



## The Discourse of Gender and Power in Naomi Alderman's *The Power*

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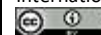
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### Abstract

*The Power* is a 2016 science fiction novel by British writer Naomi Alderman. Its basic principle is that women develop the ability to release electric shocks from their fingers, causing them to become the dominant gender. This study tried to find the concepts of gender and power in this novel and analyze them. *The Power* describes how gender relations would be affected, how society would evolve if women developed the ability to deliver electric shocks. This speculative fiction explores the form of power in patriarchy by using a singular principle according to which the women of the planet obtain as an evolutionary accident a new organ in the clavicle - the skein - producing electric shocks. Obtaining this power allows women to challenge the power dynamics of patriarchy.

**Keywords:** Discourse; The power; Naomi Alderman; Power; Gender; Feminism.

### 1. Introduction

In her article "Feminism and Empowerment: A Critical Reading of Foucault", Monique Deveaux has studied the appropriation of Foucault's ideas in feminist studies. She looks at three "waves" of Foucauldian literature by feminist political theorists and philosophers. These waves are first literature that appropriates Foucault's analysis of the effects of power on bodies, or what is known as the "docile-bodies" thesis, as well as a related aspect of this, the notion of "biopower," which refers to state regulation of the population; second, analyses that take their cue from Foucault's later development of an agonistic model of power, in which multiple, interweaving power relations are viewed as inherently contested, as best expressed by his adage, "where there is power, there is resistance"; and third, postmodern feminist writings on sexual and gender identity informed by Foucault's assertion that prevailing categories of sex identity are the result of the transition to a modern regime of power and a proliferation of subjectifying discourses on sexuality (223).

Beulen (2017), has tried to show how the main characters of two contemporary novels; *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood and *Catching Fire* by Suzanne Collins find their female power and how this is portrayed in dystopian literature, as well as analyze how this power manifests itself and how the dystopian setting influences this manifestation. She argues that even though Margaret Atwood's work is from 1985, it still resonates in today's culture, since the fictional world created in the novel seems to resemble the nonfictional world President Trump is creating today. The analyses showed that the main character in *The Handmaid's Tale* has a female power that is manifested in the form of speech and that this is an internalized power. Whereas the main character of *Catching Fire* has an externalized political power, she is also able to project her caring, but rebellious nature onto the population. Both of their powers are heavily influenced by the dystopian world they reside in. The researcher has concluded that the oppression from the government, in both cases, heavily influenced the development of female power. Neither of the characters would have had to develop this power if they were not in a state of oppression. The type of female power they developed was also a result of this oppression (3).

Marome (2005), noting that Michel Foucault's focus on power relationships has drawn political scientists, political philosophers, and feminists to his texts, argues that Foucault's work is important for feminist analyses, because it shares with feminists an intense and critical gaze at sexuality, 'power and knowledge.' though, Foucault's politics of Western sexuality leaves female sexuality invisible. To complete this historical account of sexuality requires feminist critiques which extend and alter the analysis to include female sexuality. Thus, the question is not if, but how Foucault should be situated into contemporary feminist theory. Marome tries to examine four major criticisms that traditional feminists have argued against Foucault's understanding of theory-justification, power relations, collective politics, and gender neutrality. He suggests that since Foucault has neglected gender difference in his history of sexuality, feminists should appropriate only the aspects of Foucauldian philosophy that are conducive to gender analysis and move beyond Foucault's androcentrism to create alternative histories of sexuality and opportunities for resistance (117).

The problem dealt with in this study concerns the representation of gender, or the discourse of gender and how it works as a counter-discourse and challenges the dominant discourse of the society. These days, writing about and discussing the role and rights of women in the society is a commonplace of literary classes and journals. However, feminism can be traced back to the publication of *Vindication of the Rights of Women* by Mary Wollstonecraft. Later in nineteenth century, the movement found more strength when the first wave of feminism called for the equality of men and women. The social, cultural, economic and political changes of the Victorian age made women want a change in their social status as well.

The second wave of feminism which emerged after the world war in the writings of Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millet, and Betty Freidan, tried to show how female characters are portrayed by the male authors. In fact, "they saw literary texts as models and agents of power" (Guerin, 2004). Kate Millet in her *Sexual Politics* concludes that women's "interior colonization [by men] is sturdier than any form of segregation, more uniform, and certainly more enduring" (24-25).

The feminism depicted in Alderman's *The Power* is a very good example of Elaine Showalter's third period of women's literary development. In the first period (1840-1880), which Showalter calls *Feminine*, the women are under the dominance of the male society and imitate male writers. In the second period (1880-1920), which is called feminism, the women started to recognize and advocate their own rights. The third period which starts in 1920 and continues to our age, is called Female period in which women no longer imitate the male writers and begin to concentrate on representing female experience.

