-day life experiences, we see a racialized division of domestic labor. This means stereotyped roles and psychological characteristics are attributed to men and women and become a part of who they are, leading to aggression and mistreatment of those individuals (Ajayi et al., 3). The presuppositions "if I were a boy" and "if I were a son" indicate that Amal is having problems with self-identity as a woman who feels wrong about her body's gender role. This undoubtedly contributes to shaping Amal's ideology and viewpoint into her domestic role for her family. She inevitably has to sacrifice her ideals because, as a female character in the novel, she cannot avoid acknowledging the power of men, who, in this case, is her father.

"I thought of my father, who had no time for my dreams. My little sisters and their endless demands. Suddenly I felt tired. Tired of feeling powerless. Tired of denying my own needs because someone else needed something more" (Saeed 50).

The data above is proof of Amal's relationship with her family. In the previous data, Amal has been pessimistic with all the circumstances she has experienced until she realizes that she is powerless. To resist this power, Amal must liberate herself of the limitations imposed on her family by normalizing identity categories. The reason is that Amal is subject to disciplinary practices and tied to her identity; therefore, Amal should refuse to accept who she is (Raoufzadeh et al., 169). As a result of this incident, Amal's identity within his family became restricted. Amal's gender identity follows patriarchal ideology. As such, she was raised in a demanding family, making her feel exhausted and powerless.

Patriarchal values determine the subordinate position of Women in Pakistani society. Women are controlled by patriarchy through institutionalized strict codes of behavior, segregation by gender, and the ideology that family honor is associated with feminine virtue. As a result of the patriarchal culture in Pakistan, Amal's character experiences various restrictions in her family because of the relationship between Abu and Amal. As cultural practices, these practices are amoral, abnormal, and harmful practices that preserve the subjugation of women. In addition, this culture harms Abu as a male character. Even though men hold the highest power, he cannot use that power socially.

Power through Discourse in Relation with Jawad

Jawad Sahib, in this novel, is portrayed as an antagonist character. The relationship with Amal becomes the difference in power between the two because Jawad's background as a landlord family with a lot of money gave him the power to oppress anyone he didn't like. With Jawad's power, Amal faced a lot of oppression while working with him. Previously in the narrative, Amal had to work with Jawad until all his father's debts were paid off. In the novel, the dominance of the Jawad character is shown through the relationship between him and Amal. In this case, Amal appears inferior in power and unable to fight for her rights. As a result of social construction and patriarchal culture, women, in general, are



viewed as subordinate (Rosida & Soraya 14). The data below shows some analysis concerning Amal with Jawad.

“Enjoying it here so far? Jawad Sahib continued. I couldn’t move, rooted by his gaze” (Saeed 79). A woman who has experienced direct expression of rage, aggression, and anger in terms of violence is highly likely to suppress and mask her emotions. Therefore, masking is usually triggered by the fear of outbursts (Maji 5). In the quote above, Amal is under pressure because he is under Jawad's power. After her father’s debt to Jawad, Amal had to submit to all the discourses that Jawad gave. This also indicates that Jawad performs the male gaze. The male gaze refers to portraying women and the world from a male perspective, who takes on the role of a sexual object for the male viewer's pleasure (Piechucka 74). Although in the context of Amal, it is not a sexual object, Jawad views it as a pleasure of his power over Amal's autonomy. She has to suppress and mask her emotions even though the traits that Amal has in her want to do resistance. She does this to save herself from causing new problems while simultaneously realizing that her lives are under male domination.

Moreover, the gendered modernity/tradition binary has implications for the representation of modern gender, as it is used to identify marginal oppression and exclude marginalized people from participation (Wade, 2009). Oppression is a powerful phenomenon in which relations between people and between groups are experienced in the form of domination and subordination, superiority and inferiority (Davis 222). The main to this phenomenon is control. Those with control have power, while those without power have no control. Power presupposes political, economic, and social hierarchies, structured relationships of groups of people, and systems or regimes of power. This system, the existing power structure, includes thousands of ways in which some groups and individuals utilize control over others.

... I’d promised myself I wouldn’t cry in front of him, but my body betrayed me. Hot salty tears slipped down my face. I looked down and stood still. I did my best not to move. I stood still until he was satisfied. Until he walked away (Saeed 82-83).

Amal was suppressed to the point that her physical state betrayed her intellectual understanding because she failed to resist all types of power. The phenomenon of the social body is not the influence of a consensus but the influence of the manifestation of power operating on individual bodies (Foucault 174). Foucault's statement is directly proportional to the findings in the data above. When dealing with Jawad, Amal experiences the manifestation of power, not only through speech but also affects the body. This can be seen from inside Amal, who burst into tears because she could not withstand the influence of power from Jawad. In his treatment of Amal, he displayed the power he had over her, demonstrating that he held absolute power. The degrading way in which Amal was treated became a manifestation of the power he wielded over her. From this event, the power relation can also be seen that Amal has accepted herself as her servant and Jawad as her master.



