

**POWER DYNAMIC BETWEEN MATHILDE AND AMINE
BY LEILA SLIMANI'S IN *IN THE COUNTRY OF OTHERS***

THESIS

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

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THESIS

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2026

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled “Power Dynamic Between Mathilde and Amine by Leila Slimani’s in *In The Country of Others*” 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 bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

Malang, June 22th, 2026

The Researcher



Achmad I Ageng Ario

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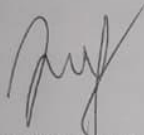
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MOTTO

“In this great future you can't forget your past”

- Bob Marley

“Ranjau-ranjau sepanjang jalan beribu panah berhamburan letusan ledakan
berurutan. Kami berlindung pada-Mu Tuhan”

- Emha Ainun Nadjib

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved parents, Imam Makhali and Roudlatul Jannah, my life's heroes and lifelong companions who have always been by my side since the beginning of my life. Every step I take is accompanied by their prayers, supporting me in every situation, and always giving me the best in my life.

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Achmad I Ageng Ario

ABSTRACT

Ario, A. I. (2026). Power Dynamic Between Mathilde And Amine by Leila Slimani's in *In The Country of Others* Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

Advisor: Agung Wiranata Kusuma, M.A.

Keywords: power, power dynamic, resistance.

Colonialism creates a complex power structure, not only between the colonizer and the colonized when it enters the domestic and gender spheres in the novel in *In The Country Of Others* illustrates the family of Amine Belhaj and Mathilde, a French-Moroccan couple in the post-World War II era. This research departs from the need to analyze how macro power is reproduced and resisted in everyday micro interactions in the household sphere. The analysis shows that the power dynamics are horizontal, Mathilde as a European in the colonial context has privileges but her position as a woman in a patriarchal Moroccan society makes her subordinate, secondly Amine as a Moroccan man holds patriarchal authority. Effective power is not repressive but works through the mechanism of power discipline, this shows that power is a mutually entangling relationship where each individual can be a powerful and submissive subject depending on the context and space of the relationship. This research aims to identify how the power dynamics are represented in the novel in *In The Country Of Others* and how Mathilde resists the power within it. This research aims to analyze the forms of power dynamics and resistance in the novel *In The Country of Others* by Leila Slimani. This research focuses on the power dynamics between the main character, Mathilde, and her husband, as well as Mathilde's resistance to that power. This research applies Michel Foucault's theory of power dynamics.

مستخلص البحث

أريو، أ. أي. (٢٠٢٦). ديناميكيات القوة بين ماتيلد وأمين بقلم ليلي سليمان في دول أخرى. أطروحة. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية بولاية مالانغ

المشرف: أغونغ ويراناتا كوسوما، ماجستي في العلوم الإنسانية

الكلمات المفتاحية: القوة، علاقات القوة، المقاومة.

يخلق الاستعمار هيكل سلطة معقد، ليس فقط بين المستعمرين والمستعمرين عندما يدخل المجالين المنزلي والجندي. في رواية "في بلد الآخرين" تصور عائلة أمين بلحاج وماتيلد، زوجين فرنسيين-مغربيين في حقبة ما بعد الحرب العالمية الثانية. هذا البحث يبتعد عن الحاجة لتحليل كيفية إعادة إنتاج القوة الكلية ومواجهتها في التفاعلات اليومية في المجال الداخلي. يظهر التحليل أن ديناميكيات القوة أفقية، وماتيلد كأوروبية في السياق الاستعماري لها سابقة لكن مكانتها كامرأة في المجتمع الأبوي المغربي يجعلها في موقع تابع، حيث يحمل أمين كرجل مغربي سلطة أبوي. القوة الفعالة ليست قمعية بل تعمل من خلال آلية الانضباط السلطوي، وهذا يظهر أن السلطة علاقة مترابطة حيث يمكن لكل فرد أن يكون موضوعا للسلطة والخضوع حسب سياق ومساحة العلاقة. يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحديد كيف تمثل ديناميكيات القوة في رواية "بلد الآخر" وكيف تمثل مقاومة ماتيلد للسلطة فيها. يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل أشكال ديناميكيات القوة والمقاومة في رواية "بلد الآخر" للكاتبة ليلي سليمان. يركز هذا البحث على ديناميكيات القوة بين الشخصية الرئيسية ماتيلد وزوجها، بالإضافة إلى شكل مقاومة ماتيلد لهذه القوة. يطبق هذا البحث نظرية ديناميكا القوى التي اقترحها ميشيل فوكو.

ABSTRAK

Ario, A. I. (2026). *Dinamika Kekuatan Antara Mathilde Dan Amine Karya Leila Slimani Di Negara Lain*. Skripsi. Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

Pembimbing: Agung Wiranata Kusuma, M.A.

Kata Kunci: kekuasaan, hubungan kekuasaan, perlawanan.

Koloialisme menciptakan struktur kuasa yang kompleks, tidak hanya antara penjajah dan terjajah ketika masuk dalam ranah domestik dan gender pada novel *In The Country Of Others* ilustrasikan keluarga Amine Belhaj dan Mathilde, pasangan Perancis – Maroko pada pasca perang dunia II. Penelitian ini berangkat dari kebutuhan untuk menganalisis bagaimana kuasa makro yang direproduksi dan dilawan dalam interaksi mikro sehari-hari dalam ranah rumah tangga. Analisis menunjukkan bahwa dinamika kuasa bersifat horizontal, Mathilde sebagai orang eropa dalam konteks kolonial memiliki privilege namun posisinya sebagai perempuan dalam masyarakat patriarkal maroko membuatnya pada posisi subordinat, kedua Amine sebagai pria maroko memegang otoritas patriarkal. Kuasa yang efektif justru tidak bersifat represif akan tetapi bekerja melalui mekanisme disiplin kuasa hal ini menunjukkan bahwa kuasa adalah hubungan yang saling menjerat dimana setiap individu dapat menjadi subjek yang berkuasa dan tunduk tergantung konteks dan ruang relasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengidentifikasi bagaimana dinamika kuasa direpresentasikan dalam novel *In The Country Of Others* dan bagaimana perlawanan Mathilde terhadap kuasa didalamnya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bentuk-bentuk dinamika kekuasaan dan perlawanan dalam novel *In The Country of Others* karya Leila Slimani. Fokus penelitian ini adalah pada dinamika kekuasaan antara tokoh utama Mathilde dengan suaminya, serta bentuk perlawanan Mathilde terhadap kekuasaan tersebut. Penelitian ini menerapkan teori dinamika kekuasaan yang dikemukakan oleh Michel Foucault.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the background of the study, the problems of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitations, significance of the study, and also the definition of the key terms.

A. Background of Study

Power dynamics manifest in interpersonal relationships, workplaces, social groups, and broader societal contexts. These dynamics reflect imbalances or balances of power, influencing how people interact, make decisions, and influence each other. Factors such as social class, gender, race, age, economic status, and organizational role often shape these dynamics. In the family environment, the husband represents the ultimate power.

This reflects power, which views power not as an entity possessed or repressed by one party over another, but rather as a capillary, anonymous, and productive network of relationships operating across all layers of the social order. In this perspective, power operates not only through prohibition or overt coercion, but also through more subtle mechanisms: it disciplines by creating norms, regulating behavior through internal oversight.

In The Country of Others by Leila Slimani, the complex relationship between Mathilde and Amine is explored. Mathilde, a French woman who married Amine, a Moroccan man, often felt lonely and misunderstood in her

new environment. Inner conflict arose when Mathilde wanted more freedom or attention, while Amine focused on hard work and social demands as the head of a family in a conservative society. And that made Mathilde feel very lonely and alienated. She left her homeland, France, for love. But in Morocco, she lost her identity, freedom, and even a sense of being appreciated. Amine, who used to be attentive, is now quiet, temperamental, and loves his job more. On the other hand, Amine feels burdened. He works hard to build a life amidst colonial pressures and a society that looks down on him. He wants to be respected in the eyes of society, his family, and also his wife.