Both the title and the theme of the novels draw our attention to the discourse of power and indeed Foucault is the most prominent figure in discussions of power. A very important aspect of Foucault's discourse analysis is his theory of subjectivity. Michel Foucault argues that subjects are created in discourses and then evolve through discursively formed social practices and power.

In his discussion of power, Foucault argues that there is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself. A superb formula: power exercised continuously and for what turns out to be at minimal cost. (155)

Foucault believes that *The power* makes human act in a special way. However, he later adds that "where there is power there is resistance" (95). Wijitbusaba Marome argues that, for Foucault, power has a dual nature; it both limits and creates possibilities for individuals. Strategies of power gravitate toward the solidification and strengthening of themselves (119).

Monique Deveaux argues that first wave feminists draw a similarity between this conceptualization of power and "women's acquiescence to, and collusion with, patriarchal standards of femininity" (6). However, the second wave feminists, as Marome also notes, have taken up Foucault's work on power, his *Power/Knowledge* and *The History of Sexuality* vol.1, in a different way to stress the possibilities of resistance over the fact of domination.

Some feminists say they love the future described in Naomi Alderman's *The Power*, although she describes a world in which men cannot vote, are prosecuted, raped, and then murdered. "Power" does not represent a future. It's a fiction. It's a satire (with a lot of horror). The story tells how women suddenly discover that their bodies can produce a deadly electric charge. They use this force to fight men. This is hardly realistic and is not even intended to be on the agenda.

Nobody in their right sense (unless they intentionally want to denigrate a movement) would think that it is a prediction or a desirable representation of the future. The book does not retreat and completely reverses the structure of power. The men who read the book will know what it means to reverse the structure of power. Suddenly, parents and society ask men to behave appropriately and not go astray too late. Any interaction between a man and a woman is based on female supremacy, and men are painfully aware of it, while women are not. Men must constantly fear being controlled and raped.

That's why feminists love the book. Not because of "the future she portrays", but because she slaps one with their own privilege. For example, if one feels that what is written in the book is horrible, she should perhaps remember that the things written in the book are exactly as they are, except for the female gender. That's why feminism is needed. That's why this book is valuable. Women now know how horrible the power structure would be - and will be aware of their privileges.

*The Power*, is so exhilarating and nauseating. She imagines a world in which women reign: "Men have evolved to become strong guardians of the farm, while women - with babies to protect against injury - have had to become aggressive." And she imagines the events that could have led to this: a reversal of roles, in which women are able to exert the same violence as men who have sold and violated and diminished their bodies, the same rape, the same desire to control, the same greed; first to get revenge, and then just because it feels good. Late in the novel, a group of women attack a refugee camp: "There is no sense in what is done," writes Alderman. Women "know that nobody cares about what's going on here". And then: "They do it because they can."

A central conception of the novel is that it was written by a woman - whose name is an anagram of that of Alderman - and the narrative is framed by a series of letters between the "real" author and the author "fictional," Naomi abruptly, crisp, demanding, Neil, "shy, sorry, and frustrated. The image of the established but still unstable matriarchy that emerges from their letters is undeniably the world in which we currently live, simply inverted between the sexes: it is a place where "it is what it means to be a woman". force and not feel fear or pain ", it is hard to believe that there were " brave men trying to provoke war "and" there are still places where baby boys are regularly aborted " . "Neil" struggles with his historical novel to get an idea of how this feminine rule could have

come true. What he settles on is an eye for an eye, made possible by the fact that women discover in themselves a physical force that can be used to torture and rape.

Throughout the story, there may be a voice of god - playful, devious, omniscient, pushing the story forward - which could be read as Alderman herself, and near the end of her story, she says: you: my optimism about the human race is no longer what it used to be. In many ways, it is a book with no hope. This desperation is linked to the fact that there is no legitimate reason to govern patriarchy, not really. In a few brief pages of *Sapiens*, Harari tackles everything from reproduction strategies to intellect. He rejects even the physical force. There is "no good answers" for male domination, except for what Alderman describes in one of the coaching letters as "five thousand years of entrenched structures" and "history books" that we all read in our childhood ... according to traditional stories ". Tell stories, then. Myths built.

Gender equality is far better now than it was in the past (Victorian Women's Trust 2017). "Power" tells a time (which could be now or in a few years) during which young women wake up to realize that they have new abilities - can produce electricity from their hands. This power can be passed on to older women with a touch. Suddenly, the balance of power in the world changes: women walk with weapons, men become the weaker sex, and men do not have time to take control before conquering the world.