"Your obligations are to me now." He grabbed the phone from me.

"The more you learn how to leave your backward ways behind, the easier things will be for you. Your days of being an idle farm girl are over" (Saeed 85-86).

It is known that knowledge plays a role in determining social and political control, and if it is patriarchal, women's knowledge can also serve as an oppressive barrier. Jawad's subjective knowledge of Amal's role in his family made him a dominant power. Even though Amal is not an "idle farm girl", the gender stereotypes by Jawad's knowledge indicate that a strongly patriarchal culture has been created in his environment. The fact that Amal becomes Jawad's obligation helps explain how he can control the power in an individual's body by creating a barrier around her. Even though Amal works hard and studies diligently, the patriarchal domination behavior makes women oppressed in this novel.

From Jawad's domination, Amal realized she was in the same situation as in her domestic environment. In contrast to Abu who forbade Amal to achieve his dreams, Jawad emphasizes subconsciously that he is an absolute discipline giver that no one can deny. Therefore, women in this novel suffer harm, oppression, and subordination; their consciousness has changed to see oppression for what it was, and to see it for what it was, and that it is not inescapable or natural (Enyew & Mihrete 59). From this, Amal sees that suffering from being a woman is normalized, and the cycle of violence will always repeat itself.

In the novel, Amal is in a prison situation even though he lives in Khan's estate (Saeed 98). This imprisonment has become Foucault's concept of the panopticon, a cylindrical prison concept. And at the center of the cylinder, there was a tower with a window with a one-way glass facing the inside so that they all felt watched. In short, Jawad made the punishment system more effective than punishing her in a dark room that provided some protection against her (Foucault 192). Throughout his discussion of the Panopticon, Foucault defined discipline as "a type of power, a modality through which it is exercised, including a whole set of instruments, methods, procedures, levels of application, and targets; it is the physics' or the 'anatomy' of power" (Ishii 4). The panopticon allegory in this novel makes Khan's estate a prison and Jawad a monitor of all activities in his house. Although physically Khan's estate is a luxurious house, Amal still views it as a prison where there is no freedom there.

Power can retreat to reorganize its strength, invest itself elsewhere, and so on..., thus, the battle between Amal and Jawad continues (Foucault 75). While Jawad views Amal subordinately, the data quoted in "...I can write. I can read. I know math as well." He studied me for a moment. "Full of surprises, aren't you?" (Saeed 112-113). This indicates that power is not exclusively about oppressors and oppressed. Knowledge can also contribute to power development, so the relationship between the two characters induces knowledge discourse. We accept power as more than a negative agency with



repressive functions because it shapes knowledge and produces discourse rather than just saying no. (Foucault 155).

Gender and Power Concerning Baji

The writer finds the relationship data between the characters of Amal and Nasreen Baji; she is Jawad's mother, who becomes Amal's boss. The relationship between the two is that they are of the same gender but differ in conscious power. Amal is a form of resistance, while Baji's character is described as someone who submits to power by marrying Khan Sahib. They both know that men dominate, but Baji has a strategy for power, as the spouse of Khan Sahib, the oppressor. Although they both grew up in the same neighborhood, Amal has a role of power and resistance to the oppression of marginalized women. Throughout the *Rights of Women*, Wollstonecraft argues that women have victimized themselves as well as women by trivializing women's intellectual abilities and marginalizing their reasoning abilities (Bhusal 54).

Gender, according to Butler, is not at all tied to the facts of the material body but is solely and completely a social construction. This fiction is, therefore, open to all changes and contestations. She has also argued about constructing gender "Because there is no 'substance' expressed or manifested by gender or objective ideals that gender aspires to; because gender is not a fact, acts of gender create ideas about gender, and without that action, there would be no gender at all. Gender, as such, is a social construct that regularly keeps its origins secret". Stereotypes and gender roles represent more than just the expression of biological build upon sex differences and more than the involuntary or random division of qualities and behaviors by society into "feminine" and "masculine." Gender is an expression of cultural values, a social construct that helps regulate behavior and maintain the power structure of society. As gender is socially constructed, there is room for change in the way it is defined (Lips 14).