In the Country of Others opens as an analysis of power by introducing the character of Amine, a Moroccan soldier turned land owner. His position significantly complicates the reading of power he is part of the economic ruling class but also subject to racism from French settlers. This tension demonstrates that power dynamics do not operate in a single path, but rather through a series of contradictions that shape the object. Another distinctive feature lies in the depiction of domestic power, which is presented as parallel and equal to colonial power. The narrative of Mathilde, the French heroine, 's struggle for autonomy amidst isolation, harsh surroundings, and suspicions of being a foreigner, where identity and power are never fixed, always negotiated between various social and cultural strata. Thus, this novel is a fitting choice because it avoids the trap of a

simplistic analysis of power and opens up space for a more nuanced reading of how domination and resistance are played out in everyday.

In The Country of Others by Leila Slimani, Mathilde's resistance cannot be read solely as individual resistance, but as a form of agency born of cultural interaction, a subject's attempt to negotiate her identity amidst a web of power that seeks to reduce her subjectivity to rigid collective norms. Mathilde's reluctance to allow her identity to fade is a strategic response to what she perceives as an existential threat to her autonomy a condition that makes her a conscious agent.

In the discussion of the dynamics of power in the literary environment in the novel *In The Country of Others*, it is still rarely found, therefore, this study will focus on how power is exercised between Amine and Mathilde and Mathilde resistsace what she feels in an oppressed position Dynamics.

In addition, this study advances the field of power relations theory by examining a literary work in a way that has not been widely disseminated before. This study uses Michel Foucault's theory of power relations to examine the actual dynamics of power that exist in social interactions. In order to complete this study, the researcher reviewed a number of previous studies related to the subject of power relations in writing which are mentioned below.

In a previous study, Foucault's concept of power dynamics is one of the power theories often used in the analysis of literary works. In the

research *The Dynamics of Power Relations Between The Apes and The Humans in The Planet of The Apes Movies*. The research was carried out in the form of arguments to gain its authority (Fauzy, 2024) As well as in the research *Power Dynamics In Leigh Bardugo's Six Of Crows*. This research highlights verbal conflicts and authority struggles where individuals are tasked with prohibiting or defeating in other words arguments and quarrels, power is exercised through the exploitation of desire, judgment and hatred (Ranaputri, 2019, p. 161). And in the research of power dynamics presented in *Power Dynamics in Ahmad Tohari's Novel "The Dancer"*, this study explains the interaction of power between characters is visualized as a strategy of interest not controlled by certain parties, more fundamentally the main character in this study was created by a knowledge system that requires a figure like him (Savitri, 2016).

In Another study, "*Applying Michel Foucault's Theory of Power to Shakespeare's King Lear*," by Ansam R. Abdulla Al-Maarroof, Layla Nazhan Hamid, and Ethar Riyadh Abdullah, interprets the play from Foucault's perspective on power as a dynamic relationship between discourse and subject. This study analyzes the text of King Lear to demonstrate the relationship between power, knowledge, and language. This play provides a depiction of a complex network of power dynamics involving multiple spheres of influence (AbdullaAlmaarroof et al., 2022).

Meanwhile, in the study "*Power Relations Between Maria and Male Character Represented in Paulo Coeleho's Elven Minutes*" power appears

to manifest itself in oppressive and restrictive forms, and resistance to power is also trapped within the circle of power itself (Imbron, 2024). Foucault's concept of power and resistance shows that Foucault's concept of discipline in 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). Meanwhile, in the study of Foucault's concept of discipline in power, it is also found in *Exploring While in the study of A Foucauldian Reading of Oppression and Resistance in The Handmaid's Tale* by Alyssa Malcorps. This thesis uses Michel Foucault's concept of power, discourse, and surveillance to see how the regime uses these tools as a means of oppression. This thesis also shows how power can be used and how individuals and groups can resist (Malcorps, 2018).

Furthermore, in this research "*The Exercise of Power and Its Resistance*" in Gracia Veva's *Isle of Dogs*. This study highlights the role of citizens in power relations in a democratic society, as they have the ability to determine the form and strength of the flow of power. In this study, the government exercises its power through propaganda and controlling the flow of information, while resistance comes from citizens who challenge government ideas and spread contradictory information (Veva, 2019).

Based on previous studies, it can be seen that Michel Foucault's concept of power dynamics is often used in analyzing literary works,

including novels and films. Several studies mentioned previously use Foucault's concepts.

Specifically Foucault's concept of power dynamics can also be applied to analyze Leila Slimani's *In the Country of Others*. Using Foucault's perspective, research on this novel can focus on how power operates through discourse that shapes perceptions, the forms of resistance and oppression that emerge in response to oppression in order to achieve normal standards, and other concepts that may be encountered.. The study of power in *In the Country of Others* is not only relevant academically and politically, past and present. By deepening the analysis of this novel, researchers hope to uncover new insights into how power dynamics are understood and represented in a literary context dynamic.

The Researcher also found that there has been no research that discusses the relationship between power and knowledge as in the novel *In The Country of Others* by Leila Slimani, especially the discussion of the Dynamics of Power towards Mathilde and Amine is still relatively little, several previous studies used a power relations approach in reviewing the research object. However, by using Michel Foucault's framework of thought, seeing power does not only come from husbands or colonial structures, but as a productive network relationship that forms identity and even resistance in Mathilde's interactions and the point where that power is exercised and negotiated.private.

B. Problems of Study

Given the foregoing explanation, the study seeks to provide answers to the following queries.

1. How are power dynamics represented in Leila Slimani's *In The Country of Others*?
2. How does Mathilde resist the power represented in Leila Slimani's *In The Country of Others*?

C. Significance of Study

It is anticipated that this research will offer theoretical advantages and expertise in examining literary works using the notion of power dynamics. This research should open up opportunities for Michel Foucault's theory of power dynamics to be expanded upon in other literary studies. This study contributes to our understanding of how power dynamic theory works and how to apply it to different kinds of objects.

D. Scope and Limitation

This study uses Michel Foucault's theory of power dynamics as its primary theoretical framework to select Leila Slimani's novel, *In The Country of Others*, as the subject of research. The researcher places Foucault's Theory of power—which shapes the social landscape with the prevailing identity crisis and culture of the period—in literary literature. because Mathilde, from an independent person, becomes a wary and alienated figure, feeling unaware of some parts of the narrative, the researcher focuses on her discussion. The researcher looks for the resistance

represented in the book's storyline and the type of power dynamics between Mathilde and Amine while analyzing the data.

E. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misconceptions, the terminologies employed during this research have been defined as follows:

1. Power is the capacity of an individual or organization to exert influence over another individual or organization by charisma, authority, or physical force; it is the power to bring about and uphold justice and peace as well as to stop and combat injustice. The act of gaining, retaining, and using power in society involves altering people's mentalities and behaviors (Foucault, 1977).
2. Power dynamics are the interactions that occur within these power structures, reflecting how power is negotiated, contested, and exercised. Power is rarely static. It flows, shifts, and changes depending on the context, the individuals involved, and their relationships, among other factors.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter explains the theories related to this research. The researcher will discuss the theory that is applied as an analytical framework for the study, which contains a number of topics to support the analysis of this study.

A. Sociology of Literature

Literature is an aspect of emotional life which includes feelings in the body, literature is a tool that reflects emotions and human thoughts are represented by writing which is produced by involving the feelings that exist around us, therefore literature can be used as a tool to convey emotions through writing. Because literature captures life's realities, it might be seen as a kind of constitution (Parton, 2008).

Literature, as a reflection of social reality and human emotions, is always bound by social relations that shape and are shaped by the subjects within it. The novel *In the Country of Others* not only presents physical events or historical narratives, but also represents the social relations between men and women, and how thoughts, moral symbols, politics, and resistance intersect in everyday life. The combination of sociological and Foucauldian lenses allows this study to not only capture social reality as reflected in the text but also reveal how power subtly regulates, limits, and produces subjects within a complex and multidimensional network of relations.

