

**POWER RELATION PORTRAYED IN RACHEL KUSHNER'S**

***THE MARS ROOM***

**THESIS**

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE**

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

**UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK**

**IBRAHIM MALANG**

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**POWER RELATION PORTRAYED IN RACHEL KUSHNER'S**

***THE MARS ROOM***

**THESIS**

**Presented to**

Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang In Partial to Fulfillment  
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I state that the thesis entitled “**Power Relation Portrayed in Rachel Kushner’s *The Mars Room***” is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

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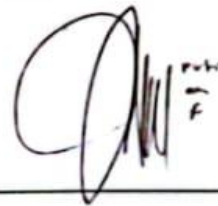
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## **MOTTO**

*“Gaji berjuta-juta tidak bisa menggantikan satu sholat yang kamu tinggalkan”*

-  
*Ketergantungan terhadap manusia adalah langkah awal untuk kecewa*

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is proudly dedicated to my beloved mom's Siti Maemunah and Markamah as well as My Thesis Supervisor. All parties who have contributed to this thesis. Thank you from the bottom of my heart, and I'm grateful to have some amazing people who always love and support me.

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Malang, August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Agustiyar Prastyo', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Agustiyar Prastyo

## ABSTRACT

**Prastyo, Agustiyar.** (2024). Power Relation Portrayed in Rachel Kushner's *The Mars Room*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor: Dr. Siti Masitoh M. Hum.

*Keywords: Relation, Power, Literary Criticism*

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Power relations in prisons refer to the power that occur between various actors in the prison environment, including prison guards, prisoners, and outsiders. Prison guards have the power to supervise and control the daily lives of prisoners, determine access to facilities, and make administrative decisions. to reveal the power relations experienced by the characters carried out by prisoners in the face of power inequality in the novel *The Mars Room*. This research is categorized as a study of literary criticism because the object under study is a literary work and centers on the characters in the novel *The Mars Room*. Literary criticism is the analysis, study, and evaluation of literary works. Literary criticism does not only interpret what is written; researcher identify what power relations are experienced by the characters in the novel. Focusing on Michel Foucault's power relations theory and focusing on the characters in Rachel Kushner's *The Mars Room*, the researcher concludes that power is not only oppressive, but also productive in shaping prisoners' behaviors, norms, and identities, which in turn influence their actions. Prisoners are not only subject to strict surveillance, but also respond to such control with social strategies that allow them to maintain some control over their lives. This research shows that power is not only applied vertically by the authorities, but also distributed among individuals, who construct their own social hierarchies under strict control and constraints.

## مستخلص البحث

براستيو، أجوستيار. (2024). علاقات القوة مصورة في رواية غرفة المريخ للكاتبة راشيل كوشنر. رسالة البكالوريوس. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية مالانج. المشرفة: د. سيني ماسيتوه ماجستر في العلوم الإنسانية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العلاقات، السلطة، النقد الأدبي

تشير علاقات القوة في السجون إلى القوة الموجودة بين مختلف الجهات الفاعلة في بيئة السجن، بما في ذلك الحراس والسجناء والغرباء. يتمتع حراس السجن بسلطة الإشراف على حياة النزلاء اليومية والتحكم فيها، وتحديد إمكانية الوصول إلى المرافق، واتخاذ القرارات الإدارية. للكشف عن علاقات القوة التي تعيشها الشخصيات كما يقوم بها السجناء في مواجهة عدم تكافؤ القوى في رواية غرفة المريخ. يصنف هذا البحث ضمن دراسة النقد الأدبي لأن الموضوع المدروس هو عمل أدبي ويركز على شخصيات رواية غرفة المريخ. النقد الأدبي هو تحليل ودراسة وتقييم الأعمال الأدبية. النقد الأدبي لا يفسر ما هو مكتوب فحسب، بل يحدد أيضًا علاقات القوة التي تعيشها الشخصيات في الرواية. ويلتزم على نظرية ميشيل فوكو في علاقات القوة والتركيز على الشخصيات في رواية غرفة المريخ للكاتبة راشيل كوشنر، يخلص الباحث إلى أن السلطة ليست قمعية فحسب، بل إنها منتجة أيضًا في تشكيل سلوكيات ومعايير وهويات السجناء، والتي تؤثر بعد ذلك على أفعالهم. لا يخضع السجناء للمراقبة المكثفة فحسب، بل يسجنون أيضًا لتلك المراقبة باستراتيجيات اجتماعية تسمح لهم بالحفاظ على السيطرة على حياتهم. يوضح هذا البحث أن السلطة لا يتم تطبيقها عموديًا من قبل السلطات فحسب، بل يتم توزيعها أيضًا بين الأفراد، الذين يبنون التسلسل الهرمي الاجتماعي الخاص بهم تحت رقابة وفيرود صارمة.

## ABSTRAK

**Prastyo, Agustiyar.** (2024). Relasi Kuasa yang Digambarkan dalam Novel *The Mars Room* karya Rachel Kushner. Skripsi Sarjana. Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Pembimbing: Dr. Siti Masitoh M. Hum.

*Kata kunci: Relasi, Kekuasaan, Kritik Sastra*

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Power Relasi kuasa dalam penjara merujuk pada kekuasaan yang terjadi di antara berbagai aktor di lingkungan penjara, termasuk sipir, narapidana, dan orang luar. Penjaga penjara memiliki kekuasaan untuk mengawasi dan mengontrol kehidupan sehari-hari narapidana, menentukan akses terhadap fasilitas, dan membuat keputusan administratif. Untuk mengungkap relasi kuasa yang dialami oleh tokoh yang dilakukan oleh para narapidana dalam menghadapi ketimpangan kekuasaan dalam novel *The Mars Room*. Penelitian ini dikategorikan sebagai kajian kritik sastra karena objek yang diteliti adalah karya sastra dan berpusat pada tokoh-tokoh yang ada di dalam novel *The Mars Room*. Kritik sastra adalah analisis, kajian, dan evaluasi terhadap karya sastra. Kritik sastra tidak hanya menginterpretasikan apa yang tertulis, tetapi juga mengidentifikasi relasi kuasa apa yang dialami oleh tokoh-tokoh dalam novel tersebut. Berfokus pada teori relasi kuasa Michel Foucault dan berfokus pada karakter-karakter dalam novel *The Mars Room* karya Rachel Kushner, peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa kekuasaan tidak hanya menindas, tetapi juga produktif dalam membentuk perilaku, norma, dan identitas para narapidana, yang kemudian mempengaruhi tindakan mereka. Narapidana tidak hanya tunduk pada pengawasan yang ketat, tetapi juga merespons pengawasan tersebut dengan strategi sosial yang memungkinkan mereka untuk mempertahankan kendali atas kehidupan mereka. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kekuasaan tidak hanya diterapkan secara vertikal oleh pihak berwenang, tetapi juga didistribusikan di antara individu-individu, yang membangun hirarki sosial mereka sendiri di bawah kontrol dan batasan yang ketat.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides some explanations, including background of the study, problem of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, and the definition of key terms.

#### **A. Background of the Study**

A relationship is any connection between two or more people as social beings, are inseparable from interactions and relationships with others (Ryan, 2024). These interactions take place in a variety of settings, from small settings such as family and friendship, to larger settings such as communities and countries. In these social dynamics, power is always present and plays a fundamental role. Power, in simple terms, can be defined as the ability of an individual or group to influence and control the actions of others (Foucault, 1982). This ability is not only limited to the formal authority that leaders have, but also manifests in various forms of informal influence that charismatic individuals have.

At every level, power has a significant influence on human life. It shapes social structures, determines the direction of change, and leads individuals or groups to strategic positions in society. Power can be used for positive purposes, such as achieving social justice, improving collective welfare, and promoting societal progress. On the other hand, power can also be misused, leading to oppression, exploitation and injustice. Understanding power means understanding how societies are organized, how decisions are made, and how individuals' lives are shaped by forces beyond their control.