Baji reinforces her repression because knowledge is biased. Everything has to do with oppression; as a result, Baji has the power to change that. Women have supported patriarchal ideas out of an unintentional need and sometimes for their benefit. One of the examples above shows that Baji gave himself up to oppression so that his family could prosper, with Khan paying for Baji's nephew's education fund (Saeed 90). Baji's strategy was simply that there was no better choice than to marry a wealthy landlord. When the husband's economic status is significantly higher than that of his wife, hypergamy occurs. There is a high incidence of hypergamy in almost all patriarchal societies (Roychowdhury & Dhamija 1). Baji's hypergamy causes the women in the novel to not have many choices to determine their destiny, so there is no profit between Baji and Amal.

The discourses of Foucault represent change and variety in knowledge and truth definitions as they occur historically, socially, and institutionally (Ikävalko & Brunila 3–4). Amal thought that the truths that made her not free were also experienced by Baji and almost all the female characters she met. Changes in knowledge and power that occurred in Amal made her aware of the conditions of the social construction of gender, allowing her to see all forms of oppression experienced by female characters in this novel.



According to Foucault, knowledge is not a vague expression of power relations, but knowledge is in the power relations themselves (Syafiuddin 152). Power produces knowledge, and not only because knowledge is useful for power. There is no knowledge without power, and vice versa. There is no power without knowledge. Foucault's concept brings consequences. Finding power requires research on the production of knowledge that underlies power. Because every power is compiled, established, and realized through certain knowledge and discourse. These discourses produce certain truths and knowledge, which have a powerful effect.

Amal and Baji's ideology historically sees how the effects of truth are produced through discourse that cannot be said to be true or false (Foucault 154). After Amal struggles with Jawad to imprison him, but on the other hand she feels guilty because Jawad is Baji's son (Saeed 216-217). The relationship between Amal and Baji in this story describes a truth that is considered a paradox because the fact is produced through discourse that cannot be said to be true or false. Morally, Amal certainly wants to resist the Sahib family's oppression. But on the other hand, Baji, as a superior and in the same gender relationship, experiences oppression by Amal against his son, Jawad.

In the relationship between the characters, a conclusion can be stated that each character fosters power in Amal until she finally fights with resistance. Throughout this analysis, resistance is echoed in the desire to destroy the power structure – Jawad as the highest authority holder – by providing Amal with the knowledge she previously withheld. This knowledge includes the sovereignty power in Abu, the concept of the panopticon prison that Amal felt in the Khan estate, to the allegory of the bird cage experienced by Baji.

Gender issues play an essential role in analyzing power in this novel as Amal gets the influence of power from male characters. The female characters in this novel are marginalized and have no choice but to have their freedom. She has a point or an aim to use her knowledge as a carrier of the truth for all the gender inequalities she experienced. Amal prioritizes resistance to free her choice in her gender identity, and power relations are obliged to change with the resistance. This relationship resulted in a discourse based on oppression, power, and resistance so that Amal as the main character, took the final action by using her power to arrest the corrupt figures of Jawad and Sahib.

Conclusion

Gender-based power relation in this novel presents how power installs itself and produces real material effects. This is manifested through characterizations in the novel, where each character has power and produces real material impact on the relationship with each other. The results can be in the form of goodness (Amal with the spirit of teaching) but can also lead to evil and violence (Jawad's discriminatory attitude and physical violence). The social power structure and the prescribed gender norms also affect how the characters relate to each other. Seeing Amal's relationship with her father is one example of why gender norms, which marginalize women, create patriarchal power structures that harm many women. One way to fight this norm is with gender identity because the only basis



for identity and gender is in action. Action makes Amal resist any imbalance of gender roles in this story. To conclude, the relationship between men and women has shaped gender-based power relation as the social construction have given roles and rules to both sexes and designed attributes for them. As a result, subordination and oppression toward women are undeniable, as men are seemingly designed to be powerful meanwhile women are powerless.

