

p-ISSN:2708-2091
e-ISSN:2708-3586



www.gsrjournal.com

GSR

Global Sociological Review

GSR

GLOBAL SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW

HEC-RECOGNIZED CATEGORY-Y

VOL. X ISSUE II, SPRING (JUNE-2025)

Double-blind Peer-review Research Journal

www.gsrjournal.com

© Global Sociological Review

DOI (Journal): 10.31703/gsr

DOI (Volume): 10.31703/gsr.2025(X)

DOI (Issue): 10.31703/gsr.2025(X-II)


Humanity Publications
sharing research

Article title

Power, Patriarchy and Resistance: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Novel “The Power” by Naomi Alderman

Abstract

This research discusses the power, patriarchy, and resistance themes in Naomi Alderman's novel The Power (2016) using Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (2005). Even though it is fiction, the novel mirrors actual gender relations. The study explores how power functions in patriarchal societies and how women challenge it, examining how language creates and alters gender identities. Six statements in the novel are data for analysis. The results are that patriarchy is naturally connected to power, which is applied to construct and reconstruct identities. The research identifies the ways in which resistance occurs due to oppression, as it shows that resistance is what changes the way people respond to injustice. Finally, it maintains that power is a key instrument in portraying and challenging gender roles, giving more knowledge of how discourse constrains and subverts structures in society.

Global Sociological Review

p-ISSN: [2708-2091](#) e-ISSN: [2708-3586](#)

DOI(journal): 10.31703/gsr

Volume: X (2025)

DOI (volume): 10.31703/gsr.2025(X)

Issue: II Spring (June-2025)

DOI(Issue): 10.31703/gsr.2024(X-II)

Home Page

www.gsrjournal.com

Volume: (2025)

<https://www.gsrjournal.com/Current-issues>

Issue: II-Spring (June -2025)

<https://www.gsrjournal.com/issue/10/2/2025>

Scope

<https://www.gsrjournal.com/about-us/scope>

Submission

<https://humaglobe.com/index.php/gsr/submissions>

Keywords: Patriarchy, Power, Resistance, Society, Culture, Critical Discourse Analysis

Authors:

Shaiza Aslam: (Corresponding Author)

MPhil Scholar, Department of English, University of Gujrat, Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan.

(Email: shaizaaslam@gmail.com)

Nazia Anwar: Lecturer, Department of English, University of Gujrat, Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan.

Isha Razzaq Butt: MPhil Scholar, Department of English, University of Gujrat, Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan.

Pages: 23-33

DOI:10.31703/gsr.2025(X-II).03

DOI link: [https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2025\(X-II\).03](https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2025(X-II).03)

Article link: <http://gsrjournal.com/article/power-patriarchy-and-resistance-a-critical-discourse-analysis-of-the-novel-the-power-by-naomi-alderman>

Full-text Link: <https://gsrjournal.com/fulltext/power-patriarchy-and-resistance-a-critical-discourse-analysis-of-the-novel-the-power-by-naomi-alderman>

Pdf link: <https://www.gsrjournal.com/jadmin/Auther/31rvIolA2.pdf>



Visit Us



Citing this Article

03	Power, Patriarchy and Resistance: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Novel “The Power” by Naomi Alderman		
Authors	Shaiza Aslam Nazia Anwar Isha Razzaq Butt	DOI	10.31703/gsr.2025(X-II).03
		Pages	23-33
		Year	2025
		Volume	X
		Issue	II
Referencing & Citing Styles			
APA	Aslam, S., Anwar, N., & Butt, I. R. (2025). Power, Patriarchy and Resistance: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Novel “The Power” by Naomi Alderman. <i>Global Sociological Review</i> , X(II), 23-33. https://doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2025(X-II).03		
CHICAGO	Aslam, Shaiza, Nazia Anwar, and Isha Razzaq Butt. 2025. "Power, Patriarchy and Resistance: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Novel “The Power” by Naomi Alderman." <i>Global Sociological Review</i> X (II):23-33. doi: 10.31703/gsr.2025(X-II).03.		
HARVARD	ASLAM, S., ANWAR, N. & BUTT, I. R. 2025. Power, Patriarchy and Resistance: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Novel “The Power” by Naomi Alderman. <i>Global Sociological Review</i> , X, 23-33.		
MHRA	Aslam, Shaiza, Nazia Anwar, and Isha Razzaq Butt. 2025. 'Power, Patriarchy and Resistance: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Novel “The Power” by Naomi Alderman', <i>Global Sociological Review</i> , X: 23-33.		
MLA	Aslam, Shaiza, Nazia Anwar, and Isha Razzaq Butt. "Power, Patriarchy and Resistance: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Novel “the Power” by Naomi Alderman." <i>Global Sociological Review</i> X.II (2025): 23-33. Print.		
OXFORD	Aslam, Shaiza, Anwar, Nazia, and Butt, Isha Razzaq (2025), 'Power, Patriarchy and Resistance: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Novel “The Power” by Naomi Alderman', <i>Global Sociological Review</i> , X (II), 23-33.		
TURABIAN	Aslam, Shaiza, Nazia Anwar, and Isha Razzaq Butt. "Power, Patriarchy and Resistance: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Novel “the Power” by Naomi Alderman." <i>Global Sociological Review</i> X, no. II (2025): 23-33. https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2025(X-II).03 .		



