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REPRESENTATION OF FEMINISM IN CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH LITERATURE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE POWER, NORMAL PEOPLE, AND THE TESTAMENTS

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Abstract
This conference paper explores the portrayal of feminism in three influential texts of modern Anglophone fiction: Naomi Alderman The Power, Sally Rooney, and Margaret Atwood The Testaments. The article claims that these works are not mere repeats of the same feminist message but, in fact, feminism is staged in them in three narrative modes, namely speculative reversal, intimate realism, and institutional testimony. The paper examines the construction of female agency, embodiment, desire, vulnerability, and resistance in each novel through close reading, on qualitative grounds and using a comparative approach, within the social order of each novel. The Power speculates a world where women acquire a new ability to the body and unveils the process of reproduction of domination in the absence of power in justice. Normal People is a feminist literature that embodies relationships of every-day, classed intimacy, emotional labour, consent, and spoke in the world of unequal privatities hard to talk about. The Testaments goes back to Gilead as a reminder of how patriarchal structures endure in surveillance, religious punishment, and gendered educational efforts, and also how witnessing and cooperative patricide weakens authoritarianism. By demonstrating that modern feminist fiction can be the most effective when it recognizes contradiction: the empowerment can become the domination, the intimacy can conceal the coercion, and the survival can cost the compromise. The three novels together illustrate that contemporary feminism in literature is plural, contestive and structurally conscious.

Introduction
Contemporary English female writers do not possess a single stable form, stable political vocabulary and a stable heroine to embody feminism in its form. It is found in dystopian worlds, in which women struggle against the tyranny of the state, in realist fiction, in which gender is made part of speech, and in speculative fiction, where the element of power itself is reconfigured to find out whether it is a gendered domination or a structural domination. Three of such works have been discussed in this paper: The Power by Naomi Alderman, Normal People by Sally Rooney, and The Testaments by Margaret Atwood. Genre, scale, tone and the approach to the narrative are incredibly different in the three novels, but are linked together by a common focus on the negotiation of social formation that governs bodies, desire, speech and power by women. They can be compared in a manner that is therefore valuable as it enables feminism to be seen not as holding a singular theme but as being a literary problem field.

The chosen readings are a part of a recent literary period when the conversations about feminism are spread across the academic world,

mainstream culture, social networks, law courts, and political protests. The Power employs speculative fiction to envision the world in which women have gained the power to generate electricity via their bodies. Reversing the physical hierarchy, which traditionally made women vulnerable, Alderman challenges the reader to question the idea that the power formation leads to justice or that it forms alternative types of control (Alderman, 2016). In comparison, the book of Normal People is formally silent and intimate. The novel by Rooney traces the lives of Marianne and Connell since school in Sligo to university life in Dublin, and the feminism that comes out in the book is one of vulnerability, consent, classes shame, emotional dependency, and the inability to maintain equality within the love void (Rooney, 2018). The Testaments brings back the world of Gilead and creates a focus on the place of women testimony at the centre of the authoritarian collapse. The sequel of The Handmaid Tale by Atwood is an expression of feminism, but telling the stories of Aunt Lydia, Agnes, and Daisy/Nicole, who survive by enabling the mass production of obedience in women and controlling women by means of memory (Atwood, 1985, 2019).

It is the difference in these novels that makes them valuable to read together. A juxtaposition of the dystopian feminist novels only can give a well-worn version of oppression and revolt. The fragmentary nature of interpersonal relations may be taken as dominant in a comparison of only realist novels, but this may ignore the spectacle of structure of law, religion and state violence. The paper poses how modern fiction reflects feminism at various levels of experience by introducing to a single frame a speculative reversal, a relationship novel of realism, and a dystopian testimony narrative. It examines feminism in the body, in the couple, in the family, in the classroom, in the state, and in narrative voice. This comparative scale matters in that feminist criticism has long maintained that gender is not a personal identity but a social relation that is influenced by power (Butler, 1990; hooks, 1984; Moi, 1985).

The thesis of the paper has been that the three texts are the feminism as a bargaining between agency and structure. We find women in each of the novels resisting, choosing, planning, desiring, or talking but in none of the novels do we find the agency as the agency of the individual. The now empowered female body does not necessarily generate ethical politics in The Power. In Normal People, the choices of individuals are curtailed by the society of classes, sexual shame, family violence and gender expectations. In The Testaments a resistance occurs within and against the institution that educates women to reproduce their own subordination. This fact implies that the feminist worth of such texts is not based on whether such texts depict the women as victorious. It is based on how they reveal the circumstances under which agency becomes possible, compromised or distorted.