Undoubtedly, researcher often hear about it appearing in the news, particularly in relation to government and political issues. Power is not solely associated with politics or government, as it can originate and operate anywhere. On the other hand, *The Mars Room* depicts a reality involving the power relations that are inevitable in a prison environment, a world where power and control are the hallmarks of everyday life. Although power can be gained through violence or authority, it can also arise from obeying and enforcing rules. Thus, power is not about limiting others' freedom, but about the possibility of shaping or changing their options. When such a power overreappears, it runs the risk of turning into oppression (Foucault, 2005).

In *The Mars Room*, Kushner describes the lives of female prisoners in a California prison, focusing on the main character, Romy Hall. *The Mars Room* is a novel written by Rachel Kushner and published in 2018. The novel takes readers into the agonizing world of women's prisons and chronicles the struggles of an inmate named Romy Hall. Through powerful storytelling and honest portrayals, Rachel Kushner invites readers to look at the dark side of the criminal justice system. With a poetic and empathetic writing style, this novel is a profound reflection on life behind bars. The researcher considers that *The Mars Room* raises a power relation issue, which is power relation related to a society's economy, political, and ideological realms. This research identifies how the power relation in the novel *The Mars Room* by Rachel Kushner. The researcher chose Rachel Kushner's novel *The Mars Room* as the object of this study to examine the power relation.

According to Foucault's theory of power, Power is a fundamental concept in human life. Behind every social interaction, there is power, which is defined as the ability of an individual or group to influence and control the actions of others. This power is not only limited to the formal authority possessed by the leader, but also manifests in various forms of informal influence possessed by charismatic individuals (Foucault, 2005). power and knowledge are not two separate entities, but are bound in a mutually reinforcing relationship. Knowledge, according to Foucault, is not only neutral facts and information, but also the product of power. Dominant social systems, institutions, and discourses in society produce and disseminate knowledge that supports and strengthens existing power structures. Individuals and groups with greater power have the ability to determine what is considered valid and valuable knowledge. They can control access to information, manipulate narratives, and even suppress alternative knowledge that challenges the status quo (Foucault, 2013).

Furthermore, the research must make space for alternative knowledge and perspectives that may be marginalized by domination. In this novel, there is a strong depiction of power relation enforced by the prison system and deep social structures. The influence of power and control is seen in various aspects of women prisoners' lives, from strict rules and regulations to unfair and discriminatory treatment of them.

Based on observations, there hasn't been any research done specifically analyses the novel *The Mars Room* by Rachel Kushner with a study of power relation. This shows that research on power relation in the novel has not been



conducted in this academic environment. Therefore, this research is unique and has the potential to make a new contribution to literary studies and the understanding the power relation. Abd El-Sayed Nashed (2021) This research aims to challenge the conventional understanding of power as a tool for domination and control, instead highlighting it as a multifaceted and pervasive element in society. (Aqeeli, 2023) This research aims to highlight how resistance can manifest as weak, submissive, creative, or productive forces, emphasizing the potential to challenge subjective power relations.

In the research conducted by Abdulla Almaarof et al., (2022); Jannah, (2022); Poorghorban, (2023) The purpose of these research is to analyze the themes of power and authority and explore how power is used by the characters in the play and the consequences of their actions. Fadhli & Anwar (2023) The aim of this study is to analyze power relations and resistance to power abuse in mother-daughter relationships. (Aurangzaib et al., 2021; Kurnia et al., 2021) This study aims to explain the resistance shown by the characters to the domination of power. Ida Rosida (2023) This research aims to explore power relationships between characters and their impact on gender identity. Simanjuntak et al., (2022) This purpose of this research is to explains how power is actualized through knowledge and influences social interactions.

Previous research on power relations has provided a fundamental understanding, but there are still research gaps that can be explored in the analysis of Kushner *The Mars Room* (2018). The novel offers an opportunity to examine more complex and unconventional power relation, such as creative and productive

resistance, power through knowledge, and emotional manipulation. Analyzing the intersectionality of power is also important for understanding how factors such as gender, race, class, and sexual orientation affect power relations within prisons. In addition, this research can examine how power affects individual identities, including identity transformation and identity resistance. The novel's unique and complex narrative style also allows for analysis of how narrative structure and writing style influence representations of power relations.

### **B. Problem of the Study**

According to the research background, this study seeks to answer “How is the power relation portrayed in Rachel Kushner’s *The Mars Room*”?

### **C. Significance of the Study**

Based on the research objective provided above, there are two advantages that can derive from this research. The first step is to describe the power relation in the novel. The second step is to describe how power relations portrayed in the novel. Meanwhile, literary devotees can use the findings of this study to gain a better understanding of Michel Foucault’s power relations, as society describes various types of power relations in literature. Meanwhile, this research can be used as reference material by other researchers who conduct similar research in studying, analyzing, and comprehending literary works, specifically Rachel Kushner’s novel *The Mars Room* and the application of Foucault’s theory of power relations.

### **D. Scope and Limitation**

This research focus on analyzing the power relation contained in the novel *The Mars Room* by Rachel Kushner. The researcher explores how the power relation

is portrayed in the social relationships, and social dynamics present in the story. This includes aspects such as institutional domination, ideological control, social inequality, and cultural influences that affect the lives of the characters in the novel. This research limits the analysis to the theme of power contained in the novel, such as plot, characters, and writing style may not be considered in depth. This study examined the power relation concerns utilizing Foucault's theory of power.

### **E. Definitions of Key Terms**

#### **A. Power**

Power is a dynamic that involves individuals or groups in a relationship of mutual influence. In this context, a series of actions are performed with the aim of influencing others, while also responding to those actions. Power is not only about control or domination, but also includes influence, persuasion and exchange (Foucault, 1982).

#### **B. Power Relation**

Foucault (2005), revealed that power relations are not understood as something possessed by individuals or groups, but rather as a complex strategic situation within society. Foucault emphasizes that power is positive and productive, and intertwined with knowledge in various social contexts. Power relations are also asymmetrical forms of relations, where one subject dominates another, so that the dominated subject has limitations in determining the choice of action. This relationship is stable and hierarchical.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW ON RELATED LITERATURE

This study aims to look at the power relation in a literary work entitled *The Mars Room* written by Rachel Kushner. The behaviors and habits of the characters in the novel examined through the lens of power theory developed by Michel Foucault. The main focus of this research is to identify the power relation that occur in the novel.

#### **A. Objective Approach**

The objective approach to literary analysis is like a sharp scalpel, paving the way for a deeper understanding of the literary work (Indahningrum & lia dwi jayanti, 2020). Here, the main focus is on the intrinsic elements of the work: structure, language, character, plot, and theme. Without being bound by external factors such as the author's biography, social context, or the reader's interpretation, researcher invited to dive into the meaning contained within the text itself. The structure of the text is analyzed to understand how the storyline is built and how meaning is constructed. Word choice and language style are examined to reveal the author's intentions.

Characters are studied to understand their motivations, emotions and roles in the story. The plot is unraveled to see how conflict and resolution are built. The underlying themes of the work are explored to understand the message the author is trying to convey. This objective approach frees us from prejudices and assumptions that may bias our understanding. By focusing on intrinsic elements, the research can

discover meanings that may have gone unnoticed before.

The resulting interpretation is more objective and measurable, based on the evidence contained in the text itself. Of course, an objective approach does not mean ignoring external factors completely. Social, cultural and historical contexts can provide valuable insights into understanding literary works. However, in this approach, these factors are not the main focus, but rather complementary to enrich our analysis. This objective approach opens the gates to a deeper understanding of literary works. By focusing on intrinsic elements, the research can look at literary works more critically and analytically, discover hidden meanings, and appreciate their beauty and complexity as a whole. This objective approach opens the gates to a deeper understanding of literary works.