This theory also connects to analyzing social conditions and cultural space, The relationship between social groups and literary works, the phenomenon of social relationships with their authors, therefore the applied sociological theory cannot ignore the social life of the author, literary sociology is research that brings together the relationship between works. culture with social conditions and unites the sociological function of literature. As a social picture even though it is not like a written work (Luh et al., 2023).

The researcher took a sociological approach allows to read the novel *In the Country of Others* not merely as a fictional narrative, but as a social document that represents relationships between people. Thus, a sociological approach becomes the right foundation because it not only treats literature as an expression of personal emotions, but also as an arena where social reality is constructed, questioned, and negotiated—an essential entry point before Foucauldian power analysis is operationalized to dissect the more subtle mechanisms of power behind that social reality.

B. Michel Foucault's Theory of Power

Discourses Power Dynamic is Identity and power influence each other, especially in terms of identity formation and power relations that are exercised in society. What happens in these power structures reflects how power is negotiated, contested, and exercised. Power is rarely static. It flows, shifts, and changes depending on the context, the individuals involved, and their relationships, among other factors (Ramin, 2014).

Power as a network refers to the power of the roles and organizations included in the network that is the core of the individual network society over human groups or individuals who are not included in this global network. Each network defines its own power relationships, depending on the goals it is programmed to pursue. Social power refers to the control and distribution of social resources, including social connections, networks, and social capital. Social power is often based on factors such as social status, reputation, and influence within a particular social group or community. Social power can affect an individual's access to opportunities social mobility.

Power is not only defined by the existence of resources or authority, but also by the ability to enforce rules, norms, and values that shape behavior and define relationships. Therefore, power is not static, but is continually negotiated, contested, and transformed through interactions that reflect patterns of privilege, oppression, resistance, actions (Hanson, 2023). Power dynamics can help to identify how certain groups of individuals are marginalized or excluded. Failure to recognize power discourses can have detrimental consequences, including the perpetuation of injustice and inequality.

Discipline is a mechanism of power that regulates the behavior of individuals in society. It does this by regulating the organization of space and is enforced with the help of a complex system of surveillance. Foucault

emphasized that power is not discipline, but rather discipline is only one way in which power can be exercised (Foucault, 1972).

Disciplinary power functions as the training, monitoring, and checking of individuals on how to do things based on institutions in the regime of truth, based on scientific discourse. However, where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather as a result, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power (Foucault, 2014).

It is the art of opposing energies, of images linked by association, of forging stable connections that defy time: it is a matter of constructing representations of pairs of opposing values, of constructing quantitative differences between opposing forces, of constructing complexes of barrier signs that can subject the movement of forces to relations of power (Foucault, 1991).

Biopower operates through institutions such as health care, education, and social policy, using surveillance, norms, and regulations to shape how populations live and reproduce. Biopower is integral to modern governance and capitalism, allowing states to manage populations to increase productivity, control risk, and maintain social order.

Anatomical politics is the disciplinary control of individual bodies to increase their productivity and compliance. organizes modern power by shifting the focus from sovereign authority power exercised through law and the right to take life to forms of regulatory power that manage life itself at the population level.

Power creates resistance. Resistance is the act of those who are dissatisfied with the system of power and try to oppose it. Foucault (1982). Foucault points out that there are many ways to resist the exercise of power. Moreover, resistance does not only come from outside but from the entire existing network of relations.

Resistance will change the balance of war, not politics. In that case, social existence is the whole struggle. Resistance is the natural consequence of a struggle. It can be claimed from Foucault's perspective that power, like resistance itself. Foucault (1990). This asserts power with similar devices, rising against it on the fringes of society, and determining similar characteristics of the positive transformation of resistance.

C. Power Dynamic : Concept and Theoretical

Power originates from and is present everywhere (Foucault, 1980). This implies that institutions within a system of governance are not the only source of power. It can be defined as the ability of an individual or group to influence or control the behavior of others, despite objections, this definition highlights the relational aspect of power, emphasizing that power exists in the context of social relationships.

The capacity of one party to affect the behavior of another is known as power (Foucault, 1982). According to Foucault, power is the process of reorienting reason and consciousness's power relations in the domain in which they function and set up their own organizations. According to Foucault, in medieval civilization, authority was primarily established by

the presence of a sovereign who used violence against things to maintain control.

Weber identified three different sources of power: class, status, and party. Class refers to economic power, status refers to social prestige, and party refers to political influence (Foucault, 1982). Each type of authority represents a different way in which power is legitimated and exercised in society, defining power as the opportunity that an individual in a social relationship can achieve his or her own desires despite the resistance of others.

Individuals use discourse to claim, reject, or negotiate identities by choosing language that conforms to or challenges social roles and norms. Social discourse shapes the meanings and norms that construct social reality. Through discourse, dominant groups can legitimize positions of power and social norms. In analyzing the relationship between discourse and power, one must look at the sources of power such as politics, media, or science. and the process of influencing someone's mind and indirectly controlling their actions (Ningtyas, 2021).

Power is employed in the present day in stronger and varied ways; these new mechanisms place a greater emphasis on the body and mind. The idea is that power is exercised by an agent over another agent in terms of power; power is a structure of action that acts on other people indirectly. Thought is something benign that can be used, controlled, changed, and improved (Foucault, 1995). This is an effective system that empowers

energy and power, not wealth or commodities through absolute control power.

Power that only view it as a form of oppression or repression. He rejected the idea that power only serves to limit individual freedom, and instead argued that power is also productive, creating forms of behavior and events. Foucault emphasized that power is not just saying "no," but also creating norms, values, and rules that shape individual actions 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

Disciplinary power in Michel Foucault's concept of power dynamic refers to a form of power Power that operates through subtle and pervasive mechanisms to regulate social behavior and norms. Unlike sovereign power, which is exercised through law or direct command, disciplinary power operates through surveillance, normalization, and checks. This power does not rest on a single authority, but circulates through social relationships and institutions, producing individuals who conform to expected norms and behavior.

The regulation and control of individual time, space, and activities. Foucault argues that this power works to create "submissive bodies" through various social techniques and

practices. One of these is the regulation of time and space (Foucault, 2016). This power is not always repressive, but often works in subtle and productive ways, shaping individual subjectivity and how they understand themselves. This is also because it shapes individuals into obedient.

D. Resistance

Resistance is the result of power dynamics, and resistance is the activity of those who want to challenge the power structure because they are unhappy with it. According to Foucault (1982), resistance is a complicated phenomena that defies explanation through the impersonal idea of lawlessness. Power may be resisted in a variety of ways, as demonstrated by Foucault. According to Foucault, no matter how repressive the system is, there must be room for resistance as resistance equals power (Sayer, 2012). According to Foucault, resistance not only originates from the outside but also from within the network, acting as an adversary or possible source of resistance to authority.of existing relationships,

Resistance operates in the realm of language and social practices, with subjects rebelling against hegemonic entities and the authority of power. This means that subjects do not always engage in these social practices with the explicit aim of resisting power. It is in this conflict between power and resistance that subjects are able to assert their agency and come to the fore (Howarth, 2002).

According to Foucault's theory in his book *Subject and Power*, power relations are fundamentally based on a persistent rejection of the principle of habit. As such, power relations cannot exist without this rejection. the suggestion of escape or its possibility (Foucault, 1982). Foucault presents various types of resistance found in power relations theory. One instance is resistance via language; Foucault argues that power and discourse construction are inextricably linked.

Although it is exercised in social settings where there are private areas where power is also used, power is not possessed by any one person (Foucault, 2002). speech can therefore take the form of an organized practice that modifies the social structure and speech that is independent, truth-claiming, and knowledge-based. Discourse, according to Foucault, has the capacity to both reinforce and subvert established power structures.

