

**POWER RELATION AND RESISTANCE IN G. WILLOW  
WILSON'S *THE BIRD KING***

**THESIS**

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM  
MALANG  
2024**

**POWER RELATION AND RESISTANCE IN G. WILLOW  
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**THESIS**

Presented to

Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra (S.S.)*

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2024**

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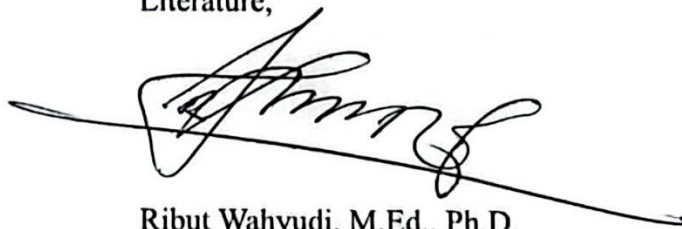
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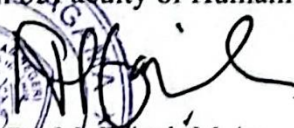
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## **MOTTO**

“Some mistakes get made that’s alright, that’s okay. In the end it’s better for me,  
that’s the moral of the story, babe.”

~Ashe

“Kunci hidup bahagia; tahu diri dan tahu batas.”

~Fahruddin Faiz

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved parents, Umi Zaenab and Ramlan, the breath and heroes of my life who have always been by my side since the beginning of my life. Who always prays, supports me in any condition, and always gives me all the best in my life.

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Last but not least, I want to thank me for believing in me. I want to thank me for doing all this hard work. I want to thank me for never quitting. I want to thank me for always being a giver and trying to give more than I achieve. I want to thank me for trying to do more right than wrong. I want to thank me for just being me all the time.

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7. My cherished friends, who brought joy to my college days, was always there to catch me when I stumbled, and provided the wisdom I needed during my most uncertain moments.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emilia". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial letter 'E' that loops back under the rest of the name.

Emilia Monica Ramlan

## ABSTRACT

Ramlan, E. M. (2024). Power Relation and Resistance in G. Willow Wilson's *The Bird King*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

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This study aims to analyze the form of power relations and resistance in the novel *The Bird King* by G. Willow Wilson. The focus of the study is on the power relations between the main character Fatima and the nobles of Granada, as well as Fatima's form of resistance to that power. This study applies the theory of power relations proposed by Michel Foucault. This type of research is classified as literary criticism with a sociology of literature approach. The primary data source used is the novel *The Bird King* by G. Willow Wilson. The data collection was carried out through the close reading technique by noting relevant quotations. Data analysis includes the stages of classification, analysis, interpretation, and conclusion. The results of the study show a complex power relationship between Fatima and Lady Aisha, Sultan Abu Abdullah, and Nessma. Lady Aisha exercises power through strict supervision and control over Fatima's body. The Sultan has full power over Fatima as a concubine, although Fatima also has a certain influence. Meanwhile, Nessma uses her social status to dominate Fatima. Despite being in a dominant position, Fatima shows various forms of resistance such as running away secretly, controlling her own body by preventing pregnancy in secret, and daring to challenge Nessama directly. This dynamic illustrates that the power relations in the novel are not static or one-way, following Foucault's theory which states that where there is power, there is always room for resistance.

## مستخلص البحث

رملان، إ. م. (٢٠٢٤). علاقة القوة والمقاومة في *The Bird King* لـ ج. ويلو ويلسون. أطروحة بكالوريوس. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية مالانج.  
المشرفة: فضيلة الدكتور موني رايو الماجستير  
الكلمات المفتاحية: القوة، علاقات القوة، المقاومة، الخيال التاريخي

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من منظور نظرية ميشيل فوكو عن القوة. *The Bird King* تدرس هذه الدراسة علاقات القوة والمقاومة في رواية ج. ويلو ويلسون ، Fatima ، تصور الرواية، التي تدور أحداثها في غرناطة في القرن الخامس عشر، ديناميكيات القوة المعقدة بين الشخصية الرئيسية وهي عبدة في القصر تصبح لاحقاً جارية، ونبلاء غرناطة. تحلل هذه الدراسة كيف تعمل القوة من خلال المراقبة والسيطرة على الجسد على الرغم من وضعها. Nessama و Sultan Abu Abdullah و Lady Aisha مع Fatima والخطاب، والتي تتجلى في علاقات في أشكال مختلفة من المقاومة، من الهروب السري إلى التحكم في إنجابها وتحدي شخصيات السلطة بشكل Fatima الخاضع، تنخرط مباشر. تكشف هذه الدراسة أن القوة في الرواية ليست أحادية الاتجاه بل تعمل كشبكة من العلاقات حيث المقاومة ممكنة دائماً، تماشيًا مع مفهوم فوكو للقوة. من خلال استكشاف هذه المواضيع، تظهر الدراسة كيف يمكن للأعمال الأدبية أن تكون وسيلة لفهم ديناميكيات القوة واستراتيجيات المقاومة في سياقات اجتماعية وتاريخية محددة. تساهم هذه النتائج في الخطاب الأوسع حول علاقات

## ABSTRAK

Ramlan, E. M. (2024). Hubungan Kekuasaan dan Perlawanan dalam *The Bird King* karya G. Willow Wilson. Skripsi. Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

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*Kata Kunci: kekuasaan, hubungan kekuasaan, perlawanan, fantasi sejarah*

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Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bentuk hubungan kekuasaan dan perlawanan dalam novel *The Bird King* karya G. Willow Wilson. Fokus penelitian adalah pada hubungan kekuasaan antara tokoh utama Fatima dengan para bangsawan Granada, serta bentuk perlawanan Fatima terhadap kekuasaan tersebut. Penelitian ini menerapkan teori hubungan kekuasaan yang dikemukakan oleh Michel Foucault. Jenis penelitian ini tergolong sebagai kritik sastra dengan pendekatan sosiologi sastra. Sumber data primer yang digunakan adalah novel *The Bird King* karya G. Willow Wilson. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui teknik close reading dengan mencatat kutipan-kutipan yang relevan. Analisis data meliputi tahap klasifikasi, interpretasi, analisis, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya hubungan kekuasaan yang kompleks antara Fatima dengan Lady Aisha, Sultan Abu Abdullah, dan Nessama. Lady Aisha menjalankan kekuasaan melalui pengawasan ketat dan kontrol atas tubuh Fatima. Sultan memiliki kuasa penuh atas Fatima sebagai selir, meski Fatima juga memiliki pengaruh tertentu. Sementara Nessama menggunakan status sosialnya untuk mendominasi Fatima. Meski berada dalam posisi yang didominasi, Fatima menunjukkan berbagai bentuk perlawanan seperti melarikan diri secara diam-diam, mengontrol tubuhnya sendiri dengan mencegah kehamilan secara rahasia, serta berani menantang Nessama secara langsung. Dinamika ini menggambarkan bahwa relasi kuasa dalam novel tidak bersifat statis atau searah, sesuai dengan teori Foucault yang menyatakan bahwa di mana ada kekuasaan, selalu ada ruang untuk resistensi.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains an explanation of the introduction to this research, including the background of study, previous studies, problem of studies, benefits of research, research limitations, and definition of the key terms.

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

The study of power in literature is an interesting field of study. Literary works not only serve as entertainment, but also reflect the social situations that occur in our daily environment (Culler, 2011, p.35). This means that literature is not only an interesting story to read, but also carries a deeper message about life, including the dynamics of power that exist in society.

In literary works, there are various ways to express power, both in the political, social, cultural, and other fields. Therefore, by examining how power is represented and criticized in literary works can help better understand how power operates in society.