The objective approach in this book refers to a way of analyzing a work of art that is distinct from all its external references (Abrams, 1971). This approach sees the artwork as an independent entity formed by its parts in their internal relations. In this approach, the judgment of the artwork is solely based on criteria that are intrinsic to its mode or existence. In analyzing the artwork separately from all its external reference points, the objective approach pays special attention to how the artwork itself is formed and organized. This means that the analysis is not influenced by what is known about the external context, such as the life of the artist or the socio-political circumstances at the time the artwork was created. Through an objective approach, the artwork is seen as an entity consisting of parts that are interconnected and influence each other in their internal relations. These parts include visual elements such as color, shape, line and texture, as well as

compositional elements such as balance, rhythm and proportion. In this analysis, the main focus is on how these parts work together to create a cohesive and meaningful visual experience.

In addition, the objective approach also emphasizes the assessment of artworks based on criteria that are intrinsic to their mode or existence. This means that the assessment is based more on the quality and merit of the artwork itself, rather than on external criteria such as popularity or market value. This allows for a more objective and in-depth assessment of the artwork, without the interference of external factors that might influence subjective judgment. In this book, this objective approach is used as a foundation to understand and assess artworks more deeply. By separating the artwork from its external context, discussing how the artwork itself is formed and organized, and judging it based on intrinsic criteria, readers can gain a richer and deeper insight into the artwork and the visual experience it presents. In this book, this objective approach is used as a foundation to understand and assess artworks more deeply. By separating the artwork from its external context, discussing how the artwork itself is formed and organized, and judging it based on intrinsic criteria, readers can gain a richer and deeper insight into the artwork and the visual experience it presents.

According to Geoffrey & Harpham (2011), objective criticism in literature sees it as an entity separate from its relationship with the poet, the audience, or the world around it. In this view, the literary product is regarded as an independent and autonomous object, or even as a world in itself. This literary work should be considered as an end in itself and should be analyzed and judged only based on its

intrinsic criteria. In objective criticism, the complexity of the literary work becomes one of the important factors in the assessment. A work is considered better if it has complexity that is interesting and challenging for the reader. This complexity can be seen in the use of rich language, in-depth character development, or an intricate plot. The more complex a work is, the more interesting objective criticism will be.

In addition, coherence is also an important criterion in the assessment of objective criticism. A literary work is considered coherent if it has an organized and logical storyline. Every scene, dialog, and event must be interrelated and form a unified whole. When a literary work is coherent, readers can easily follow the storyline and understand the message the author wants to convey. Balance is also an important consideration in objective criticism. A literary work is considered good if it has a good balance between the elements in it. For example, the balance between action and dialog, between narration and description, or between main and supporting characters. This balance creates a harmonious harmony in the literary work and makes it more interesting to enjoy.

Wholeness is also an aspect that is considered in objective criticism. A literary work is considered whole if it has a solid and well-organized structure. Each part of the work should be interconnected and create a complete unity. This wholeness will ensure that the literary work can be enjoyed as a whole and that no part feels missed or irrelevant. Finally, the interconnectedness of the component elements in a literary work is also a consideration in objective criticism. A literary work is considered good if its elements are connected and support each other. For example, the theme should support character development, or the use of distinctive

language should portray the atmosphere or mood that the author intends. The interconnectedness of these component elements creates strength in the literary work and makes it more memorable for the reader. By using these intrinsic criteria, objective criticism can provide a comprehensive and in-depth view of literary works. In this approach, extrinsic relationships with the poet, audience, or the world around it are considered irrelevant and do not affect the assessment of the literary work itself. Objective criticism allows us to understand and appreciate the literary work as an independent and self-contained entity.

### **B. Foucault's Theory of Power**

Michel Foucault is a French postmodernist philosopher whose theories have influenced various fields of science in the modern era. Foucault was one of the few writers who understood the role of power in social relations. According to Foucault, power is a dynamic relationship between discourse and subject (Foucault, 1982). Discourse can dominate certain subjects or organize individual demands. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to explore the power relations that exist in the work *The Mars Room* by Rachel Kushner through the lens of Foucault's theory of power. In *The Mars Room*, the character's actions and reactions are clearly reflected in words and sentences, illustrating the dynamics of strengths and weaknesses. With this perspective, *The Mars Room* can be seen as a dramatization of words and sentences as elements that reflect the overall dynamics of power relations.

Foucault's work offers new insights into exploring the positive meaning of the "exit" and "voice" phenomena described by Albert O. Hirschman (Haugaard, 2022). Foucault goes beyond Hirschman's analysis by showing that the impact of a



program often exceeds the criteria used to measure its success. The reason, according to Foucault, lies in the nature of the program itself. A program is not just a formulation of desires or intentions, but is also an embodiment of knowledge about the area of reality in which you want to intervene. This knowledge, which may not always be explicit, is embedded in the program design, assumptions about its goals, and the methods used to achieve them.

It is important to remember that this knowledge is not a static and objective entity, but rather a social construction that is influenced by various factors, such as values, ideology, and the interests of the groups involved in the program. When programs are implemented, the knowledge embedded in them interacts with complex and dynamic realities. This can result in unforeseen consequences, both positive and negative, that go beyond the program's initial intentions. Foucault points out that the "exit" and "voice" mechanisms Hirschman describes are not only tools for evaluating programs, but also mechanisms for reflecting on and challenging the knowledge underlying those programs. By using "exit" or "voice," individuals and groups can indicate their disagreement with the knowledge embedded in the program and encourage consideration of alternatives.

This approach helps us to view programs and other social phenomena more critically and reflectively. By understanding how knowledge is embedded in programs and how this knowledge interacts with reality, the research can better understand the impact of programs and the role of "exit" and "voice" in mediating that impact. In Foucault's monumental work *Discipline and Punish*, sparked heated debate with his ideas about the relationship between power and freedom (Massin,

2017). He stated that power is not only exercised through direct coercion and repression, but also through the internalization of dominant norms and values in society. Individuals, in an effort to become part of society and avoid social sanctions, voluntarily comply with the rules and norms set by the authorities.

Foucault's claims do offer important insights into how social control works in many modern societies. Internalization of dominant norms and values is indeed a powerful tool for rulers to maintain control over their people. Individuals who have internalized these norms will obey these rules and norms without the need for direct coercion, making it easier for the authorities to exercise their power. However, it is important to remember that Foucault's claims do not always apply universally. There are many situations where power is exercised through direct coercion and brutal control, leaving no room for individual freedom. Foucault's claim oversimplifies the complexity of the relationship between power and freedom, and ignores the various forms of oppression and control that exist in the real world.

The concept of power, according to Foucault (1982), is not only seen as something possessed by individuals or institutions, but rather as a complex network of relationships. He states that power and freedom are intertwined, where every power relationship also contains the potential for resistance. Foucault also emphasizes the importance of understanding how individuals shape themselves as subjects in the context of power. The statement that "power is not a political structure like a government or a dominant social group" invites us to go beyond a narrow understanding of power and explore its broader and more complex

dimensions (Sumitro et al., 2020). Power, in its essence, is not a static or centralized entity, but a phenomenon that is dynamic and closely intertwined with various aspects of social life.

The statement “power is exercised, not possessed” challenges the traditional understanding of power as something possessed by particular individuals or groups (Foucault, 2017). Power, in its essence, is not a privilege that can be acquired or maintained by the dominant class. In the context of this novel, it can be seen that there are power relations from the characters, both from prison guards and prisoners who use their power as prison guards for the benefit of prejudice and among prisoners who feel superiority over others. The impact of these strategies and positions can manifest in various forms, such as changes in behavior, decision making, or even the social structure itself. This impact can be direct and clearly visible, but it can also be indirect and subtle, making it difficult to recognize.