Foucault describes resistance as a discursive phenomenon, and discusses points of resistance that interact with power. This resistance, which sometimes aims to construct alternative truths, can be seen as a form of slow-motion resistance because it causes an inevitable time lag in the process of signification. It is the strategic conditions of the various points of resistance that ultimately make revolution possible. This, according to Foucault, is similar to the way the state relies on institutional integration (Foucault 1990).

Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather as a consequence, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in its

influence on power. (Foucault, 1982) This means that resistance can manifest as organized practices, changing the social order, and discourses that have autonomy and claim truth and contextualize knowledge. Foucault said that discourse has the potential to be a source of power, but can also be used to challenge and cover up existing power.

Foucault argues that freedom is not a state that exists outside of power, but as something that emerges within power relations. Freedom is the ability to act in a context where power is present and constantly negotiated. And Foucault argues that where there is power, there is also the possibility of resistance. Freedom is often realized through acts of resistance to power that seek to discipline or control individuals. This resistance can take the form of attempts to negotiate or reject the constraints imposed by power.

Michel Foucault's perspective on resistance emphasizes that where there is power, there is always resistance. For Foucault, power and resistance are intertwined; resistance is not external to power but is a natural response within any power structure. Foucault's idea of "micro-resistance" is particularly relevant in sociology, as he suggests that resistance occurs not only in grand movements but also in everyday, subtle actions. His analysis shows how resistance can be pervasive, with people constantly negotiating and contesting the power dynamics in even mundane social interactions.

Resistance to normalization, namely the character's efforts to reject or modify the standards of behavior imposed by social norms. resistance to subject formation, namely the effort to maintain or reclaim autonomy in defining oneself amidst discourses that seek to establish one's identity. Thus, the operationalization of Foucault's theory in this study will trace how the characters in the novel, especially Mathilde, carry out resistance in fluid and ambivalent forms, while also showing that resistance and obedience are often present simultaneously in one action, making resistance an inseparable part of the ongoing game of power relations.

The matter of power with assessment to produce knowledge about the subject while strengthening control over him. In the operational context of the novel's analysis, disciplinary power can be traced through how the characters, faced with strict social and gender norms, how they are monitored—both physically and through the social gaze of the surrounding community—and how they internalize these standards so that they act as if without external coercion. Thus, this analysis not only identifies visible oppression, but also reveals how power works productively to shape obedient subjects while opening up space for resistance within that obedience itself.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

There are several points in this section, first, the research design explains the methods and methodology of this research, second. Data and data sources, explaining how researchers carry out data collection. Finally, data that explains the analysis steps.

A. Research Design

This study examines literary criticism to analyze the power practiced by characters and its impact in the novel. Literary is a branch of literature that analyzes, interprets, and evaluates literary texts by applying a certain theoretical framework to examine its various aspects. In this research, it allows researcher to not only identify who oppresses whom, but also reveal how power is produced, negotiated, and resisted in a domestic space that is full of ambiguity, this research aims to dissect the nuances of character, plot, and setting as an arena where the dynamics of power and resistance compete with each other, thus producing a more complete understanding of the complexity of power relations in literary texts.

The main objective of this study is to provide an in-depth and detailed analysis of the themes of power and resistance in literary works. The research method used is qualitative, allowing for an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of the novel. With this approach and theory, the researcher can understand the nuances of character, plot, and setting within the context of power and resistance. Therefore, this study provides insight

into the dynamics of power and resistance in the novel *In the Country of Others*.

B. Data Source

In this study, The primary data source for this research is the text of Leïla Slimani's novel *In the Country of Others*. The data analyzed are textual, including dialogues between characters, the author's narrative, and descriptive passages that depict the practices of power, disciplinary mechanisms, social control, and forms of resistance demonstrated by the central characters, namely Mathilde, Amine, Mouilala, and Aïcha. These textual units were collected through close reading techniques and categorized based on theoretical indicators from the Foucauldian framework, thus enabling a focused analysis on the representation of power dynamics in the social relations depicted in the novel.

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 a literary work such as *The Country of Other* by Leïla slimani, data collection techniques aim to understand and identify how the dynamics of power and resistance are depicted in the novel. In using data collection techniques in this study, the author's first step is to read and understand the text. The author reads *In The Country of Others* carefully and understands the plot, characters, themes, and messages the author wants to convey through in-depth reading. Then, the author annotates the text.

During the reading, the author notes 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 these techniques 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 study "Power Dynamic Between Mathilde and Amine By Leila Slimani's in *In The Country of Others*" the first analytical step carried out by the author is content analysis, after the researcher collected the data, the researcher analyzed the quotes and data that had been collected to identify how power and resistance were expressed in the text both through narrative, dialogue, and character actions. Then the researcher carried out an interpretation. After identifying the data, the researcher interpreted the findings according to the context. Data needs to be interpreted to obtain broader meaning.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will present the findings of the data analysis process. The analysis is based on the research questions in the first chapter. In this chapter, there are two related discussions, How are power dynamics represented between in Leila Slimani's *In The Country of Others*, and Mathilde resist the power represented in Leila Slimani's *In The Country of Others*.

A. Power Dynamic in Domestic Relationship

According to Foucault (2005), power is an integral part of modern social productive interaction, and is related to the formation of group substance. Power appears in every social interaction with the mission of influencing, operating, or controlling that power. Foucault states that in social interaction, one party manages more power than the other party, so that this relationship creates a powerful party and a powerless party (Foucault, 1982).

This novel shows evidence of the power dynamic between Amine and Mathilde. Style, expression, and actions towards Amine are unique compared to practices in other interaction systems. The main character is named Mathilde, a French woman who loves Amine who comes from Morocco. Mathilde is described as a woman who is critical of something. Mathilde realizes that the culture she adheres to is different from Amine and that makes Mathilde feel alienated, making it difficult for her to adapt to the local conservative culture that is harsh on foreign women.

In this chapter IV, the researcher will analyze the forms of power dynamics in the novel *In The Country of Others* by using Michel Foucault's theory of power dynamics which focuses on Mathilde towards Amine who still knows the conservative local culture. In addition, the researcher will observe the form of Mathilde's resistance to them in the power built in the novel. The character Amine in question is a husband.

1. Authority and Discipline in Husband and Wife Relationships

In the novel *In the Country of Others*, the power dynamics between Mathilde and Amine exemplify the social dynamics of Morocco. Mathilde, a French woman with a diverse background, moved to Morocco because she chose to marry Amine, but her life didn't go planned.

The relationship between Amine and Mathilde forms the basis of analysis through the concept of asymmetrical power dynamics. Amine's authority to direct and supervise Mathilde's activities is not simply a household rule, but a form of disciplinary practice that affirms the positions of subject and object. In this context, Mathilde's autonomy is reduced by Amine control mechanisms.

The interaction between Mathilde and Amine in the novel depicts a complex power relationship, one of the most visible aspects being Amine's position of authority over Mathilde. Amine desires that his wife obey all his wishes, this shows the level of control Amine has over Mathilde.

Authority in interpersonal relationships is a manifestation of power dynamics that determine the structure of decision-making and the

distribution of emotional burdens. Personality influences and communication styles serve as agents of power, while cultural norms, gender roles, and financial capacity act as structures that legitimize positions of dominance. The subject's ability to express themselves authentically depends largely on the extent to which authority in the relationship allows space for power negotiation.

Datum 1:

“After the romance faded, Amine wanted a wife like his mother, who would understand him instinctively, who would share the patience and sacrifice of his people, who talked less and worked more.” (Leila Slimani, p. 17)

Based on the findings above, the relationship between Mathilde and Amine represents Foucault's power dynamics mechanism through the formation of authority and subtle discipline. Rather than using the violence of sovereign power, this power operates through the internalization of the patriarchal discourse that a good woman is a submissive woman, so that Mathilde gradually forms a docile body by reducing her voice and increasing her work productivity. Amine's authority does not come as an explicit command, but has become an internalized habit and norm, allowing power to function more effectively and invisibly.