Alderman's writing is beautiful, both poetic and percussive. The characters she has chosen to tell this story are the perfect witnesses of the evolution of the situation: Roxy, daughter of a powerful British gangster; Margot, a very ambitious local politician; Tunde, a young Nigerian turned photojournalist to document the changes in the world; Allie, a foster child who takes a leadership role in the new world; Jocelyn, Margot's daughter, who has problems with the changes, and Darrell, Roxy's brother, whose motives are often unclear. Changing between these characters gives us a broader picture of the world as it transforms, and they are all fully trained characters - one may not like what they do, or agree with their actions but they cannot doubt the veracity of their stories. They are all very human, mistakes and all.

There are also apocryphal documents throughout the work - sketches of statues and illustrations of women of all times, messages on electronic and electronic forums - that add to the almost historical sense of the book. This is Atwood's "servant's tale"; the maids, after years of abuse, have risen and men have nowhere to hide.

What makes the reader think the most is that women have been saying for years, almost jokingly, how good the world would be if they directed it. They would not be so inclined to go to war - women are not warmongers like men. They do not have their fragile ego to protect. Cases of violence and rape would collapse - they are a symptom of a male dominated society. Salaries would be equal. Sexual Trafficking - nonexistent. The decisions would be made with a cold head, probably on mimosas in the veranda. "Men" make fun of women by looking up at the latest example of misogyny.

It is not said that it would not happen - or could not - happen. But there must be something missing. We are all human. And the title of the book is twofold: women have a new power (electric), then women have all the power (politics). And absolute power corrupts absolutely, no matter what the gender is. Alderman understands this, and looking at this world that she has created creates power from one hand to the other is quite terrifying. There is so much hatred and anger in the world right now, so many absolutes, so many things "if we were in charge, it would not happen" and vice versa ... but in the end, it's always the same thing, and whoever has the power must take responsibility for it.

This is not a book that can be taken lightly, it is a book that will haunt the reader, several days after its end, and for good reason. These are thoughts that people all must have, conversations that must be had - because, although it is a speculative fiction, it strikes harder and closer to home than it would be. comfortable with.

Also *The Power* is a novel that mainly is about power and gender, but it also depicts the damage caused by a social system that tries, at least by language, to define everything. this or that, in black and white without any myriad shades of gray in between. It can be called a binary novel. The frustration with the binary explodes from one of the letters "Neil", a heartfelt cry that says "Gender is a game where you can go anywhere. The very idea that there are two things and which one to choose is the problem. Sex and gender are so much more complex than men or women, as all intersex, transsexual, non-binary, sexist, nonconformist women or women will tell. More complex, more fluid, potentially more free.

Admittedly, Alderman does not pursue this argument particularly effectively. She has two characters, one, who do not fall into the normative categories and the language she uses to describe them is that of intimidation. Jocelyn and Ryan meet through "deviant and abnormal websites", people whose "chromosome irregularity" makes them "weird", at best objects of derision, fear and disgust. Even Jocelyn cannot tolerate the pressure: "all she wants is to be ordinary". But who can define the normal? People in power of course. At the end of the book, apart from fiction, in the last paragraph of his thanks, Alderman speaks of two of the illustrations in the book, which are based on "true archaeological discoveries of the ancient city of Mohenjo-Daro, in the Indus ". Valley ": a statue representing the body of a woman and the head of a man who, without thinking of the context in which they were built, are archaeologists named Priest King and Dancing Girl. The people in power are not just kings and queens, politicians and army leaders. They are archaeologists, historians, teachers and storytellers.

The same voice of god / alderman who admits pessimism has a thread throughout the book: "You cannot get there from here." Allie - the character who hears the voice - wants to lead a female separatist movement, she wants to create a matriarchy, she wants to rebuild society on principles of love, with the unscrupulous warning she gets from "possessing". Finally, she decides that "you cannot get there from now on" means the necessary apocalypse - exactly the same time Margot, ruthlessly climbing the political ladder from the United States to the presidency, hears a voice in her head saying also: "You can stop here."

The implication in the novel, or at least in the belief system that Allie and Margot operate, is that one cannot get the power s/he wants without a quote from another false statement pronounced by Alderman / God - "dismantle the old house and start again." But outside the limits of the novel she claims to have been written by a man, Alderman, the current author, has read the word of the Lord.

