



Reproducing Authority: Patriarchy, Marginality, and Gendered Power in Naomi Alderman's *The Power*

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Abstract: This study tries to analyze how patriarchy, marginalization and gendered Power are represented in *The Power* (2016) by Naomi Alderman using a holistic feminist perspective. The article explores ways in which the novel challenges and disrupts the established patterns of male authority, not only by inverting the usual order of the body, but by reshaping social and political power relations. The study adopts close textual analysis of a qualitative interpretative approach inspired by cyborg feminism by Donna Haraway, posthuman feminism by Rosi Braidotti, marginality by Bell Hooks and Judith Butler's theory of performativity. The analysis shows that *The Power* offers more than a feminist fantasy about women's empowerment; it is also an analysis of the instability and reproducibility of domination. It is a novel that uncovers how the violent, normalized social performances, institutional structures and networks of violence that are embedded in the patriarchy are not set into law but repeatable. It is a novel that illuminates that patriarchy relies not on a fixed biological basis, but on repeatable patterns of social performances, institutional frameworks and normalisation of violence. Concurrently, Alderman foregrounds marginalized voices and peripheral identities as key sites of resistance and transformation, and at the same time reveals the way new configurations of power can create new modes of force and exclusion. The study also claims that the female body-electrified holds the position of a posthuman that challenges the binary logic of gender, body and power. Finally, the article argues that *The Power* is a multifaceted feminist dystopian critique of power, violence, and institutional control; it focuses on the fluidity and relationality of power in different social settings.

Keywords: Feminist dystopia; Patriarchy; Marginality; Gendered power; Posthuman feminism.

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Introduction

Feminist dystopian fiction is one of the important genres that have examined gender, power, violence, social control issues of today's world in the past few years (Boaz, 2020; Sen, 2022). These are not limited to what might be, but also reflect the fragility of what societies have considered to be systems that are "natural" and "permanent" and "apodictic". Feminist scholars have theorized that dystopias they have read often have an underlying history of the construction and maintenance of the power of men and men's norm and institutionalization of these practices in daily life (Yebra, 2019; Jokari & Hesampour, 2023). In some of these texts, contestation,

opposition and reconfiguration of power is located in the body. The following are examples of feminist dystopias that have emerged in the past and more recently in the present such as Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and Naomi Alderman's *The Power*, that question the structures through which gender hierarchies are established, broken and maintained (Kaur & Khanna, 2023; Sen, 2022).

In *The Power* (2016) by Naomi Alderman, this disruption manifests itself as an unexpected biological change whereby women gain the power to produce electricity from within their bodies. The shocking metamorphosis of the body is extended to a far-reaching social and political revolution, and the obvious



concepts of gender, violence and authority are suddenly toppled. The novel is a description of the political and institutional context and how it has been constructed around the ideas of physical power and social control, ideas that are increasingly undermined by the disintegration of traditional masculinity. Alderman's story, however, is not an easy one of liberation (Miller 2020; Shah et al. 2020).). *The Power* however, is always renewed, and the themes of domination, fear and violence resurface as new forms after the transfer of power, as the novel is constantly enriched by the idea of empowerment as a practice that walks the streets after power has been transferred (Mondragón Paredes, 2022; Sen, 2022). The Power is therefore a re-imagining of the inversion, it's a hyper-spectacular one, where the patriarchy is not inevitable or a law that is to be followed but another fragile one that relies on the repeat of enactments of the power, collective consent and social conditioning (Butler, 1990; Yebra, 2019).

The novel's provocative stakes around issues of gendered authority, violence and social change have garnered growing scholarly attention about *The Power*. Existing studies have analysed the narrative from a number of critical viewpoints, such as feminist stylistics (Gheni, 2021), speculative dystopia (Razzaq et al., 2025), discourse analysis (Boaz, 2020), political allegory and representations of violence. Others scholars have explored the fall of patriarchy once women gain control of their bodies, concluding that the novel challenges the notions about the institutional power and the masculine authority (Yebra, 2019; Miller, 2020). Meanwhile, the narrative constantly highlights the voices of the marginalized, the outsider, the abused woman and the socially excluded who reveal the oppressive systems of marginalization that exist in political and cultural institutions. These dimensions place marginality not only as a condition of exclusion but in a space where resistance, transformation, and other forms of agency arise (Hooks, 2000; Crenshaw, 2020).