Another large-scale tension in modern feminist culture that is also addressed in the paper is the distinction between empowerment as an individual self-assertion and feminism as a structural critique. The sphere of postfeminism and neoliberal feminism frequently presents independence and liberty as being confident, free, strong, and self-promoting (Banet-Weiser, 2018; Gill, 2007, 2017; Rottenberg, 2018). This discourse is complicated by the three novels. They demonstrate that fear, class, surveillance, religion, family reputation, sexual vulnerability and the imbalanced distribution of social legitimacy can influence choice. Feminist representation is thus given a literary and political treatment in the comparative reading. It then poses the question not only of the types of women represented in these novels but also of the types of social worlds that render their action either meaningful or dangerous.

The paper is divided into seven parts. Following this introduction, the literature review describes pertinent feminist literary criticism, gender performativity theories, intersectional and postfeminist criticism, and study of feminist dystopian. The study is then focussed on the research questions. The research design describes the qualitative comparative close-reading format, the rationale behind the selection of texts and analytical categories. The section of analysis and discussion parallels the three novels of the four major concerns, including power and embodiment, intimacy and consent, institutions and testimony, and contradictions of feminist agency. The

conclusion provides a conclusion to the results and the contribution of the study to the English works of literature today.

Literature Review

The theoretical framework of this study is that of feminist literary criticism in that it seeks to understand how literature constructs gendered experience, how literature recreates or challenges the patriarchal order, and how female writing can generate other forms of knowledge. The difference between feminist and gynocriticism by Showalter is still of help here. The Feminist criticism analyses the representational nature of women in the literary tradition and gynocriticism focuses on women as writers and creators of meaning (Showalter, 1979). The current paper is based on both impulses. It examines women characters and gendered institutions within the novels, but it also looks at the construction of narrative forms by Alderman, Rooney, and Atwood that allows feminist critique.

This narrative of feminist literary theory provided by Moi also applies in that it cautions against considering women as some open or general category (Moi, 1985). The modern feminist reading should thus not presume that all characters who are of female gender express the identical political stance. This fact is validated in the three novels that are the subject here. The characters Roxy, Allie/Mother Eve, Marianne, Agnes, Aunt Lydia, and Daisy/Nicole hold varying positions in the class, their physical condition, and their role in the institution, and their moral issues. Their tales do not bring up to one act of emancipation. Instead, they show feminism in literature usually operates on antithesis, contradiction and biased knowledge.

The theory of the gender performativity developed by Butler helps in understanding how gender is fostered in these novels through repetitions, norms, rituals and familiar scripts of social action (Butler, 1990). Gender does not emerge as an innate being; sexuality is built up through the training, anticipation, clothing, language, recrimination, lust and social punishment. This is more pronounced in the Testaments, where women are taught to become wives, religious, and to fear their own bodies. It can also be observed in the case of normal people that the performance of masculinity and femininity vary within school, at home and in the university. Even The Power, which seems to make a biological turnabout, ends up proving that bodies are read in institutions, myths, militaries, media, and collective narratives.

Another theoretical provision is intersectionality. The description of intersectionality provided by Crenshaw reveals that gender oppression cannot be divested of race, social, law, and other forms of identities and power (Crenshaw, 1991). Although the three novels vary in their willingness to explicitly describe the intersectional difference, the approach of this paper considers gender as interdependent with other social categories, as opposed to being defined in isolation of them. This aspect is especially crucial in the case of Normal People since the difference between classes influences both the emotional life of Marianne and Connell as much as gender does. Gender in the Testaments is coupled with religious authority, age, reproductive ability, literacy, and institution level. The Power envisions gender reversing all over the world, yet it also demonstrates that race, country, religion and violence do not vanish when women are acquiring a new body power.

Of particular interest in this paper is the argument of hooks that feminism should be a struggle against sexist oppression, and not a lifestyle identity (hooks, 1984). Such a difference matters in the fact that feminism frequently becomes visible, branded, confident, and successful in the current culture. Banet-Weiser (2018), identifies the emergence of popular feminism and popular misogyny, and Gill (2007, 2017) identifies postfeminism as a sense of personal choice, self-surveillance, and individualism, alongside bodily discipline. Rottenberg (2018) goes on further to opine that neoliberal feminism turns feminist aspiration into individual self-management. Such narrations contribute to the understanding of why the category of empowerment is a volatile one in the chosen novels. A character can be seen as strong and at the same time being within the ranks of domination, or a character can be seen as powerless and secretly amassing knowledge to fight back later on.

