

Power Relations and Resistance in Naguib Mahfouz's *Layali Alf Laylah*: Michel Foucault's Hegemony

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Doi: [10.24252/jad.v25i1a5](https://doi.org/10.24252/jad.v25i1a5)

(Submitted: 29/01/2025, Accepted: 12/05/2025, Available Online: 19/05/2025)

Abstract

This research examines the relationship between power and resistance in *Layali Alf Laylah*, a novel by Naguib Mahfouz, through the lens of Foucault's hegemony theory. This qualitative research employs an analytical descriptive approach. The material object analyzed is the novel *Layali Alf Laylah*, while the formal object is Foucault's hegemony theory, which explores the influence of power on individuals and the emergence of resistance against established power structures. The analytical descriptive method is utilized to examine the text and to identify the various forms of power and resistance mechanisms embedded within the characters and narrative of the novel. The findings indicate that the novel portrays repressive power dynamics while simultaneously presenting resistance against these power structures through both individual and collective actions. Consequently, the novel not only illustrates the existing power relations but also highlights how resistance plays a crucial role in the process of social change. In conclusion, *Layali Alf Laylah* offers a nuanced depiction of the interplay between power and resistance within a society shaped by dominant power structures. The novel provides critical insight into the complexities of hegemonic influence and the potential for subversion, reinforcing the dynamic nature of societal power relations. This research contributes to the body of knowledge by providing a deeper understanding of the dynamics of power and resistance in literature, demonstrating how Foucault's theoretical framework can be applied to analyze social structures within fictional narrative.



Keywords: Hegemony, Foucault, power, Resistance, Layali Alf Laylah.

الملخص

"يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل علاقة السلطة والمقاومة في رواية "ليالي ألف ليلة" لنجيب محفوظ باستخدام نظرية الهيمنة لفوكو. يعتمد هذا البحث على المنهج النوعي مع مقارنة وصفية تحليلية. الموضوع المادي الذي يتم تحليله هو رواية "ليالي ألف ليلة"، بينما الموضوع الشكلي هو نظرية الهيمنة لفوكو، مع التركيز على تأثير السلطة على الأفراد وكيفية ظهور المقاومة تجاه الهياكل السلطوية القائمة. يتم استخدام المنهج الوصفي التحليلي لاستكشاف النص وتحديد أشكال السلطة وآليات المقاومة التي تتجلى في الشخصيات وحبكة الرواية. تظهر نتائج البحث أن الرواية تصور ديناميات السلطة التي تتسم بالقمع، لكنها تقدم أيضاً مقاومة للهياكل السلطوية من خلال أفعال الأفراد والجماعات. وبذلك، فإن الرواية لا تكتفي بكشف العلاقات السلطوية القائمة، بل توضح كيف تصبح المقاومة جزءاً من عملية التغيير الاجتماعي. وفي الختام، تُظهر رواية "ليالي ألف ليلة" تمثيلاً معقداً لتفاعل السلطة والمقاومة في مجتمع يتأثر بهياكل السلطة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الهيمنة، فوكو، السلطة، المقاومة، ليالي ألف ليلة

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis relasi kuasa dan resistensi dalam Novel *Layali Alf Laylah* karya Najib Mahfouz dengan menggunakan teori hegemoni Foucault. Jenis penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif analitis. Objek material yang dianalisis adalah Novel *Layali Alf Laylah*, sedangkan objek formalnya adalah teori hegemoni Foucault, yang berfokus pada pengaruh kuasa terhadap individu dan bagaimana resistensi muncul terhadap struktur kekuasaan yang ada. Metode deskriptif analitis digunakan untuk menggali teks dan mengidentifikasi bentuk-bentuk kuasa serta mekanisme resistensi yang terjalin dalam karakter-karakter dan alur cerita novel. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa novel ini menggambarkan dinamika kuasa yang bersifat repressif, namun juga menyajikan perlawanan terhadap struktur kuasa tersebut melalui aksi-aksi individu dan kelompok. Dengan demikian, novel ini tidak hanya mengungkapkan hubungan kuasa yang ada, tetapi juga memperlihatkan bagaimana resistensi menjadi bagian dari proses perubahan sosial. Kesimpulannya, *Layali Alf Laylah* menyajikan representasi kompleks mengenai

interaksi kuasa dan resistensi dalam masyarakat yang dipengaruhi oleh struktur kekuasaan.

Kata Kunci: Hegemoni; Foucault; Kuasa; Resistensi; Layali Alf Laylah

How to Cite This Article: Alandira, Palendika, Rohanda, Wildan Taufiq, and Rifqi Muhammad Firdaus. "Power Relations and Resistance in Naguib Mahfouz's Layali Alf Laylah: Michel Foucault's Hegemony". *Jurnal Adabiyah* 25, no. 1 (May 12, 2025). Accessed May 19, 2025. <https://journal.uin-alauddin.ac.id/index.php/adabiyah/article/view/55027>

A. Introduction

Literature as a cultural product serves not only as entertainment, but also as a reflection of the social, cultural and political dynamics of society. Literary works, especially novels, often depict the struggles of characters in facing the power structures that operate in society. Literature not only functions as a representation of the relationship between individuals, groups, and power that exists in social life, but also as a medium to analyze and criticize the social order and power structures in society.¹ Literature is important not only for its aesthetic value, but also for its ability to reveal tensions between individuals and larger social structures, which often involve power relations that operate covertly.² However, while many literary works depict dominating power relations, not many explore the forms of resistance that emerge in response to such power. Foucault (1980) explains that power does not only operate through direct domination, but also through discourse networks that influence individual behavior, values, and thoughts.³ In this context, Najib Mahfouz's Layali Alf Laylah is a strong example in illustrating how power relations can control individuals, as well as how these individuals respond with resistance to the system that controls them. Mahfouz meticulously reveals the power hidden behind social and political structures in society.⁴ This research uses Foucault's theory of hegemony to analyze power relations and forms

¹ Ririn Anggraeni, "Analisis Konflik Sosial Dan Konflik Politik Dalam Novel Sekali Peristiwa Di Banten Selatan Karya Pramoedya Ananta Toer Dan Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran Membaca Di SMA" (Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa, 2016).

² Hasfikin S, Ainy Khairun Nisa, and Nuz Chairul Mugrib, "Analisis Bentuk Struktur Sosial Dalam Kisah Layālī Turkistān Karya Najīb Al-Kailānī," *JILSA (Jurnal Ilmu Linguistik Dan Sastra Arab)* 6, no. 2 (2022): 104–17, <https://doi.org/10.15642/jilsa.2022.6.2.104-117>.

³ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), p 195

⁴ Ridwan, "Novel-Novel Realis Karya Najib Mahfuz: Kajian Sosiologis Atas Perubahan Sosial, Politik, Dan Keagamaan" (UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI SYARIF HIDAYATULLAH JAKARTA, 2010).

of resistance in Layali Alf Laylah.⁵ Through this approach, this research aims to reveal how power operates through discourse and social structures, and how individuals or groups respond to it through forms of resistance.⁶ This research will not only analyze the textual aspects of the novel, but also relate it to the broader sociocultural context.