Power itself is often seen as something negative, repressive, and oppressive (Foucault, 1978, p.194). However, this view was criticized by the famous French thinker Michel Foucault who viewed power from a different perspective. Foucault views power as a relationship that exists in all social interactions. Power is not only held by a particular individual or group, but it

can also be structured in institutions, discourses, and social practices (Foucault, 1980, p.98).

In this study, the novel "*The Bird King*" by G. Willow Wilson become the object of analysis the depiction of social relationships contained in it. This novel presents various forms of interaction and relationships between characters that can provide insight into social dynamics in the context of the story.

*The Bird King* novel by G Willow Wilson presents a historical fantasy context, covering the period of the late Muslim sultanate in the Granada of Spain during the Inquisition of the Christian Kingdom of Spain, providing a rich background to explore the various forms of power that existed in fantasy. This novel tells the story of the main character Fatima who is the child of a palace slave who lost her mother when she was a child and began to be raised under the supervision of Lady Aisha who was the mother of the Sultan. She then became a favorite subordinate of Lady Aisha who was later appointed as the Sultan's concubine. Her current status as a concubine makes her disliked by the Sultan's half-sister named Nesma. However, Fatima, who is Lady Aisha's favorite and trusted person, makes Nesma unable to do anything even though Nesma's status is higher than hers. One time when the Muslim kingdom of Granada where she lived was in the inquisition by the Catholic kingdom, her friend Hasan was interested in the agreement to hand over power. With all her efforts she disobeyed the sultan's order to hand over Hasan and fled the



kingdom. This novel provides a picture of the complex relationship between Fatima and the Granada aristocrats in the royal environment.

Through this novel, researcher examine the power relations between Fatima and the Granada aristocrats according to Foucault's power relations. Foucault views power as a relationship that exists in every social interaction. To support and complete this research, the researcher has reviewed several previous studies related to the topic of power relations in various literary works. These studies reveal how power works and how forms of resistance emerge in narratives, characters, and story structures.

Foucault's concept of power relations is one of the theories of power that is often used in analyzing literary works. In the research *The rule of the weird: power relations in the films of Yorgos Lanthimos* by Tugce Kutlu. The research in Lanthimos' cinema uses Foucault's concepts of power relations such as obedient bodies, discipline, control, bio-power, and sovereign power (Kutlu, 2023, p.36). The concept of discipline in Foucault's power is also found in Exploring *Discipline and Resistance in To Kill a Mockingbird from the Perspective of Foucault's Theory of Power* by Chen Sun and Dan Zhou. This study examines the oppression that occurs due to unequal power relations and resistance to the discourse of power in the novel. (Sun & Zhou, 2022, p.737).

While in the research *A Foucauldian Reading of Oppression and Resistance in The Handmaid's Tale* by Alyssa Malcorps. This thesis uses Michel Foucault's concepts of discourse power and surveillance to see how regimes use

these tools as a way to oppress. This thesis also shows how power can be used and how individuals and groups can resist (Malcorps, 2018, p.2). In another study *Applying Michel Foucault's power theory in Shakespeare's King Lear* by Ansam R. Abdulla Al maaroof, Layla Nazhan Hamid, Ethar Riyadh Abdullah. This study interprets the play in the Foucauldian perspective of power as a dynamic relationship to discourse and subject. This study analyzes the text of King Lear to show the relationship between power, knowledge, and language. The play provides a depiction of a complex network of power dynamics involving multiple spheres of influence (Abdulla Al maaroof et al., 2022, p.1790).

Furthermore, the concept of power in government can be seen in the research *Repression and Resistance: A Foucauldian Discourse Analysis of Power Structures in the Novel A God in Every Stone* by Kamila Shamsie by Qurat UI Ain Liaqat and Rizwan Akhtar. This article presents a Foucauldian analysis of the relations of power, resistance and dynamics of colonialism in the novel A God in Every Stone. Furthermore, this study provides insights into the complex interplay between repression and resistance (Liaqat & Akhtar, 2019, p.1). Another study is *The Exercise of Power and Its Resistance in Isle of Dogs* by Gracia Veva. This study highlights the role of society in power relations in a democratic society, because they have the ability to determine the form and strength of the power of the flow. In this study, the government exercises its power through propaganda and control of the flow of information, while

resistance comes from citizens who oppose government ideas and spread contradictory information. (Veva, 2019, p.320).

Power is not only in government, but also relations in social life and daily life. In *Foucault's Theory of Power in the Edrissis' House and the Grass Is Singing* by Atiyeh Khorasani and Batul Fakhreslam. In both novels, power seems to manifest itself in a form that oppresses and limits individuals, and resistance to power is also trapped in the circle of power itself (Khorasani & Fakhreslam, 2019, p.1). Whereas in *Study of Power Relations in the "The Salesman" Analysis of the Study Subjects' actions (Cognition of Strategies and Techniques)* by Elham Tavakoli, Merdad Navabakhsh, Mansour Haghghatian. Power analyzes the relationship between the subject Emad and the aggressor in the film 'The Salesman' and examines how they influence each other and the strategies and techniques they use to exercise power (Tavakoli et al., 2021, p.41). *Power Relations in the Novel Everything, Everything* by Nicola Yoon (2015) by Rahmat Fadhli and Desvalini Anwar. The concept of power relations in this study is in everyday life. The story focuses on the mother-daughter relationship and the role of health in power dynamics (Fadhli & Anwar, 2023, p.656).

The last, in research *Re-reading Achebe's Arrow of God: Foucault on Power and Exegesis of a Narrative* by Adaoma Igwedibia and Greg Ekeh. This study applies Michel Foucault's theory of power to analyze Chinua Achebe's novel "Arrow of God". The focus is on two perceptions of power: coercive and

discursive, represented by the characters Ezeulu and Nwaka. Using Foucault's perspective, this study challenges the understanding of power as a centralized instrument of coercion, and instead emphasizes the concept of power as a diffuse phenomenon that is manifested in discourse.

Based on the previous studies above, it can be seen that the concept of power relations from Michel Foucault's theory is often used in analyzing literary works, including novels and films. Some of the previously mentioned studies use Foucault's concepts such as obedient bodies, discipline, control, bio-power, sovereign power, discourse, and surveillance to examine the dynamics of power depicted in literary works.

Although not specifically mentioned, Foucault's concepts of power relations can also be applied in analyzing G. Willow Wilson's *The Bird King*. By using Foucault's perspective, research into this novel can focus on how power is depicted, how power relations operate, the forms of oppression and resistance that emerge, as well as other concepts that might also be found. The study of power in *The Bird King* is not only academically relevant, but also has significant implications for understanding power dynamics in culture and politics past and present. By deepening the analysis of this novel, the researcher hopes to open new insights into how power relations are understood, challenged and represented in a literary context.

**B. Problems of the study**

1. What are the power relations between Fatima as the main character and the Granada aristocrats in the novel *The Bird King*?
2. How is Fatima's resistance against the Granada aristocrats portrayed in the novel *The Bird King*??

**C. Benefits of research**

The benefits of this research are to provide a deep understanding of the complexity of power in literary works, as well as to provide insight into how power relations are represented and challenged in literary works. In addition, this research also contributes to the development of critical theory and literary analysis, and generates a broader understanding of how literary narratives can influence our perceptions of power and how power can resist in Foucault's view.

**D. Research limitations**

The limitations of this research focus on the concept and theory of Power Relations introduced by Michel Foucault without extending its analysis to the concept of power from other theoretical views or to aspects of power outside Foucault's framework. In addition to the concept and theory of power, this research also examines how power is challenged and resisted in the novel. This research also limits its analysis to the narrative and context in G. Willow Wilson's *The Bird King*, without extending it to other literary works or historical contexts outside the scope of the novel. Thus, this research focus on the

application of Foucault's theory in analyzing the representation of power relations in the novel as well as how that power is resisted.