In this context, Amine acts as an authority figure whose power is legitimized by social structures and marital norms. This places Mathilde in a subordinate position. Mathilde experiences a subjective process, in which her identity and space are shaped by norms that normalize her husband's authority.

Form of authority aimed at shaping her behavior to conform to established norms., he will oppose the decisions Amine makes that will restrict Mathilde's freedom of movement, as in the dialogue recorded below.

Datum 2:

"I'm going to take him to the park so he can run around, he said before leaving, paying no attention to the advice Mathilde gave him". (Leila Slimani, p. 16).

The dialogue and interactions in the novel illustrate how power dynamics are represented through micro-level authority within domestic relationships. Amine's ability to disregard Mathilde's advice and unilaterally decide on Aiche's activities demonstrates the exercise of disciplinary power, where authority operates not through overt force but through normalized relational dominance. This reflects Foucault's argument that power functions from the smallest scope of social associations, allowing one individual to regulate the actions and movements of others, thereby reinforcing hierarchical power relations in everyday.

The data demonstrates that power becomes effective when the subject has productive power by gradually adopting habits to suppress Mathilde's emotions through various social norms to control activities in space and time, rather than through written rules that the body and mind become accustomed to what is accepted and rejected.

Authority is not only oppressive, but also productive in shaping the subject. It establishes norms of behavior that are considered correct about how to act, as an internal coercion of identity that has been normalized by the structure. Power not only prohibits Mathilde but actively creates for her

to become a body that obeys the structure, making the type of personality and behavior that aligns with the norms.chapter

Mathilde demonstrates that power is never absolute or one-way. Within a Foucauldian framework, power is productive and always triggers resistance.

Datum 3:

“That’s how things are here.” It was at that precise instant that she understood she was a foreigner, a woman, a wife, a being at the mercy of others.” (Leila Slimani, p. 19)

This dialogue and narrative moment powerfully represent power dynamics through the normalization of cultural and gendered hierarchies. While Amine deploys the statement as a form of disciplinary authority to regulate Mathilde’s expectations, Mathilde counters by utilizing rational knowledge and arguments in an attempt to influence and resist his behavior.

This reflects Foucault’s concept of power as relational, where knowledge functions as a strategic tool within everyday interactions to both exercise and contest authority in the construction of subject positions. Mathilde uses relational power by mobilizing the discourse of truth—through rational and grounded arguments to negotiate and challenge Amine's authority. This intention suggests that disciplinary power in the novel operates not only through unidirectional domination but also through the circulation of knowledge, which allows subjects to challenge and negotiate power relations in everyday interactions.

Mathilde does not force Amine directly but rather tries to shape his behavior through rational and grounded arguments against Amine's

circumstances. Mathilde's use of relational authority to influence Amine reflects Foucault's concept of relational authority. Foucault argues that relational authority emphasizes the importance of personal connections and influence in guiding where authority is dynamic and based on how people interact with one another.

2. Hierarchy of Power in Relationships with Children

In the context of the hierarchical relationship between parents and children, the hierarchy of power generally shows differences in roles and authority, where parents tend to have greater power over children. The dominance of men in this family can be seen in various daily practices that shape family dynamics. Important decision-making, both in education and household matters, is often in the hands of men. (Hanafi, 2025). but also with their claims to moral and emotional authority which are often seen as natural rights.

The same case of the form of power hierarchy, namely in Amine and Aicha. Aicha with the model of clothes and make-up, which initially did not realize that it triggered protests from Amine who felt it was inappropriate for Aicha, when everything was already partly finished, differences in taste also had an effect, according to Mathilde it was suitable but different from Amine who was in contrast to it.

Datum 4:

“You shouldn’t do makeup on children. That mink, in her eyes? That’s not good. That’s vulgar. Do you understand?” (Leila Slimani, p. 16).

This dialogue represents the dynamics of power through hierarchies of power in relationships with children. Amine uses language as a disciplinary mechanism that establishes clear boundaries between what is considered 'normal' and 'deviant,' functioning not simply as an external coercion but as a normalizing force. In line with Foucault's theory, this process internalizes standards of conformity into the child's subjectivity, shaping Aïcha's identity and behavior according to the norms imposed by the authorities within the domestic power structure.

Amine with his position, uses the connotation of language to create a medium and reality of truth with the connotation of being an instrument of discipline and power, creating the meaning of identity and boundaries for the subject. Aïcha's body becomes the target of discipline and is shaped according to the norms set by Amine so that she spontaneously submits without any physical violence.

By productively constructing the subject, Aïcha's obedience stems from internal norms, gradually adopting expected behavior as part of her own identity. What occurs is obedience, a natural trait and a moral value. This transforms control into a natural order in domestic relations.

Further on the following data, the case against Aïche shows a subtle expression as a depiction of her father, as in the quote.

Datum 5:

“Aïcha never knew what to say to her father. She loved him, but she was afraid of him”. (Leila Slimani, p.12)

Aïcha's inability to speak the fear she internalizes reflects how disciplinary power operates by mapping children's behavior to tolerated activities and prohibitions, transforming it into automatic patterns of silence and obedience. In Foucault's terms, this produces a self regulating subject who internalizes the norms established by paternal authority, thus maintaining the hierarchical power structure within the family.

Amine's actions toward Aïcha represent the operationalization of surveillance. Amine's prohibitions function as micropower. By constantly feeling watched, Aïcha constantly adjusts her body and becomes submissive because the surveillance mechanism has become part of her. This surveillance aligns with the Panopticon that constantly perceives her surroundings, leading her to begin to monitor herself.

The following quote suggests that Aïcha would indirectly experience a period of restraint due to her father's actions.

Datum 6:

“Don't tell me you want to raise Aïcha to be a submissive woman!” (Leila Slimani, p. 16).

This data highlights the hierarchy of power in relationships with children by exposing the tension and contestation surrounding the production of a docile female subject. The statement reveals how paternal authority seeks to instill disciplinary norms of obedience and submissiveness in Aïcha, while simultaneously facing resistance from

another family member. Through Foucault's lens, this interaction demonstrates power operating at the micro level of the family, where the child's identity and future behavior are shaped through competing discourses that normalize gendered compliance within the domestic power structure.

3. Power Dynamics in Familial and Extended Family Relations

Power dynamics in Foucault's thinking suggests that power is distributed and exercised within families, influencing their interactions, power-sharing, and relationships. Family power involves an individual's ability to influence behavior, attitudes, and decisions within the family unit, and this power can be fluid and negotiated as roles change.

Family power dynamics describe how influence is shared or concentrated within a family. This includes who makes decisions, who controls resources such as money, and how family members assert their preferences and needs. Power can be exercised both overtly and covertly, and it shapes family structure and harmony.

In the novel *"the Country of Other,"* Mathilde, the main character, is the wife of a Moroccan soldier. She is subordinate to Amine's authority, but despite this, Mathilde experiences power beyond the family. This visualization of power demonstrates the power of a third party, as described in the concept of the panopticon, which describes a norm that supervises and disciplines her, suggesting that she is not entirely free.

Real subjection arises mechanically from relationships. So there is no need to use force to force someone to behave properly, that the panopticon can be so light: no more bars, all that is needed is a clear separation and a well-ordered opening.

In the novel *In The Country of Others*, Mathilde, the main character of the story is the wife of a Moroccan soldier. Being in a subordinate position under Amine's power, but in the midst of this condition, Mathilde feels power outside the family, the visual of this power shows the power of a third party in Foucault's thinking, power applies by spreading and the opportunity to become an authority can be felt by anyone.

Datum 7:

“But what she wanted was a way of expressing herself with no barriers or obstacles at all”. (Leila Slimani, p. 46)

This data reflection represents power dynamics in familial and extended family relations through the depiction of resistance against disciplinary constraints. The desire for unhindered self-expression highlights Mathilde's awareness of how power operates relationally within the family, imposing invisible barriers that regulate speech, behavior, and identity. In Foucault's perspective, this moment reveals the tension between normalizing forces that produce docile subjects and the potential for resistance, as individuals navigate and contest the micro level power relations embedded in everyday family interactions.