Title

Power, Patriarchy and Resistance: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Novel “The Power” by Naomi Alderman

Authors:

Shaiza Aslam

(Corresponding Author)

MPhil Scholar, Department of English, University of Gujrat, Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan.

(Email: shaizaaslam@gmail.com)

Nazia Anwar

Lecturer, Department of English, University of Gujrat, Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan.

Isha Razzaq Butt

MPhil Scholar, Department of English, University of Gujrat, Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan.

Contents

- [Introduction](#)
- [Research Objectives](#)
- [Research Questions](#)
- [Literature Review](#)
- [Research Methodology](#)
- [Data Analysis](#)
- [Explanation](#)
- [Statement 3](#)
- [Foucault – Knowledge as Power](#)
- [Judith Butler – Gender as Constructed Identity](#)
- [Conclusion](#)
- [References](#)

Abstract

This research discusses the power, patriarchy, and resistance themes in Naomi Alderman's novel The Power (2016) using Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (2005). Even though it is fiction, the novel mirrors actual gender relations. The study explores how power functions in patriarchal societies and how women challenge it, examining how language creates and alters gender identities. Six statements in the novel are data for analysis. The results are that patriarchy is naturally connected to power, which is applied to construct and reconstruct identities. The research identifies the ways in which resistance occurs due to oppression, as it shows that resistance is what changes the way people respond to injustice. Finally, it maintains that power is a key instrument in portraying and challenging gender roles, giving more knowledge of how discourse constrains and subverts structures in society.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Power, Resistance, Society, Culture, Critical Discourse Analysis

Introduction

Discourse is the part of daily life, that is used to present ideas and beliefs in a unique way. Discourse is a way to present ideologies related to daily life with the use of words that are impactful in any given situation (Anwar & Butt, 2025). By the use of discourse, ideologies related to societies and human beings can

be built or molded. Any piece of writing is an entity that offers a chance for the readers to come across new ideologies. With the power of discourse, authors narrate their ideologies and by the use of context-based language, they can present their ideologies in a predictable way. Novels are the source of presenting old ideologies and building up novel ideologies.



The power imbalance between males and females is one of the biggest hapless facts of society these days. In patriarchal societies, women suffer a lot. They obey all the orders of men and spend their lives pleasing them as they live in a society where men are considered to be superior to women. Discourse has the power to present reality-based ideas through the use of imaginative characters and stories. Therefore, this study aims to look at the power imbalance in a male-dominated society. It explores the changes that become part of women's behavior if they suddenly get to know that, they have become more powerful. This study explores the power dynamics and their connection with societal structures in an impactful way.

Although it is an imaginative story, it provides a thought-provoking description that shapes our thought patterns in a specific way and challenges readers' assumptions about power, gender, and society in real-world situations. It provides insights into the ways in which patriarchal ideologies can be challenged and subverted, ultimately offering a vision of a more equitable and just society.

According to Anwar et. al. (2025), linguistic choices can influence the thought patterns of people. So, a powerful person uses a specified lexicon to set up a new perspective and construct meaning according to their strategy. The novel "The Power" was written by Naomi Alderman in 2016. It is based on an imaginative story, in which characters have a magical power. It describes a society where men are in power and women have threats to their lives, honor, and self-esteem. They are living according to the demands of the society but they are not happy and want to resist. During this situation one day they discover that they have a new magical power to produce current from their fingers. They become able to pass current to the next person if they try to harass them. This thing improves their confidence level and they feel strong. There remained no fear of men in their hearts, they got the power to live independently. Now they started to act in a weird way. They used to deliver the message of liberty and with their language usage, they try to convey the message that men are no more powerful now. They become capable of resisting male