#### **E. Definition of the key terms**

1. Power is the ability or authority of an individual or group to influence or control the behavior, actions, or decisions of other individuals or groups either through social, political, or organizational contexts (Dahl, 1957, p.203)
2. Power Relation is power as a relationship that exists in every social interaction. Power is not only owned by certain individuals or groups, but also structured in various institutions, discourses, and social practices (Foucault, 1980, p.98).
3. Resistance is generally carried out by individuals or groups who are in a disadvantaged or subordinate position to the repressive forces that suppress them. It occurs as a response to the oppression experienced by some people or certain communities (Rahayu et al., 2020, p.73).
4. Historical fiction refers to literary works that recreate a particular period or history with attention to factual accuracy while telling a story featuring both fictional and historical characters, with the latter usually playing a secondary role to avoid compromising known historical facts (Gundal and King, 2020, p.7).

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter provides an explanation of the approaches and theories used in this research. The approach used in this research is sociology of literature and the theory used in this research is Gramsci's theory of hegemony and resistance to hegemony. The explanation of approaches and theories in this chapter help in answering research problems.

#### **A. Sociology of Literature**

The sociology of literature is a field of study that examines the relationship between literature and society. Literature and sociology have a complex relationship, and literature is often a source of inspiration and material for sociological analysis (Halsey, 2004, p.205). Sociology pays attention to literature as a picture of society itself (Dewi & Rahayu, 2020, p.23). Because literature is a reflection of the thoughts and realities of dynamic human life, so is literature, which is always changing according to the flow of human thought in a certain period (Annas, 2021, p.89). Although literature, like sociology, can objectively discuss social reality, in a more artistic way it penetrates the surface of social life and displays human experience in depth.

Sociology of literature, according to Vána (2020, p.183), is a literary approach that focuses on analyzing literary fiction from a sociological point of view. This approach engages in the examination of social and cultural aspects described in

literary works, aiming to understand how these aspects reflect and shape society. Within this framework of study, there is a recognition of the interaction that occurs between literature and society (Váña, 2020, p.183). The focus is on exploring how literature can provide insight into social experiences, values and norms.

The sociology of literature has a primary goal, which is to understand how literature can reflect and refract the social world. This approach overcomes the conflict between internal and external analysis of literary works, as expressed by Shapiro (2023, p.4). In other words, sociology of literature not only highlights the internal dimensions of literary works, but also explores the ways in which literature interacts with its social context. In this sense, literary sociology opens the door to a more holistic understanding of literature's role in shaping and reflecting social reality.

Swingewood and Laurensen (1972) present three concepts in his literary approach, namely; literature as a reflection of the times, the production of authorship, and literature in relation to history.

a. Reflection of the times

According to Swingewood and Laurensen, the concept of "mirror" in the sociological analysis of literature must be treated with caution, taking into account the author's role, consciousness, and intentions. The great writer not only describes the social world descriptively, but is also tasked with moving his characters in artificially



designed situations to explore their personal destinations and find meaning in the social world. Society does not only consist of social institutions that form the social structure, but also contains norms, standards of behavior, and values accepted by individuals. Literature reflects these norms, including the values that the author strives for, and in many cases, literature reinforces and illuminates sociological concepts. This is especially evident in literary works that choose society as their subject (Swingewood & Laurenson, 1972, p.13).

b. The concept of authorship and production

The concept of authorship and production in literary sociology according to Swingewood and Laurenson refers to the way an author creates a literary work and how it is produced and received by society at a particular point in history. It involves analyzing the creative process of the author in creating the literary work, as well as how social, cultural, and political factors affect the production, distribution, and reception of the literary work. Thus, this concept covers two important aspects: first, the activities and processes of authorship undertaken by the author, and second, the processes of production, distribution, and reception of literary works in society (Swingewood & Laurenson, 1972, p.17).

c. Literature in relation to history

The third perspective in the sociological analysis of literature explores how a literary work is accepted by society at a historical point.

In his book, Swingewood and Laurenson describe how the reception of Guy de Maupassant's work in Britain in the 1880s and 1890s helped to change the British literary view of sexuality towards a more modern view, reflected in the work of Thomas Hardy and George Moore (Swingewood & Laurenson, 1972, p.21).

The role of popular culture in sociology according to Swingewood and Laurenson is to highlight the importance of understanding the values and symbols that form cohesion in society. Swingewood and Laurenson argue that if literature reflects the fundamental values that connect different groups in society, then popular culture can be used as a diagnostic tool to analyze modern society (Swingewood & Laurenson, 1972, p.22).

## **B. Power**

Power has a complex meaning. Not only held by the government and structural officials, but power also occurs in social interactions and can be exercised by everyone (Rahayu et al., 2014, p.153). Power is the ability or authority of an individual or group to influence or control the behavior, actions, or decisions of other individuals or groups either through social, political, or organizational contexts (Dahl, 1957, p.203).

In his theory of power, Foucault states that power is not only limited to certain institutions or structures, but also spreads into various sources and

manifestations in society. Although power is not all-encompassing, it is present in various forms and mobility in everyday life. "Power," in the sense he mentions, is the overall result of various processes and dynamics in society that aim to maintain the status quo and control the movement or mobility of individuals and groups.

Foucault asserts that power is not something fixed or static, but is the result of complex interactions between various forces working in society. Power also does not have a specific physical form, but emerges as a result of strategic processes that occur in society (Foucault, 1978, p.93). Therefore, it is important to understand power as a dynamic and changing phenomenon, which is always reproduced in various contexts both in social and historical forms.

### **C. Foucault's concept of power relations**

Foucault in his theory said that power is everywhere. Foucault also introduced the main model of his theory of power, which focuses on power relations. He said that power does not only occur in a centralized or local form, but also through a complex network of relationships between individuals, groups, and social structures. Power flows through these relationships, through society like a chain, and is not concentrated at certain points. This shows that power does not always have to be seen or expressed directly but is often exercised through indirect and veiled means in various forms of social interaction (Foucault, 1980, p.98).

By emphasizing that individuals are tools of power, Foucault emphasizes that power does not only apply to individuals as passive objects, but individuals also play an active role in the process of achieving power. They are part of this network of power, influence it, and are influenced by it in various ways.

Foucault's approach to power highlights the complexity and dynamics of power in society, as well as the active role of individuals in the formation and reproduction of power in various historical and societal contexts. Althusser developed the concept of the Ideological State, which highlights the role of ideology in maintaining the hegemony of power, and distinguishes it from the Repressive State Apparatus (Mills, 2003, p.35).

Michel Foucault offers a more complex view of power than models of power that only view it as a form of oppression or repression. He rejects the idea that power only serves to limit individual freedom, and instead suggests that power is also productive, creating forms of behavior and events. Foucault highlights that power does not just say "no", but also creates norms, values and rules that shape the actions of individuals in society (Mills, 2003). In his theory, Foucault identified several forms of power that operate in society. The following are the forms of power according to Foucault:

1. Disciplinary power (power over space and time)

Disciplinary power in Michel Foucault's concept of power relations refers to a form of power that operates through the

regulation and control of time, space, and individual activities. Foucault argues that this power works to create "obedient bodies" through various social techniques and practices. One of them is the regulation of time and space (Foucault, 1977, p.137). This power is not always repressive, but often works in subtle and productive ways, shaping individual subjectivities and how they understand themselves.