For example, in Layali Alf Laylah, there is a quote that illustrates the power relations that restrict individual freedom, namely in the interaction between Minister Dandan and Sultan Shahriyar, as seen in the following quote:

عقب صلاة الفجر، وسحب الظلام صامدة أمام دفقة الضياء المتوثية، دعى الوزير دندان إلى مقابلة السلطان شهريار.. تلاشت رزاة دندان ، خفق قلب الأبوة بين جوانحه، غمغم وهو يرتدى ملابسه : الآن تقرر المصير .. مصيرك يا شهزادا

*“Following the dawn prayer, with clouds of darkness defying the vigorous thrust of light, the vizier Dandan was called to a meeting with the sultan Shahriyar. Dandan’s composure vanished. The heart of a father quaked within him as, putting on his clothes, he mumbled, “Now the outcome will be resolved your fate, Shahrzad.”*⁷

This quote illustrates how Sultan Shahriyar's power works through discourse that determines the fate of individuals, in this case Shahrzad. Minister Dandan's feelings of tension and anxiety about what will happen to Shahrzad reflect how power operates in society, where individuals do not have complete freedom to determine their destiny. The power of the Sultan, who is in a dominant position, indirectly determines Shahrzad's life and fate, which serves to uphold the existing social order.

In Foucault's (1976) perspective, power is not only realized through violence or physical threats, but also through discourse mechanisms that regulate the way individuals think and act.⁸ In this case, Sultan Shahriyar embodies a power figure who not only exerts direct control but also establishes norms that influence individual destinies. Power operates through societal discourses, limiting autonomy and subtly shaping decisions. The narrative highlights how power functions not just through overt domination, but through hidden mechanisms embedded in social norms. This research aims to analyze power dynamics and resistance in the novel, using Foucault's concept

⁵ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*.

⁶ Jenifer Tiara Ridwan Tiara Ridwan et al., “Teori Relasi Kekuasaan Strata Sosial Masyarakat Dalam Novel Red Queen Karya Victoria Aveyard,” *Sosietas* 12, no. 2 (2023): 111–22, <https://doi.org/10.17509/sosietas.v12i2.58685>.

⁷ نجيب محفوظ، ليالي ألف ليلة رواية لـ نجيب محفوظ (القاهرة: دار الشروق، 2015). ص 8

⁸ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976).p 94

of hegemony to uncover how invisible power affects individuals and how resistance appears in subtle forms.

Previous research related to Power Relations and Resistance through Foucault's Hegemony has been conducted by several researchers. One of the most recent studies is by Hussen (2023) analyzes power relations in Tanah Surga Merah using Foucault's power theory, highlighting how power operates through religion, culture, the state, and institutions in Acehese society. The study reveals that power is maintained not only through domination but also through normalization and regulation. Through a qualitative literary analysis, it explores strategies of control and resistance, emphasizing the role of religion and culture in shaping social order.⁹

Farhah et al. (2024) analyze Layali Alf Laylah through a literary sociology approach, exploring Mahfouz's social and political background and the novel's depiction of Arab society. Using qualitative methods, the study highlights how Mahfouz portrays social complexities and offers alternative solutions. The findings reveal the novel's relevance to Indonesia's leadership crisis and societal welfare, contributing to literary studies.¹⁰

Thinking framework

Novel Layali Alf Laylah Karya Najib Mahfudz



Hegemoni foucault



Relasi Kuasa dan resistensi

⁹ Muhammad Hussen, "Relasi Kekuasaan Masyarakat Aceh Dalam Novel Tanah Surga Merah Karya Arafat Nur: Studi Kekuasaan Michel Foucault," *JOURNAL SYNTAX IDEA* 5, no. 10 (2023), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.46799/syntax-idea.v5i7.2416>.

¹⁰ Eva Farhah et al., "Potret Najib Mahfouz: Lingkungan Sosial Politik Dalam Novel Layali Alf Lailah," *Hijai – Journal on Arabic Language and Literature* 7, no. 1 (2024): 78–91, <https://doi.org/http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3626-4131>.

Layali Alf Laylah by Naguib Mahfouz depicts the dynamics of power in Egyptian society, operating through hegemony, power relations, and resistance.¹¹ From Foucault's perspective, hegemony is not only imposed but also operates subtly through regulation and normalization.¹² From Foucault's perspective, hegemony is not only imposed but also operates subtly through regulation and normalization.¹³

Power relations are not static or centralized but are dispersed across various aspects of social life.¹⁴ Through cultural and religious control, power restricts individual freedom and regulates behavior.¹⁵ However, in line with Foucault's theory, where there is power, there is also resistance.¹⁶ his novel presents various forms of resistance against domination, ranging from individual rebellion to criticism of hegemonic social structures, creating opportunities for social change and justice.¹⁷ The novel shows how marginalized individuals attempt to deconstruct the dominant discourse and create space for change.¹⁸

This research explores power relations and resistance in Layali Alf Laylah through Foucault's hegemony theory. It addresses gaps in applying Foucault's framework to contemporary literature, particularly Mahfouz's novel. The research examines how power and resistance operate in the text, contributing theoretically to literary analysis using Foucault's ideas. Practically, it aims to raise awareness of power dynamics and inspire artistic engagement with these themes.

¹¹ Sherif Elgayyar, "The Impact of the Arabian Nights in Modern Egyptian Narration: Mahfouz's Arabian Nights and Days as a Case Study," *Scripta Neophilologica Posnaniensia* 21, no. 79 (2021): 303–19, <https://doi.org/10.14746/snp.2021.21.13>.

¹² Abdil Mughis Mudhoffir, "Teori Kekuasaan Michel Foucault: Tantangan Bagi Sosiologi Politik," *Masyarakat Jurnal Sosiologi* 18, no. 1 (2013), <https://doi.org/10.7454/mjs.v18i1.1253>.

¹³ Ratna Ayuningtiyas, "Relasi Kuasa Dalam Novel Anak Rantau Karya Ahmad Fuadi: Kajian Teori Michel Foucault," *Sarasvati* 1, no. 1 (2019): 73–86, <https://doi.org/10.30742/sv.v1i1.657>.

¹⁴ Mark Haugaard, "Foucault and Power: A Critique and Retheorization," *Critical Review* 34, no. 3–4 (2022): 341–71, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08913811.2022.2133803>.

¹⁵ Mudhoffir, "Teori Kekuasaan Michel Foucault: Tantangan Bagi Sosiologi Politik."

¹⁶ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*. P 95

¹⁷ Anisatus Sholikhah, "Relasi Dan Resistensi Kuasa Dalam Novel Orang-Orang Oetimu Karya Felix K. Nesi: Kajian Kekuasaan Michel Foucault," *E-Journal Bapala* 7, no. 3 (2020): 1–12.

¹⁸ Abd. Ghofur, "Analisis Dekonstruksi Tokoh Takeshi Dan Mitsusaburo Dalam Novel 'Silent Cry' Karya Kenzaburo Oe Perspektif Jacques Derrida," *OKARA Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra* 8 No.1, no. 9 (2014): 57–76.