## 2. Methodology and Research Questions

This research is library-based, besides using online materials such as eBooks, articles, and interviews. Using an interdisciplinary approach in applying Foucault's ideas to Naomi Alderman's *The Power*, It therefore focuses on

1. How does the third period of women's literary development coincide with Foucault's "discourse of power"?
2. How do the traits of major female characters in *The Power* challenge the conventional gender roles attributed to women?
3. How are the major female characters in *The Power* portrayed to advocate the discourse of power?

## 3. Discussion

Science fiction, a genre of literature once dominated by men, has seen an increase in the number of imaginative fictions focusing on the relationships between the sexes and between sexuality and power. This literature is known as feminist dystopian fiction, a genre in which the complex relationship between individual power and societal power is discussed through a reassessment of gender relations and institutionalized racism and sexism. Feminist dystopian novels often radicalize women's inferior position in contemporary society and present a social reality in which captivity and severe oppression of women are the norm (Booker 340).

Alderman (2017a), novel, *The Power*, was released in 2017, right in the middle of the fourth feminist wave. The fourth wave is often associated with online presence, technology development and the ability to remain anonymous online, resulting in more sexual harassment via social media. Technology becomes an integral part of *The Power's* storytelling, as stories about women's electric forces spread quickly via mobile phones and the Internet. This aspect comes back in the four narratives that structure the novel: Tunde is a reporter who films everything he sees, Allie and Roxy finally use the Internet to spread their message of revolution and Margot strengthens its political position as mayor in seeking support. foreigners online. It is therefore this evolution of rapid access to the latest news that has partially contributed to radicalize the rise of women and to popularize their cause. Alderman explores modern conflicts, including the influence of fast online sharing, and links them to the visibility and freedom of women in the public sphere. In addition, Alderman invokes the idea of dystopia, a "bad place" (Daniels and Bowen, 2003), which is in the visible future, waiting to happen. She builds this sense of anticipation by associating the development of the wrong place with the maturity of her characters.

Alderman's story is based on the idea that neither sex is able to stand on moral heights when all power is in his hands. Women can be as violent and interested as men. But that does not stop Allie, a black adoptive girl finally able to defend herself against her abusively obscene "father" or Roxy, the illegitimate girl of a London gangster, escaping the assassins sent to kill her. mother and finally take over the estate of his murderous father.

Alderman shows the different ways societies try to suppress the rebellion and eradicate the difference: girls are forced to live in camps, some countries execute women as witches, others control them with drugs and rhetoric and, of course, the US finds the way to make profits mercenary force of young women who can be deployed at the right price as "peacekeepers".

"Power" comes from a newly discovered muscle or organ that runs along the clavicle. Called "skein", not all girls have it and some have "defective" skeins. There are also boys and men who have a skein, although the novel is just one example. Margot Cleary's daughter, Jocelyn, has a skein "defective"; she is teased and tormented and finds solace only in a relationship with a boy who has a skein. Both are dismissed as "abnormal" and Cleary responds to the relationship by banning Jocelyn from seeing the boy, calling him a terrorist and sending him to the camp. Later, when Roxy, "the most powerful" of all the women, loses her power after a violent attack, she finds comfort with the journalist Tunde who escapes a scene of horrible mass murders in a refugee camp and finds a comfort in the strength perceived by their weakness.

Victimization as a thematic feature in feminist dystopias is not uncommon, as most feminist dystopian narratives explain how women's social roles and public positions have been affected by power structures that regard men as gender. dominant. It may be argued that the public sphere of the modern world has helped to institutionalize the idea of women as a weaker sex, and any feminine individuality is absorbed by the generalization of this weaker kind (Feuer, 1997). In *The Power*, victimization is related to the concept of survival. Reddy argues that in analyzing the meaning of survival, Atwood did not necessarily mean the continuity of physical existence, but rather the sense of seeking dignity in a society that attempts to restrict or eliminate individuality (1). This also applies to the representation of survival in *The Power*, because the idea of fighting for dignity in a fight against the social reality of the novel is here represented by the acquisition by women of electrical powers; it becomes their way of surviving. In addition, the novel respond to the concept of women's subordination in Western societies and the role women themselves play in accepting, and even enforcing, subordination (Foley, 1990).

The concept of victimization goes from domestic problems to a dominant societal problem. The opening scenes of *The Power* give a clear picture of the violence experienced by Allie and Roxy in their youth, which suggests the regularity of domestic violence. As the novel progresses, victim status shifts from the private to the public, and stories of survival are shared through the uprising of women. Margot as Mayor Cleary becomes misogynist, selfish and intrusive. She no longer embodies the mother who desires gender equality, but becomes a political ship that



recognizes and accepts violence and murder as a tactic to gain power. Allie's motivation to start a revolution for women was fueled by the physical and mental abuse she had suffered from her stepfather. This aggression, however, turned out to have been planned by her mother-in-law, who "saw the devil" (Alderman, 2017b) in Allie. Even Tunde ends up being the victim of his own curiosity: he is tortured and threatened by women who abuse their powers. In the end, *The Power's* story focuses on women's empowerment, but also shows that abuse of power is not limited to the male sex. Alderman argues that fighting for equality is useless when society clings to sexist discrimination.