## 2. Power in surveillance

The form of power through surveillance in Foucault's theory of power is also part of disciplinary power. This power is illustrated by the analogy of the Panopticon, a prison model designed by Jeremy Bentham. In the Panopticon concept, cells surround a central watchtower, creating a sense of constant surveillance. Foucault uses this principle in modern society, illustrated in institutions such as schools and hospitals using similar surveillance (Mills, 2003, p.45).

Through surveillance, individuals will regulate their own behavior according to prevailing norms. This makes power effective without physical violence and only through the threat of constant surveillance (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p.189). Thus, producing obedient souls and individuals who have internalized the rules and monitor themselves.

## 3. Power in normalization

The last form of power in disciplinary power is normalization. Based on Foucault's theory of power relations, the normalization of power refers to the way society creates and enforces standards of behavior that are considered "normal." This process occurs not only through formal rules, but also through everyday social interactions that shape our understanding of what is considered good, right, or appropriate (Mills, 2003, p.42).

Through this mechanism, individuals are encouraged to conform to prevailing norms, while those who are deemed not to follow prevailing norms are deemed in need of correction or punishment. In Foucault's thinking, the normalization of power is not only intended to create harmony or uniformity but also to measure and empower individuals based on their deviations from established norms (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p.196).

#### 4. Power over the body (biopower)

Michel Foucault also identified a form of power over the body or also called biopower. This power provides an important explanation in understanding how modern power works through the regulation of the body and biological processes. He argues that power over the body is a form of power that is subtle, widespread and works in managing life through various institutions and social practices. Foucault explains that biopower is a form of power that

focuses on controlling the human body and its biological processes (Foucault, 1978, p.139). This power works on aspects of life such as health, birth, and death at the population level. This shows that the body, especially in its biological functions, is the main focus of the operation of power.

Foucault further explains that biopower also creates standards of "normal" that are accepted in society. He also wrote that biopower shapes individual behavior, identity, and social roles by creating certain norms and expectations. For example, in society there are still standards and social pressures to have children, especially boys. Although this is not a written law, it is a kind of unwritten rule that influences a person's thinking about themselves and their role in society. This is an example of biopower, where power shapes people's behavior and identities without using physical force (Foucault, 1977, p.26).

#### 5. Discursive Power

In Foucault's theory of power relations, Discursive Power is a form of power that leads to the power of discourse. This form of power focuses on the way we talk and think about things. According to Foucault, discourse shapes what we consider to be "truth" or "knowledge" in a society (Foucault, 1981, p.52). Discursive power

works by determining what can be said and thought, and who is considered to have the authority to speak about something.

This form of power is not only found in government or large institutions. Everyone can be involved in spreading these discourses through everyday conversation. Mills explains that Foucault views power as something that flows in society and in the form of networks, this power is not something that is owned by a particular group or individual (Mills, 2003, p.35).

#### **D. Resistance**

According to Foucault, power does not belong to a particular individual or group, but is distributed throughout society through various practices, institutions, and discourses. In this perspective, power is not only repressive or oppressive, but also has an impact on the creation of knowledge, identity, and social behavior (Rabinow, 1984, p.205).

Power itself is spread across various places and the emergence of resistance as a response to the dynamics of existing power (Foucault, 1978, p.95). In terms of power, Foucault sees resistance as an integral aspect of the power relationship itself.

In his theory of power relations, where there is power, there is resistance. According to Foucault, resistance is not something that is outside of power, but arises from the dynamics of power itself. This means that resistance



and power are interdependent and form a complex relationship. (Pickett, 1996, p.458).

Resistance is often carried out by individuals or groups who feel disadvantaged or under the power of repressive forces that oppress them (Rahayu et al., 2020, p.73). Resistance, according to Foucault, is not a single entity or essence, but appears in various forms spread throughout the network of power. He emphasizes the "plurality of resistances" each of which is a special case. Resistance, in Foucault's view, does not always take the form of a massive rebellion, but can appear on various scales and contexts. This resistance is dynamic and unavoidable, because it is inherent in the structure of power itself. (Foucault, 1978, p. 96).

Foucault (1978, p.96) stated that in every power structure, whether at the individual, organizational, or societal level, there will be efforts to resist or oppose that power. The quote also emphasizes the idea that power cannot be achieved without resistance. Although power has a dominant influence in determining norms, values, and behavior in society, there will always be individuals or groups who resist or criticize that power.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter contains an explanation of the methods used in this research. This chapter includes the research design used, data sources, data collection, which contains how data is collected, and data analysis.

#### **A. Research design**

This research is a literary criticism study that focuses on the depiction of power relations and resistance that are manifested in the novel *The Bird King* by G. Willow Wilson. This research uses a sociological literary approach using the theory of power relations developed by Michel Foucault. This study aims to examine how the concept of power relations is reflected in the story, characters, plot and setting of the novel.

The main objective of this study is to provide an in-depth and detailed analysis of the theme of power and resistance in literary works. The research method used is a qualitative method, so that it allows for an in-depth and complete analysis of the novel. Using this approach and theory allows researcher to understand the nuances of character, plot, and setting in the context of power and resistance. Therefore, this study provide insight into the dynamics of power relations and resistance in the novel *The Bird King*.

## **B. Data and Data Sources**

The data source of this research is the novel *The Bird King* (2019) by G. Willow Wilson. This novel was published by Grove Press Publisher, New York, in 2019. It contains 385 pages, consisting of 26 chapters. The data used by researcher are words, sentences, and dialogue in the novel *The Bird King* by G. Willow Wilson. The novel is set in the 15th century in the Emirate of Granada during the last days of the region. It tells the story of the escape of Fatimah who is a concubine and her friend Hasan, a mapmaker who comes from the last Islamic sultanate dynasty in the Emirate of Granada. Fatimah and Hasan are on the run from the Spanish Inquisition who are trying to capture and kill Hasan as they consider him a threat to the Spanish Empire.

## **C. Data Collection**

Data collection techniques are methods or strategies used to gather relevant and useful information for specific research purposes. In the context of analyzing literary works such as *The Bird King* by G. Willow Wilson, data collection techniques aim to understand and identify how power relations and resistance are depicted in the novel. In using data collection techniques in this research, the first step the author takes is to read and understand the text. The author reads the novel *The Bird King* carefully and understands the plot, characters, themes, and messages that the author wants to convey by deep reading. Then, the writer annotate the text. During reading, the author record

observations, questions, or ideas that arise related to the depiction of power relations and resistance in the novel. These can be relevant quotes, character descriptions, or important scenes.

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

Data analysis techniques are a series of systematic procedures used to analyze, interpret, and present data collected in a study. The purpose of this technique is to gain a deep understanding of the patterns, relationships, and meanings contained in the data, in line with the research questions posed. In the context of the research "Power Relations and Resistance in G. Willow Wilson's *The Bird King*". The analysis steps that the author takes first are content analysis. After the researcher collects data, the researcher analyzes the quotes and data that have been collected to identify how power and resistance are expressed in the text, either through narration, dialogue, or character actions. Then the writer made Interpretation. After identifying the data, the researcher interprets the findings in context. The data needs to be interpreted to obtain a broader meaning.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the results of analysis obtained from narrative research on the novel *The Bird King* by G. Willow Wilson with a focus on power relations and resistance using Foucault's theory. In this research, the author reveals how power relations are practiced by various parties with the main character Fatima and what forms of resistance to this power form in the novel *The Bird King*.

#### **A. Power Relations between Fatima and the Granada Aristocrats in the novel *The Bird King***

The novel *The Bird King* is set in the Emirate of Granada in 1491, the final moments before the fall of the last Islamic kingdom in Spain. The main character of this novel is Fatima, a woman who became the concubine of the Sultan of the Emirates of Granada. Fatima has lived in a harem since childhood, born to a mother who was a Circassian slave who was sold to the sultan while pregnant.