dominance in a powerful way by using their magical characteristic. They are ready to resist this patriarchal society because they are the source of power and this power makes them able to face all difficulties in a brave way and react strongly to the men if they try to control them. In this way, the ideology of the patriarchal society changed and women became powerful. Now women become dominant and men are forced to accept their superiority. In this way, power changes the ideology in such a way that women who were even afraid of raising their voices to get their rights, become able to resist in a strong dominant way. This thing builds the ideology that the ultimate source of dominance is the one who has power. Although, the characters in this story are imaginative the message of the novel is very obvious. The use of imaginative power to generate current from the fingers of women is the demand of the ideology that this novel aims to present. The person who has power always shows superiority, when men were in power, they ruled over society. But when women got power, they were denied the power of men and wanted to live their lives with freedom. This novel portrays the upcoming era, in which women got rights in every field. The demand for controlling male dominance is being increased day by day and females are becoming successful in different fields. This study is significant because of its contribution to the discussion of women's empowerment and gender-based oppression.

Fairclough's three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis (2005) is a way to understand the language and discourse usage in shaping our understanding of power, gender roles, and the ultimate urge of women to resist male dominance. It provokes the readers to consider the possibilities of a world where women's empowerment is not just a thought but a reality.

Research Objectives

- To study the role of language and discourse in shaping and reflecting power relationships in the novel *The Power*.
- To identify the ways in which this novel challenges and subverts patriarchal ideologies.

- To explore the change in women's behavior when they get power.

Research Questions

1. How does the author portray the shift in power dynamics between men and women in patriarchal societies?
2. In what way does the author describe the female resistance to male dominance in patriarchal societies?

Literature Review

The interplay of power, patriarchy, and resistance in literature has been a focal point in Fairclough's three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis (2005) particularly concerning how female characters navigate and subvert patriarchal structures. This literature review explores various studies that examine these themes, focusing on instances where women, upon acquiring power, exhibit behaviors associated with superiority. The exploration of power dynamics, patriarchal structures, and forms of resistance in literature has been a significant focus within critical discourse analysis (CDA). This review examines various studies that analyze these themes, particularly highlighting instances where female characters, upon acquiring power, exhibit behaviors associated with superiority.

The first step towards resistance is to identify the rights from which you are deprived. In this regard, Savitri et al. (2025) have explored the 17th-century Javanese literary work "Serat Centhini" by the use of critical discourse analysis. The study has examined how the Javanese women first identified their rights and understood them. And after understanding their rights, they used to talk about them, and they showed resistance against oppressive domestic situations. They used the language according to different strategies to express the oppression present within societies. Women use the discourse to show resistance to assert their agency in historical and cultural contexts of that time in understanding women's agency. They navigated the complexity of patriarchal societies by the use of language as language is

considered to be a powerful tool to construct and change the identity (Anwar et al., 2024).

Tariq Ali's "The Stone Woman" (2000) is a fascinating novel that discusses the internal and external struggles of the Ottoman Empire. It is basically about the aristocratic Iskander Pasha family. Nilofer is a young woman of this family, and he describes the narrative of patriarchal society by discussing her memories. He used to share her thoughts with a stone statue of a woman. This stone statue is the passive listener that served as a symbol of silenced women. Nilofer talks to the statue and portrays that women's narratives are often unheard in official settings and they have to struggle in male-dominant society to get their rights. But as the story unfolds, we see that these patriarchal societies also lose power and reach the same level as their women (Amir et al., 2020).

In another study, Allagbé and Amoussou (2020) conducted a gender-orientated CDA of contemporary feminist writing. This study is based on the analyses of the feminist texts. It examines the ideological representation of feminist writers in patriarchal societies. It describes the ways in which contemporary feminist writing often describes the societies that privilege male authority and power over women. The study explores that feminist writings represent women who reject or subvert traditional notions of femininity. It discusses the idea of women's agency by discussing the writings that show the resistance of women against these patriarchal societies. They represent a new ideology of women who are independent and assertive. This study explores how language is used to assert and subvert power structures among men and women.

In addition, Pafford and Matusitz (2017) have analyzed ABC's television series "Quantico" using CDA, uncovering instances of female superiority and racial stereotypes. This study presents women as the source of power. The female superiority in *Quantico* could be linked to the assertion of female agency. They do not accept male dominance; instead, they challenge and subvert their power. The study depicted female superiority in the *Quantico* series. That is a way of challenging patriarchal structures, where

women historically have been positioned in subordinate roles, especially in areas like law enforcement or national security. These series break the racial stereotypes of male dominance and portray women as powerful figures. This study examines how individuals or groups are represented in media and how that can influence how society views gender relations and racial hierarchies.