*The Power* recognizes the oppression of women in Third World countries, told in Tunde's story as a journalist. He travels to Riyadh, capital of Saudi Arabia, where women are deprived of rights considered paramount to Western civilization. One of these rights is the driving of a car, a common right reserved for men, which therefore adds to the inherent power structure. Alderman is radicalizing this form of oppression by giving these women the power to blow up the car they are not allowed to drive, suggesting that radical physical domination can change institutionalized discrimination. Tunde's narrative gives an image of the power of women's gathering and gravity, which shifts the balance of power, by describing how violence increases women's motivation to resist the police and the government, and ultimately leads to the destruction of all governments. the world (Alderman, 2017a). *The Power* also develops the topics of trafficking in human beings and sex trafficking. This last part is an important aspect of how Alderman structured his story: it highlights controversial and difficult topics, such as trafficking for sexual purposes, as an institutionalized and ignored aspect of modern society. She points it out through Tunde's narration and her contact with a twenty-year-old girl who says "it was not just them (the traffickers). The police knew what was going on and did nothing. The men of the city would beat their wives if they tried to bring us more food. The mayor knew what was going on, the owners knew what was happening, the factors knew what was going on" (Alderman 94).

Every dystopia is the utopia of someone else. In *the Power*, all kinds of women thrive while men seem to have their happiness. The intention of this thesis is not to defend the wellbeing of one sex or the other at the expense of the other, but to expose the roles of the two sexes in the historical constructions they represent. This is shown by Ketterer's analysis: "Atwood does not have to worry about the destruction of one of the two sexes; it is with their mutual survival" (216). Once we realize that we have created these unfair circumstances, and all the worst we can conceive, we will realize that we have the power and the responsibility to change our present for the better. Our expectations should not be exorbitant, but even our tempered solutions could help us: "The best we can hope for is probably to create a society that strives not to let people go. And to remain vigilant vis-avis the people we exclude, whatever they are. Listen. Try to do things as often as possible. Imagine how it could be different" (Alderman, 2017a). Mankind could do with a worse manifesto. Inequality is everywhere.

Beginning in Saudi Arabia and then in other countries, women seize political control and vengeance violently on the men who enslaved and abused them. They use the Power to defend themselves and liberate themselves, and that changes their vision of themselves. According to some sources, fights in playgrounds would leave boys, and sometimes girls, breathless and shaky. To ease the parents' worries, the government is separating the schools instead of shutting them down, separating the boys from the girls: "Boy-only buses were driving them safely to boys' schools" (Alderman, 2017b).

New movements are moving around the world. The boys begin to dress more effeminately, because "girl" now seems to be "strong". The girls also disguise themselves, but only to hide themselves like a wolf disguised as a sheep (Alderman, 2017b). Abstinence is the official line among politicians who are absolutely not ready to face a complete overhaul of gender power dynamics. Girls simply should not do it and it will pass. When training camps are finally installed, they teach the girls breathing exercises to keep control of their power. The thought is this: a treatment will be developed and everything will be in order, as if everyone wanted it.

A test is developed to detect the presence of electrostatic power. Initially, it is used to determine whether newly born girls have developed skeins, but it becomes clear that such diagnoses are not necessary - all female infants have them. Once it is clear that adult women can also have the power, the test becomes mandatory: "Some positions involving contact with children and the public have been declared inappropriate by the governor's office" (Alderman, 2017a).

Margot Cleary, a mayor who has the power awakened in her by her daughter, nevertheless passes the test and concludes that the test is necessary, because any woman who cannot help but cope with such slight pressure is a threat to her. And society. This knowledge gives Margot a different power, the assurance that she is still the most important person in the room. She does not even try to follow what her colleagues said at a meeting, because she was absorbed in the notion that "it is really foolish of one of these men, because she could kill them. In three movements" (Alderman, 2017a).