B. Literature Review

1. Foucault's Theory of Hegemony

Hegemony comes from the Greek *eugemonia*, which means a system that shows the dominance of one party over another. The term was originally used to describe the influence that states such as Sparta and Athens had over other states in the context of power relations.¹⁹ In the development of international relations studies, the concept of hegemony became the center of attention of scholars, who traced the roots, functions, and changes of the concept. The Greek historian Thucydides is considered one of the early thinkers who used the concept of

Michel Foucault redefined hegemony by viewing power not as mere domination but as a network of relationships spread throughout society. He argued that power is not centralized in the state but operates through discourse, norms, and knowledge in daily life. For Foucault, power is productive, shaping social subjects who conform to rules, often without direct coercion.²⁰ Foucault emphasized the link between power and knowledge, arguing that knowledge is never neutral but shaped by power relations. What is accepted as “truth” results from power mechanisms operating through institutions like education, media, and religion. Hegemony, in this sense, extends.²¹ Foucault links hegemony to panopticism, where individuals regulate themselves according to imposed norms. Resistance arises in subtle, hidden ways that challenge the system. He expands the concept of hegemony by revealing how power operates at the micro level through bodies and minds and how resistance takes various forms.²²

2. Michel Foucault's Relations of Power and Resistance

a. Michel Foucault's Concept of Power

Michel Foucault, a philosopher known for his structuralism and post-structuralism approaches, views power as a dynamic relation that is widespread in social networks. Power, according to him, is not centralized in certain individuals or institutions, but works through complex relational mechanisms.²³ Foucault explains: "Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are

¹⁹ Nezar Patria and Andi Arief, *Antonio Gramsci: Negara Dan Hegemoni* (yogyakarta: PUSTAKA PELAJAR, 2015).P 115

²⁰ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*.

²¹ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*.

²² Farida Nurul Rahmawati, Emy Susanti, and Pinky Saptandari, “Resistensi Perempuan Tandhak Madura: Berjuang Dari Dalam,” *Jurnal Komunikasi* 15, no. 1 (2021): 17–28, <https://doi.org/10.21107/ilkom.v15i1.10046>.

²³ Umar Kamahi, “Teori Kekuasaan Michel Foucault: Tantangan Bagi Sosiologi Politik (Umar Kamahi),” *Jurnal Al-Khitabah* 3, no. 1 (2017): 117–33, <http://journal.uin-alauddin.ac.id/index.php/Al-Khitabah/article/view/2926/2802>.

endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society".²⁴ Foucault asserts that power is not tied to a single institution but emerges through social relations. It operates across various sectors, shaping norms and regulating behavior. In education, for example, power influences how students think and act, reinforcing societal norms through complex social mechanisms.²⁵

b. Forms of Power Relations

1) Power Relationships over Thought

a) Religion

Religion plays an important role in shaping power relations over the mind. Through religious discourse, religious institutions create a collective frame of mind that instills adherence to certain norms. Foucault writes:

"The Church was not only a religious institution but a complex network of power relations aiming to govern both the body and soul".²⁶

In this context, religious institutions not only perform a spiritual function, but also play a role in shaping people's thoughts and behaviors through narratives that emphasize divine power. Religion serves as a tool to discipline individuals, where norms set by religious institutions are often referenced in everyday life. This shows how power can operate through the legitimization of knowledge produced by religious discourse. Religion functions as a system of meaning that regulates social behavior.²⁷ Religious power is both repressive and productive, shaping norms and worldviews through knowledge.²⁸ Religious institutions influence how individuals understand themselves and society. Media, as a tool of power, shapes political and social discourse, interacting with religion to construct public perception.²⁹ This highlights the complex

²⁴ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*. P 93

²⁵ Gede Agus Siswadi, "Relasi Kuasa Terhadap Konstruksi Pengetahuan Di Sekolah: Perspektif Michel Foucault Dan Refleksi Atas Sistem Pendidikan Di Indonesia," *Sang Acharya: Jurnal Profesi Guru Universitas Hindu Negeri I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa Denpasar* 5445, no. April (2024): 1–15.

²⁶ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976).p 211

²⁷ Abdullah Khozin Afandi, "Konsep Kekuasaan Michel Foucault," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam* 2, no. 1 (2012), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2012.2.1.131-149>.

²⁸ siti zainab, "Kekuasaan Agama Dalam Masyarakat Modern," *Jurnal Sosial Budaya* 10, no. 2 (2020).

²⁹ Ayub Dwi Anggoro, "Media, Politik, Dan Kekuasaan: Analisis Framing Model Robert N. Entman Dalam Pemberitaan Hasil Pemilihan Presiden 9 Juli 2014 Di TV One Dan Metro TV," *Jurnal Aristo* 2, no. 2 (2014): 25–52.

relationship between religious institutions, social norms, and discourse, where power and knowledge shape perspectives.³⁰

b) Culture

Culture is an effective medium for the spread of power, especially through traditions, symbols, and rites that shape people's mindsets. Foucault emphasizes:

"Discourses not only describe the world; they create it by shaping the subjects who inhabit it".³¹ Culture not only reflects social reality but also shapes and regulates behavior.³² This shows that tradition can be used to maintain existing power structures. Power relations over thought are distributed in four elements, namely religion, culture, institutions, and the state.³³ Traditions, like wedding ceremonies, reinforce social norms and maintain power structures through embedded knowledge and discourse.³⁴ Power relations over thought operate through religion, culture, institutions, and the state, subtly influencing society. Cultural paradigms are key to understanding theoretical thought, as power often hides within everyday practices perceived as normal.³⁵

c) State

The state acts as the main actor in the operation of power through various institutions and policies designed to control people's minds. Foucault states:

"The state is far from being an entity that exerts power directly; it operates through a network of institutions and techniques that permeate society".³⁶

The state exercises power through institutions and policies that shape public thought. Foucault (in Zaidan, 2020) argues that power operates through networks rather

³⁰ Martinus Barasa and F.X. Armada Riyanto, "Analisis Teori Kekuasaan Michel Foucault Atas Propaganda Media Dalam Membangun Diskursus Politik," *Journal of Education, Humaniora and Social Sciences (JEHSS)* 6, no. 1 (2023): 188–95, <https://doi.org/10.34007/jehss.v6i1.1785>.

³¹ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*. P 48

³² Leylia Khairani and Ketut Wiradnyana, "From Ethnic Genealogical Folklore to the Power and Legitimacy of Traditional Society," *Eduvest - Journal of Universal Studies* 3, no. 6 (2023): 1098–1115, <https://doi.org/10.59188/eduvest.v3i6.837>.

³³ Peni Adji, "Relasi Kekuasaan Dalam Novel Lolong Anjing Di Bulan Karya Arafat Nur," *Jurnal Ilmiah Kebudayaan SINTESES* 13, no. 1 (2019).

³⁴ Ahmad Syarif Makatita and Athoillah Islamy, "Paradigma Dakwah Islam Terhadap Budaya Lokal Masyarakat Papua : Integrasi Syariat Islam Dan Budaya Dalam Tradisi Bakar Batu Pada Komunitas Muslim Dani," *Jurnal At-Taghyir: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Pengembangan Masyarakat Desa* 4, no. 2 (2022): 241–62, <https://doi.org/10.24952/taghyir.v4i2.5264>.

³⁵ Mudhoffir, "Teori Kekuasaan Michel Foucault: Tantangan Bagi Sosiologi Politik."