Although there is much recent criticism of *The Power* available, the majority of the existing criticism explores the novel's aspect of empowerment, discourse, violence, patriarchy, or dystopian inversion as relatively autonomous fields of analysis. This is a critical gap that is discovered through this fragmentation. Although much has been written about female empowerment and the failure of patriarchy, few studies have looked at how Alderman brings together the issues of patriarchy, marginalisation and the reconfiguration of gendered authority under a single feminist banner. Likewise, while the marginalized figures and the peripheral communities are given a focal position within the narration, they are often considered peripherals to the discussion of empowerment itself (Shah et al., 2020; Sen, 2022). This means that the entangled connections between domination, marginality, resistance and the reproduction of power is underdeveloped in existing research.

This study fills that gap by looking at how *The Power* can deconstruct the authority of the patriarchy, foreground the marginal as a site of transformation, and reimagine the gendered power through speculative reversal. It is not a study of the novel's multiple themes, but rather an analysis of the multiple dynamics that work together throughout the novel to create a general critique of domination and social control. This article makes an argument to the effect that Alderman's narrative is more than merely a flipping of gender hierarchies, but also an interrogation of the mechanisms of the production, legitimation, embodiment and reproduction of authority across political, religious and social institutions.

The study examines these dynamics through an integrated feminist approach, inspired by theorizing by Judith Butler, Donna Haraway, bell hooks and Rosi Braidotti on performativity, cyborg feminism, marginality, and posthuman feminism, respectively. Butler's framework helps to explain the fragility of the authority of the hegemonic masculinity when the performances of dominant masculinity start to fail (Butler, 1990). Haraway's cyborg feminism offers a fruitful framework for the interpretation of the electrified female body as a hybrid and a liminal figure that un-binds the gender binaries and the power binaries (Haraway, 1985). Hooks' work on marginality is a window into the creation of "excluded voices" and "socially peripheral identities" as sites of "resistance" and "transformation" (Hooks, 2000; Hooks, 2015). The posthuman feminism of Braidotti extends the conversation of embodiment, violence, technology, and the uncertainty of authority in posthuman environments (Braidotti, 2019). All of these are theories that can be put together to create a reading of the novel that transcends the story of gender reversal to a nuanced examination of the ways in which power is embodied, repeated, resisted, and transformed in the modern social setting.

This study links these theoretical lenses, thereby enriching feminist literary criticism with a more comprehensive reading of *The Power* and its portrayal of the constructs of authority, violence, resistance, and marginality. The study illustrates that the novel by Alderman is not just a story of empowerment, but a complex feminist dystopia in which the stability of all forms of domination is challenged and which shows that power is relational and unstable. Through this, the article underscores the need for multi-theoretical feminist reading in the analysis of contemporary speculative fiction and puts *The Power* in the larger context of the discussion of gender politics, cultural authority, embodiment and transformation of social power structure.

Literature review

The study of feminist dystopian fiction has begun to take an extra focus on gender, violence, authority, and the uncertainty of social power structures in recent years. The novel *The Power* has garnered critical responses from a variety of angles such as feminist dystopian criticism, discourse analysis, posthuman feminism and institutional violence. These studies are crucial in their analysis of the novel's critique of patriarchal systems and gendered authority, but much of the existing scholarship treats empowerment, violence, marginality or dystopian reversal as distinct scholarly and analytical interests. The following review therefore examines the major scholarly approaches surrounding feminist dystopian fiction and *The Power* while identifying the critical and theoretical gap that the present study seeks to address.