Because she grew up in a royal environment, Fatima often interacted with the nobles who lived in the palace. In this story, we can see three forms of power relations involving Fatima and the Granada nobles. First, there is a power relationship between Fatima and Lady Aisha, a senior nobleman who is the mother of the sultan and Fatima's mistress. Second, there is a power relationship between Fatima and Sultan Abu Abdullah, ruler of the Emirate of Granada

Third, there are power dynamics between Fatima and Nessama, the sultan's half-sister.

These power relations illustrate Fatima's unique and complex position in the social structure of the palace. As the sultan's concubine, Fatima had a higher status than ordinary slaves, but was still below the nobles. Her relationship with Lady Aisha reflects a more complex dynamic than slaves in general with the fact that Fatima is Lady Aisha's favorite slave. Her relationship with Sultan Abu Abdullah was of course very important, because the sultan had supreme power and their relationship was both intimate and political. Meanwhile, Fatima's interactions with Nessama, the sultan's half-sister, illustrate the tension between concubines and members of the royal family.

### **1. Power Relations between Fatimah and Lady Aisha**

In the novel *The Bird King*, the power relations between Fatima and Lady Aisha are an interesting example of the social dynamics at the Alhambra palace. Fatima, the daughter of a Circassian slave who was born in the palace, she has a unique background. Fatima is the daughter of a slave who was bought by the sultan, then Fatima's mother became a slave of Lady Aisha who was the mother of the sultan, but unfortunately Fatima's mother died shortly after giving birth to her.

Then, Lady Aisha took care of and supervised Fatima, who later made her a favorite slave and appointed her as the king's concubine.

Lady Aisha has a very powerful position in the royal environment. As the mother of a sultan, as well as the Harem administrator for the women of the palace, she has the power to regulate life in the harem and supervise the women who live there. As the administrator of the harem, she has the authority to make decisions about daily life in the harem, including supervising and directing the activities of its residents. Fatima who is one of the women who lives in the harem is not free from the power of Lady Aisha. Fatima must obey the rules and orders set by Lady Aisha in the royal environment.

The interactions between Fatima and Lady Aisha in Wilson's story illustrate these complex power relations. One aspect that stands out the most is Lady Aisha's ability to keep an eye on Fatima. Lady Aisha had extensive knowledge of everything that happened in the palace, including Fatima's activities and movements. This surveillance ability shows the level of control Lady Aisha had over Fatima's life.

This surveillance can be seen as a manifestation of what Michel Foucault calls "panopticism", where the subject of power (in this case Fatima) always feels watched, even though actual surveillance may not always occur. This creates a situation where Fatima must always be careful in her actions, aware that Lady Aisha may know or will find out what she is doing. This is proven in the following data:

*"You went to see our cartographer friend," observed Lady Aisha. Fatima no longer wondered how she knew these things. Lady Aisha had eyes everywhere, though how this was achieved remained a mystery. (The Bird King, p.17)*

As a slave, Fatima's actions are monitored and controlled by Lady Aisha, who apparently has a surveillance network that allows her to know Fatima's whereabouts and activities. Lady Aisha's ability to always know what is going on makes Fatima feel like she is always being watched, leaving her with little freedom or privacy.

This situation makes it difficult for Fatima to act freely. She had to be careful with what she did, because Lady Aisha could find out. This shows how power can control a person's behavior, even without the direct presence of the person in power.

Lady Aisha's power in supervising Fatima is also seen when Fatima tries to help her friend Hassan in escaping from the Inquisition and joins in the escape. This is proven in the following data:

*"No thank you," said Fatima, freshly alarmed. If he was offended, the dog-man gave no sign, but hummed to himself again, leaping over a mound of earth and rubble and landing on all fours. The light had taken on a piercing quality, filling the passage ahead of them. Fatima's eyes began to water. The dog-man rose and became a silhouette, the shadow of a beast standing upright.*

*"I've found them, my lady," he called to the flickering brightness. "They were lost in the borderlands of the Empty Quarter. Here they are, safe and sound."*

*"Good boy," came a familiar voice. Fatima put up a hand to shield her eyes. The light shifted. It was a torch, Fatima realized, held up by a slim figure in a robe and a saffron-colored veil.*

*"Well, Fatima," said Lady Aisha, lowering the light and pulling her veil down to reveal a wry smile. "Did you really think you could run away in the dead of night without saying good-bye?" (The Bird King, p.94)*



In the data above illustrates how Lady Aisha demonstrates her ability to track and monitor Fatima even as she tries to escape. The use of a genie who can transform into a human-dog suggests that this surveillance is pervasive and difficult to avoid, similar to the concept of the "watching eye" in Foucault's panopticon.

Fatima's shocked reaction to being caught illustrates the psychological effects of constant surveillance. This situation shows how strong Lady Aisha's supervision of Fatima is. Even when Fatima tried to run away secretly in the middle of the night, Lady Aisha was still able to track her easily. This proves that Lady Aisha has sophisticated and unpredictable ways to monitor Fatima's movements.

Furthermore, Lady Aisha's power over Fatima is not only seen from her ability to supervise, but also from the rules she enforces. As Fatima's mistress and mother of the king, Lady Aisha had the right to dictate how Fatima should behave. This makes Fatima's freedom even more limited.

Fatima's position as the king's concubine meant that she had to obey special rules. She cannot freely meet or talk to other men as she pleases. This is because in the harem system, Fatima was considered the complete property of the king. These rules further emphasize that Fatima does not have complete freedom over herself as in the following quote:

*"You miss the point. For the sake of his dignity, we all assume he does like girls. That way, no one need make a fuss when men come and go from his quarters. But there must be a fuss if my son's own concubine visits him alone. It ruins the symmetry of the arrangement." (The Bird King, p. 17)*

The data above illustrates how Lady Aisha uses her power to control Fatima in the context of the social structure of the harem. Lady Aisha explains to Fatima about the unwritten rules that apply in their environment, especially regarding Fatima's relationship with Hassan.

Lady Aisha's statement shows that Fatima's personal desires and choices must be sacrificed to maintain the good name of the sultan and the harem. Fatima is reminded of her position in the social hierarchy and the boundaries she must obey. This is a subtle but firm form of control from Lady Aisha.

This situation reflects Foucault's concept of power through normalization. Foucault argues that modern power works through the process of normalization, in which individuals are formed to conform to standards of behavior that are considered "normal" in a society or institution (Foucault, 1977, p.184). In this context, Lady Aisha acts as a normalizing agent, directing Fatima to understand and obey the norms that apply in the harem.

On the other hand, Lady Aisha knows how power works and influences women through the body and reproduction. The body, especially in the context of intimate relationships, becomes a site where

power is exercised and negotiated. Furthermore, Lady Aisha's power over Fatima's body and reproduction is seen in her desire for Fatima to have a son with the Sultan. This can be seen in the following data:

*“Why all these questions now, sweeting? Are you pregnant? Is that what this is about?”*

*“No!” Fatima clutched the edge of the tub reflexively. “No.”*

*“That’s a shame,” sighed Lady Aisha, closing her eyes again. “I hope you’ll conceive before that silly cow Hurriya does. She’s desperate for a boy. Imagine her horror if her future glory was displaced by the son of a slave girl. Second wives, my dear! Second wives need keeping down.”*

*Fatima kicked one foot restlessly. She wanted to reply that she desired no children, that the line between her own childhood and the role she occupied now was still unclear to her, but she knew better than to adopt this line of reasoning with her mistress.... (The Bird King, p. 18)*

Lady Aisha shows a deep understanding of how pregnancy and the birth of a male child can be a source of power and influence. Lady Aisha's desire for Fatima to become pregnant before the Hurriya reflects how reproduction becomes a tool in the game of power. This is in accordance with Foucault's argument that sexuality and reproduction are the main focus in the exercise of bio-power (Foucault, 1976, p.145).