³⁶ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*.p 92

than direct enforcement.³⁷ Modern states use education and media to instill values that maintain stability. Policies subtly regulate behavior, making individuals unconsciously adhere to norms in biopolitics, Foucault highlights how health and education policies subtly control populations, showing that power extends beyond direct control to shaping social norms and individual behavior.³⁸

d) Institution

Institutions such as schools, hospitals and prisons are places where power is reproduced through surveillance and norm formation. Foucault explains:

"Institutions are not only spaces of operation but also mechanisms of normalizing and disciplining individuals".³⁹

Institutions like schools, hospitals, and prisons reproduce power through surveillance and norm formation.⁴⁰ In this context, the institutions not only provide services but also play an important role in shaping individual behavior to conform to the prevailing norms. Foucault explains that they not only function as service providers but also as mechanisms for normalization and discipline.⁴¹ These institutions shape behavior by defining what is considered "normal" or "abnormal" reinforcing power structures.⁴² Power is not only centralized in formal institutions but also embedded in everyday practices, subtly shaping social norms and individual.⁴³

2) Power Relations over the Body

a) The Social Body

The social body is the body that is operationalized when individuals are part of a social community. Foucault emphasizes that power works through disciplinary mechanisms applied by social institutions. He states:

³⁷ Yuris Fahman Zaidan, "Kritik Sandra Lee Bartky Terhadap Pemikiran Michel Foucault," *JAQFI: Jurnal Aqidah Dan Filsafat Islam* 5, no. 2 (2020): 134–53.

³⁸ Chisa Belinda Harahap and Iqram Sulhin, "Pengendalian Kejahatan Pada Sub-Kebudayaan Gang Klitih (Dalam Paradigma Kriminologi Budaya)," *Deviance Jurnal Kriminologi* 6, no. 1 (2022): 86, <https://doi.org/10.36080/djk.1569>.

³⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. p 136

⁴⁰ Miloje Grbin, "Foucault and Space," *Социолошки Преглед XLIX*, no. 3 (2015): 305–12.

⁴¹ Sahrul Sori Alom Harahap and Irza Hamdani Nurul Hidayah, Putiha Nuro, Anis Safia, Nur Syahira, "Filsafat Ilmu: Epistemologi Post-Strukturalisme Dalam Menjelajahi," *Jurnal Multidisiplin West Science* 2, no. 6 (2018): 422–32.

⁴² Mangihut Siregar, "Kritik Terhadap Teori Kekuasaan-Pengetahuan Foucault," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik* 1, no. 1 (2021): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.30742/juispol.v1i1.1560>.

⁴³ Grbin, "Foucault and Space."

*"Discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies"*⁴⁴

Discipline shapes docile bodies through institutions, operating via norms and surveillance rather than force. Subjected bodies are controlled, while practiced bodies adapt through repetition. Ultimately, individuals internalize control, making coercion unnecessary. Foucault reveals how modern power subtly governs behavior. Siregar (2021) explains that power operates through normalization, where institutions define "normal" and "abnormal" behavior to maintain existing structures. These norms are internalized by individuals, reflecting complex power relations within society. Foucault emphasizes that power is not only centralized in institutions but also embedded in daily practices, shaping behavior through established norms.⁴⁵

b) Sexual Body

The sexual body is the body associated with sexual and reproductive activities. Foucault describes the sexual body as an object of control and surveillance exercised by society through medical, religious, and legal discourses. He states:

*"Sexuality must not be thought of as a natural given which power tries to hold in check, or as an obscure domain which knowledge tries gradually to uncover. It is the name that can be given to a historical construct".*⁴⁶

Sexuality is not purely biological but a social construct shaped by institutions and power relations. Abadi (2023) states that sexuality is regulated by societal norms.⁴⁷ while O'Callaghan (2013) highlights how discourse imposes restrictions, stigmatizing "deviant" expressions. Foucault argues that repressing sexuality reinforces power by defining "normal" and "abnormal" behavior. Thus, power relations in sexuality reveal how the body becomes an arena where discourse and authority shape identity.⁴⁸ Power relations in the sexual body illustrate the complex interaction between individuals and social norms that regulate sexual behavior. Foucault argues that the body is not merely biological but a site where discourse and power shape sexual identity.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.p 138

⁴⁵ Mohamad Ulil Azmi Arifudin, "Relasi Kuasa Dalam Novel Canting Karya Arswendo Atmowiloto (Kajian Michel Foucault)," *E-Journal Mahasiswa Unesa* 6, no. 1 (2019): 1–11, <https://ejournal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/jurnal-sapala/article/view/31742>.

⁴⁶ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*.p 105

⁴⁷ hermawan septian Abadi, "Kekuasaan Seksualitas Dalam Novel: Perspektif Analisis Wacana Kritis Michel Foucault," *Belajar Bahasa: Jurnal Ilmiah Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia*, 2, no. 2 (2017): 167–78, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32528/bb.v2i2.828>.

⁴⁸ Julie Faith O'Callaghan, "The Sexual Experience: Michel Foucault and The History of Sexuality" (Murdoch University, 2013).

⁴⁹ Abadi, "Kekuasaan Seksualitas Dalam Novel: Perspektif Analisis Wacana Kritis Michel Foucault."

3. Resistance

Resistance is an integral part of power relations, not something separate from them. Power does not only function as a tool of oppression but also creates opportunities for resistance. This resistance can manifest in various forms as a dynamic response within the framework of power itself. Foucault states: "Where there is power, there is resistance".⁵⁰

Resistance exists within power relations and emerges in various forms, both overt and subtle. It can manifest through individual actions that challenge norms or through everyday practices that question existing power structures. Foucault highlights that resistance is not always revolutionary but can be embedded in daily life as a response to domination.⁵¹ For example, individuals can resist by changing the way they think or by not following social norms that are considered unfair.⁵² Foucault's concept of resistance highlights how individuals and groups navigate power structures, not only by rejecting domination but also by creating alternative spaces for change. Resistance operates within power itself, offering ways to challenge and reshape social norms.

C. Research Methods

Research methodology generally includes five main aspects, namely research approaches and methods, types and sources of data, data collection techniques, and data analysis techniques, namely approaches and methods, types of data and data sources, data collection techniques, data analysis techniques, and time and place of research.⁵³ This research is a qualitative research using descriptive analytic method. Research with descriptive analytical methods aims to produce a systematic picture and a detailed, factual, and accurate description of the topic or object under study.⁵⁴ This research approach refers to Michel Foucault's theory of hegemony, which focuses on power relations and resistance. Foucault's theory views power as something that is not centralized, but rather spread through a network of social relations, institutions, and discourses. Power operates not only through direct domination, but also through

⁵⁰ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*. P 95

⁵¹ Saul Newman, "Power, Freedom and Obedience in Foucault and La Boétie: Voluntary Servitude as the Problem of Government," *Theory, Culture and Society* 39, no. 1 (2022): 123–41, <https://doi.org/10.1177/026327642111024333>.

⁵² Zahratul Umniyyah, Yanuaresti Kusuma Wardhani, and Nurhadianty Rahayu, "Representasi Keperempuanan Dan Sistem Patriarki Dalam Novel Tarian Bumi Karya Oka Rusmini," *DEIKTIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra* 4, no. 3 (2024): 384–95.

⁵³ Uin Sunan Gunung Djati, "Pedoman Penulisan Skripsi, Tesis, Dan Disertasi Universitas Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung," 2020, <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Yls-wxDhYhzYRyLrvwUYOC7oVobFNJ2S>.