2.1 Feminist Dystopian Fiction and Gendered Authority

Feminist dystopian fiction has served as a literary genre to challenge systems of gender oppression, institutional violence, and social control since its beginning. Feminist dystopias are not usually about oppressive regimes or technology, but also often focus upon the body, sexuality, reproduction and domestic power structures as primary political conflict arenas (Atwood, 1985; Baccolini & Moylan, 2003). Feminist dystopias have been described as examinations of the fragility of patriarchal structures that are questioning or overturning the normalcy of hierarchy (Boaz, 2020; Sen, 2022). These texts introduce the concept of authority in a speculative manner, that is, through repeated social performances and cultural conditioning, as well as institutions. In

times during the past few decades, feminist dystopias have explored how violence and domination can persist even after the old order of things seems to have fallen. In this literary tradition, Naomi Alderman's *The Power* is a key feminist dystopian work that reimagines the dynamics of gender, violence and authority, by inverting bodily power.

2.2 Critical Studies on *The Power*

The Power has since been cited by a number of scholars, especially for its radical challenge to patriarchy and its depiction of the changing nature of gender dynamics since publication in 2016. There are various kinds of criticism that have been offered on the novel, some of which include feminist stylistic, discourse analysis, political allegory, speculative dystopia, institutional violence (Gheni, 2021; Razzaq et al., 2025; Boaz, 2020). Alderman's is noted and valued for his disruption of the notions of the patriarchy, bestowing upon women the superiority of the body and giving them the power to produce electricity from their bodies (Miller, 2020; Shah et al., 2020). Other research claims that the novel challenges and undermines the historical link between masculinity, violence and political power by revealing how societies and institutions are built on body domination to establish social control (Yebra, 2019). These readings situate *The Power* as a feminist critique on a historical tradition of structures that normalise violence against women and perpetuate gender inequality.

Meanwhile, a number of critics argue for the novel's ambivalent attitude towards empowerment, as it fails to offer an easy feminist triumph. *The Power* illustrates the re-emergence of domination in new guises after a change of authority, as Sen (2022) suggests. In the same vein, Mondragón Paredes (2022) proposes that the narrative disrupts binary notions of victim and oppression, conceptualizing violence as a relational and reproducible rather than as a phenomenon of the male gender. Such readings go beyond a liberatory approach and focus on the movement of power itself being unstable. As a result, the novel has been read increasingly not only as a challenge to patriarchy, but as a critique of the way authority is reproduced in the shifts of political and social systems.

2.3 Marginality, Violence, and the Reproduction of Power

A second aspect of the current scholarship is the portrayal of marginality and socially marginalized identities in *The Power*. While the discussion of empowerment is pervasive in the criticism, the stories keep bringing to the fore the experiences of abused women, displaced communities, peripheral identities, and socially marginal people whose experiences reveal unequal structures of domination in political and cultural systems. The term 'marginality' as defined by Hooks (2000) as a space of resistance is useful for the analysis of the role of the excluded voices in the novel as agents of change rather than victims of oppression. Similarly, Crenshaw's (2020) accounts of structural inequality and intersectionality highlight the intersectionality of gendered violence and religion, politics, and institutional power in Alderman's dystopian world.

Additionally, several studies indicate that violence in the novel is not exclusively a system of patriarchy, and is a process that can be reproduced and repeated (Sen, 2022; Shah et al., 2020). While women slowly become more institutional and political dominant, the narrative illustrates how new forms of authority can be used to reproduce systems of fear and coercion and exclusion. In this regard *The Power* critiques essentialist notions of 'masculinity' and

unmask the malleability and relationality of 'domination'. Marginality is thus not just a state of difference and a space of exclusion, but also a key zone of encounter, challenge and redraft of the prevailing systems of power.