Works Cited

- Ajayi, L. A., Olanrewaju, F. O., Olanrewaju, A., & Nwannebuife, O. "Gendered violence and human rights: An evaluation of widowhood rites in Nigeria." *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2019.1676569>.
- Allen, A. "Power/Knowledge/Resistance: Foucault and epistemic injustice." *The Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Injustice*. Routledge. 2017, pp. 187–194.
- Asif, D. M., Zafar, N., & Iftikhar, T. "Reconceptualization of Gender Relations in Saeed's Amal Unbound and Rao's Girls Burn Brighter." *Sjesr*, vol. 4, no. 2, Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.36902/sjesr-vol4-iss2-2021>, 2021, pp. 131-138.
- Batool, S., & Shaheen, I. "Gender and Higher Education In Pakistan." *International Journal of Gender and Women's Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2013, pp. 15–28.
- Bhusal, A. "Emphasizing the Suppression of Feminist Voices." *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2017.
- Çinar, B. "A Performative View of Gender Roles: Judith Butler." *International Journal of Media Culture and Literature*, 2015.
- Davis, L. J. *The Disability Studies Reader*. Routledge, 2016.
- Enyew, B. E., & Mihrete, A. G. "Liberal feminism: Assessing its compatibility and applicability in Ethiopia context." *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, vol. 10, no. 6, 2018, pp. 59–64. <https://doi.org/10.5897/IJSA2018.0769>.
- Foucault, M. *Power/Knowledge: Wacana Kuasa/Pengetahuan* (C. Gordon, Ed.; Y. Santosa, Trans.). Narasi, 2017.
- Global Gender Gap Report 2021*. (n.d.). World Economic Forum. Retrieved July 5, 2022, from <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2021/>.
- Ikävalko, E., & Brunila, K. "Coming to discursive-deconstructive reading of gender equality." *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, vol. 42, no. 1, 2019, pp. 33–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727X.2017.1413085>.
- Ikävalko, E., & Kantola, J. "Feminist resistance and resistance to feminism in gender equality planning in Finland." *European Journal of Women's Studies*, vol. 24. 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506817693868>.
- Ishii, Y. "Diversification as a New Disciplinary Power: Gender and Sexual Subjectivity in Postmodernity." *International Journal of Japanese Sociology*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2018, pp. 70–84, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijjs.12070>.
- Kiguwa, P. "Feminist approaches: An exploration of women's gendered experiences." *Transforming Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, edited by S. Laher, A. Fynn, & S.



- Kramer. Wits University Press, 2019. pp. 220–235, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.18772/22019032750.19>.
- Lips, H. M. "Gender: The basics." Routledge, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315178233>.
- Maji, S. "Society and 'good woman': A critical review of gender difference in depression." *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, vol. 64, no. 4, 2018, pp. 396–405. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020764018765023>.
- Mondal, D., & Paul, P. "Associations of Power Relations, Wife-Beating Attitudes, and Controlling Behavior of Husband With Domestic Violence Against Women in India: Insights From the National Family Health Survey–4." *Violence Against Women*, vol. 27, no. 14, 2021, pp. 2530–2551, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801220978794>.
- Patimah, E., Nurhantoro, T. S., & Susanti, D. L. "Rethinking Gender Discrimination: The Restriction Of Pakistan Women's Rights Through Cultural And Political Interests As Portrayed In Aisha Saeed's Amal Unbound." *JELLT (Journal of English Language and Language Teaching)*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2021. Article 1, <https://doi.org/10.36597/jellt.v5i1.10027>.
- Piechucka, A. "'We All Want to Be Seen': The Male Gaze, the Female Gaze and the Act of Looking as Metaphor in Emma Cline's The Girls." *Polish Journal for American Studies*, 2020, pp. 71–82, <https://doi.org/10.7311/PJAS.14/1/2020.05>.
- Raoufzadeh, N., Basirizadeh, F. S., & Birgani, S. Z. "A Foucauldian Reading: Power in Awakening by Kate Chopin." *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute (BIRCI-Journal): Humanities and Social Sciences*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.33258/birci.v3i1.731>.
- Rapaport, H. *The Literary Theory Toolkit: A Compendium of Concepts and Methods*. John Wiley & Sons, 2011.
- Rosida, I., & Soraya, "A. Gender Relation in Willow Trees Don't Weep Novel (2014) by Fadia Faqir: A Feminist Literary Criticism." *Insaniyat : Journal of Islam and Humanities*, vol. 2 no. 1, 2017.
- Roychowdhury, P., & Dhamija, G. "Don't Cross the Line: Bounding the Causal Effect of Hypergamy Violation on Domestic Violence in India" (SSRN Scholarly Paper No. 3766994). Social Science Research Network, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3766994>.
- Saeed, A. *Amal unbound*. Penguin, 2018.
- Syafiuddin, A. "Pengaruh Kekuasaan Atas Pengetahuan" (Memahami Teori Relasi Kuasa Michel Foucault). *Refleksi: Jurnal Filsafat Dan Pemikiran Islam*, vol. 18, no. 2, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ref.2018.1802-02>.
- Wade, L. "Defining Gendered Oppression in U.S. Newspapers: The Strategic Value of 'Female Genital Mutilation.'" *Gender & society*, vol. 23, no. 3, 2009, pp. 293–314, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243209334938>.





Muslim English Literature



Universitas Islam Negeri
SYARIF HIDAYATULLAH JAKARTA

Fakultas Adab dan Humaniora
UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta
Jl. Tarumanegara, Pisangan, Kec. Ciputat Timur,
Kota Tangerang Selatan, Banten 15419, Indonesia