The changing tides result in a proliferation of self-defense products for men. A wrist-mounted Taser gun is presented as a means of leveling the playing field, but is then removed after its use has resulted in the death of seventeen men. Defensive rubber socks are another way for men to keep up, but there appears to be no market for self-defense classes or self-defense armor because the funds are routed to camps. Training for girls. This leads to a growing movement in search of justice for men. Activists gather anonymously on Internet forums to discuss their conspiracy theories about the origins of skeins and to encourage each other to make a difference, to unleash and to wage war" (Alderman, 2017b). They also share stories of abuse. One of these bullying boy stories seems to be provoking a group called Male Power to attack a women's clinic. They claim that this is part of a strategy to force the government to act against the enemies of man, but the world has been irreversibly transformed and their voices are no longer the loudest. They are not the main target audience for public discourse, but submissive spectators. Advertisements show young women showing their long curved arches in front of stunned silent boys: "Be strong,

they say [to women], that's how you get everything you want" (Alderman, 2017a). Now, it is women who tell men to stay safe and to fall behind them, where they will be protected from danger.

A similar change occurs in the media. While still on the air, a pair of TV anchors quarrel over the possible existence of power throughout history. Tom insists that if it had already existed, it should have been created systematically because we did not want it - who would? "Would you tell me if you could do something like that, do not you, Kristen?" (Alderman, 2017b). Things go from bad to worse when Margot appears. While she offers training camps for girls, Tom is visibly scared. He is trying to advocate for the government-approved strategy, but his co-host rejects it while expressing his full support for the idea. The already fragile relations between coworkers' collapse with the announcement of the terrorist attack of Male Power. Kristen's insistence that she cannot even understand what they're protesting makes Tom make a tirade about the inequality that is dragging him out of the studio.

Tom is replaced by a news presenter who has a distinctly different attitude from his predecessor: "Matt laughs in an attractive way and says: Now I do not understand that kind of thing, but I'll tell you what I know about: ointment" (Alderman, 2017b). The condescending way in which his ten-year-old main partner treats him reaches an all-time high when thinking points about the number of men actually needed are gaining popularity. The idea is that men are dangerous and commit the vast majority of crimes. They are less intelligent and less diligent. They are more likely to suffer from diseases, thus draining the country's resources. It is not necessary to do the same for reproduction as a woman, so one in ten women is essential. Matt's worries are swept under the carpet with Kristen's soft hand on his knee: "And of course, they do not talk about guys as great as you" (Alderman, 2017b). Comforted, Matt says he blames extremist human rights activists before moving on to a segment on the fun self-defense moves you can practice at home. While Kristen assumes the position that the reader should see occupied by a man, it becomes clear that Alderman reverses gender stereotypical roles and socially accepted inequality, in order to more clearly illustrate their injustice.

Ubiquitous power has an impact on people's sexual lives. A girl in an alley cajoles a boy with a cracking hand in the hollow of her back. A journalist who sees him while passing, he finds it sexy, which is why he is soon embarking on an electric love affair. Internet pornography is "reworked when pleasure and pain are linked in new ways" (Charles). Fear becomes as important as desire, physical pain is part of the act as much as desire. Electricity can make a man stand up, which allows for prolonged sex, and some women "enjoyably play in bed with willing participants" (Alderman), but these things inevitably escape. It hurts a bit if you want it, a lot if you do not want it. A little spark can also be used to injure the vocal cords, which perfectly complements the powers of inducing paralysis and erection, making everyone a silent and easy target of rape. The new reality takes some time to settle, the victims thinking that this is not what happens to a man. Except it's now. The justifications of the rapists remain the same: "He asked for it. He begged us for it" (Alderman, 2017a).

In addition to revealing how male-dominated societies influence the interpersonal relationships between women and men, Alderman also shows how the dominance of a gender influences the politics and affairs of the state. In Saudi Arabia, a religious uncle finds two of his nieces practicing their devil together. He calls his friends to punish the girls, but they end up dead. Neighbors who saw the unfortunate incident gather. A dozen women turn into a hundred, then a thousand. Protesters seeking justice for the dead girls are extending their laws to problematic laws prohibiting men and women from holding hands and banning women from driving. Similar protests are taking place in India, with women coming together significantly in markets where they would never have been allowed to walk alone, and not if they were under seventy. They proclaim that men are now "those who should not leave their homes alone at night. They are the ones who should be scared" (Alderman, 2017b).

A revolution begins in Moldova when a teenage maidservant passes power to victims of trafficking for sexual purposes. They wait in the dark, until their captors come to take one for the night, when they leap. They kill all the men in the house but are still not satisfied: "I'm not just them. The police knew what was going on and did nothing. The men of the city would beat their wives if they tried to bring us more food. The mayor knew what was going on" (Alderman, 2017a). The world capital of human trafficking is soon invaded by Paramilitary gangs of women who have freed themselves from sexual slavery, this is how the wife of a now deceased president comes to proclaim a new country, Bessapara. The republic of women installs the wife as new president.