2.4 Theoretical and Critical Gap

While there is increasing scholarship on *The Power*, much of what is written has been theoretically disjointed. However, the study of individual aspects of the novel (discourse, empowerment, dystopian inversion and institutional violence etc.) has been the predominant theme of many studies, while little attention has been paid to the interaction among the elements of patriarchy, marginalization, embodiment and the reproduction of authority as interconnected structures. Likewise, popular scholars' use of feminist or posthuman lenses is often uncoordinated, applied in isolation rather than in an integrated framework for analysis. Thus, in current scholarship, the connections between genders of authority, social marginality, posthuman embodiment and institutional violence are not sufficiently explored.

In response to this, the present study draws on an integrated feminist approach that draws on Judith Butler's theory of performativity, Donna Haraway's cyborg feminism, bell hooks' notion of marginality, and Rosi Braidotti's posthuman feminism. Butler's theory of authority suggests that it is not so much about fixed identities as repeated social performances (1990), and Haraway's cyborg feminism is a useful lens for the female body, which is electrified, being a hybrid, desublimating the traditional categories of body, gender and power (1985). While hooks' writings shed light on the political potential of the voices of the fringes and their peripheral identities (Hooks, 2000; Hooks, 2015), Braidotti's posthuman feminism broadens the conversation to encompass wider debates about embodiment, violence, technology and the unstable nature of the authority in posthuman settings (Braidotti, 2019). Through the articulation of these viewpoints, the study is a more holistic interpretation of *The Power* and analyzes its deconstruction of patriarchy, foregrounding of marginality and re-imagining of the dynamics of gendered power and social control.

3. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative interpretive approach to examine the representation of patriarchy, marginalization, and gendered power in Naomi Alderman's *The Power* (2016). The novel can be read as a speculative fiction by feminist critical theory because it deals with the destabilisation of power, the shift of power from the body and the reproduction of violence across social and institutional structures. Therefore, the study is conducted through close examination of the text, to examine the relationship between gender, domination, resistance and social control that are constructed in the narrative. The analysis of the novel is guided by close reading of areas of characterization, narrative, body representations, institutional discourse, and symbolic reversals which help construct the novel's feminist dystopian critique.

Unlike empirical methodologies that depend on quantitative data or sociological measurement, literary analysis examines how meaning is produced through language, narrative movement, imagery, and ideological representation. The concept of close reading, in this context, enables the study to examine the questioning of the traditional notions of masculinity, authority, and institutional power in the research of the speculative reconstruction of the

bodily power relations in *The Power*. The study also examines the ways in which political, religious and social institutions in the novel are also perpetrators of violence and exclusion even as patriarchal systems start to fall apart.

3.1 Textual and Feminist Analysis

The study focuses on the textual analysis as the main method. The approach allows for the study of the central themes of authority, violence, marginality and resistance in the novel in terms of narrative language and symbol construction. Specific focus is paid to scenes that involve transformation of gendered authority, institutional violence, control of body and the evolving dynamics of power and social legitimacy. The study also looks at marginalised characters and peripheral identities that are used to show the unequal structures in political and cultural systems.

Apart from the narrative analysis, the study utilizes a feminist interpretive approach to analyze the novel and its critique of a patriarchal authority and its challenges to the normalized assumptions on gender and domination. Feminist literary criticism gives a critical perspective and understanding of how power is being exercised in cultural contexts, bodies, and institutions. The analysis does not see the nature of authority as something fixed or natural, but rather as relational, performative and socially constructed in various contexts within the narration.

3.2 Integrated Feminist Framework

The study uses an integrated feminist approach inspired by Judith Butler's theory of performativity, Donna Haraway's cyborg feminism, bell hooks' theory of marginality, and Rosi Braidotti's theory of posthuman feminism to examine these dynamics. The standard theory regarding performativity is Butler's (1990) notion that gendered authority is maintained through repeated social enactments and institutional practices, not through essential or inherent gendered identities. This attitude is especially useful in understanding the breakdown of the traditional systems of bodily domination as masculine authority in *The Power* is eroded.

A productive way to consider the electrified female body is in the context of Donna Haraway's cyborg feminism, which defies the body/gender/technology/power binary, and explores the body as a hybrid and boundary-crossing object (Haraway, 1985). This lens allows for the novel's depiction of embodied electricity to be read as an assault on the fixed categories that have been linked to patriarchy.