Moreover, Wallace (2020) has studied the urban sustainability discourses. He explores dominant narratives and finds out the ways in which these grand narratives may fail to overcome or even reinforce gendered and sexual hierarchies. According to this study, these dominant narratives often follow the predetermined gender rules that are already present within a society. And these narratives ignore the inequalities that are present among different genders. This study emphasizes the importance of understanding the power dynamics that are present within the society at present time.

Furthermore, the novel *Moth Smoke* by Mohsin Hamid (2000), explores the complex portrayal of power dynamics among males and females in Pakistani society. This novel provides an opportunity to understand the power relations in societies. By the character of Mumtaz, this novel reveals the females' step towards women's agency and the reaction of society towards it. As Mumtaz decides to work as a journalist, she decides to hide her profession from her husband and society. This fact highlights society's resistance to women's agency. Women are supposed to prioritize their duty as wives and mothers. They are not appreciated for working in society, which is why she chose to work secretly. Mumtaz kept her profession secret because she knew that societal norms would not accept it (Ramzan & Khan, 2020).

Additionally, Madiou (2021) has studied the novel "An Unnecessary Woman" written by Rabih Alameddine in 2014. In this novel, the author explores the expectations that society places on women, most importantly on older women in patriarchal societies. This novel is based on the story of Aaliya, who served her life for literature. She was a divorced, childless woman. She decided to live in solitude for the rest of her life and translate the world literature into Arabic

language. But as in the Arabic patriarchal society, women are expected to do home chores and live their lives as reproductive family members. She faces a lot of criticism because of her decision. She was a great intellectual woman, but her skills did not get appreciated. Her family and society labeled her "unnecessary" because of her divorce. However, she did not care for society and devoted her life to literature. It was her way of showing resistance to the expected norms of society.

In addition to the research mentioned above, the present study is a continuation to unearth the patriarchal uneven traces of power displayed prevalent in our society. It is another effort to identify the existing inequality in our society.

Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore the resistance on women's end towards patriarchal societies. This study examines the way the author represents her view regarding women's reactions when they get power in patriarchal societies. This study explores the expression of resistance from the novel "The Power" by Fairclough's three-dimensional method of critical discourse analysis (2005). The aim is to reveal how lexical choices are a powerful tool to express inner feelings. Fairclough's framework is an appropriate way to express how discourse can shape power relations in societies, as here in patriarchal societies. Power dynamics is the striking topic of CDA; it has the ability to express the pros and cons of imbalance in society. It examines the way thoughts and ideologies can be represented and also created with the help of discourse. In this study, CDA is used to examine how the author has drawn the situation in which women get power and label their lexical choices more powerful than their actions. It will illustrate the present power depiction of women and the effect of their past lives on their thinking patterns and ideology.

Data Analysis

There is a strong connection between discourse and societal, cultural, economic, and social norms of society related to gender. This connection has been

described by Fairclough through Fairclough's three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis (2005). Fairclough also discusses the influence of societal, cultural, linguistic, and social theories in his model of critical discourse analysis. He examines Crenshaw's (1989) intersectionality about how lexical choices are interconnected with different categories like race and gender. CDA gives a way to examine power dynamics. Foucault in 1980 discusses the power dynamics of how women's resistance negotiates and challenges the power structures that already exist in patriarchal societies. The change in behavior is obvious with the change in social status and power. In patriarchal societies, there is a set ideology that men are superior to women. Although women do not show severe reactions to it in normal situations. But when women get opportunities, they become able to get power. They ultimately start to give a stronger reaction every time they face any kind of injustice from them and they express resistance as well as authority towards males. In the following lines, the data analysis of the selected statements has been presented:

Statement 1

"It doesn't matter that she shouldn't, that she never would. What matters is that she could, if she wanted. The power to hurt is a kind of wealth."

Textual Analysis:

Modality

The use of "shouldn't", "never would", and "she could" in a contrastive way indicates the modal verbs of possibility versus morality. Here "shouldn't" introduces the ethical limitation present in the social norms, and "never would" conveys the personal moral values of character. On the other hand, "She could" embodies capability or potential, independent of ethics. It highlights the existence of possibility and impossibility at the same time.