Lady Aisha exercises power by attempting to control Fatima's reproductive choices and by perpetuating the hierarchical structure within the harem. For Lady Aisha, Fatima's potential pregnancy is not just a personal matter, but is related to the power struggle between women in the harem. She saw the reproduction of Fatima as a means of asserting dominance over the Hurriyas. Fatima, despite internal

resistance, is forced to navigate these power relations carefully, given her status as a slave.

Another example of the power relationship between Fatima and Lady Aisha through control over Fatima's body and sexuality can be seen in the following data:

*"The taste of it never failed to remind Fatima of the first time she had been presented to him, on a night two years ago when Lady Aisha had declared her old enough to share a bed." (The Bird King, p. 30)*

This passage shows how Lady Aisha, as an authority figure, exercises control over Fatima's body and sexuality. Mistress Aisha determines when Fatima is considered sexually mature and uses her authority to regulate Fatima's sexuality, deciding when she should begin serving the sultan sexually.

Lady Aisha's actions are in accordance with Foucault's thinking, which argues that power does not only work through prohibition or oppression, but also through the regulation and formation of sexual behavior. Furthermore, Foucault states that the body becomes a place where power is exercised through various social and institutional practices. In this regard, Lady Aisha's act of determining Fatima's sexual maturity by "presenting" her to the sultan reflects the ways in which women's bodies are subject to control and regulation within broader systems of power.

Power relations in this context are not only gendered but also intersect with class and status, because Fatima's position as a female slave makes her very vulnerable to the control and decisions of those above her in the social hierarchy.

The following quote further illustrates the complex power dynamics between Lady Aisha and Fatima from a Foucauldian perspective:

*"This is my bondswoman, Fatima," said Lady Aisha. "Please forgive her in advance for the many offenses she is preparing to commit. I have never punished her for anything. There's no point." (The Bird King, p. 40*

In the data above, the term “bondswoman” used by Lady Aisha is an affirmation of Fatima’s subordinate position. This shows that power is not only physical coercion but also classification and labeling, which according to Foucault is a form of discursive power that forms the identity of the subject.

Furthermore, Lady Aisha’s statement about “the violation she is currently experiencing” shows that Fatima has certain behavioral expectations. This is consistent with Foucault’s concept of normalization, which states that power operates by establishing expected behavioral norms. However, Lady Aisha’s anticipation of this violation shows a form of resistance from Fatima, which is also an important aspect of Foucault’s theory of power.

Lady Aisha's assertion that she never punished Fatima and that it was useless shows a more complex dynamic than simple domination. This shows that Fatima's resistance is an integral part of their power relationship.

## **2. Power Relations between Fatimah and Sultan Abu Abdullah**

The relationship between Fatima and Sultan Abu Abdullah was a form of power between the sultan and his concubine. Sultan, as supreme ruler, having complete control over the intimate aspects of their relationship, including sexual interactions and use of time. While Fatima, as the lower party in the hierarchy social and political, does not have the ability to make her own decisions or choices regarding her body or how she spends her time.

This situation illustrates an unequal power dynamic, where one party has absolute authority to determine when, how, and under what conditions physical interactions occur, while the other party must comply with the wishes and demands of the party in power without having the opportunity to voice her personal preferences or objections. as in the following quote:

*The sultan called for her that evening. Fatima was sitting in the doorway of Lady Aisha's private room leafing through an illuminated volume of Hafez when his messenger arrived— (The Bird King, p.22)*

*"Mistress Fatima," he panted. "His majesty is asking for you. Now, or sooner." (The Bird King, p. 22)*

The Sultan has complete control over when and how sexual interactions occur. He can summon Fatima whenever he wants, as seen from the message "Now, or sooner". This shows that the Sultan had the power to regulate Fatima's time and activities, especially those related to her body and sexuality. The Sultan's control over Fatima's time and activities reflects what Foucault calls "disciplinary power". Foucault argued that modern power operates through the regulation of time, space and bodily activity (Foucault, 1977, p.137)

In addition to Fatima's power over space and time, the sultan also has power over her body. Although it is not explained directly, the following quote shows that Fatima does not have power over her body against the Sultan:

*But whatever desire she felt had faded when she realized he was still her king. She could neither initiate their lovemaking nor reject it: it was a transaction in which her desire played no part. (The Bird King, p.30)*

The data above reveals how power over women's bodies is at the heart of the relationship between Fatima and Sultan Abu Abdullah. The sentence "But whatever desire she felt had faded when she realized he was still her king" illustrates how awareness of her subordinate position erases her personal desires. Fatima's body is no longer her own, but has become the subject of the king's power. This situation shows the deep inequality in their relationship, where Fatima's status as a concubine removes her autonomy over her own body.

The sexual objectification of Fatima is clearly seen in the sentence "She could neither initiate their lovemaking nor reject it". This illustrates how Fatima loses control over her own sexual interactions. She has no power to initiate or reject intimate relationships. This situation is similar to what Catharine MacKinnon, a feminist expert, said that women are often considered objects that can be used and enjoyed by men (MacKinnon, 1989, p.124). In this context, Fatima's body has become an object whose existence is solely to fulfill the king's desires.

Finally, the sentence "it was a transaction in which her desire played no part", further strengthens the idea that the sexual relationship between Fatima and the king was a "transaction" in which Fatima's desire played no part. This illustrates how patriarchal norms have been normalized in the context of the palace, where women's bodies are considered the property of male rulers.

Although the sultan had dominant power, sometimes Fatimah showed a more subtle form of power through her knowledge and attention. This is proven in the following data.:

*"You know you're not supposed to bring all this to bed with you," she said. "Your physicians have said over and over that it disturbs your sleep and your appetite. How many of these couldn't wait until tomorrow?"*

*"Considering the centuries of mismanagement that brought us to our current apocalypse—all of them," said the sultan drily, throwing himself onto his bed. He still moved like a boy. Fatima had found it charming once, but lately it had begun to unnerve her.*



*“Have you eaten?” she asked, scrutinizing his ribs. Abu Abdullah rolled onto his back with a groan.*

*“Now you’re just nagging. Good God! Even my slaves nag me now. What a farce.” He caught her by the waist, pinching her in a particularly ticklish spot. Fatima shrieked and doubled over and let him pull her laughingly down beside him. (The Bird King, p. 29)*

Fatima uses her medical knowledge to try to influence the Sultan's behavior, reminding him of the doctors' advice. This reflects Foucault's concept of power operating through discourse and knowledge. Fatima did not force the Sultan directly, but rather tried to shape his behavior through rational arguments and concern for his health. Fatima's use of medical knowledge to influence the Sultan's behavior indeed reflects Foucault's concept of power/knowledge. Foucault argued that power and knowledge are closely related (Foucault, 1977, p.27).

Although the Sultan responded with a joke and pulled Fatima to bed, Fatima's actions showed that she had room to voice her opinion and try to influence the Sultan. This illustrates that power relations are not always top-down and can operate in more subtle and complex ways.

The physical and verbal interactions between the two also demonstrate a certain intimacy that allows for more dynamic power negotiations. Although the Sultan had more authority, Fatima was also able to use her position close to the Sultan and try to influence his actions.

### 3. Power Relations between Fatimah and Nessma

The power relationship between Fatimah and Nessma is depicted in the form of discursive power. In the relationship between Fatima and Nessma, we can see how power works through the way they speak and behave towards each other. In accordance with Foucault's thinking, he emphasized that language and social customs can shape the way we understand the world and regulate our behavior in society. Nessma, who is in a higher position as the sultan's half-sister, uses various expressions to show that she is stronger and has more authority than Fatima.