Another aspect of the analysis that can be explored with the help of Bell hooks' concept of marginality is how excluded voices and socially marginalized identities are spaces of resistance and transformation (Hooks, 2000; Hooks, 2015). The following framework is relevant in considering characters who rise to prominence from areas of exclusion to challenge dominant frameworks of authority. Furthermore, Rosi Braidotti's posthuman feminism extends the discussion to include discussions of embodiment, violence, instability, and the change of authority in posthuman settings (Braidotti, 2019). These theoretical lenses enable the novel to be viewed as more than just a story of gender transgression and reversal, but as a more comprehensive critique of the construction and reconstruction, normalisation and contestation, of power in political, religious, and social structures.

3.3 Analytical Focus

The three interrelated aspects examined in the novel are the deconstruction of patriarchy, new location of marginalisation as a space of resistance and transformation and new refocusing of gendered power through speculative reversal. Particular focus is placed upon the correlation of "body power" and "institutional control," and the persistence of violence and domination despite what looks like the breach of traditional gender structures. The analytical framework explores not only patriarchy as a system of power, but also the wider processes by which systems of power continue and reinforce social inequality, the *Power* critiques.

4. Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Deconstructing Patriarchal Authority

The central issue in *The Power* is the disruption of the patriarchy's power through the changing of the power dynamics in the body. Early in the novel, social and political institutions function under the usual assumptions and norms that link social control, institutional authority, and physical dominance to masculinity. Men are in political, religious, military and economic leadership, women are subjected to various forms of social and physical violence. However, in a sudden development, the 'skein' that enables women to produce electricity from their bodies radically challenges these long-established hierarchies. In this speculative reversal, Alderman reveals the precariousness of what was once thought of as a natural and unchallengeable patriarchy.

Throughout the novel, the dominance of men is enforced through the use of bodily power and fear as a means of institutional control. After women gain physical power, the authority of men starts to fall apart from political and social institutions. Images of fear and violence in public spaces, and of the fragility of the institutions, expose the precariousness of the social order that had been maintained by extrapolating from the physical strength of men, without a stable ethical or political basis. So, in this capacity, the narrative implies that patriarchy is not a stable form but a system that has to be reproduced socially through the reiteration of authority figures and those who are supposed to obey. Butler's concept of performativity is especially relevant here because in the novel, male power seems to be increasingly precarious when the dominant forms of male performativity become increasingly discreditable in society (Butler, 1990).

Alderman also examines the responses of political and religious institutions to the shift in power, as a way of condemning patriarchal systems. Alderman also points out the reactions of political and religious institutions to the changing balance of power as a means of criticizing patriarchal systems. Many institutions become more violent, fearful and guerrilla control in response, instead of settling into the changes. With the breakdown of traditional gender structures, religious language, media image and political speech all become vehicles of authority that seek to maintain themselves. These reactions suggest that there is a hierarchy of power, oppression, and compliance within institutional narratives as well as overt violence. The novel, then, reveals a structure of patriarchy that is not biological but cultural, one that is perpetuated through repetition.

Meanwhile, the story undermines the notion of liberating the colonized people simply by overturning the physical dominance. As women slowly take on roles of power, the very same systems which oppressed them start to create new systems of oppression. The change indicates that the main criticism in the novel is not just

against patriarchy but also against the wider system that is shaped by it as a form of power. In this way, *The Power* challenges the assumptions of gender essentialism and authority by demonstrating how dominance can continue even when a particular group holds the power in the institutions it creates.

4.2 Marginality as Resistance and Transformation

Marginality is a key feature within *The Power*, especially in the form of characters that are born or raised from social marginality, vulnerability and institutional neglect. Abused women, displaced people, marginalized communities, and marginalized identities constantly serve as the focus of the novel, articulating inequalities of power in political, religious and cultural institutions. Instead of treating marginality as victimhood, Alderman proposes to conceptualize the space of exclusion as a space where resistance, transformation and other modes of agency can emerge.