In this case, Mouilala exercised this dominance through normalization and regulation. Power operates by regulating behavior

through norms, rules, and surveillance. The effect of this was a victory that avoided any physical confrontation and was always decided beforehand.

Another form of Mouilala's dominance over Mathilde's family rests on her control over decisions regarding Aicha's education, as her granddaughter. Although Aicha's mother, Mathilde, expects Aicha to receive an education, this is not part of Mouilala's plans. This action represents a form of internal dominance over the nuclear family, as shown in the following data.

Datum 8:

“Mathilde will try to convince Mouilala that education can provide her daughter with the means to gain her independence, her freedom” (Leila Slimani, p. 26).

In the data above, The desire for unhindered self-expression highlights Mathilde's awareness of how power operates relationally within the family, imposing invisible barriers that regulate speech, behavior, and identity. In Foucault's perspective, this moment reveals the tension between normalizing forces that produce docile subjects and the potential for resistance, as individuals navigate and contest the micro-level power relations embedded in everyday family interactions.

It can be used as a figure of biopower and government that manages populations and conditions social life through the normalization of discourse and practices in shaping subjects and social order.

Social expectations within the family play a key role in shaping the desired personality. Power dynamics influence how decision-making, authority, and roles are distributed within the family. These expectations

arise from cultural norms, social norms, and conservative beliefs about family roles and behavior. Cultural capital is a collection of individual skills or abilities, including insight, expertise, and communication skills.

Social norms determine what is considered appropriate behavior for family members, often defining the roles of parents, children, and other relatives. This is intended to encourage members to follow and internalize prevailing norms.

Even though Amine is Mathilde's husband, he sometimes uses social and cultural expectations as a benchmark for his own behavior. This is evidenced by the following data.

Datum 9:

"Sometimes he felt a violent, cruel need to return to his culture, to love his god, language, and country with all his heart, and Mathilde's incomprehension drove him crazy. He wanted a wife like his mother, who would understand him instinctively, who shared the patience and abnegation of his people, who spoke less and worked more". (Leila Slimani. P. 86).

In this data represents the dynamics of power in family relationships through the idealization of the submissive female subject. Amine's desire for a wife who "talks less and works more" reveals the internalization of cultural and patriarchal norms that function as disciplinary mechanisms, expecting Mathilde to conform to traditional gender roles of silence, obedience, and sacrifice. Within Foucault's framework, this illustrates how power operates relationally by producing and enforcing normalized subject positions within marriage, where women's bodies and behaviors are regulated to align with masculine and cultural authority.

Furthermore, Mouilala's power over his family is evident in his ability to forbid things under the pretext of past rules. As Amine's parent, he has the right to dictate to Amine's younger siblings, without exception.

Mouilala's position as a parent who makes unfounded rules allows him to freely speak as he pleases. This is because of the past rules, Mouilala was considered like a king. These rules further emphasize Mouilala's freedom, as in the following quote.

Datum 10:

“Selma was sick of Mouilala’s ridiculous old superstitions and backward beliefs. She had stopped listening to her mother. It was only out of respect for her elders that she didn’t shut her eyes and plug her ears with her fingers every time Mouilala started going on about djinns, bad luck, and ancient curses. Her mother had nothing new to say.” (Leila slimani, p. 92).

The data above illustrates where authority is maintained not primarily through direct supervision, but rather through the strategic deployment of traditional beliefs and generational hierarchies. By embedding superstitious narratives such as references to djinns, bad luck, and ancient curses into everyday family discourse, Mouilala regulates the thoughts and behavior of younger family members like Selma, forcing them to obey even without constant supervision. power operates through internalized deference to elders and the reproduction of cultural norms that reinforce patriarchal control. Selma's outward obedience, driven by cultural expectations of filial loyalty to parents rather than genuine acceptance.

This situation relates to the concept of power not only as domination by one person (such as a father), but as exercised through a network of power relations that influence actions and behavior within the family unit.

Power within the family functions through mechanisms of control, normalization, and discipline, which shape the behavior and relationships of family members. In this context, Mouilala is a normalizing agent influenced by the rules of her predecessors and the norms prevailing in Morocco.

4. Power Dynamics in Social and Community Interactions

Mathilde's relationships with her social circle have an influence on shaping her behavior in all areas of social life. As a foreigner, Mathilde finds herself in a social hierarchy, as the lower echelon in the social and political hierarchy.

This situation illustrates surveillance; one party cannot be free alone by wanting the demands of the powerless party and having the opportunity to voice their personal preferences and must rely on normal circumstances or be betrayed by their supervisor, as in the following quote.

Datum 11:

“She felt the weight of their eyes on her back, a permanent inspection that judged her clothes, her gait, and the way she spoke to the merchants. In the city, she was never just Mathilde; she was a spectacle, a transgression walking the streets.” (Leila slimani, p. 98)

The quote has a context The collective surveillance of the city's inhabitants creates a constant gaze on Mathilde, preventing her from escaping social judgment and control. This uncertainty forces Mathilde into constant, automatic self discipline. This creates a docile body that voluntarily adapts its behavior, appearance, and gestures to prevailing norms, thus reinforcing existing power relations.

Notion of deviance is only possible where norms exist. For Foucault, norms are concepts that are constantly used to regulate and control objects; they do not simply constrain but actively shape the framework within which individuals voluntarily measure and judge, becoming increasingly locked into a position as objects that always fail to meet standards that are never actually fixed.

Furthermore demonstrates surveillance as a means of spatial control under the guise of security to confine Mathilde to a domestic space. This is illustrated in the following quote.

Datum 12:

“Why were you at the market alone? Do you want everyone to stare at you? A woman in your position should not be seen so much. You stay at the farm, where it is safe, where no one has to look at you..” (Leila slimani, p. 83)

This Mathilde's position is fragmented: she implicitly occupies a position as part of the ruling race, yet also as a subordinate object within a gender hierarchy that qualifies as surveillance and a colonial logic to create a subject who actively regulates herself according to the limits imposed by power, while simultaneously diminishing her complex social identity to a mere body to be controlled and protected.

This surveillance is not to protect the subject's physical safety, but rather to maintain social order a form of preventative surveillance that restricts mobility to maintain existing power structures, so that the subject will limit her own movements without the need for constant physical supervision. This is the essence of a disciplinary society: the individual becomes his or her own prison guard.

B. Mathilde's Resistance Against Power Structures

Foucault in his thoughts on the dynamics of power said that resistance plays an important role in power, Foucault argued 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 to resist, negotiate, or change the conditions imposed by the power that oppresses them. There are many ways and motives that drive people to resist power, ranging from the spontaneous and brutal to the more structured. Power itself is distributed in various places and resistance arises as a reaction to existing power dynamics (Foucault, 1978). This makes power and resistance interdependent concepts: power creates the possibility for resistance, and resistance influences the implementation and transformation of power.

The relationship between Mathilde and Amine creates a power discipline. This occurs because Amine wants Mathilde to be quiet and quiet. Amine wants her to talk less and work more. Abusive relationships are often characterized by the deliberate creation or maintenance of power imbalances.

The relationship between Mathilde and Amine creates passive resistance. This occurs because Amine wants Mathilde to be quiet and calm. In Foucault's concept, where there is power, there is resistance. Shaping individuals into effectively "speaking truth to power" is not direct

resistance, but rather about shaping behavior and identity through control mechanisms embedded in everyday practices. As in the following data.

Datum 13:

“Amine was rarely mentioned in her letters. Her husband was a secondary character, a vague presence in the background. She wanted to give Irène the impression that their love was so passionate that it could not be shared or put into words. Her silence was thick with insinuation;.” (Leila slimani, p. 139).

In the data above, the form of resistance how power dynamics are represented through subtle resistance within patriarchal structures. Rather than directly challenging Amine's authority, Mathilde resists by deliberately marginalizing his presence in her letters and reframing the narrative of their relationship. This strategy aligns with Foucault's view of power relations, where resistance does not aim to directly overthrow power but operates as a counter-discourse that reclaims subjectivity and disrupts the mechanisms of surveillance and silencing imposed on it.