She often talked about their differences in social status, reminded Fatima of her position as a slave, and used the war situation to strengthen her power. The way Nessma speaks is not just words, but also the way she maintains her higher position than Fatima. Every time Nessma spoke like this, she was actually reinforcing the unwritten rules about who was in charge and who should be submissive in their relationship. This shows how power is not just about who gives orders, but also about how people speak and behave to maintain their position in society. This is clearly seen in the following quote:

*“You shouldn't be so careless about your things,” said Nessma finally, having decided upon a line of attack. “You think that because you've ensnared my brother, you can walk around with your nose in the air like a lady and dirty the clothes we give you, but if you ruin your tunic, I will see to*

*it that you don't get another. We're at war, in case you haven't noticed. We can't afford to keep idle slaves in silk." (The Bird King, p. 14)*

Nessma, with her superior position, uses language as a tool of power to dominate and degrade Fatima. The designation of Fatima as a "slave" and the criticism of her behavior demonstrate how power operates through discourse and labeling, shaping one's identity and social position.

Nessma's accusation that Fatima has "ensnared" her brother reveals tensions in power dynamics, suggesting that Fatima may have her own form of influence that threatens Nessma's position. Nessma's threat to withhold clothes from Fatima is a more obvious manifestation of power, depicting control over material resources as a tool of domination. Nessma's use of the war situation as justification for limiting Fatima's rights shows how the broader social context can be manipulated to strengthen a position of power.

#### **B. Fatimah's resistance to power in the novel *The Bird King***

Foucault, in his thinking about power relations, said that resistance plays an important role in power relations. Foucault is of the view that where there is power, there is always a gap for resistance. This means that power is not static, but dynamic and always faces resistance efforts from the dominated party.

Resistance is a way for the dominated party to fight, negotiate, or change conditions of injustice resulting from the power that oppresses them. There are many ways and motives that encourage people to resist power, ranging from the spontaneous and brutal to the more planned and compromised. Power itself is spread across various places, and resistance emerges as a reaction to existing power dynamics (Foucault, 1978, p.93-95). Resistance can take the form of overt actions such as protest, rebellion, or even violence. However, resistance can also be more covert such as silent resistance, denial, or avoidance tactics.

Resistance always exists wherever there are oppressive power relations. In the novel *The Bird King*, Fatima, the main character of the story, who works as a concubine or slave, is in a subordinate position under the power of nobles such as Lady Aisha and the Sultan. However, in the midst of these conditions, Fatima showed resistance. Fatima's resistance efforts are in line with Foucault's thinking, where there is power, there must be opportunities for resistance. So, even though she faces very unequal and repressive power relations, Fatima still has the agency to carry out resistance, both openly and covertly. As in the following data:

*Fatima went to her favorite spot along the balustrade, yawning herself as Hassan's indolence grew contagious. She pushed aside a pile of paper and sat on the sun-warmed stone, allowing herself, finally, to relax. The golden hour bloomed around them, yellowing the myrtle hedge, the grass, the marble paths, the long reflecting pool that pointed through the courtyard toward the administrative wing of the palace.*

*It was in this vaporous time of day, when Lady Aisha liked to doze, that Fatima would often slip away from her mistress, leaving the harem through an unguarded*

*door used primarily by the washerwoman and the unfortunate pox-scarred girl whose job it was to empty the stool chamber. It led to a windowless corridor which was entirely dark when the doors at either end were closed, and emerged, by Hassan's benevolent wizardry, in the Court of Myrtles, allowing Fatima to come and go without being seen, provided she kept her wits. (The Bird King, p. 3)*

In the data above, the form of resistance shown in this quote is the act of avoiding or running away carried out secretly by Fatima. As a concubine and woman living in the harem, Fatima should always be under the supervision and control of her master, Lady Aisyah. However, Fatima took advantage of certain times to escape from the obligations and prohibitions imposed on her.

Fatima used the moment when Lady Aisha fell asleep to sneak out of the harem through an unguarded door. She utilizes her knowledge of secret passages and certain times of day to move undetected. This action showed subtle resistance to the system of surveillance and control that existed at the palace.

Fatima's resistance was also supported by Hassan's help who had the ability to create a secret tunnel map with "benevolent wizardry". This shows the existence of a solidarity network between Fatima and Hassan in fighting the existing power system.

Fatima's actions, although they look simple, are a form of resistance against the restrictions on freedom and mobility imposed on women in the harem. By sneaking out and enjoying time at the court of Myrtles, Fatima created her own private space where she could "relax" and be free from Lady Aisha's activities and orders.

In this situation, Fatima fought against several aspects of power that limited her. She opposed the system and rules that limited women's freedom of movement in the harem. In addition, indirectly, Fatima has also fought against Lady Aisha's authority as the administrator and leader of the harem. Fatima fought in a clever and stealthy way. She took advantage of the time when Lady Aisha was sleeping to sneak out of the harem. Fatima used unguarded secret doors to move without anyone knowing with the help of Hasan's map. In this way, he managed to create a little space of freedom for himself in a very restrictive environment. Fatima's actions in sneaking out of the harem and creating a private space for herself reflect Foucault's concept of micro-resistance, where individuals in subordinate positions engage in subtle and hidden resistance to dominant systems of power, without directly challenging or changing the existing power structures (Foucault, 1978, p. 95).

Another form of Fatima's resistance to Lady Aisha centered on her control over her own body's reproductive functions. Although Lady Aisha, as the sultan's mother, expected Fatima to bear the sultan's offspring, Fatima secretly resisted this expectation. She chose to maintain control over her own body in a very personal and risky way. Fatima took secret steps to prevent pregnancy, even going as far as having an abortion. This act was a very intimate and dangerous form of resistance to the system that sought to control and exploit her body as the following data below:

*Fatima kicked one foot restlessly. She wanted to reply that she desired no children, that the line between her own childhood and the role she occupied now was still unclear to her, but she knew better than to adopt this line of reasoning with her mistress. Still less could she admit to the little packet of herbs she had stolen from the apothecary and swallowed, in the dead of night, after she had failed to bleed during one particular moon, or to the upheaval that had come afterward, and the drying-up that had come after that. Instead, she kicked again. (The Bird King, p.18)*

In the data above, the resistance shown by Fatima in this quote is a form of silent resistance and control over her own body. Fatima refuses to reveal her true thoughts to her employer, Lady Aisha, regarding children and her current role. She chooses to keep her thoughts to herself and takes secret actions as a form of controlling her reproduction.

Fatima's actions in stealing drugs from the pharmacy and using them to prevent pregnancy are a very personal and risky form of resistance. This action is her attempt to maintain control over her own body in a system that seeks to regulate and exploit her reproductive function.

Fatimah's resistance is in accordance with Foucault's concept of power relations. According to Foucault, power does not only come from above, but can also emerge from below which is known as a form of resistance. Foucault stated, "Where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault, 1978, p.95). In Fatima's case, she uses the knowledge and resources available to her to resist and maintain control over her body, this shows that even in a very limited situation, there is still room for resistance.

Fatima's decision not to reveal her actions or thoughts to Lady Aisha is a deliberate strategy of resistance. She understands that direct disclosure may

result in additional sanctions or restrictions, which is why she chooses to resist silently. In this section, Fatima struggles against expectations and control over her own body. She rejects Lady Aisha's expectation that she will have children with the sultan. Fatima refuses to accept her role as a concubine who is only used to bear children. Her method of resistance is very risky but is carried out carefully. This shows Fatima's resistance to control over her body and reproductive functions.