According to Haugaard & Ryan (2008), the literature on power is characterized by three main meta-language games used to analyze it: conflict, consensus, and constitutive language games. Each of these meta-language games offers a different perspective on how power works and how it can be understood. Conflict language games focus on the dynamics of struggle and resistance in power relations. Power is seen as something that is gained and maintained through struggle and contestation between various groups and individuals. These language games often use concepts such as domination, oppression, and resistance to explain how power works.

Constitutive language games in the analysis of power offer a unique and important perspective by highlighting power as a disposition. This disposition refers to the ability of individuals and groups to define, shape, and influence meaning and reality through practice and discourse. Constitutive power, in this case, is not only limited to material resources or formal authority, but also includes the ability of individuals and groups who have the power to shape the discourses and narratives that dominate society. Through language, stories, and symbols, they can define what is considered true, normal, and valuable. This constitutive power allows them to influence the way people think, behave, and understand the world around them.

According to Foucault (2005), power in prisons and the justice system should be collective and educative, where the state apparatus is controlled by the masses and serves to educate and train the people in political vision and experience. Power is not top-down but bottom-up, allowing the masses to make important decisions, including in terms of punishment. Foucault criticizes the conventional justice system as a tool to avoid acts of popular justice, suggesting that power directed by the masses is more capable of achieving true and educative justice for society. Foucault sees power as multifaceted and ever-changing, influenced by knowledge, institutions, disciplinary techniques, social relations and resistance. In the prison context, power is influenced by techniques of discipline, surveillance, segregation, normalization, bureaucratic structures, and control over prisoners' bodies and spaces.

Accepting this reality does not mean giving up. Various efforts can be made to combat the unfair distribution of power. Activism and social movements, for

example, play an important role in voicing the aspirations of marginalized groups and encouraging policy change. Power is not an abstract concept, but a real reality that is manifested in everyday life (Emmet, 2017). Education and public awareness are also important to mobilize the community to act. Additionally, advocacy and policy reform can help create more just and inclusive social structures. In short, understanding power as a reality with unequal distribution is a crucial first step in fighting oppression and fighting for social justice. By recognizing power inequalities and their impacts, the research can work together to build a fairer society, where every individual has the opportunity to thrive and prosper.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This section discusses the research of design, data source, data collection, and the data analysis.

#### **A. Research Design**

This research is designed within the framework of literary criticism, which includes the analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of literary works (Peck & Coyle, 2002). Furthermore, this research is classified with literary criticism because the researcher discusses the social phenomena related with power relation described in Rachel Kushner's *The Mars Room*. To analyze the data, the researcher has applied the theory of power proposed by Michel Foucault. Since the main object of research is literary works, the researcher has applied the objective approaches.

#### **B. Data Source**

The data source in this research is Rachel Kushner's *The Mars Room*, a 336 pages novel published on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 by Scribner. The data in this study are words, phrases, and sentences from Rachel Kushner's *The Mars Room*. In the context of literary criticism, the only source of data is this novel.

#### **C. Data Collection**

The data collection procedure in this study began with the first step of reading Rachel Kushner's *The Mars Room* repeatedly to gain a thorough understanding of the phenomenon under discussion. The second step involved formulation, where the themes of the novel were investigated to answer the research questions posed. The next step is the application of Michel Foucault's power

relations theory to analyze the issues contained in the narrative. The final step involves inventorying the data by marking passages from the novel that show aspects of power using markers. To achieve this, the process of reading the novel *The Mars Room* was done repeatedly with emphasis on elements related to the concept of power.

#### **D. Data Analysis**

This research classified the data based on Michel Foucault's theory of power, which focuses on how power is distributed in social interactions and societal structures. The categorized data is then interpreted in the context of the theory, explaining how power relations work in the situation under study. This interpretation process helps reveal patterns of power that are not only oppressive, but also productive in shaping norms and behaviors. From the analysis, conclusions are drawn in the form of a summary of the main findings, presented briefly and concisely, describing how power operates in the social dynamics under study.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the research. By using Foucault's theory of power, researcher analyze how power relation portrayed in Rachel Kushner's *The Mars Room*. The focus of this research is divided into two, consisting of power relations between prison guards and prisoners, and power relations among prisoners.

#### A. Power Relations between Prison Guards and Prisoners

The first datum is the power relations between prison guards and prisoners, where Russ, Jhonson, Jones, Doc, and other prison guards have power over prisoners who are in prison both in terms of rules and indirect control by prison guards.

Datum 1:

*“Russ, forced himself on the girls at night, unpredictably but predictably. If you stayed there, sooner or later you were going to be visited at night by Russ, who was old, and muscular, and mean. The girls complained about being raped by him as if it were a form of strictness, or rent.” (p.35)*

The quotation reveals three main dimensions of power: knowledge, discipline and control. First of all, knowledge becomes the main instrument of power for Russ, the prison guard. He has a deep understanding of the prisoners' conditions, including their vulnerability and lack of options. This knowledge gives him the edge to exploit the situation as he sees fit, exploiting the prisoners without fear of significant resistance. Furthermore, Russ act of forcing himself on the prisoner girls reflect the exercise of power through discipline. In the prison system



of power, guards like Russ have the ability to restrain and oppress the bodies of prisoners as they see fit. Such actions create a hierarchy of power that reinforces the prison guard's dominance over the prisoners, creating deep insecurity and fear among them.

Overall, Foucault's power is reflected in the aspect of control exercised by Russ over the prisoners. The prisoners, especially the victimized girls, lose control over their own bodies and lives. They have no ability to resist or escape the violent acts carried out by the prison guards. Thus, Russ's power restricts the prisoner's freedom and autonomy, making them vulnerable and cornered in the harsh prison environment. Through this quote, we can see how power is manifested in the power structure within the prison. Russ uses knowledge, discipline and control to curb and oppress the prisoners, creating a hierarchy of power that supports the prison guard's dominance over them.

The excerpt below depicts an unethical and violent practice in the prison system, where a prisoner, Johnson, is forcibly injected with Thorazine by corrections officers.

Datum 2:

*"After my own immersion in this new world of Johnson's, I knew why he had seemed so dim in the arraignment box: the assholes had given him an involuntary injection of liquid Thorazine. When certain types of inmates were slated for court transport, an involve by corrections officers made their own job easier." (p. 62)*

The forced use of Thorazine injection is a form of strict medical discipline. Foucault talks about how discipline is not only applied through direct physical control, but also through medical interventions that control the body and mind of

the individual. This forced injection was a means of control that ensured the prisoner remained compliant and manageable during transportation and court appearances. The Thorazine injection reduced Johnson's ability to communicate and defend himself, which made him appear silent or confused in front of the judge. This demonstrates how the prisoner's body is controlled to meet the needs of authority, in this case, making the corrections officer's job easier by reducing the potential for resistance or disruption from the prisoner.

These actions reflect the institutional power exercised by prison officers. Officers have the authority to make medical decisions without the prisoner's consent, demonstrating unilateral power that has no regard for individual rights or welfare. This is in line with Foucault's view that power in institutions such as prisons is total and regulates every aspect of prisoner's lives. The Thorazine injection changed Johnson's behavior, making him more compliant and less able to interact effectively in court. It shows how medical discipline is used to shape and control individual behavior to conform to the wishes of authority.

The quote goes on to portray a situation where Jones' stern instructions and Fernandez's sarcastic response reflect the discomfort, humiliation, and harsh control of the prison environment.