⁵⁴ Rohanda Rohanda, *Metode Penelitian Sastra: Teori, Metode, Pendekatan, Dan Praktik*. (Bandung: LP2M UIN SGD Bandung, 2016), <https://digilib.uinsgd.ac.id/id/eprint/89761>.

normalization and regulation that create control over individual minds and bodies.⁵⁵ On the other hand, resistance is always present where power operates, as an attempt by individuals or groups to resist domination and create alternative spaces for freedom.⁵⁶ The main data source in this research is the novel *Layali Alf Laylah* by Najib Mahfudz, which was chosen because it describes the dynamics of power and resistance in the Egyptian social context. The research data are phrases, words, or sentences in the text of the novel that show the practice of hegemony, power relations, and forms of resistance to power. This data was collected through the documentation method by reading, recording, and interpreting the contents of relevant texts. Data analysis was conducted by linking the data obtained from the text with Foucault's theoretical concepts focusing on power relations and resistance.

D. Results and Discussion

1. Power Relationships over Thought

a. Religion

Religious media shape power by using spiritual discourse to influence collective thought, promoting moral values while legitimizing authority. Foucault argues that this power operates subtly, fostering voluntary compliance through narratives perceived as universal truths. This leads to self-surveillance, where individuals regulate their behavior according to societal norms. Resistance to such control reflects the dynamic nature of power. In *Layali Alf Laylah*, religious discourse reinforces obedience to higher authority by embedding ideas into the mind.

حذار يا بنتي فإن الخواطر تتجسد في القصور وتنطق

فقالَت بأسي

ضحيت بنفسى الأوقف شلال الدم

قتتم

للّهِ حكمته

⁵⁵ Kushtrim Ahmeti, "Power and Its Relationship with the Individual in Foucault's Political Philosophy," *European Journal of Research in Social Sciences* 7, no. 5 (2019): 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.33107/ubt-ic.2018.405>.

⁵⁶ Stellan Vinthagen and Anna Johansson, "'Everyday Resistance': Exploration of a Concept and Its Theories," *Resistance Studies Magazine*, no. 1 (2013): 1–46, <http://rsmag.nfshost.com/wp-content/uploads/Vinthagen-Johansson-2013-Everyday-resistance-Concept-Theory.pdf>.

فقلت بحنق
 وللشيطان أولياؤه
 قال بتوسل
 إنه يحبك يا شهرزاد
 الكبر والحب لا يجتمعان في قلب، إنه يحب ذاته أولا وأخيرا
 للحب معجزاته أيضا
 كلما اقترب منى تنشقت رائحة الدم
 السلطان ليس كبقية البشر
 لكن الجريمة هي الجريمة .. كم من عذراء قتل، كم من تقى وورع
 أهلك، لم يبق في المملكة إلا المنافقون
 فقال بحزن: ثقى بالله لم تتزعزع قط
 أما أنا فأعرف أن مقامي في الصبر كما علمني الشيخ الأكبر⁵⁷

In the analyzed datum, the power relations mediated by religion are clearly visible. Religion functions not only as a tool to shape societal norms and beliefs but also as a means to strengthen power. For example, in the statement "I sacrifice myself to stem the flood of blood," religion is used to provide moral justification for actions related to power, where self-sacrifice is seen as a legitimate and honorable act within the context of power. Additionally, expressions such as "My faith in God will never waver" show how religion is also used to affirm the spiritual strength underlying belief in the legitimacy of power, positioning power as part of God's will or divine destiny.

In this context, religion becomes a tool that unites power with moral and spiritual values, providing strength to the ruler to reinforce their position in the eyes of the people. The ruler seeks to legitimize their actions by using religion, and this is clearly

محفوظ، ليالي ألف ليلة رواية لـ نجيب محفوظ. ص 9-10⁵⁷

evident in the data presented, where religious beliefs are used to manipulate individual opinions and beliefs, convincing them that acts of power are part of a divine plan.

However, despite religion functioning as a tool to justify and legitimize power, there is ambiguity in these power relations. In the phrase "Every time he comes near me, I smell blood," a form of resistance to the use of religion to justify power emerges. Shahrzad rejects the legitimacy built through religion, indicating that, even though religion is used to validate the ruler's domination, individuals still have the capacity to resist and criticize that power. This is further clarified by Shahrzad's statement, "But evil is still evil. How many girls has he killed!" which suggests that, although religion is used to provide moral justification for the ruler's actions, there is an understanding that this power could be evil and unjust, thus allowing for resistance.

This data illustrates how religion plays a dual role in power relations. On one hand, religion strengthens power by providing moral and spiritual legitimacy, but on the other hand, it also creates space for individuals to resist power that is perceived as illegitimate. Thus, while religion functions to control and shape norms, the power relations mediated by religion are not entirely hegemonic and remain open to resistance.

فقال بطيشة

علينا أيضا أن نضاعف المواعظ في المساجد والموائد

أوشك صنعان أن ييأس ولكن السلولي أشار إلى مرجان إشارة خاصة فغادر
المكان.. ومع ذلك كان الحرس منتشرا في الحديقة، ولا يوجد مهرب، ولكنه لم
يغفل لحظة عن وعد قمقام.. قال السلولي

مغير الهجته فلنطو حديث الجريمة والمجرمين⁵⁸

In this datum, we can see how the discourse shaped by al-Salouli and Murgan reflects the power structures operating within it. The action of al-Salouli to suggest that warnings be spread in mosques and religious festivals shows the use of power in regulating society, where religious discourse is used as a means to control and shape social behavior. It reflects how power can work through religious institutions to maintain order and regulate societal morality.

The use of religion in this context demonstrates the enormous influence of power in shaping individual thoughts and behavior. When al-Salouli suggests broadcasting warnings in mosques, he is not only directing a physical action (broadcasting warnings), but also attempting to organize people's thoughts and feelings, leading them to feel alert

⁵⁸ محفوظ. ص 36-37

to potential dangers and comply with the rules in place. In this context, religious discourse serves to create social norms that guide individuals in their actions, and religious power is present to discipline society in subtle yet effective ways.

The text also reveals how power not only operates at the level of larger social structures, but also in interpersonal relationships. Although the characters in the story, such as al-Salouli and Murgan, talk about crimes and offenders who plead guilty, their talk remains focused on the broader social setting, using religious discourse to achieve specific goals of controlling individual behavior and maintaining morality in society.⁵⁹ Furthermore, al-Salouli's persistence, despite his apparent dismissal of the subject of crime, suggests that power relations are not just about enforcing rules through direct action, but also about shaping narratives that play a role in directing individual behavior and beliefs. Al-Salouli's decision to suggest using religion to tackle crime is a manifestation of how power can work through discourses that organize the thoughts and actions of individuals in society.

سرعان ما جمع أعوانه فصب عليهم السيل الذي انصب عليه في بهو الإمارة وفتح نوافذ الجحيم على مصراعها.. وكلما وقع حادث جديد قبض على عشرات بلا دليل أو قرينة وعذبهم بلا رحمة.. وخفت تبعا لذلك متابعته للشيعنة والخوارج فضا عفوا من نشاطهم⁶⁰

In the context of power relations over the mind through religion, this quote shows how power can use methods of violence and fear to control individual behavior and influence people's minds. Acts of violence committed by rulers, such as the arrest and torture of people deemed guilty, serve not only to physically restrain, but also to instill a deep sense of fear, which in turn affects their mindset and beliefs.