Of particular significance to feminist literary criticism is the notion of the body. The celebrated explanation of woman as a socially constructed being with the prerequisite of otherness, provided by de Beauvoir, remains to be in the continuity of gender analysis (de Beauvoir, 2011). The female body is not neutral in the mentioned novels. In The Power the body has turned into a physical source of power. The body in normal people is a place of desire, exposure, injury, consent, and vulnerability in terms of feelings. The female body in The Testaments is controllable by reproductive ideology, surveillance, and clothing, as well as, religious language and training. The institutional regulation of bodies can be read with the help of Foucault account of discipline as it demonstrates that the power creates itself not only with the help of direct violence but also the repetitiveness of routines and internalized surveillance (Foucault, 1977).

The second area of scholarship that informed the paper is feminist dystopian criticism. Dystopians tend to embody boosting the reader by exaggerating existing tendencies in the world of the reader, which could be viewed as oppressive arrangements. Moylan (2000) believes that dystopia provides mental maps of past crises, whereas Baccolini and Moylan (2003) stress on dystopia, which is critical, as it does not lose hope because it resists, recalls, and has open endings. The story of the continuance of hope thought in dystopian science fiction offered by Baccolini is specifically handy when reading The Power and The Testaments, to the extent of which offer no remainder utopian resolutions (Baccolini, 2004). In both readings, the feminist imagination cannot escape the fact that liberation can be unsuccessful, perverted or have to be corrupted or achieve liberation in ways that are morally questionable.

Feminist dystopia literature written by women is a literary dystopia that has many different forms where the language, narration, and alternative discourse play an essential role in the writing style of women (Cavalcanti, 2000). This directly applies to The Testaments that are organized in the form of a testimony. The politics of feminism in the novel relies not just on action but the keeping up and sharing of the stories of women. The application of various narrators as a device by Atwood reveals cruelty where the system of authority is afraid of memory since memory reveals contradiction. The Power by Alderman also employs a frame narrative to challenge who tells history and who is authorized to tell the truth. In such a way, the changes of feminist dystopia refer not only to oppression but oppression of the world of discourse as well.

A different yet related critical language is needed when critiquing realist fiction. Normal people are not a form of patriarchy based on a totalitarian state or an astonishing bio-transformation. Rather, it introduces gender in little moments of intimacy, indecisiveness, embarrassment in the name of the classes, family brutality, and misunderstanding. Cruel optimism, as defined by Berlant, assists in comprehending how attachments can keep people alive and harm them at the same time (Berlant, 2011). There is a mixture of care and injury in the relationship between Marianne and Connell. The novel is thus a protest against any feminist reading which sees intimacy as either liberating or oppressive. It posits the question of how individuals can love one another in social worlds that has already sensitized them to inequality.

The review is also informed by the classic work on the writing of women that Gilbert and Gubar first identified similarities of confinement, rebellion, doubling and madness as common motifs of the writing of women (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979). These motifs are re-employed in modern versions in the chosen novels. The trapped girl, the disciplined wife, the angry woman, the silent sufferer, the double agent, the woman who talks out of a hostile archive are all manifested in one form or another. In modern fiction, however, these motifs are revised by linking them to neoliberal culture, anxiety around classes, mass media, and late-modern strategies of surveillance.

The available scholarship is thus a valuable resource to read the chosen texts, although the gap in comparisons is still substantial. The Power and The Testaments can be read as feminist speculative or dystopian tendencies and usually, the Power and The Testaments are read as such, whereas normal people are normally read on intimacy versus class versus realism

versus millennial affect. A reading through the three of them shows a more general trend: the feminist literature of the contemporary era shifts between macro-political and micro-social relationships. It knows that patriarchy exists not just in the state or just in the family, but in the entire spectrum of institutions, desires, accounts, and practices according to which individuals live. This paper makes that contribution to come up with a comparative enlightenment.

Research Questions

The paper is guided by the following research questions:

RQ1. How do The Power, Normal People, and The Testaments represent feminist agency through different genres and narrative structures?

RQ2. How do the three novels connect gender with body, class, intimacy, institution, violence, and testimony?

RQ3. What similarities and differences emerge in the novels' treatment of empowerment, resistance, vulnerability, and compromise?

RQ4. How does a comparative reading of speculative reversal, intimate realism, and dystopian testimony expand the understanding of feminism in contemporary English literature?