Datum 3:

*"Jones said, 'You sit where I put you. This isn't musical chairs.' 'Next to the baby killer,' Fernandez said, not quietly. 'You two are like the Bobbsey Twins,' Fernandez said." (p. 79)*

The quotation reflects the power structure within the prison environment. Firstly, the assertion of authority by prison guards, as practiced by Jones,

demonstrates the tight control held by guards over prisoners. In arranging the seating position of prisoners, Jones asserts his supremacy of power, asserting that prisoners must submit to the orders given by the guards. Furthermore, the stigmatization and bullying of prisoners, such as what happened when the prisoner was called a “baby killer” by Fernandez, reflects how prison guards and even fellow prisoners can use labels and stigmatization to reinforce control and hierarchy within the prison. This creates an environment of injustice and oppression, where prisoners are identified and categorized based on stereotypes and stigmatization.

Thus, the pressure for conformity to certain norms within the prison environment can also be observed through the comparison between two prisoners as the “Bobbsey Twins”. This reflects the expectation or demand for conformity to the norms set by prison guards, which aims to maintain order and obedience within the prison.

The following quote describes a conversation that expresses the desperation and injustice felt by a woman in death row, as well as the unethical behavior of a prison guard called “Doc”.

Datum4:

*“Doc was the dirty cop, Sammy said. ‘He’s tried to take a bounty on me about five times. You’d think a woman on death row could get some peace. Be left alone.’” (p. 101)*

The quote shows the hierarchy and power relations between the prisoner (Sammy) and the prison guard (Doc) “Doc was the dirty cop”. In this context, prison guards have authority and power over prisoners, but on the other hand, prisoners also have the power to expose unethical practices or corruption committed by prison

guards. Then, the statement “He's tried to take a bounty on me about five times” highlights the oppressive practices or abuse of power committed by prison guards against prisoners. Such actions reflect a form of control and domination exercised by prison guards over prisoners, along with efforts to maintain the hierarchy of power within the prison institution.

Furthermore, the statement “You'd think a woman on death row could get some peace. Be left alone” shows how the prisoner (Sammy) describes her hope to get freedom and peace in the prison environment. However, these hopes are often at odds with the reality of prison life, where prisoners are often the target of oppressive practices and abuse of power by prison guards.

The next quotation is the power relations between guards and prisoners, where the prison has power over prisoners who are in prison both in terms of rules and indirect control by prison guards.

Datum 5:

*“I tried to lean away from her as best I could in my chains.” (p. 7)*

In the context of this excerpt, the chains binding the narrator are a physical manifestation of the power exercised by the prison system. The chains restrict the narrator's bodily movements, showing how power can manifest itself in the form of direct and concrete control over one's body. With the narrator trying to get away from others “as best I could in my chains,” we see an example of how discipline works to restrict and regulate physical movement. The chains are not only a means of binding but also a symbol of disciplinary power that serves to control and regulate

the narrator's behavior. Foucault also talks about how power organizes space and how individuals are placed within that space. In a prison, space is designed to maximize control and surveillance. The narrator, bound in chains, tries to stay away from others, but his physical space is limited by the chains. This reflects how power not only controls individuals but also regulates how individuals interact with the space around them.

The quote goes on to describe a highly regulated and controlled situation, where an individual's freedom to choose clothing is drastically restricted by strict rules.

Datum 6:

*"No orange clothing No clothing in any shade of blue No white clothing No yellow clothing No beige or khaki clothing No green clothing No red clothing No purple clothing No denim of any kind or color." (p. 47)*

The quotation above is refer to discipline is implemented through rules and norms that govern every aspect of an individual's life, including how to dress. The rules regarding the clothing allowed in prison are a concrete example of how discipline is applied to control and regulate behavior. By setting various restrictions on the color and type of clothing, prison institutions discipline visitors and ensure that they adhere to the norms set by the authorities. One of the key concepts in Foucault's theory is the regulation of individual bodies by power. Rules prohibiting different colors and types of clothing are a way to regulate and discipline the bodies of prison visitors. By limiting clothing options, prison institutions enforce strict control over how individuals should present themselves. This suggests a form of strict surveillance, where every aspect of an individual's appearance is under the

control of authority. This not only prevents the expression of individuality, but also enforces conformity to institutional norms.

Foucault also talks about the process of normalization, where certain behaviors become standard and expected, while other behaviors are considered abnormal or deviant. By setting strict rules on what clothing can be worn, prisons create a standard of what is considered appropriate and inappropriate. This forces individuals to conform to the norms set by the institution, reduces diversity and individuality, and enforces conformity.

This process ensures that all visitors adhere to the same standards, reinforcing institutional control and power. These rules regarding dress may seem trivial, but they are actually part of a subtle mechanism of power. They not only control behavior, but also create and enforce a hierarchy of power. Visitors who do not comply with these rules are penalized by having their visits cancelled, showing that the institution has the power to determine who can and cannot visit detainees. This is an indirect but highly effective form of power in controlling behavior. This power works through norms and rules that seem administrative, but have a huge impact on how individuals behave and interact with the institution.

The quote further describes a situation where power and authority are abused, women are objectified and belittled, and moral dilemmas and corruption are rampant.

Datum 7:

*“No Cunt Worth Forty K, which made it sound like these guards all faced a dilemma between their job and easy action with prisoners.” (p. 52)*

The phrase "No Cunt Worth Forty K" reflects the complex power relation within the prison institution, particularly in the relationship between prison guards and prisoners. By using demeaning and degrading words, prison guards indirectly affirm their superiority over prisoners. These phrases are not just a form of verbal abuse, but also an example of how language is used as a tool to shape identity and dehumanize individuals in a prison setting. Within the framework of Foucault's power relations theory, naming things like "No Cunt Worth Forty K" also highlights the process of classifying and naming within the prison institution. Prison guards, by labelling the prison as such, not only express their attitudes towards prisoners, but also set norms and expectations within the environment. As such, such phrases reflect how power can be realized through the process of classifying and naming that sets boundaries in social interactions within the prison.

In addition, the sentence illustrates a power dynamic where prison guards are perceived to have a choice between performing their duties well or using their power for easy actions against prisoners. This highlights how power can influence individual perceptions and choices within prison institutions. Prison guards may feel they have the power to commit unethical or unfair acts against prisoners due to their position of power within the prison. As such, the sentence also illustrates how power relation influence individual behavior and social interactions within contexts that are controlled by existing power structures.

The quote below powerfully illustrates the unequal power relations between the defendant and the authorities, where the defendant is in a very weak position and is strictly controlled by the court authorities.





clear hierarchy of power. The bailiff, who walks freely, represents authority and control, while the limping prisoner in handcuffs symbolizes subordination and powerlessness.

The next quotation describes a situation where a group of prisoners are being removed from a bus in a swift and violent manner by the competent authorities.

Datum 9:

*“They hustled us off the bus two at a time, yelling, Move it, Let's go.” (p. 73)*

In this quotation, the strict orders and arrangements by the prison guards show a form of intense surveillance. The prisoners are not only instructed to move in a certain way, but are also closely monitored to ensure compliance. By bustling the prisoners from the “two-by-two” bus and shouting, the guards use visual and verbal surveillance to ensure that no one gets out of line or breaks the rules. Prisons, as institutions, are classic examples of what Foucault calls “disciplinary societies.” Prison structures and rules are designed to regulate every aspect of a prisoner’s life. “They hustled us off the bus two at a time” reflects how the prison as an institution exercises strict control through standardized procedures that all prisoners must follow. This action demonstrates the structural power held by the prison institution, where every step and movement of prisoners is controlled by rules and orders.

Foucault also talks about how modern power works through a process of normalization, where behavior is measured and conformed to certain standards. In this context, the way prison guards shout “Move it, Let's go” reflects an attempt to normalize obedience and discipline among prisoners. By implementing strict rules and ensuring that all prisoners follow instructions without question. Power is also

seen in the physical control over the prisoners' bodies. In this excerpt, prison guards not only direct prisoners to move, but also organize how they move "two- by-two" reflecting strict control over space and bodies.