The ruler here used physical force to subdue groups that were perceived as threats, such as the Shiites and Khawarij. This use of violence not only aims to subdue them physically, but also aims to shape their minds and submission through fear of the consequences of resistance. This fear is then reinforced by religious narratives that link torment and punishment to moral or spiritual concepts, such as “hellfire” presented in both verbal and symbolic forms.

The power relations established here show how institutions or rulers can manipulate religious discourse to control people's minds. In this case, power not only influences behavior through physical control, but also by directing individual beliefs to

⁵⁹ Michele Bigoni, Laura Maran, and Zeila Occhipinti, “Of Power, Knowledge and Method: The Influence of Michel Foucault in Accounting History,” *Accounting History*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10323732241243088>.

⁶⁰ محفوظ، إلبالي ألف ليلة رواية لـ نجيب محفوظ. ص 55

accept the legitimacy of power through religious interpretations that emphasize divine punishment or consequences for those deemed to be resisting or sinning.

On the other hand, while there is clear dominance through violence, the data also shows that despite the rulers' attempts at containment and control, their ambitions to suppress these groups are not entirely successful. This indicates that despite the control that power through religion and violence seeks to exert, resistance still arises, and individuals or groups under pressure may find ways to resist or strengthen their courage, as seen in the courage of the Shiites and Khawarij to redouble their activities.

Thus, through this analysis, we can see that power relations over the mind through religion are complex, because although power seeks to dominate through violence and religious narratives, resistance exists as a response to such oppression.

b. Culture

Cultural media shapes power by producing discourses that influence collective thought. Foucault argues that power not only represses but also constructs norms and knowledge to regulate society. Through symbols, traditions, and rituals, power is legitimized, while resistance is contained, reinforcing existing structures.

احتفل بالزفاف في حجرة أم السعد ..شهدته الأسرتان، ودعى إليه عبد الله
الحمال فسوغ حضوره بهدية من العنبر والبخور قدمها للعروسين، وبما بذله في النهار
من كنس الفناء ..جاد بالهمة التي جاد بها ساعة تصدى لقتل بطيثة مرجان ..ثم
بعقب الأسرة الحار الذي نقشت في جوارحه سكرة باقية⁶¹

This narrative shows how culture through wedding celebrations functions as a medium to construct power relations over individual minds in society. The wedding at Umm Saad's house is not just a social event, but also a cultural ritual full of meaning. In Foucault's perspective, this kind of celebration can be analyzed as a power mechanism that regulates individual behavior and reinforces collective norms.

Abdullah, despite coming from a low social class, engages in this ceremony in a way that demonstrates his internalization of cultural norms. The provision of gifts such as amber, incense and money, although earned through manual labor, indicates Abdullah's attempt to conform to cultural expectations. This action reflects how individuals are "compelled" to fulfill social demands, not through coercion, but through the influence of cultural norms that are considered natural. In Foucault's framework, this is a form of self-regulatory governmentality driven by cultural influences.

⁶¹ محفوظ. ص 83

The celebration becomes a space where power relations are distributed through social symbols. The family becomes a small unit of society that reflects the larger power structure, where status, roles and hierarchies are reinforced. Abdullah being “swept up in the family's excitement” shows how cultural influences affect not only external behavior but also the thoughts and emotions of individuals, creating an internalized sense of conformity.

Furthermore, Abdullah's participation in this celebration even with limited resources shows how power mechanisms do not work through direct domination, but through widely accepted social legitimacy. Wedding culture is one form of dispositif (apparatus) in Foucault's analysis, which includes institutions, rules, traditions and narratives that shape the way individuals think and act. In this case, Abdullah is not just fulfilling cultural norms, but also reproducing existing power relations.

Therefore, this wedding ceremony reflects how power works subtly through culture, influencing the behavior and thoughts of individuals. Abdullah, despite being in a subordinate position in the social structure, becomes part of the power reproduction process through his participation in this symbolic system. This confirms that power is not only something done by the powerful to the controlled, but also something done by individuals to themselves through cultural regulatory mechanisms.

استقبله على السلولي في جوسقه الصيفى بحديقة الإمارة .. طالعاه في جلباب.
فضفاض أبيض ورأس عار فخفف عنه رهبة السلطة . و قامت بين يديه مائدة حفلت
بالقوارير والكثوس والنقل فبسط له الموائسة والقرب ..أجلسه على وسادة إلى جانبه
مستبقيا مرجا بطيشة⁶²

This narrative illustrates how power and social status are manifested in interactions among Ali al-Salouli, Sanaan, and Buteisha Murgan. Foucault suggests that power does not belong solely to individuals or institutions but operates through social and cultural layers embedded in everyday interactions. Power relations in this context are influenced by cultural symbols, social behavior, and hierarchical dynamics. For instance, Ali al-Salouli's choice of attire a flowing white robe without a headdress signals a subtle reduction of his authority in the moment, showing that power is not always overtly displayed but can be diminished or symbolized through cultural practices. Similarly, the provision of a table laden with symbolic offerings such as nuts, dried fruits, and long-necked bottles reinforces hospitality as a cultural mechanism to sustain power and relationships. These actions reflect power that operates not just structurally but also through cultural rituals that reinforce hierarchical bonds.

محفوظ. ص 35 ⁶²

Further, Ali al-Salouli's invitation for Sanaan to sit beside him on a cushioned seat emphasizes their differing social positions. Though Ali maintains control, his approach is hospitable rather than authoritarian, demonstrating that power can be exercised diplomatically while preserving hierarchy. Additionally, his request for Buteisha Murgan to remain at the meeting underscores his authority, subtly reinforcing dependency and subordination in the interaction. Overall, power in this narrative operates through cultural symbols such as clothing, rituals of hospitality, and seating arrangements to shape and regulate relationships. As Foucault highlights, power functions across multiple levels and mechanisms, influencing behavior and thought through subtle and pervasive acts rather than overt force.

c. State

State media shape power relations by influencing public opinion and individual behavior. In Foucault's view, power is decentralized, operating through networks that shape thought and action. Media directs social and political discourse while establishing norms and values accepted by society.

نحن بعد تخضع لقوانين معينة ، دع المناقشة ، لك أن تقبل أو أن ترفض

قال صنعان بجرارة : أليس لك رغبات أخرى ؟ لدى مال موفور وسلع من الهند

”والصين⁶³“

This quote reflects how laws and state authority operate within a framework of power relations that influence the minds of individuals. The phrase “We remain subject to certain laws” indicates the existence of inviolable power, creating a narrative that individuals must obey the rules without room for critical dialogue. This is in line with Foucault's view that power is not only repressive but also productive, as it shapes individual norms and behavior through legal discourse.

The statement “Stop debating-you must accept or reject” illustrates the elimination of alternative discourses, confirming that state law works as a tool to control the mind through the restriction of choice. In Foucault's context, the state utilizes discourse mechanisms to legitimize its power, where laws not only regulate behavior but also create perceptions of truth and compliance.

The intervention “I have a lot of money, as well as goods from India and China” indicates the role of economics as an inherent element in state power relations. This offer can be interpreted as an attempt by the state or its representatives to encourage compliance through material rewards, showing that power is not always applied

محفوظ. ص 19 63

coercively but also through attraction and incentives. Thus, state power operates in two dimensions: control through final rules and manipulation through economic lures.

The whole quote emphasizes that the state uses a combination of legal discourse, economics, and psychological manipulation to control the minds of individuals, creating a system that supports the stability of power while limiting the space for resistance.