As a result of changes in secular politics, the results of female domination are also visible in the religious realm. While Bolivia proclaims its own female pope, a new religion appears in the United States. It starts with the Metis girl who fled foster care after killing a sexual predator in self-defense. Having found refuge in a convent with other girls expelled from their homes after using their powers, she performed a miracle. Thanks to its precise accuracy, she is able to eliminate the blockage that causes convulsions in another girl. As she heals more and more, even temporarily, she becomes the de facto leader of the group. Now having a sequel, she reintroduces herself into the world as Mother Eve and the world takes note of it.

His teaching begins by temporarily changing the pronouns of divinity: "God is neither a woman nor a man but these two things. But now she has come to show us a new face to her face, a face we have ignored for too long" (Alderman, 2017b). When the followers of Mother Eve fear to forget Jesus, she explains that the creator is greater than the created thing - so it is with God and the world, it is the same with Jesus and the Mother. Her sermon draws attention to the abandoned female figures of all religions: "Jews: look for Miriam, and not Moses, for what you can learn from her. Muslims: look at Fatimah, not Mohammed. Buddhists: Remember Tara, the mother of liberation. Christians: pray Mary for your salvation" (Alderman, 2017a). She finds the scriptures that work for her, rewrite the bits that do not work. We no longer teach that men and women must live together as husband and wife. He is happier that women live together, help each other and comfort each other.

In time, Mother Eve used televangelism to consolidate her myth. In front of a gigantic gathering, the cameras carefully capturing the miracle, she heals the broken back of a boy and, miraculously, his legs fly away. What the crowd does not know is that this lovely child was chosen for his friend from the hospital, an even bigger believer, that Eve was not sure he could heal, and who also had acne, which did not allow him to produce appropriate television content.

Empowerment can very easily slip into supremacy: "Instead of fighting back, women commit old crimes" (Read). Domestic violence against men is on the rise, as is the killing of men by women. In Bessapara, things degenerate. The police no longer investigate the murders of men: "If a man is found dead, it is presumed that a gang of revenge would have given him his just reward for his acts committed before" (Alderman, 2017a). This is the result of a lost territorial battle for which the president blames the men of Bessapara, whom she suspects of selling information to the enemy. This is the necessary pretext for passing a law which means that every man must have his passport with him at all times.

In *The Power*, examples of inversion of gender identity markers are visible. We see a linear change in a TV show in which host Kristen gains confidence and self-confidence and becomes the lead facilitator with "gravitas" (211), while male host Matt is ditzzy, attractive and apparently intended to complement Kristen: "Kristen says, the fourth quarter does not look good." Matt bursts out laughing and says, "Now I do not understand that kind of thing at all, but I'll tell you what I know about it: crack apples." (246) There are also many examples of non-linear Alderman constructing a discourse on gender and tears by introducing characters who try to resist the speech. In doing so, Alderman emphasizes the absurdity of contemporary Western gender. speech, some of the system's flaws and problems and the arbitrariness of the genre are made visible as a result of social construction, like the male character Darrell, who has a skein implanted in his own body. who actively chooses to oppose the idea that skein is the equivalent of a woman, which further deconstructs gender binary and shows that gender identity can be an active and indeterminate choice in biology.

Alderman shows how power, even elusive, tends to corrupt the wearer. The reasons why women seek power are not all pure and power corrupts them as much as it would have a man. However, since the reader is not used to a world where women are in power, it is all the more striking to see women corrupted by him, and the nature of corruption inherent in power is brought to light. Towards the end of the novel, a heartbreaking description of the violence perpetrated by women on men:

What is done here today does not make sense. There is no territory to gain, no revenge, no soldiers to take. They kill the older men in front of the younger ones, the palms of the hands to the face and throat, [...] Many of them take men and use them or just playing with them. They offer a man the choice to keep his arms or legs. He chooses the legs, but they break their market. (283)

Historian Mary Beard writes in her Manifesto Women and Power from 2017: "If women are not perceived as fully belonging to power structures, it is certain that it is the power we must redefine rather than women. If our understanding of power leads us to cruelty and sadism towards the less powerful gender, the solution certainly does not lie in the fact that the victim type becomes more powerful, and vice versa. (Mary 83) A change in power discourse is needed, including a change in the Naomi Alderman introduced and discusses this conceptual issue in order to empower the powerful to feel empowered to act towards their subjects. This requires the rules of the game more equitable, which are not more so in itself, because of arbitrary categorizations such as gender and gender expression, with our power discourse in *The Power*, but the question is then to know if human beings will have the capacity to change this discourse of power when it is a norm and poured like that of the world is executed.