The quote below depicts a situation of indifference and dehumanization in a prison or detention facility.

Datum 10:

*"The pregnant girl was clutching her stomach and crying out. Jones glanced at her and licked her thumb and turned a page of the handbook, continuing to read" (p. 81)*

The quotation reflects the power relations between the prison guard (Jones) and the prisoner (the pregnant woman). Jones, as a prison guard, has significant power over prisoners, including in special situations such as pregnant women who are suffering. Jones' seemingly indifferent actions when he sees a pregnant prisoner in pain shows how power is exercised in the relationship between prison guards and prisoners. In this case, Jones' power is not only physical, but also symbolic and psychological. Despite knowing that the pregnant woman is suffering, Jones continues his activities without showing any empathy or care. In addition, Jones' actions in continuing to read the manual while ignoring the prisoners suffering shows how power is exercised through knowledge and control over institutional procedures.

The excerpt below describes a situation where the individual is in administrative segregation, a form of isolation used in the prison system. Under these conditions, basic rights such as sending or receiving mail and making phone calls are restricted or prohibited completely.

Datum11:

*"We were not allowed mail or phone calls in ad seg." (p. 115)*

The quote reflects several key aspects of Foucault's theory of power relations. First, the prohibition against letters and phone calls in ad seg (administrative segregation) reflects Foucault's concept of panopticons, where constant surveillance and control are used to regulate prisoners' behavior. By prohibiting communication with the outside world, prisons create an environment where prisoners become subjects of constant surveillance and control. This isolation reinforces the power of the prison institution over individuals by limiting their access to outside information and emotional support. Secondly, this control over communication also demonstrates how power works to produce compliant subjects. In Foucault's view, power not only oppresses, but also creates and shapes individual identities. By removing prisoners' ability to communicate with the outside world, prisons not only restrict their physical freedom but also limit their ability to maintain the identity and social relationships they have outside of prison.

In addition, the act of isolating prisoners in ad seg also reflects a logic of power that seeks to minimize risk and maintain security. Foucault explains that power in modern institutions, including prisons, often operates through a logic of security that seeks to identify, manage and mitigate risk. By banning mail and phone calls, prisons seek to prevent possible disruptions, escape plans, or illegal activities that could be organized through communication with the outside world. Overall, power not only acts repressively but also productively, creating compliant subjects through strict control mechanisms and communication regulation.

The following excerpt describes the strict and tense situation in the prison environment

Datum12:

*"If you were even just walking down the hall and your foot went over the red line of the box, you got a 115, thanks to a paranoid named Armstrong." (p. 123)*

In the quotation, Foucault would see how power operates through strict rules and surveillance within the prison environment. Foucault's concept of the panopticon, which describes how individuals always feel watched even if not always actually observed, can be seen in the rules regarding the Armstrong box. Prisoners are ordered to stay within set boundaries, such as not stepping over red lines, even in the absence of guards directly watching them. This creates a constant awareness of the possibility of being watched and punished, forcing prisoners to abide by the rules even in the absence of direct supervision. Rules that stipulate a punishment of "115" for violations such as stepping over the red line are an example of the normalization of behavior within prisons. Through this process, certain behaviors are perceived as expected and desirable standards, while other behaviors are perceived as deviations that trigger punishment.

The next excerpt describes an atmosphere of violence and direct conflict between prisoners and security forces, with the use of crowd control tactics and resistance on the part of the prisoners.

Datum13:

*"The cops came back but on the perimeter, the narrow fenced outer lane, separated from the cafeteria by a shatterproof wall. They were suited up in riot gear. They threw a tear gas canister into the cafeteria. Someone, a prisoner, caught the tear gas canister and threw it back out." (p. 137)*

In the quotation, there is a rebellion or riot in the prison canteen because a prisoner is dissatisfied with the portion of cake he receives. This out-of-proportion reaction illustrates how power within the prison environment can manifest suddenly and violently. The response to the uprising provides another example of how power is exercised by prison authorities. Prison guards and security officers responded by using physical force and security strategies, including the use of anti-riot equipment and tear gas. These actions reflect the greater power held by the authorities to control and enforce order within the prison environment.

However, in the midst of the authorities' response, an interesting shift in power occurred when a prisoner managed to capture and throw tear gas back at the prison guards. This action highlights the potential for individual resistance to the power imposed by the authorities, even in a highly controlled context such as a prison. Although momentary, the act demonstrates that power is not always absolute and can be contested.

The next excerpt describes the seclusion and harsh treatment of individuals housed in specialized facilities within the prison, focusing on the strict control procedures and inhumane conditions.

Datum14:

*"They had taken me to a different part of the prison, the nursing facility, where no one could hear me scream, no one but the cop on duty. They were following protocols on a behavior sheet. I was alone in a strip cell, no clothes, and no sheets on the bed, on a ward where they put mental cases." (p. 155)*

In the excerpt, reflects how power within the prison operates in a very oppressive and restrictive way for the narrator. When she is transferred to a mental

health care facility, it is not as an attempt to provide care or support, but rather as a form of greater control and isolation. The narrator is placed in a strip cell, with no clothes or sheets on the bed, creating very uncomfortable and restrictive conditions for her daily life. Furthermore, the fact that she is unable to communicate with anyone except the guard shows how tight the control imposed by the prison authorities is.

These conditions reflect how the narrator's body is controlled and dominated by the prison institution. Without clothes or other personal objects, the narrator loses not only her physical privacy but also a large part of her identity as an individual. The setting where she cannot talk to anyone other than the guards highlights how information and communication become important weapons for the authorities in maintaining their power. It also reflects the social isolation often experienced by detainees, where access to external support and resources is restricted, increasing their sense of marginalization and loss of control over their lives.

The excerpt below illustrates a situation where prison counselors have great authority over the lives of prisoners and often abuse that power or at the very least are unfriendly and indifferent to the needs and welfare of prisoners

Datum 15:

*“Counselors have enormous power over what happens to us, and they are always assholes.” (p. 157)*

In this quotation, the narrator highlights the immense power that counsellors have within the prison. They have significant authority in determining the fate of prisoners, including determining security levels, security classifications, and access

to rehabilitation programs or parole conditions. The emphasis on “they are always assholes” suggests that the narrator feels the counsellors use their power in a way that is detrimental or unfair to the prisoners. From the perspective of Foucault’s power relations theory, the quote reflects how power within prison institutions is not only limited to prison guards or security officers, but also exists in custody and rehabilitation staff such as counsellors.

The power of counsellors in determining the lives of prisoners shows that power is not only repressive (through physical control), but also normative (through regulating prisoners’ behavior and identity). In addition, the use of the words “they are always assholes” indicates the narrator’s resistance to the counsellor’s authority. This reflects the complex power relation within the prison, where prisoners do not always passively accept the power imposed upon them, but sometimes try to challenge or resist the power exercised by prison staff.

The next quotation describes the situation of injustice and racial discrimination in the prison, especially in terms of the division of labor among the prisoners.

Datum 16:

*“White girls get all the best jobs,” she said. “You can clerk, sit in air-conditioning and type letters, while us black and brown women pull used tampons from the septic tank screen for eight cents an hour. Take advantage.” (p. 161)*

This quote shows how power works through a racial hierarchy that determines the types of jobs given to prisoners based on the color of their skin. “White girls get all the best jobs,” is a statement that illustrates the structural

injustice at work. White women get more comfortable and respectable jobs as clerks, while black and brown women are given much more unpleasant and demeaning jobs, such as cleaning leftover tampons from septic tank filters for very low wages.