Lexical Choices

The phrase "what matters is that she could," undermines the potential and capability of women's perception to shift towards possibility, leaving behind

morality. And the conditional phrase "if she wanted" implies the authority. The phrase "the power to hurt is a kind of wealth" indicates the historical way of practicing power. It equates violence with value in a metaphorical way. The comparison of hurt with wealth highlights the materialistic view of power.

Sentence Structure

The first part of the sentence uses a dismissive structure, "*It doesn't matter that...*" undermines the shrugging off of moral boundaries. The structure builds toward justification, where power itself becomes the justification, not the use of it.

Interpretation:

Within the Novel's Context

This statement in this novel's discourse reflects the core justification of the rights of women as they get the power to harm others. The character that has been referred to here has the ability to react violently. It is a woman's own choice to react or not, but the potential to do so is itself satisfying and empowering. The focus is on the potential of action. This woman has the authority to make decisions to hurt or leave, which highlights the shift of power. An audience that analyses the statement strictly may view the normalizing of this authority of women as dangerous for society. On the other hand, feminist readers may view this power as a reclaimed agency that represents women as independent and powerful entities. The Pacifist or humanist readers may view this behavior of identifying brutal power as wealth as a corrupt view of empowerment.

Explanation:

Foucault's Theory of Power

Michel Foucault describes that power is an interactive and ever-present quality; it is not just about actual control but the possibility of it (Lynch, 2014). This quote fits into Foucault's view of power as the exercising of control rather than direct force. Here, the power to hurt others or cause pain is enough to attain higher social values that reflect the power as an invisible but effective force operating in society.

Feminist Power Discourse

This statement reveals the dark side of traditional gender roles, which portray women as morally superior but powerless. The stressing side of empowerment is the violence that women also adopt the same way of oppression when they get power. This statement embodies Judith Butler's (1990) performativity which describes power as performance, not just possession. This statement also encodes the Marxist view of power by comparing power with wealth. It views power as commodified and moral restraint as a weakness.

Postcolonial View of Frantz Fanon

Frantz Fanon viewed that colonizers often romanticize violent power as a form of freedom (Haddour, 2019). In this view, the oppressed women in the past now take the violence as a former liberty and reflect that power corrupts both the colonizer and the formerly colonized.

Statement 2

"One of them says, 'Why did they do it?' And the other answers, 'Because they could.' That is the only answer there ever is."

Textual Analysis:

Modality

The phrase "the only answer there ever is" shows the totality of the certainty. This phrase bluntly points out the truth that power is always dominant to everything else, and it operates in society without considering moral or ethical values. The term "ever" underpins the ideology of eternal truth, indicating that the dominance of power is always practiced in society and will be practiced indeterminately. The statement is in an active voice, which creates a straightforward and strong impact. The subject "they" highlights the governing of powerful entities that can do anything.

Lexical Choices

There is no moral qualifier in this statement that makes it cold and neutral. The word choice "Because they could" is terse and final. It portrays that itself is

enough for the justification of action. The phrase "That is the only answer" highlights the ultimate view of power and rejects any alternative explanations.

Interpretation:

Within the Novel's Context

The quote reflects the absolute relationship between power and dominance. It describes the rigid exercise of power in the new female-dominated world order. It justifies the women's violent behavior by describing the historical oppression of men who act in a dominant way because they have the controlling power that they have, not because of ethical reasoning. It embodies the patriarchal history, where men exercised power over women without needing justification beyond their ability to impose it. Some fundamental feminists might see this as a justified reversal of past patriarchy. Intersectional feminists might view this statement as a warning against the repetition of patriarchal structures. This statement supports Michel Foucault's ideology of power (Lynch, 2014), which describes that power itself is the issue, not the group that holds it. It raises moral concerns about whether any group, once in power, can avoid abusing it. This statement is in line with historical power dynamics, where the powerful groups justify their dominance on the basis of their ability to do so. The actions were taken on the basis of capability, not on moral values. The phrase "Because they could" implies the idea that when there is unchecked ruling of power, it becomes the reason for oppression.

Explanation

The statement underlines the cyclical nature of power and oppression, aligning with Frantz Fanon's postcolonial theory, which describes that the oppressed often become the oppressors when power shifts. It warns of the unchecked use of power by aligning with Arendt's theory (2006) of the "banality of evil", where a large holocaust occurs not out of malice but due to mindless following of power structures, avoiding moral reflection and prioritizing obedience over conscious reflection. The statement ultimately suggests that all hierarchical structures are predicated on the basis of power.