The character of Allie is one of the more obvious examples. Allie is first introduced as an abused and socially disadvantaged girl, but slowly becomes one of the most pivotal characters in the story. This shift from being placed on the margin to her placement on political and religious authority demonstrates hooks' concept that the margin is not only a space of exclusion, but a space of resistance, a productive space (Hooks, 2000). But the novel complicates such a transformation, by showing how stances of resistance can be entangled within institutional power and ideological control. Allie gains influence and the line between liberation and domination grows increasingly blurred.

Religion also plays a significant role in the novel in terms of its treatment of 'marginality' and 'authority'. In *the Power*, religious stories are repeatedly retold to give validity to new systems of female rule, while simultaneously undermining older patriarchal traditions. A shift in institutional belief systems is illustrated in this transformation, which is an example of how institutional belief systems can be reconfigured to embrace new power dynamics. While new gender dynamics have broken down, marginalized communities are still being subjected to violence and exploitation. These instances indicate that structural inequality in the novel is not limited to gender but also has crossover with other political and social systems of exclusion.

The novel also shows that marginalized groups may hold knowledge which is not apparent or acknowledged in mainstream institutions. Peripheral characters often have a better grasp of the fragility of power than do politicians or institutional actors who are committed to sustaining power structures. From this point of view, marginality can be a place of vulnerability and a position of critique that can question dominant structures. Alderman does not present resistance as an end to power, but as a constant process of resistance, a process that is unstable, negotiating and transforming institutions.

4.3 Reproduction of Violence and the Instability of Power

The Power seems at first glance to be a feminist critique of male dominance, but as the novel unfolds, it begins to explore the intricacies of empowerment and liberation. Violence is not eliminated from society as women gain institutional power and bodily power, but rather enters a new cycle of social and political power. This shift is one of the most interesting challenges in the novel as Alderman shows how domination can regenerate itself even when established hierarchies have fallen.

Fear is a main system of authority throughout the story. The potential to cause bodily injury using electricity establishes new systems of intimidation that are becoming more similar to those of coercion previously linked to patriarchal violence. Scenes of military violence, political repression and public punishment make the dynamics of liberation turning into domination very visible. The novel thus undermines complacent notions of empowerment because it shows that having access to power is not enough to ensure justice and equality.

Several characters who start their role as symbols of resistance take on a role in the reproduction of structures of violence and exclusion. Political leaders, revolutionary movements and religious institutions alike get entangled in a system of coercion that is patterned on earlier systems of patriarchal authority. The repetition here exposes the relational and unstable nature of power. The novel does not suggest that violence is something that is all male but rather that domination is present whenever there is a lack of ethical responsibility and collective accountability.

The politics of change is another manifestation of the instability of empowerment, as the novel depicts. As old structures and inequalities fall apart, new ones are often establishing themselves in a similar form of fear, obedience, and institutional control. In this way, Alderman not only challenges patriarchy, but also the logic of domination that provides authority as it varies through history. The novel several times suggests that the power of one group is not necessarily eradicated when the power of another group is substituted.

This ambivalence sets *The Power* against a more critical feminist movement that doubts that systems of hierarchy and coercion can ever achieve true freedom. The narrative thus evokes an ethic of anti-heroic empowerment of women and signals the rhythm of violence and institutional power. This critique exposes power as an unstable, relational, and always vulnerable to reproduction, and by fear, exclusion, and social conditioning.

4.4 Posthuman Embodiment and the Electrified Female Body

The Power also offers a posthuman feminist interpretation, which fractures traditional boundaries between gender, body, technology and authority in the representation of the electrified female body. The "skein" potentially modifies the female body and makes it into a hybrid site of biological and technological power, which questions the convention of physical inferiority and supremacy of the male body. The novel has the effect of challenging essentialist understandings of the nature of gender, as it suggests that the body is not fixed, stable, or natural but is instead constructed and changeable.