Through the letters Mathilde practices self formation by taking on her agency by seizing narrative authority, by transforming into the main character and turning oppression into a mere obscure footnote. There is a close connection between what is said and how they live, so that truth-telling becomes a form of self-practice.

Mathilde uses speaking truth to power, She uses her knowledge to gain power without relying on her husband. This proves that truth is a resource, as it asserts her authority, that she has access to truths that her husband cannot.

Mathilde realized that the opportunity to live a more meaningful life was achieved by obtaining an education. On the other hand, her environment considered education as something that was not so important. They thought that education would only create someone who acted contrary to their habits. As in the following data.

Datum 14:

“That’s no way to educate a man. You have to give him the resources he’ll need to deal with the realities of life. I didn’t move here so my daughter would grow up to be a woman who only knows how to serve men and shut herself off from the world.” (Leila Slimani, p, 46)

In the data above, This demonstrates Mathilde's resistance to prevailing patriarchal power structures. Rather than passively accepting disciplinary norms that seek to produce submissive female subjects confined to domestic roles, Mathilde resistance the reproduction of gender based power dynamic by fighting for her daughter's access to a decent education and autonomy. This act of resistance, though localized and tactical, reflects Foucault's idea that resistance emerges within power relations as a counter-strategy, disrupting the mechanisms that normalize women's subordination and limited spatio-temporal existence.

Mathilde used her knowledge to insinuate her opinion about her child's education, subtly and without risking any harm. She acted independently, recognizing that education can transform one's perspective, and that this was what set her apart. This act represents a subtle resistance to the system and control in place within her environment.

Mathilde realized that the opportunity to live a more meaningful life was achieved through education. She employed a tactic to ensure her child's education within the family home by instilling different values in her child's care. By framing education as something worthy and creating a narrative within societal norms, she sought to assert the right to determine her future, coupled with a sustained commitment, rather than using her body to directly protest by recommending education for her child.

Another Mathilde's other action was through feelings of disgust with the conditions of the surrounding community, something she had never experienced before with her husband, she was inspired to change the situation. This action is one of the mechanisms of modifying power relations that is focused on the following data.

Datum 15:

“People in peacetime should not have to live like this,” repeated Mathilde, who was revolted by poverty. She and her husband shared the same aspirations for the progress of mankind: less hunger, less pain. They were both passionate about modernity and had a wild hope that machines would provide better harvests, that new medicines would put an end to disease. Amine, however, often tried to discourage his wife’s new mission.”. (Leila Slimani, p. 17)

In the example above, This illustrates power dynamic through the tension between shared aspirations and gendered. While Mathilde attempts to act by vocal progressive discourses of modernity, poverty alleviation, and humanitarian reform, Amine's repeated refusals embody a disciplinary force that seeks to confine her within traditional domestic boundaries. This interaction highlights Foucault's conception of power relations as productive yet contested: Mathilde's persistent resistance emerges from within the

power structure itself, serving as a counter-discourse that challenges patriarchal normalization of women's subordination and limited socio-spatial participation.

Furthermore, Mathilde demonstrates resistance as a subject who attempts to change power relations through her own means. Mathilde uses discourse to influence understandings or norms through language and argumentation. This action is mediated by ideas and will and focuses on initiative.

Mathilde's resistance aligns with Foucault's concept of power. According to Foucault, power does not only come from above but can also emerge from below, known as "where there is power, there is resistance". In Mathilde's case, she uses the knowledge and resources available to her to resist and maintain control. This demonstrates that even in unfavorable situations there is still room for resistance.

In the following data, Mathilde does not want to be ruled by norms even though the space of power is not profitable as in the data below.

Datum 16:

"Mathilde told the woman to undress the child and let him sleep naked, covered in cool towels. The next day, at dawn, the woman came back. He feared for her health and he worried that these strangers' germs might spread to his family, endangering his children. One evening a woman arrived with a little boy who'd had a fever for several days.." (Leila Slimani, p. 28)

Mathilde tries active intervention in caring for her sick child represents a form of resistance that extends her role beyond the domestic, resistance disciplinary norms that seek to confine women to the private sphere. Conversely, Amine's anxiety and despair reflect the exercise of

patriarchal power aimed at regulating her movements, interactions, and exposure to the outside world. This tension embodies Foucault's notion of power relations as strategic and productive: resistance does not occur outside of power but emerges within it, as Mathilde uses her knowledge and agency to subvert the normalization of women's subordination and restricted spatial mobility.

Her reasons are simple yet profound. Mathilde wants more freedom, and she states this desire very clearly. For Mathilde, this position binds her to rules and norms that limit her life and only further constrain her. Mathilde views the state of the system as a reflection of the bonds in her life.

Mathilde's claim to autonomy over her own body. She seeks medical intervention based on the reclaiming of external authority. Mathilde not only transforms her mind, but also imprints that knowledge on her body. The body becomes the empirical basis of her epistemological resistance.

Even though her space is not free, Mathilde still shows resistance to norms that she does not want, what she wants is freedom to act, as in the statement below.

Datum 17:

"Among the men in the neighborhood. The laborers went to Amine to complain that his wife was advising their wives not to do their conjugal duty, that she was putting strange ideas in their heads. This Christian woman, this foreigner, shouldn't be meddling in such things, sowing the seeds of discord in other families.." (Leila Slimani, p. 38)

Mathilde's actions constitute a subversive resistance that disrupts the normalized discourse of female obedience and conjugal duty, challenging the production of docile female bodies within the domestic

sphere. The men's collective complaint to Amine reveals how power operates relationally and diffusely as Foucault argues where the patriarchal network mobilizes to regulate deviant behavior and restore social order. This backlash against Mathilde's influence underscores the productive yet contested nature of power: her resistance generates counter-discourse that threatens established gender hierarchies, while simultaneously exposing the mechanisms of control designed to silence and isolate the female subject.

In This shifts often occur through social processes that Foucault calls the modification of power relations, where every daily interaction becomes a field of negotiation and resistance. In Mathilde's context, the act of providing medical advice or new insights regarding bodily rights to the wives in her community is not just ordinary conversation, but a form of counter-conduct that disrupts the stability of established patriarchal and colonial structures.

Furthermore, in her dialogue, Mathilde touches on the lives of the field farmers and even takes the initiative in conversation in the following data.

Datum 18:

"You know, your body doesn't belong to this field, nor does it belong entirely to your husband. The pain you feel is real, and you deserve to rest without having to apologize." "What do you think's going to happen? You think they'll turn you into a saint? Build a temple for you? Those women," (Leila Slimani, p. 16)

In the data, by asserting that a woman's body is not wholly owned by agricultural labor or marital authority, Mathilde resistance the disciplinary mechanisms that normalize the exploitation and self-sacrifice

of women's bodies in both productive and reproductive spheres. This act of counter disrupts the Foucauldian process of producing docile bodies through internalized norms of endurance and obedience. Her intervention represents a localized resistance that operates within power relations, aiming to reconfigure the subject's relationship to her own body and reject the dominant discourse that equates female value with endless labor and submission.

Mathilde resistance social norms that structure women's bodies as objects to be obedient, productive, and controlled within domestic and colonial settings. She rejects discourses that position women as subordinate beings. Disrupting the social order puts her at risk or directly contradicts the family structure, demonstrating that it is not her personal desire to live according to her believed truth.. Parrhesia requires that the subject be free to choose between speaking out or courageously submitting.

Mathilde speaks of truth as Foucault's concept of parrhesia, revealing that pain is not a normal power but a sign of oppression. She also encourages women to listen to their own bodies so that they can be owned individually through acknowledging their pain.

Furthermore, Mathilde's act of laughing at Amine is a highly symbolic demonstration of power, this can be seen as an act of condescension that reverses the traditional hierarchy between the two of them, her submissive reaction to Amine's situation indicates that she feels

intimidated which confirms Mathilde's success and indicates a shift in the balance of power in this interaction.