Statement 3

"Gender is a shell game. What is a man? Whatever a woman isn't. What is a woman? Whatever a man is not. Tap on it and it's hollow. Look under the shells: it's not there."

Textual Analysis:

Metaphor and Imagery

The metaphor "Gender is a shell game" compares gender to a deceptive street trick in which there is a hidden object under moving shells. The implication is that gender is illusory, performative, and constructed, not grounded in any essential truth. The clause "Tap on it, and it's hollow" uses imagery; it indicates that there is no universal truth or central core; there are only constructed meanings. The clause "Look under the shells: it's not there" reinforces the illusion of the core essence of gender. It undermines that if you try to discover a core essence of "man" or "woman", you find nothing definite. There is repetition of questions in binary structures like "What is a man? Whatever a woman isn't... What is a woman? Whatever a man is not." It highlights the mutual exclusivity that is present in the meaning of gender. The repetition highlights how these identities are defined only in opposition to each other, not by internal qualities.

Interpretation:

In the Novel's Context

The statement critiques the fixed gender norms at a point by describing inverted power dynamics between men and women in the novel. It portrays the arbitrary nature of gender roles that are described on the basis of power dynamics, not on biology or morality.

Explanation:

Gender Performativity

This quote is rooted directly in Judith Butler's theory (1990) of gender performativity by describes gender on the basis of their habits. It describes gender on the basis of their performance in the society. The "hollow shell" metaphor describes that there is no natural

meaning of gender; it is described on the basis of actions and abilities. Gender got its connotation on the basis of social behaviors, acts, and roles. The quote also undermines Derrida's view of binary opposition. That there is no fixed definition of male or female. These are described as opposites of each other by describing that a woman is identified as a woman because it is not a man and vice versa. Gender gives meaning in opposition and cannot stand independently.

Statement 4

"Now they will know," shouts one woman into Tunde's camera, "that they are the ones who should not walk out of their houses alone at night. They are the ones who should be afraid."

Textual Analysis:

Modality & Pronoun Use

The phrase "they are the ones who should...." uses strong deontic modality by using the modal verb "should". It is a declarative statement that assigns the traditional obligatory fear of women to the men. The next phrase, "Now they will know", is declarative and predictive; it undermines a turning point in cultural norms. The phrase "walk out of their houses alone at night" is historically and culturally used for women, but here it is used for men. It shows the change in culturally accepted norms of gender. The phrase "should be afraid" implies the natural urge to reinforce the feeling of fear and unsafety. The statement is shouted and portrays the emotions of resistance and a public declaration of reversal. The woman was directed to the camera to record and remember the statement as an act of collective empowerment.

Interpretation:

In the Novel's Context

Tunde, a male journalist, worked on the rising power of women. He captured the scenes of women protesting. The women's statement highlights the psychological shift in women after gaining power. They end their fear and start petrifying the men. This statement fits as a cathartic reaction to the patriarchal

societies, which used to harass them. The use of the word "now" highlights the upcoming changing society. Now, with the reversal of societal norms, men have to undergo the same sufferings as women suffer. Time and situation get changed; oppressors become the oppressed ones because of power dynamics. They no longer internalize fear; they externalize it onto the former oppressors.

Explanation:

Feminist Discourse

This statement reflects the radical feminist critique (Rowland & Klein [2013](#)). that describes the fear as a controlling power against women over a long span of time. The speaker flips this narrative by reversing the control by transferring the fear back onto men, who remained historical agents of patriarchal control for centuries. The women's reaction conveys the ideology of revenge; they no longer demand equal rights; now they consider themselves superior. This is the higher level of resistance, where the oppressed becomes the oppressor. This statement embodies the colonized reclaiming of terror as a weapon by this revolutionary spirit: "They are the ones who should be afraid."

Foucault – Power and Surveillance

The woman speaks into a camera, holding Foucault ([1980](#)) argues that visibility is a trap. Here, the woman uses the camera to trap others in fear by exposing their reality. She uses a camera as a source to convey her power and ability to control the world. It shows the ideology of a natural urge to show one's power in the world.

Statement 5

"The world is the way it is now because of five thousand years of ingrained structures of power based on darker times when things were much more violent... But we don't have to act that way now. We can think and imagine ourselves differently once we understand what we've based our ideas on."

Textual Analysis:

Lexical Choices

By depicting male dominance as a "five thousand years" long historical continuum, the patriarchy is portrayed as a deeply rooted and hard-to-change reality. The lexical item "ingrained structures of power" points to the deeply embedded nature of patriarchy that is institutionalized, not accidental. The lexical items "darker times" and "more violent" show the historical violence of male-dominant societies as war as a tool of control. The phrase "We don't have to act that way now" signals a new ideology of choosing agency, and freedom, and showing resistance to inherited norms.