This discriminatory distribution of jobs is not only a repressive form of power, but also productive in Foucault's sense. It creates and maintains a certain social order within the prison, where racial identity affects one's access to resources and better working conditions. The statement "Take advantage" indicates an awareness of the opportunities provided by this system, as well as an exhortation to take advantage of the injustices that exist. It suggests that even though there is a clear and unjust hierarchy of power, individuals within the system can also find ways to adapt and survive, even if it means taking advantage of existing injustices.

The excerpt below reflects the strict discipline and often verbal abuse applied by prison guards to ensure rules and procedures are properly followed by prisoners.

Datum17:

*"Move it, Hall!" an officer yelled. It was time for evening count.  
"Move your ass, now! I said go!" (p. 266)*

In the excerpt, it can be seen how prison officers order prisoners in a firm and harsh manner. Instructions like "Move it, Hall!" and "Move your ass, now! I said go!" reflect the hierarchical power that prison officers have over prisoners. These orders are not just about moving the prisoner, but also asserting the authority and control of the officer. The "evening count" process mentioned in the quote is



a form of systematic surveillance. This surveillance aims to ensure all prisoners are where they are supposed to be, maintaining complete control over every individual within the prison.

This is an example of the constant surveillance described by Foucault, where prisoners are forced to internalize the surveillance and behave according to the expectations of the institution. By ordering Hall to move immediately and giving strict time limits, prison officials emphasize the importance of immediate compliance. Prisoners are forced to conform to strict schedules and rules, normalizing desired behavior and suppressing any form of dissent. The harsh language and direct instructions of prison officers assert their authority and ensure that every individual is under strict control.

### **B. Power Relation Among Prisoners**

The quote further illustrates that within the prison environment, there are complex layers of power where certain prisoners can set and enforce unofficial rules, which affect the daily lives and interactions among other prisoners such as Teardrop, Conan, Button and other prisoners.

Datum18:

*“Why you got to be so racist?” Conan said. “Black girls this. Black girls that. Just because we run this prison.” (p. 123)*

The quote clearly explains how race and racial identity are important elements in the discourse that shapes social life in the prison environment. The conversation between Sammy and Conan reveals racial tensions and power struggles between groups of prisoners. Sammy begins the conversation by referring

to black women in a stereotypical and generic way, “This black girl. That black girl.” This shows how racial discourse is often used to categorize and position individuals within a certain social hierarchy. Black women in prison are portrayed collectively, without individuality, and are associated with certain stereotypes. Conan’s statement, “Just because we run this prison,” is a resistance to the stereotypes that Sammy has attached. Conan shows that black prisoners have power and influence within the prison. She challenges the notion that black women only occupy a low position in the prison’s social hierarchy.

By saying that they “run” the prison, Conan claims power and agency for his group. This statement helps to shape the group identity of black prisoners as a group that has control and authority within the prison environment. The interaction and discourse between Sammy and Conan show how identity and social roles are dynamically constructed through interaction and language exchange. Racial stereotypes are questioned and challenged, and power claims are proposed and negotiated. This conversation serves as an important example of how race and racial identity play a significant role in shaping social realities in prison.

The excerpt goes on to describe a situation of tension and confrontation within the prison fueled by discrimination and prejudice between prisoners, with social or ethnic background playing an important role in the social dynamic.

Datum19:

*“I was putting my few possessions, the photos of Jackson, into my small locker, when another roommate came in. “Nuh uh!” she yelled, looking at me. “No hillbilly bitches in this room. Get the fuck out.” Her name was Teardrop. She was huge and would have destroyed me if I had to fight her, but Conan intervened on my behalf.” (p. 159)*

In the quotation, an inmate named Teardrop using verbal violence and aggression to take control of the situation in the room. He violently rejects the narrator's presence by calling him derogatory names and threatening to throw him out of the room. Teardrop's dominant and intimidating attitude reflects the power he wields within the prison environment, which is often based on physical strength and decisiveness in action.

On the other hand, the intervention of a fellow inmate, Conan, changes the power dynamic within the room. Although the narrator may not have enough physical strength to fight Teardrop, the help from Conan shows that power does not only depend on physical strength, but also arises from social relationships and interactions between prisoners. Conan's action to protect the narrator shows that power can be exchanged or transferred through social interactions within the prison.

The excerpt goes on to describe a situation where power within the prison is controlled by the most powerful prisoners, and how this power conflict can give rise to brutal physical fights as well as harsh and stressful power arrangements.

Datum20:

*"The strongest woman in the room made the rules. Teardrop threatened to rollup Button, put her and her mattress and rabbit in the hall. Button and Teardrop had a knock-down drag-out." (p. 162)*

In this quotation, the interaction between Teardrop and Button illustrates the power relations between prisoners very clearly. Teardrop, as the strongest woman in the room, acts as an informal authority. She makes the rules and enforces discipline among the other prisoners, creating an internal hierarchy of power that is

recognized and followed by the others. This power is not only exercised physically but also through threats and intimidation, such as when Teardrop threatens to evict Button and his mattress and pet rabbit from the room.

Teardrop's threat to "roll up" Button is a form of power that enforces compliance through fear. However, Button's resistance to Teardrop involving physical conflict shows that power always involves resistance. Foucault argues that where there is power, there is also resistance, and Button's resistance shows that Teardrop's power is not absolute and can always be challenged. Teardrop making the rules also reflect Foucault's concept of normalization, where individuals with power determine the norms and behaviors that others must follow. Teardrop acts as an agent of control who determines what is considered acceptable and unacceptable within the prison environment. This shows how power works through social control and the enforcement of norms.

The next quote illustrates that within the prison environment, there are complex layers of power where certain prisoners can set and enforce unofficial rules, which affect daily life and interactions among other prisoners.

Datum21:

*"Certain women in jail and prison make rules for everyone else, and the woman insisting on quiet was one of those." (p. 4)*

According to Foucault (1975), his work examines how institutions such as prisons organize and discipline individuals through surveillance and strict rules. In this excerpt, it is seen that power is not only exercised by prison authorities, but also by prisoners themselves. "Certain women in jail and prison make rules for everyone else" suggests that some prisoners take on the role of agents of power,

creating and enforcing rules that affect the behavior of other prisoners. This is an example of what Foucault calls "micro-power," where power is operated in everyday interactions and relationships between individuals.

This quote also shows how power is internalized by individuals in prison. When certain prisoners enforce the rules, such as the woman "insisting on quiet," they are not only enforcing external rules but also showing how power is internalized and practiced by individuals as a form of self-discipline. Foucault explains that power works most effectively when it is internalized, as individuals begin to monitor and regulate themselves according to established norms. In the prison context, resistance and adaptation to power also occur. The woman enforcing the rule of silence is an example of how prisoners may try to create order and stability in a highly controlled environment. However, these rules can also be a form of resistance to wider power, where prisoners attempt to claim a little autonomy and control over their environment by setting their own rules.

The excerpt below depicts a situation in a prison cell where a prisoner tries to stop another inmate's crying in an unconventional and rude way.

Datum22:

*"The girl in the cell with me, who was not a lunatic, shook me roughly to get my attention. I looked up. She turned around and lifted her jail shirt to show me her low back tattoo, her tramp stamp. It said Shut the Fuck Up. It worked on me. I stopped crying." (p. 5)*

Foucault emphasizes the importance of the internalization of power, whereby individuals begin to regulate and discipline themselves according to norms set by authorities or by peer groups. In this case, the crying prisoner responds to instructions from fellow prisoners and adjusts his behavior accordingly,

demonstrating how power has been internalized. The message on the tattoo serves not only as an instruction, but also as a symbol of authority recognized by other prisoners. In some cases, symbols are often used to reinforce power. The “Shut the Fuck Up” tattoo functions as an informal symbol of power that is accepted and obeyed in the prison context. By displaying the tattoo, the prisoner in question uses the symbol to assert his power and regulate the behavior of other prisoners. The tattoo becomes an effective form of non-verbal communication in regulating and controlling behavior without the need for further physical intervention.