These questions are deliberately interpretive rather than statistical. The study does not attempt to measure feminist representation numerically. Instead, it examines how representation operates through form, character, narrative voice, and social setting. The questions also avoid reducing feminism to whether a novel contains strong women characters. Strength, in these texts, is not always visible as confidence or victory. It may appear as survival, hesitation, refusal, care, remembering, tactical compliance, or the capacity to name harm. The research questions therefore allow the paper to examine feminism as a complex representational structure rather than a fixed character trait.

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative comparative close-reading method. The main readings are the Power by Alderman, the book of Normans by Rooney, and the Testaments by Atwood. The approach is also qualitative due to the emphasis on the meanings, patterns, symbols, narrative strategies, and tensions between ideologies instead of numerical data. It is comparative since the three readings are done side by side with each other in order to determine convergences and differences. It is an attentive reading since the critique pays attention to the constitution of the characters, plot structure, narrative point of view, genre, body description and institution images, as well as repetitive speech and silence patterns.

The texts are chosen purposefully. The Power has been chosen due to the fact that it is one of the largest speculative novels of the times, which directly contemplates the reversal of the gendered bodily power. Normal People was chosen since it reflects the issues of contemporary gender relations without the dystopian show business where the inequality is applied in intimate and classed space. The reason why The Testaments was chosen is that it builds on an already powerful feminist dystopian world in contemporary literature and prefigures the form of testimony as a politics. These texts combine and enable the study to draw parallels between three forms of feminist presentation: embodied reversal, intimate realism, and institutional witness.

The analytic paradigm is an amalgamation of feminist literary criticism, gender theory, postfeminist criticism, and feminist theory of dystopian. The analysis is held together under five categories of agency, embodiment, institution, intimacy and narrative voice. Agency means the ability of characters to act, resist, choose or to influence others, and also questions how that ability is made possible or constrained by social structures. Embodiment is the representation of bodies as vulnerable, powerful, disciplined, sexualized, reproductive or socially interpreted. The institution describes the construction of gender in the formal and informal systems of family, school, religion, class, media, state power and law. Intimacy means affection, lust, assent, reliance, affective work and intimate types of injuries. The narrative voice deals with the identity of the speaker, the one that can be trusted, the history writer, or the testimony spreader.

There are no interviews, surveys and human participants in the study. Its information is limited to published works of literature, as well as published theoretical or critical materials. This is why it is impossible to use formal human-subject ethical approval. Nonetheless, this research adheres to the ethical standards of scholarship, using no page-specific quotes created by the investigator; moreover, theoretical statements and original texts are cited. Because of varying editions, the paper is chiefly based on close reading that was paraphrased, as opposed to using quotations of a specific page that can also not be verified. Short page-specific quotations can be included in a final version of the conference, though the researcher must confirm them to a single version required.

The dependability of a qualitative literary study relies on clarity other than scientific duplication in laboratory terms. In order to promote transparency, the paper includes a table of the primary texts and coding matrix which defines how the readings were categorized. The judgments are good, but not arbitrary: they are based on established patterns throughout the novels and recognized feminist theory. Limitations are also evident. The analysis is not able to exhaust the range of potential interpretations of the chosen texts. Further findings could be obtained in terms of a psychoanalytic, ecocritical, queer or a postcolonial, narratological study. The current paper is confined to gender representation that focuses on power, agency, embodiment, institution and intimacy.

Table 1. Primary texts and analytical focus.

Text	Genre / mode	Primary feminist concern	Main analytical focus
The Power (Alderman, 2016)	Speculative / feminist dystopian reversal	Embodied power and the danger of domination	Body, force, religion, historiography, militarization
Normal People (Rooney, 2018)	Contemporary realist intimacy	Everyday gender, class, consent, and emotional harm	Classed intimacy, silence, self-worth, recognition
The Testaments (Atwood, 2019)	Dystopian testimony / institutional narrative	Patriarchal discipline, survival, and women's witnessing	Institution, surveillance, testimony, intergenerational resistance