Modality and Voice

The statement undermines the shift from a historical declarative "The world is the way it is..." to an empowering modality "But we don't have to... our ideas on". The use of the inclusive pronoun "we" symbolizes shared representation and collective responsibility. The future-orientated clause "We can think and imagine ourselves differently..." promotes transformative thinking in the future.

Interpretation:

In the Novel's Context

This statement appears at a reflective moment where the characters or narrator critically examine how patriarchal power was historically justified and why it no longer applies. The quote marks a philosophical resistance, not just against individual oppression but against the entire framework of traditional male-dominated authority. According to the speaker, the first step towards the change is awareness.

Explanation:

Feminist Ideology and Historical Patriarchy

This dialogue describes that the current situation of normalization of patriarchy is because of the accepted historical paradigm of violence. It describes that power systems are dynamic because these power systems are not natural; these are just culturally and historically conditioned to society and have the ability to change or reverse.

Michel Foucault – Discourse and Power

Foucault (1980) critiques the justification of continuity of power on the basis of history. In the same way, this statement challenges the accepted norms of power. When someone shows the courage to resist, it opens up new ideologies of freedom and breaks the historical continuation. It gives the ideology of self-determination by conditioning social change with individual change.

Judith Butler – Gender as Performativity

This quote opens up a new thinking pattern for society by aligning gender with performativity (Butler, 1990). The historical authority of males is because of their unchanging performance and social acceptance of it. According to it, by the change of social actions of gender, new hierarchies can be constructed. This statement challenges Gramsci's (1971) concept of cultural hegemony, which describes dominance on the basis of "common sense" beliefs. By giving the ideology of intellectual resistance, this statement questions the concept of natural beliefs of the society.

Statement 6

"Have you thought about the evolutionary psychology of it? Men have evolved to be strong worker homestead-keepers, while women—with babies to protect from harm—have had to become aggressive and violent."

Textual Analysis:

Lexical Choices & Framing

The term "evolutionary psychology" describes the natural selection of gender authority. The phrase "men have evolved to be strong worker homestead-keepers" challenges the traditional gender stereotype that sees women as homemakers. The clause "women... have had to become aggressive and violent" challenges the patriarchy and reinforces women's resistance.

Syntax & Structure

The use of the interrogative "Have you thought about...?" is not for asking questions. It is a rhetorical question that encourages the listener to accept the argument as logical or natural. The phrase "had to become" shows the cause-and-effect relationship between the genders that naturalizes the changing behavior of women.

Modality & Authority

The term "evolutionary psychology" appeals to science and undermines the epistemic modality by adding a factual effect to the statement. It shows legitimacy to the reversal of patriarchal logic by considering it natural.

Interpretation:

In the Novel's Context

This quote describes the reversal practice of gender roles in society, with the change in the power structure. Power was used as a justified logic of male dominance in the past, now same logic is going to be used for female dominance. It portrays the justification of power based on nature as a flexible and socially constructed phenomenon. The reader may find a question about the validity of all essentialist arguments that favor one gender or the other. The audience makes the interpretation that dominance is based on power, not on biology.

Explanation:

Patriarchy and Scientific Discourse

Historically, patriarchy was based on science, as biologically and psychologically men are stronger and more rational. That's why they were considered suitable for leadership. Male dominance was considered logical because of the inherent power of men, which is socially proven over time. While women were considered emotionally weak, as they had the responsibility to take care of their babies, they became aggressive sometimes.

Foucault – Knowledge as Power

Foucault (1980) argues that knowledge is not merely

the search for truth; it is deeply connected to the power structures. It is shaped by the authorities and concerned about who is in power.

Judith Butler – Gender as Constructed Identity

Butler's (1990) concept of gender performativity critiques the biological meaning of gender. Gender is based on performance, and when performance and gender roles change, it changes the gender identity as well. With the women's power, a new hegemonic relationship builds up, where women enjoy the authority.