The actions of stronger or more experienced prisoners in enforcing formal rules reflect this horizontal power dynamic. In prison settings, social hierarchies often form between prisoners. The actions of prisoners instructing and regulating the behavior of other prisoners indicate that there is a power hierarchy in which some prisoners have more authority than others. This reflects how power in prison is established and maintained through social interactions and informal arrangements.

The next excerpt describes a situation where a female prisoner is faced with a serious accusation by a fellow prisoner, and the resulting reaction to the accusation demonstrates the social dynamics and prejudices that exist within the prison.

Datum23:

*“You killed him,” a woman behind us said. I felt a wave around me, people tsking in disgust. White women in prison have two crimes, baby killer or drunk driving.” (p.71)*

This quote shows when one prisoner accuses another with “You killed him,” and the response from those around him is insistence and scorn, this reflects the

power relation between prisoners. Such accusations and reactions demonstrate the ways in which power can be exercised by individuals over others through language and social judgment. Foucault argues that power is something that exists at all levels of social interaction, not just formal and hierarchical ones. The collective response to the accusation “I felt a wave around me, people tsking in disgust” suggests a form of social surveillance among the prisoners.

The prisoners supervise and control each other’s behavior and identities through social reactions and judgment. This creates a form of internal control that complements the external surveillance of the prison guards. Foucault refers to this as the “panopticon,” where individuals internalize norms and police themselves as well as others, creating a subtler but highly effective form of control. The stigmatization of white women accused of certain crimes also serves as a power mechanism for exclusion and marginalization. By categorizing and stigmatizing these women as “baby killers” or “drunk drivers,” the detention community creates social boundaries that separate and isolate certain individuals. Foucault argues that power often operates through mechanisms of exclusion, where certain individuals or groups are isolated and controlled through negative labels and social stigma.

The excerpt below illustrates how power and control is exercised in prison through unofficial rules set by more influential prisoners, and how new prisoners must conform to these rules to avoid conflict or problems.

Datum24:

*“Don’t leave nothing outside your locker!” Teardrop yelled at me, but in a slightly nicer tone, like she was resigned to letting me stay. “And nobody runs the fucking water, no tap and no flushing, until I get up in the morning.” (p. 159)*

The quotation shows that power is something that arises in every social interaction, creating a hierarchy of power within the group of prisoners. Foucault views power and knowledge as intertwined. In this context, Teardrop uses his knowledge of the informal rules and norms of the prison to maintain his power. By telling the narrator about the dos and don'ts, such as not leaving items outside lockers and not using water, Teardrop asserts his authority and shows that he has specialized knowledge that gives him power.

Teardrop's orders may seem repressive, but they also produce a certain order in prison life. By controlling daily behavior, Teardrop helps maintain a certain social structure within their group, which may be necessary for survival and cohesion in the harsh prison environment. Where there is power, there is also resistance. Although in this excerpt the narrator appears to accept Teardrop's authority, Teardrop's slightly more benevolent tone of voice suggests a negotiation of power and passive resistance. Teardrop may realize that too much pressure could lead to greater resistance from the narrator or other prisoners.

The excerpt below depicts a situation where the hated inmate Ms. Smith receives extreme and strict prison treatment, including special security, verbal and physical abuse, and a hate campaign filled with moral and religious justifications.

Datum25:

*“They kept Ms. Smith in protective custody. When they moved her, it was like they were moving someone on death row, double escort, with sharpshooters trained on her from the gun towers. Women screamed obscenities. She was gassed with jars of urine. The anti-Smith struggle was a hate campaign, complete with biblical passages and claims about morality and Christian values.” (p. 241)*

In this excerpt, it is possible to see how power within the prison environment



is exercised and expressed through various actions and strategies. The placement of Ms. Smith in protective custody with double guarding and the use of sharp weapons shows how the institution of power seeks to control individuals who are perceived as threats and deviants from the norms within the prison.

Abusive acts such as being doused with urine show how power is exercised through inhumane practices. It is not just about corporal punishment, but also about the prisoners' expression of dominance and control over the gender deviancy of Ms. Hirsch. Smith. In addition, the hate campaign against Ms. Smith was carried out using religious narratives. Smith's use of religious narratives and moral values highlights how power is exercised through ideology. By utilizing widely understood beliefs and values in society, prison guards and even other prisoners created a stigma against Smith as a transgender person.

The next quotation depicts a particularly brutal physical fight inside the prison, where extreme anger and violence are demonstrated through violent physical actions, with serious repercussions for the attacked party.

Datum26:

*“The first person on Serenity was the Norse. The Norse grabbed her and tried to pull her down. Serenity fought back. Conan pushed the Norse down and started monkey stomping her. Every bit of anger that had ever been in Conan came out of the sole of his boot, which connected over and over to the head and face of the Norse. The Norse's head started to leak.” (p. 289)*

In this quote, a representation of complex power in the context of the prison environment can be seen. Norse, as the first aggressor, tries to dominate Serenity by attacking her. However, Serenity shows assertiveness by fighting back against

Norse, showing that she is not passive in the situation. However, Conan's intervention brought the power relation into more complexity. Conan uses his power to oppress the Norse with brutal physical violence. This act asserts Conan's dominance and supremacy over the Norse. The violence displayed by Conan is a form of abusive expression of power, which is often the norm within the prison environment.

Through these actions, Conan effectively enforces his position and demonstrates that his power is over the Norse. This also reflects how power is often expressed through physical violence within the prison context, where social hierarchies and authority are established and maintained through intimidation and domination. Additionally, Serenity's reaction to Laura Lipp's attack adds another dimension to the power relation within the prison. Serenity, despite being attacked, demonstrates the ability to defend herself and resist violent acts against her. This highlights individual resistance to excessive power and shows that power is not always taken for granted by the controlled.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This conclusion is the answer to the research question used in this study. Furthermore, this chapter also provides suggestions for readers and subsequent researchers who want to conduct further research with a similar framework.

#### A. Conclusion

The conclusion of this analysis is that power relations between prisoners and prison guards, as well as between prisoners, reflect complex and changing dynamics. In the prison system, power derives not only from prison guards who hold formal control, but also from prisoners who are able to exploit loopholes in the system for their personal gain. This power is not only repressive, but also productive, shaping prisoner's behaviors, norms, and identities that influence their actions. Resistance to strict supervision emerges in the form of social strategies that prisoners use to maintain control over their lives, such as social networks and relationships with the outside world.

This phenomenon is relevant to issues of power and social control in contemporary society, such as the use of surveillance technologies by the state and corporations, as well as resistance movements against invasion of privacy through encryption technologies. This research highlights that power in prisons is not only vertical between guards and prisoners, but also horizontal among prisoners who build their own social networks and hierarchies. These power relations in prison are multi-layered and constantly changing through the negotiation of power at various levels, both within the prison and in prisoner's relationships with the outside community.

Overall, this analysis highlights how power within the prison is not only vertical, between guards and prisoners, but also horizontal, among the prisoners who build their own social networks and hierarchies.

### **B. Suggestion**

This study has several limitations, one of which is its scope which only focuses on the experiences of prisoners and prison guards in the novel. External aspects such as the author's life and the social background of the novel are not discussed. In addition, this study only examines power relations between prisoners and prison guards with prisoners, and does not examine other characters in the novel. Future research can expand its scope by examining the same aspects through different objects, such as power relations carried out by other characters in the novel.

Finally, the researcher fully realize that this research is far from perfect in its writing and description. Therefore, I always hope for criticism and suggestions for better research.

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## **CURRICULUM VITAE**



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