Although she can get great influence if she conceives and gives birth to the heir of the Kingdom, she does not want it. What she wants is freedom as in her statement below:

*"I don't want to be a slave anymore," said Fatima. The plainest possible language. She cursed herself silently.*

*Lady Aisha gave an undignified snort.*

*"How modern that sounds," she chortled. "This is what happens when you let a concubine read Ibn Arabi and Plato and sneak about with cartographers. What on earth would you do with your freedom, if it were granted? A small house, a bad-tempered husband, a child every year—what happiness could that bring you? Here you are clad and shod in silk, taught to recite poetry and to do sums and figures. You listen to music and wait upon great ladies. What does the world offer you that you don't have here?"*

*"Air, my lady," said Fatima. (The Bird King, p. 20)*

*Fatima softened at the thought that her mistress had listened and understood. She did not want influence but didn't say so; instead she bent to kiss Lady Aisha's slender hand. (The Bird King, p. 25)*

Fatima did not want children even though it would have given her great influence in the palace. Her reasoning was simple yet profound: Fatima wanted freedom more than anything. She made this desire very clear when she said, "I don't want to be a slave anymore." For Fatima, having children, especially the



sultan's, would only tie her even more to the life of slavery that she wanted to escape.

Lady Aisha tried to persuade Fatima by describing the hardships of life outside the palace - a small house, an angry husband, and a child every year. Lady Aisha also reminded Fatima of the comforts of life in the palace - silk clothes, education, music, and association with the nobles. However, none of this shook Fatima's desire for freedom. Fatima's response, "Air, my lady," was very meaningful. For Fatima, freedom was like air - something very basic and vital. She preferred a simple but free life to a luxurious but constrained life. This shows how deep Fatima's longing for freedom was.

The next resistance is Fatima's form of resistance to Nessma. Although Fatima is officially just a slave and concubine in the palace, she has a keen awareness of the hidden power that exists within her. Fatima realizes that her ambiguous status - as the property of the sultan but potentially pregnant with the heir to the throne - gives her a unique power that she can use. as in the following data:

*Fatima wondered whom Nessama was trying to impress. She lifted her chin. She had discovered that by walking softly and deliberately and keeping her eyes fixed on the person to whom she was speaking, she could inspire an odd kind of terror in whomever she chose. It came, she supposed, from her own ambiguity: she was something the sultan owned, not dissimilar from the weary-looking pair of trained cheetahs that had come home with him from Genoa, along with Fatima's mother, when Fatima was still a secret tucked inside her mother's womb. Yet Fatima too might be carrying a secret, as far as anyone knew. If that secret were viable and male, it would catapult her over all the other women of the palace and place her on a par with her own mistress, the sultan's mother. She could be despised, but not dismissed. (The Bird King, p. 14-15)*

Although Fatima is a slave and a concubine, Fatima realizes that she has hidden power in the ambiguity of her status. She successfully uses her ambiguous status to gain power in her interactions with Nessma.

Fatima's main power comes from the possibility that she is pregnant with a male heir to the sultan. Fatima realizes that if she is indeed pregnant with a boy, her status will skyrocket. This awareness of potential gives her the courage to act dominantly towards Nessma, even though Nessma has a higher royal status. This reflects Foucault's concept of power as something that is not only possessed, but can also be manipulated and used by those considered weak (Foucault, 1978, p.95).

Here, Fatima fights against the social hierarchy of the palace and her lowly status as a slave and concubine. She fights in a clever way, exploiting the ambiguity of her own status. Fatima realizes that the possibility of bearing an heir to the throne gives her hidden power. She uses this potential to gain power in her interactions with Nessma. In this way, Fatima successfully challenges the existing power structure, even though she was a slave who managed to become a concubine.

Next, in her interactions with Nessma, Fatima shows subtle yet strong resistance. She does not hesitate to challenge Nessma directly, taking the initiative in conversation and even doing demeaning actions such as cleaning Nessma's lips in the following data:

*“Do you have anything else to say?” she asked Nessma. Nessma flushed a little brighter. Her lower lip, pink and slick with whatever she had been eating, quivered slightly. Fatima reached out and wiped it clean with her thumb. She almost wished they would come to blows, giving her an excuse to rake her nails across the exposed column of the smaller girl’s neck. It seemed more honest. But Nessma only gritted her pearly teeth and trembled. Satisfied, Fatima turned on her heel and walked across the courtyard, through the weedy roses. (The Bird King, p.15)*

In the above quote, Fatima takes the initiative in this interaction, challenging Nessma directly with her questions. This shows Fatima’s increasing confidence and readiness to challenge Nessma’s authority. This action reflects Foucault’s concept that power is not only possessed, but can also be seized and used by those perceived as weaker.

Furthermore, Fatima’s act of wiping Nessma’s lips is a highly symbolic demonstration of power. This can be seen as a demeaning act that reverses the traditional hierarchy between them. Nessma’s reaction of blushing and trembling suggests that she feels intimidated, confirming the success of Fatima’s tactic. Nessma’s inability to respond verbally indicates a shift in the balance of power in this interaction.

In this section, Fatima directly challenges the authority of Nessma who has a higher royal status. She challenges the traditional hierarchy between herself and Nessma. Fatima's way of resisting is very bold and open. She challenges Nessma directly in conversation, even doing demeaning actions such as cleaning Nessma's lips. Fatima deliberately takes the dominant role in this interaction, reversing the power relationship that usually exists between them.

Fatimah's actions reflect Foucault's (1994) thoughts on resistance, that power dynamics inherently contain the seeds of resistance, since the very nature of power relationships depends on the possibility of opposition - whether through confrontation, evasion, manipulation, or tactical maneuvers to transform the existing conditions (Taylor, 2011, p.24).

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

After carrying out a series of analyzes of the research on Power Relations and Resistance in G. Willow Wilson's *The Bird King* using Foucault's theory of power relations, the researcher has arrived at the point of drawing conclusions about the research that has been carried out and providing suggestions for further research. In this chapter the researcher concludes of the research results and provides suggestions for readers who might conduct the same research using the same theory in other literary works.

#### A. Conclusion

Research on the novel *The Bird King* by G. Willow Wilson using the perspective of Michel Foucault's theory of power has revealed the complexity of power relations and resistance in the context of the Emirate of Granada in the 15th century. Through the main character Fatima, the novel illustrates how power operates in various forms and levels, especially in her relationship with Lady Aisha, Sultan Abu Abdullah, and Nessma.

Lady Aisha exercises power through strict supervision and control over Fatima's activities and body. Sultan Abu Abdullah has full power over Fatima as his concubine, although Fatima also has certain influence over the Sultan. Meanwhile, Nessma uses her higher social status to dominate Fatima through demeaning language and behavior. Despite being in a dominated

position, Fatima shows various forms of resistance that assert her agency. Against Lady Aisha, Fatima runs away secretly and controls her own body by secretly preventing pregnancy. In facing Nessma, Fatima takes advantage of the ambiguity of her status and shows the courage to challenge directly. This dynamic shows that the power relations in the novel are not static or one-way, in accordance with Foucault's theory which states that where there is power, there is always room for resistance.

These findings are in line with Foucault's thinking that power is not centralized, but rather distributed and operates through various social relations. Power works by disciplining the body and behavior of individuals through surveillance, normalization, and control. However, where there is power, there is also resistance.

## **B. Suggestion**

Novel *The Bird King* by G Willow Wilson is a very interesting novel to read and research. The advice that researcher can give is that there are still many research aspects that can be used to analyze this novel as an object. Apart from that, development of this research can still be carried out considering that the researcher did not analyze all the characters in the novel. So, there is a gap to analyze power relations towards other characters. Similar research to the same theory on other literary works can also be applied and deeply criticized.

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## CURRICULUM VITAE



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