Conclusion

The present study is based on the imaginative representation of power dynamics in different parts of the world. It cites different parts of European Arabic societies. This study bluntly exposes the presence of patriarchy and its effect on society with the help of Fairclough's three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis (2005). Apparently, this study is based on a fictional world; for example, the ability of women to produce current from their fingertips can happen in imagination only. But it is deeply rooted in the reality of power dynamics. It bluntly exposes the fear and harassment that male-dominance societies enact on women. It undermines the emotions of revenge that are developed because of the violence of patriarchal societies. Women have feelings, and they always want to resist, but usually, they do not react

because of their oppressed condition. This novel depicts the intensity of resistance of women by portraying the behavior that they adopt after getting power. Women start to resist and react to the unjust behavior of society. They become the core source of power, and this changes their thinking pattern and confidence levels. They start to resist openly even against slight actions of men. They become the ultimate source of power, and this change is troublesome for males. Through the depiction of this change, the author challenges the essentialist approach to the fixed meaning of gender. The change of power and authority challenges the stereotype of natural dominance of power. This novel is a blunt critique of the natural dominance of power and unjust behavior in social groups on the basis of power. Change in the role of males and females coins with Butler's (1990) concept of gender performativity. This novel describes that the process of development of resistance ideologies is rooted in societal norms. But people resist more openly when they have the power to convey their thoughts without fear. When women start to hold authority, it changes the whole power structure and results in new power dynamics. This is the fluid nature of power and gender that describes the journey of oppression. It describes how the oppressor becomes the oppressed according to the power shift. The statement "Gender is a shell game" – that the whole game is of power; gender in itself is nothing. It got its meaning from society on the basis of performance; there is no basic essence of gender.

References

- Allagbé, A. A., & Amoussou, F. (2020). Patriarchal ideologies and female un-femininities in a contemporary feminist writing: A gender-oriented and critical discourse analysis perspective. *AFRREV LALIGENS an International Journal of Language Literature and Gender Studies*, 9(1), 13–27. <https://doi.org/10.4314/laligens.v9i1.2>
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Amir, M. A., Ali, S., & Akhter, F. (2020). Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of the Stone Woman by Tariq Ali. *Global Language Review*, V(III), 275–287. [https://doi.org/10.31703/glr.2020\(v-iii\).28](https://doi.org/10.31703/glr.2020(v-iii).28)
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Anwar, N. D. N., & Butt, N. I. R. (2025). Mapping the New Middle East: A Critical Discourse analysis of Netanyahu's speech at UNGA in 2023. *the α Critical Review of Social Sciences Studies*, 3(1), 1993–2004. <https://doi.org/10.59075/zax9bv45>
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Anwar, N., Butt, I. R., & Shahzadi, A. (2024). *Portrayal of the hidden agenda: A critical discourse analysis of political-war statements of Israeli officials*. *The Journal of Research Review*, 1(04), 256–265.
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Arendt, H. (2006). *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A report on the banality of evil* (Rev. ed.). Penguin Books. (Original work published 1963).
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1), 139–167. <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972–1977* (C. Gordon, Ed.). Pantheon Books.
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks* (Q. Hoare & G. Nowell Smith, Eds. & Trans.). International Publishers.
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- HADDOUR, A. (2019). *Frantz Fanon, postcolonialism and the ethics of difference* (1st ed.). Manchester University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvnb7m11>
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Lynch, R. A. (2010). Foucault's theory of power. In *Michel Foucault* (pp.13–26) (pp. 13–26). <https://doi.org/10.1017/upo9781844654734.002>
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Madiou, M. S. E. (2021). Abject Talks Gibberish: "Translating" abjection in Rabi Alameddine's *An Unnecessary Woman*. *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 43(3). <https://doi.org/10.13169/arabstudquar.43.3.0249>
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Pafford, A., & Matusitz, J. (2017). ABC's Quantico. *Critical Studies in Television the International Journal of Television Studies*, 12(3), 273–288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1749602017717167>
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Ramzan, M., & Khan, A. K. (2020). A critical discourse analysis of powerlessness in Mohsin Hamid's novel *Moth Smoke*. *Sir Syed Journal of Education & Social Research*, 3(4), 106–112.
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Rowland, R., & Klein, R. D. (2013). *Radical feminism: Critique and construct*. In *Feminist knowledge (RLE Feminist Theory)* (pp. 271–303). Routledge.
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Savitri, I. D., Sukesu, K., Sujoko, A., & Winarni, I. (2025). Critical discourse analysis to uncover women strategies in navigating domestic oppression in Serat Centhini the 1st volume. *Cogent Arts and Humanities*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2025.2469452>
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Wallace, A. (2020). *Sustaining patriarchy? A critical discourse analysis of urban sustainable development* (Master's thesis, Uppsala University). *Uppsala University DiVA Portal*. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1455450>
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)