## 4. Conclusion

*The Power* of Naomi Alderman is a remarkably popular novel and laureate of the Baileys Prize for Female Fiction. This speculative fiction explores the form of power in patriarchy by using a singular principle according to which the women of the planet obtain as an evolutionary accident a new organ in the clavicle - the skein - producing electric shocks. Obtaining this power allows women to challenge the power dynamics of patriarchy.

Even though *The Power* seems to be an example of a new way of understanding feminist dystopia and utopia, when we use the reversal of gender roles, the lack of references to the main trends of the feminist wave Currently, the rather simplistic dynamics of oppression, *The Power* fails to build a feminist achievable utopia, also creating a feminist dystopia.

At first, therefore, we can identify Alderman's text as a modern feminist dystopia; the novel opens with a modern society, a reflection of our present society, in which the same patriarchal discourses and abuses are played out. With many characters such as Allie, for example, systematic sexual abuse is succinctly presented to illustrate the dystopian initial state of the world. That said, Alderman is content to comment on the current state of affairs and points out that we are already living in a modern dystopia for women if we focus our attention on the various grievances that are still unresolved. Feminist critical dystopia, in fact, profoundly describe the great patriarchal narratives to dismantle them, proposing a myriad of freshly polished visions of alternative social constructs. They also often criticize the omission by meta-narratives of the marginalization of women in terms of class, race, sexual orientation, and issues of femininity or pregnancy, among others. Therefore, the important thing is to try to highlight a distinct strategy of social or political oppression and to develop an alternative discourse. Alderman painfully describes what is obvious on many occasions, forgetting the subtler ways in which patriarchy can influence the current situation.

In this sense, feminist utopianism functions as an agent of politicization, revealing new forms of democracy and pluralism of values. We therefore conclude that a contemporary feminist utopia must consider a society capable of

ending gender oppression as well as proposing an alternative policy that overturns the patriarchal social and economic organization.

Unfortunately, Neil's timid commentary is insufficient as a wish for change and exposes only disillusionment: something must be done, but we do not know what it is. A novel which, allegedly, protests against patriarchy but is built on the basis of binary oppositions, as the power dictates, will always be a source of problems. Despite the fact that the texts aim at subversion, transgression and deconstruction of binary notions, especially those related to gender, they use binary oppositions that go in the direction of the following divisions: dystopia / utopia, patriarchy / matriarchy, man / woman, subjugation / freedom and injustice / equality. Thus, masculinity is identified as the source of social ills that invariably place the woman in the position of the other victim. The subversion of binary notions should be the beginning of a real deconstruction, because without denying the negative values inherent in binarism, we normalize them, so that the utopian opposition impulse remains incomplete. The conclusion we reach is that by accepting that gender roles have a function, as Alderman does, we affirm their validity.

The real form of power is something much more complicated than simply imposing the physical nature of men's muscles and sexual abuse. Like other feminist critical dystopias and utopias, it can be argued that patriarchal power concerns lack of education, imposed belief systems, centuries of enslavement, psychological campaigns against liberation processes, oppressive economic systems groups of people - for reasons of race, gender or sexual orientation - as well as the criminalization of certain practices such as abortion. Not just brute force, as Alderman suggests. At the end of the novel, the voice inside Allie turns out to be the voice of power asking to create a new order of subjugation. Therefore, power is presented as a temptation, or a kind of demonic voice from a Judeo-Christian point of view, as a negative product that maintains domination, violence and obedience through fear, abuse and physical strength. Thus, Alderman concludes that what makes the system fail is the physical power that one sex has against the other, and that what is wrong is the desire to dominate, what it ultimately calls the "power". Alderman's portrayal of empowerment or the retention of power is, logically, ideologically patriarchal - a way of understanding empowerment diametrically opposed to the ideology championed by fourth-wave feminism. A world in which the empowerment of feminists has been achieved through a patriarchal use of power cannot result in a feminist utopia but a dystopia that does not represent feminist ideals. The deconstruction of patriarchy is limited to a critique of the most obvious manifestations but does not offer the complex exploration of alternative social narratives that can be revealed by feminist dystopia. As a utopian text, *The Power* omits above all to propose explicitly or implicitly a resolution of the conflict between the sexes, Alderman presenting the genre in a clearly patriarchal way. In the end, alliances between men and women have been erased, even those of the current patriarchy. Thus, power lacks resolution or even hope for a real change or a future bringing a feminist utopia.

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