فحدجه الحاكم بنظرة طويلة ثم قال

بيت المال تكلف فوق طاقته

انقبض صدره وأدرك كل شيء، فقال يوسف الطاهر

السلطان في حاجة إلى قرض يسدد عقب جمع الخراج⁶⁴

This quote reveals how state power operates through economic discourse to shape public understanding and compliance. The statement, “The State Treasury has more expenses than it can afford,” presents the state's financial difficulties as a justification for taxation and loans, positioning these actions as logical and necessary. Foucault suggests that this type of discourse is a strategy of power, where the state shapes collective thought, not just through physical governance, but by manipulating how the public perceives economic conditions and obligations. By framing the need for loans as part of a broader economic system, the state normalizes its control over the people, making economic subordination seem inevitable.

The emotional reaction of Karam al-Aseel, “suddenly choked up as soon as he understood the meaning of the conversation,” highlights the psychological impact of this power dynamic. The state's manipulation of economic dependency creates a sense of inevitability and fear, leaving no room for resistance. This use of fear and moral obligation ties into Foucault's concept of biopolitics, where the state not only regulates bodies but also influences individual consciousness through control over economic institutions. Ultimately, this economic discourse strengthens the legitimacy of state power by ensuring compliance and reinforcing its authority over individual minds and societal norms.

d. Institution

.. وبإشارة من الحاكم راح الجنود يجردون المقبوض عليهم من ملابسهم الرثة

وذهل عجر طيلة الوقت وأيقن من أنه ساق نفسه إلى مصيبة تخف بالقياس إليها

محفوظ. ص 118 64

مصائبه..واتهالت السياط عليهم فمزق صراخه الجو من قبل أن يأتي دوره ..ولكنه نال نصيبه⁶⁵

This passage illustrates how government institutions, represented by the governor and police officers, exercise power through repressive measures like disarmament and torture, which are not just physical punishments but symbolic demonstrations of dominance. In Foucault's view, power is not just coercive but also shapes individuals through control over their bodies and minds, using fear and discipline to ensure compliance without constant supervision.

The internalization of fear, as seen when prisoners like Ugr view themselves as responsible for their fate, reflects the ideological control exerted by institutions. Practices like public humiliation and physical punishment reinforce power relations by reminding individuals of their subordinate position. These mechanisms, such as shame and fear, are subtle ways institutions maintain control, ensuring domination through both physical and psychological means without the need for direct coercion

إنه يرى جمصة البلطى أمامه ..الجنود تسوقه إلى الخارج ..وانه - بخلافه - شديد الفزع والانهيار ..وجد نفسه أيضا محررا من القيد، فعزم على مغادرة السجن⁶⁶

In this passage, the power relation between the institution (prison) and the individual (Gamasa al-Bulti) is evident through the symbolism of liberation and control. Gamasa, who is initially described as being in a state of “extreme fear and paralysis,” reflects how the prison institution not only restricts physical freedom but also affects the individual's mind by creating a sense of helplessness and submission. In Foucault's view, prison as an institution is a concrete form of power that operates through surveillance, punishment, and discipline to mold compliant subjects.

When Gamasa finally found himself “free from bonds,” this could be interpreted as a symbolic moment in which institutional power began to collapse, at least at the individual level. However, the decision to leave prison does not fully indicate freedom, but rather the first step in a process of renegotiating power relations. This shows that institutional control over individuals is not absolute, and there is always room for resistance, however small, where individuals can reclaim their agency.

Gamasa's experience illustrates the complex dynamic between institutional control and individual freedom. Prisons not only punish the body but also attempt to discipline the mind to create a sense of dependency and compliance. However, Gamasa's state of freedom indicates that power is not only unilaterally applied by

⁶⁵ محفوظ. ص 166

⁶⁶ محفوظ. ص 67

institutions but also always elicits a response, either in the form of compliance or defiance, which is at the core of Foucault's power relations.

2. Power Relations over the Body

a. Social body

Power over the social body operates through norms and practices set by institutions like the state and religion, shaping both individual and collective behavior. Foucault sees the social body as a key arena for power, exercised through disciplinary mechanisms that enforce obedience and productivity, often through punishment and symbolic practices that influence collective perceptions.

قال لنفسه :من تعفف جاع في هذه المدينة ..وتساءل ساخرا :ماذا يجرى علينا لو تولى أمورنا حاكم عادل ؟ . !أليس السلطان نفسه هو من قتل المئات من العذارى والعشرات من أهل الورع والتقى ؟ !ما أخف موازيتة إذا قيس بغيره من أكابر السلطنة⁶⁷

This data shows the deep dimension of power relations over the social body through narratives of obedience, injustice, and ruling policies. The character's statement that 'He who is too polite will starve in this city' reflects the irony of individual existence in a social structure characterised by inequality and authoritarian power. In this context, the social body, which includes groups of individuals in society, becomes the subject of control by the authorities who shape their behaviour and ways of survival.

The phrases 'just governor' and 'slaughtering sultan' show a critique of the power relations that shape the social body. Governors or rulers not only rule physically, but also create discourses that influence people's perceptions and actions. This narrative highlights how power goes beyond direct action and into the realm of the symbolic, shaping collective hopes, fears and feelings.

Foucault explains that power is not only oppressive but also productive; it shapes social reality and creates mechanisms of compliance. In this case, the narrative of the massacre of virgins and the pious becomes a symbol of power that works to instil fear and compliance in the social body. This fear becomes an effective tool of control, influencing how people judge the actions of the ruler and how they conform to the existing rules. On the other hand, the criticism of rulers who are 'light on the scales compared to great rulers' shows ambivalence in the acceptance of power, where people sometimes idealise rulers who are harsher but considered more just.

This analysis shows how power relations over the social body are created through narratives and practices that both constrain and direct people's lives, creating both deep obedience and dependence on a perceived absolute power.

⁶⁷ محفوظ. ص 44

نحن نؤمن بالرحمة حتى ونحن نضرب الأعناق ونجتز الرؤوس

يا لك من منافق! ما عملك؟

كبير الشرطة

يا لها من ألقاب! هل تؤدى واجبك بما يرضى الله؟

فقال جمصة بقلق

واجبي أن أنفذ الأوامر⁶⁸

This datum highlights the intricate dynamics of power over the social body, exercised through narratives of legitimacy, authority, and moral claims that justify violence. The statement, “We believe in compassion, even if it means cutting throats,” underscores the contradiction between professed compassion and violent acts, illustrating how power legitimizes oppression through moral discourse. The dialogue reveals the individual’s role within hierarchical power structures, as seen in the police commander, Gamasa, whose response, “My duty is simply to carry out orders,” reflects a moral dilemma. Power not only governs actions but also subjugates minds, compelling individuals to follow orders without questioning their morality. As Foucault explains, power operates not just through physical force but also by shaping thought and behavior, erasing individual responsibility within systemic mechanisms.

Moreover, the use of moral legitimacy to justify systematic violence demonstrates how power obscures its oppressive nature. By associating violence with noble values like compassion, power creates a discourse that masks domination and presents acts of control as being for the collective good. This strategy sustains dominance by blurring the lines between morality and oppression. Ultimately, power over the social body involves physical, psychological, and symbolic dimensions, employing moral contradictions and the dissolution of personal accountability to maintain societal compliance and reinforce its authority.

b. Sexual body

Power over the sexual body, as Foucault explains, is exercised through institutions like family, law, and culture to regulate norms and control sexual behavior. By disciplining the body and defining acceptable sexuality, power shapes roles, behaviors, and orientations, making the sexual body a symbol of moral and ideological authority.