The cyborg is a concept introduced by Haraway (1985) that helps to describe the disruption of bodies. Like the cyborg figure, the electrified body in *The Power* questions traditional dichotomies of human and technological power, nature and culture, weakness and dominance. The novel shows that women are no longer placed in the passive, physical role that has been historically assigned to them in patriarchal system. Rather, the body itself is a political force that can transform institutional dynamics and social relationships.

Meanwhile, Alderman undermines the link between embodiment and empowerment by showing that changing bodies is not enough to end violence and domination. It is a body as well as a space of freedom and a device of terror, violence and institutionalization.

The ambiguity is rooted in the posthuman feminist thinking of Braidotti (2019), which focuses on instability, transformation and the constantly changing nature of embodied identity in the current power structures. The novel, then, avoids easy claims for empowerment of the body and emphasises the ethical and political issues of the use of power.

The disruption of gender binaries continues to be one of the most important moments in the novel. *The Power* challenges norms about bodily weakness and male power, highlighting the socially produced nature of much of the hierarchy surrounding gender that is often thought of as 'natural' or 'biological.' Ultimately, however, Alderman proposes that the changes within the body do not necessarily lead to changes in the structures of domination. Embodiment is thus not presented as a solution to oppression in the novel, but rather as a new way of seeing the instability of authority, violence and gendered power.

Conclusion

The Power by Naomi Alderman is a complicated feminist dystopia that is more than just a flip of the patriarchy. At first the novel envisions a female power through exchange of bodily power, but over time, the novel exposes the fragility of domination and how power and violence, fear and institutional control, might still function in different social climates. The novel's speculation on gendered authority disrupts the notion of oppression as a male prerogative and examines the structures that, in sum, render systems of power normal, reproduce them, and perpetuate them.

It is clear from the analysis that the power of the Patriarch is not rooted in fixed or natural but rather in bodily dominance, repetition within institutions and cultural conditioning. Upon gaining physical dominance through the "skein," traditional systems of male authority come undone and true fragility becomes apparent, behind the seemingly stable and unquestioned façade. The novel complicates however the narratives of liberation, however, as it depicts how new forms of female authority can also be coercive, exclusionary and violent. In this context, Alderman's dystopia is an examination of not only patriarchy but of the interdependent and repetitive dynamics of domination in political, religious and social institutions.

Another aspect of the novel's feminist criticism is highlighted by the study, which shows that marginality is central to the novel. Characters on the edges of society often become a vehicle of resistance and change, revealing institutional inequalities which are not acknowledged by the dominant authority structures. However, the story also tells us how systems of ideological and political control can take over spaces of opposition. This tension helps to sustain the overall proposition of the novel, which is that power is always precarious and can be continually reproduced by anyone who is in a position of institutional authority.

The study uses an integrated feminist framework consisting of Butler's theory of performativity, Haraway's cyborg feminism, hooks' concept of marginality and Braidotti's posthuman feminism to provide a more comprehensive interpretation of *The Power* and its depiction of the concepts of authority, embodiment, violence and resistance. The article does not consider patriarchy, marginalization, and gendered power as separate ideas, but rather shows how all three of these are integrally connected to create the dystopic vision of the novel. This holistic approach also uncovers the way in which Alderman challenges common dichotomy of

victimization, vulnerability, manhood/femininity, and institutional power.

Finally, *The Power* is not simply a feminist fantasy of empowerment or revenge. The novel, on the other hand, offers a more disturbing portrait of how systems of domination continue even in the wake of the failure of traditional hierarchies, through fear, repetition in institutions, and conditioning in social life. Alderman's dystopia thus poses larger questions about the ethics of power in itself and the problem of envisioning social change outside of coercive and controlling structures. *The Power* is an important work of feminist dystopian fiction and is a broad reflection on embodiment, violence and the politics of power in contemporary society, in its speculative reconfiguration of gendered authority.

Author Biography

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Declaration

The author confirms that this manuscript is original, has not been published previously, and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

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