The next resistance is Mathilde's resistance to Amine. Even though Mathilde is only a stranger in need of others' compassion, she possesses a keen awareness of her own power. Mathilde recognizes her weak status as a wife, but she does not immediately resign herself to the situation, as in the following data.

Datum 19:

"They talk? Let them. They are strangers to me, Amine. And I will not let them or your customs dictate where my feet may step. I have abandoned everything for you, but I will not abandon myself." (Leila Slimani, p. 84).

In this quote, Mathilde's resistance within the patriarchal power dynamics depicted in the novel. By rejecting the disciplinary surveillance of communal customs that attempt to regulate her spatial mobility and behavior, Mathilde asserts her agency and refuses to become a completely submissive subject. This assertion functions as a counter discourse that challenges the mechanisms of power that demand women's complete subordination and self effacement in exchange for marriage and relocation. In Foucauldian terms, her resistance does not exist outside of power but emerges from within it itself a tactical reversal that reclaims her body and subjectivity, revealing the contested and relational nature of power in the domestic and social.

In this case, Mathilde directly expresses her opposition to Amine who has a higher status in the household, she challenges her traditional hierarchy and the customs of the people there, Mathilde's way of resisting is

very clear, Mathilde deliberately takes a dominant role in this dialogue, reversing the power that is usually tied to them.

Mathilde's actions thoughts on resistance, that power dynamics inherently contain the seeds of resistance, because the nature of power relations depends on the possibility of resistance either through confrontation, avoidance or tactical maneuvers to transform existing conditions.

Mathilde's power stems from the possibility that she can fulfill her need for independence; that if she were truly independent, her status would skyrocket. This awareness of this potential gives her the courage to act slowly, even though Amine has more status than Mathilde. This reflects Foucault's concept of power as something that is not only possessed but can be used by those who are weak.

The next resistance is a form of resistance against Amine, even though Mathilde is only a wife, she has the determination and intention to prevent him from getting more involved in the existing rules that burden her, Mathilde realizes that her status is being squeezed, as in the following data.

Datum 20:

"No matter how much time passes, she never seemed to get over it: her dependence, her submission, was like a rotting organ inside her body, something that left her disgusted with herself, comfort without dignity is a prison. I have to find a way out of this house, Amine. I have to work. I have to prove that I'm more than just your gardener or your in-laws' servant. It's the only way for me to survive in this 'foreign country.'" (Leila slimani, p. 38)

Mathilde's internal resistance against the disciplinary power that has produced her as a docile subject. She experiences her own subordination and

dependence not merely as external constraint but as a deeply internalized mechanism that corrupts her sense of self. By declaring her need to work and escape the confines of the domestic sphere, Mathilde articulates a powerful counter-discourse that rejects the normalization of female submission and spatial restriction. In this resistance emerges directly from within power relations: rather than passive acceptance, Mathilde seeks to reclaim her productive capacity and subjectivity, exposing the contested nature of power and the possibility of tactical subversion even within seemingly totalizing patriarchal structures.

Mathilde doesn't want dependency even though it affects the situation at home. The reason Mathilde wants freedom more than anything, she states this desire very clearly, saying "*I have to find a way out*" For Mathilde, dependency will only tie her to the life of being squeezed by customs that she has avoided all this time.

Furthermore, in her interaction with Amine, Mathilde showed open resistance, strongly insisting on her own wishes, directly dominating the conversation and even showing that there was no such thing as being submissive to her, as shown in the following data.

Datum 21:

"But Mathilde was naturally contrary and she couldn't resist the temptation to argue with him." "I am my own mother, Amine. If I have to work, I will work. If I have to walk in the market, I will walk. You may love your country, but you cannot impose your fears on me". (Leila slimani, p, 84)

And in this section, Mathilde's resistance against the disciplinary power exercised by Amine. By asserting her autonomy over her own body

and spatial mobility, she directly challenges the patriarchal mechanisms that seek to produce and maintain her as a docile subject confined by her husband's fears and cultural expectations. This act of verbal defiance functions as a counter-discourse that refuses the internalization of submission and rejects the normalization of female dependence. Mathilde's resistance operates within the existing power relations not as a total overthrow, but as a tactical reversal that exposes the relational and contested nature of power, while reclaiming her right to self-determination in the foreign social landscape.

In the analysis above, it can be seen that Mathilde can reverse the power held by Amine, in the context of resistance initiated by Foucault, he stated that resistance can be a powerful tool in seizing power and as a means for tactics such as subversion, criticism of authority.

Mathilde's actions view of resistance, that power dynamics inherently contain the seeds of resistance, because the very nature of power relations depends on the possibility of resistance whether through confrontation, manipulation, avoidance, or tactical maneuvers to change existing condition.

Within this, each character occupies a distinct position. Amine wields patriarchal authority through customary mechanisms, attempting to mold Mathilde into traditional gender roles. Mouilala reinforces communal norms as an instrument of customary power. Aicha is both shaped by these relationships and becomes the object of Mathilde's disciplinary practices.

Mathilde embodies the multidirectionality of power she submits to Amine's domination but exerts power over Aicha through control. Her resistance takes various forms: verbal defiance of Amine's authority, the repatriation of narratives through letters that assert her voice, the assertion of bodily and medical autonomy in rejecting prescribed roles, and the practice of parrhesia—the courageous act of speaking the truth despite the risks. These strategies, whether openly defying Amine or covertly disobeying Mouilala, affirm Foucault's assertion that power always invites resistance, making each character an active participant in strategic struggles within this dynamic network of power relations.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

After conducting a series of analyses of the research on Power Dynamics and Resistance in Leila Slimani's *In The Country of Others* using Foucault's Power Dynamics theory, the researcher has reached the stage of drawing conclusions about the research that has been conducted and providing suggestions for further research. In this chapter, the researcher concludes the research results and provides suggestions for readers who may conduct similar research using the same theory in other literary works.

A. Conclusion

Based on Michel Foucault's Power Dynamics perspective, an analysis of *In the Country of Others* through Foucault's lens reveals that power in 1940s Moroccan society is not a top-down, repressive force, but rather a productive, microphysical network that permeates everyday relationships and domestic spaces. Power does not simply subjugate it actively produces subjectivity, shapes identities, and opens up opportunities for resistance. This aligns with Foucault's premise that power is distributed across social dynamics, operating through normalization and discipline.

Within this network, each character occupies a distinct position. Amine wields patriarchal authority through customary mechanisms, attempting to mold Mathilde into traditional gender roles. Mouilala reinforces communal norms as an instrument of

customary power. Aicha is shaped by these relationships while becoming the object of Mathilde's disciplinary practices. Mathilde embodies the multidirectionality of power she submits to Amine's domination but exercises power over Aicha through linguistic control. Her resistance, both openly defying Amine and covertly disobeying Mouilala, confirms Foucault's assertion that power always invites resistance, making each character an active participant in the strategic struggle within this dynamic network of power relations.

B. Suggestion

Leila Slimani's novel, *In The Country of Others*, future research could expand the scope of analysis to include secondary characters such as Mouilala or other Moroccan figures to reveal how power dynamics operate beyond the MathildeAmine relationship, thus providing a more complete picture of power networks in postcolonial society. Second, further research could compare this novel with other literary works that address similar themes, whether by the same author or different authors, to identify patterns of gender resistance and mechanisms of power that are cross-cultural and cross-historical. Third, further studies could delve into nonverbal aspects of resistance such as body language, silence, or emotional strategies, which were only touched upon in this study to deepen our understanding of how gender resistance is manifested through

subtle, unseen tactics. Fourth, future research could utilize alternative theoretical frameworks beyond Foucault, such as postcolonial theory, intersectional feminism, or psychoanalysis, to open up new dimensions of reading that might not be revealed through a power dynamics approach alone.

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CURRICULUM VITAE



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