محفوظ. ص 46 68

طوى سره في صدره ..حتى رسمية زوجته لم تعلم به ..وهو سر يثقل على الصدر والقلب ولكن ما الحيلة؟ إذا فشا يوما أضر بمركزه وأفقده وظيفته⁶⁹

This narrative illustrates how the sexual body becomes an object of control and a field of power influenced by social norms and structural pressures. In this context, the secrets kept by the characters reflect the power at work in the form of internalisation of norms governing the body and sexuality.

According to Foucault, power is not only repressive but also productive; it shapes identity and behaviour through surveillance and regulation. In this case, the suppressed secret demonstrates how individuals feel bound to social norms that define moral and sexual boundaries. The fear of the repercussions of disclosing this secret, both personally and socially, reflects the pressure to maintain a 'social body' that is subject to the prevailing rules of power.

In addition, the connection between the sexual body and position in this story shows how power combines private and public aspects. The sexual body is not only a private matter but also a political one, where any deviation from the norm can threaten the legitimacy of individuals in the power hierarchy. Thus, this narrative shows how control over the sexual body becomes an integral part of broader power practices.

ودعا خليل الهمذاني جمصة البلطى إلى دار الإمارة وقال له بعنف
المدينة تخرب وأنت تغط في النوم
فقال كبير الشرطة بصوت منهزم
ما نمت وما قصرت⁷⁰

This passage illustrates how power relations between Khalil al-Hamadhani and Gamasa al-Bulti are governed through verbal domination and emotional pressure. The governor uses threatening language to instill guilt and responsibility in Gamasa, as seen in the admonition "the city will suffer and be destroyed, and you are snoring away." This is a strategy that aims to create a sense of urgency and moral burden, pushing Gamasa to feel personally responsible for the safety of the city.

From a Foucauldian perspective, this act of power is a form of symbolic surveillance, where Khalil asserts authority not through physical force but through discourse that shapes Gamasa's perception of responsibility and fear. Gamasa's

⁶⁹ محفوظ. ص 49

⁷⁰ محفوظ. ص 54

response—"I don't sleep and I never relax"—reveals the internalization of power, as he feels compelled to work tirelessly, while recognizing his helplessness in the face of higher authority. This highlights how power regulates not only physical actions but also psychological states, leaving little room for resistance or respite. The pressure on Gamasa to remain "awake" symbolizes how authority demands the total submission of the individual body and mind, reinforcing the control of larger power structures.

c. Resistance

غضب حيال الإهانة فهيمنت عليه طبيعته القوية المتحدية .. غاضت نوازع
الخير فتوارت في أعماق بعيدة .. تصدى للهزيمة بوحشية رجل يستبجح أي شيء في سبيل
الدفاع عن سلطته⁷¹

This datum illustrates resistance as a reaction to repressive power, where individuals who feel belittled and oppressed fight back with courage and resilience. In the context of Foucault's theory, resistance emerges as an inherent response to practices of power that subjugate individual bodies and minds. Power, in this case, not only oppresses but also provokes defiance through the courage of individuals who feel compelled to challenge existing hierarchical structures.

Being angry at being belittled shows how power not only works through physical domination but also through symbolic humiliation that dehumanises individuals. Resistance to 'all means' power highlights how individuals are able to recognise the injustices instilled by authoritarian systems and, at some point, refuse to submit. This reveals that power is never absolute; it always faces the possibility of resistance from those who are aware of its injustices.

Resilience and courage become symbols of active resistance, while the loss of inclination towards goodness shows how repressive acts of power can change individual behaviour. Resistance in this context is not only moral but also pragmatic an attempt to renegotiate the individual's position within social and political structures. This response reflects how subjects try to reclaim their agency in a system designed to take it away.

فأشار جمصة إليه قائلاً

ها هو ذا يتكلم بلا حياه

ذهل خليل الهمذاني وهتف

محفوظ. ص 55 71

! جننت ورب الكعبة
 إنه الصدق يقال لأول مرة
 تحفز الحاكم للعمل فامتشق جمصة سيفه وهو يقول
 ستنال جزاءك الحق
 جنت، إنك لا تدري ما تفعل
 فقال بهدوء
 إني أقوم بواجبي
 فقال باضطراب وذعر شامل
 عد إلى رشدك، إنك تلقى بنفسك إلى النطع -
 فوجه إلى عنقه ضربة قاضية فاختلطت صرخته المذعورة بخواره واندفع الدم
 مثل نافورة⁷²

Gamasa al-Bulti's resistance to the governor marks the peak of accumulated oppression and defiance of hegemonic authority. In Foucault's framework, this act is a resistance to power that seeks to regulate not only the body but also the moral and political truth that supports the ruler's authority. Gamasa's declaration, "That's him, who speaks without shame," challenges the governor's abuse of power. By stabbing the governor, Gamasa does not just kill him; he symbolically destroys the ruler's legitimacy, reversing the power dynamic that once dominated him. This act of defiance shows that power is not absolute, and individuals can disrupt it by exploiting its weaknesses.

Gamasa's resistance is also grounded in a moral consciousness. By stating, "I did my duty," he reclaims the narrative of justice that the authorities have hijacked. He positions himself as an agent of justice rather than an anarchist, transforming his identity from someone who follows orders to someone who demands accountability from a corrupt system. The governor's final moments, filled with confusion and fear, reveal the collapse of an authority built on domination and fear. Gamasa's action

⁷² محفوظ. ص 63-64

challenges the established power structures, opening space for a new interpretation of the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, where power is no longer solely in the hands of the authorities.

E. Conclusion

This research has successfully revealed that power is not only present in the form of formal structures but also through hidden mechanisms that regulate individuals' lives, encompassing their thoughts, bodies, and actions. The dynamics between domination and resistance observed in the analyzed texts demonstrate that power is never absolute but always allows room for resistance. This discussion highlights how control over the social and sexual body, as well as thought, is used as a tool to maintain power. However, amidst this strong influence, forms of resistance emerge, reflecting individuals' efforts to fight against injustice. These forms of resistance serve as an important reflection that power relations are always accompanied by opportunities for opposition. Resistance is not only symbolic but can also materialize in concrete actions that influence the structure of power itself. In some cases, seemingly small or marginalized acts of resistance have a significant impact in altering or challenging the existing hegemony.

Nevertheless, the limited scope of this research, which focuses only on certain texts, is one of its weaknesses that can be improved in future studies. Further research involving a greater variety of texts from different cultural backgrounds could provide a broader and deeper understanding of the dynamics of power and resistance. Additionally, more comprehensive studies could enhance our understanding of how power and resistance interact within broader social, political, and cultural contexts and how they engage with evolving societal values.

An interdisciplinary approach also holds great potential for enriching the findings of this research. By integrating perspectives from various disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, cultural studies, and feminist theory, future research could produce a more holistic analysis of power and resistance. For example, psychological studies on identity formation and individual dynamics in facing power could provide new insights into the ways power shapes thought patterns and behavior. On the other hand, sociological theories that highlight social structures and inequalities could deepen our understanding of how power operates within a broader social context.

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