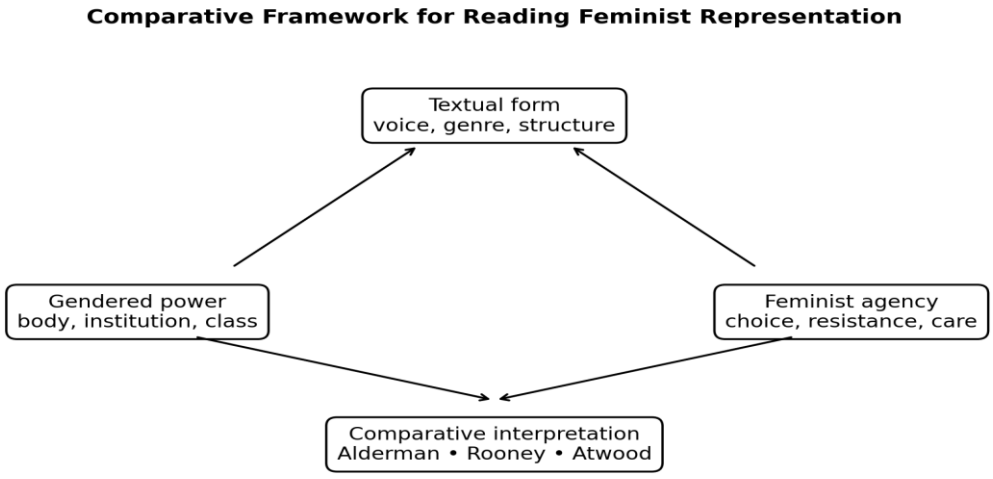


Figure 1. Comparative analytical framework used in the paper.

Table 2. Coding matrix for comparative close reading.

Category	Guiding question	Indicators in the novels
Agency	How do women act, refuse, survive, or influence others?	Resistance, compromise, refusal, strategy, speech, care, bodily force
Embodiment	How are bodies represented as vulnerable, powerful, disciplined, or reproductive?	Electric power, sexuality, injury, clothing, ritual, shame, bodily discipline
Institution	Which social systems organize gender?	Family, school, class, religion, law, state, media, archive
Intimacy	How do love, desire, consent, and dependency shape feminist meaning?	Silence, recognition, emotional labour, consent, trauma, attachment
Narrative voice	Who speaks, records, remembers, or controls history?	Frame narrative, alternating perspective, testimony, documents, memory

Analysis and Discussion

Comparative analysis: It is revealed that the three novels reflect feminism on varying levels of power. The Power starts with the body and stretches out to religion, politics, militarism and history. Normal people start with social relation and travel inwards to shame, desire, self-worth, and emotional dependence. The Testaments starts within an institution and implies the testimony as a way of revealing the mechanics of patriarchal rule. These various movements are important in that they demonstrate that gender inequality today does not have a single location in terms of feminist literature. Gender is simultaneously corporeal, affective, symbolic, institutional, and discourse.

The creation of a novel capacity of the female body is the key speculative tool of Alderman in The Power. Women and girls are capable of developing electrical force and it alters global relations. On the simplest level, the novel inverts the traditional expectations of physical weakness. But the novel is not a mere revenge fantasy. It becomes more feminist when it achieves these distinctions of power and justice. When women acquire a capacity to hurt, threaten and control, some of them reproduce the violent framework that had been linked to the power of male. This makes it hard to liberalize empowerment histories. Alderman does not imply that women are inherently more ethical than men, but rather she enquires how things would go when any group creates a coercive power but fails to reshape the political imagination that establishes domination as success (Alderman, 2016).

The embodiment in the novel is thus dual. On the one hand, the female body is newly legible as the place of power. Girls who had been taught to be afraid of male violence find out that their bodies can protect, intimidate, and control. This inversion reveals the extent to which gender has traditionally relied on the assumptions of the riskiness of the body. Conversely, when projected into institutions the new bodily capacity is soon being institutionalized. It is ideologized by religion, militarized by military struggle, commodified by media and mythology by historical discourse. The body is not the purest place of liberation. It is incorporated into systems of creation and regulation, and it substantiates Butler as saying that bodies are always read according to social conventions and through repetitive cultural practices (Butler, 1990).

The position of Allie, who became Mother Eve, evidences the possibility of feminist language attached to spiritual power and political control. Her success provides abused and marginalized girls with a new survival narrative, yet a new order emerges. The story of Roxy, such a contrast, connects the power with the family violence, criminal networks, and the brutality classified. The fact that Tunde is keen on observation and documentation further complicates the politics of witnessing since he documents the change of gendered power as he continues to become vulnerable in the new

order. The novel rejects the unsuspecting paradigm of reversal through these characters. It proposes that altering the political operator, or the presence of power, is not equivalent to altering the logic of power.

That is why The Power is not an anti-feminist war but an anti-feminist dystopia. The novel has speculative reversal to explore the moral boundaries of power. The theory of feminist dystopias is applicable here since critical dystopias commonly avoid closure and more than hope (Baccolini, 2004; Baccolini and Moylan, 2003). Harmonious equality is not the end of the Alderman world. It concludes on the note of uncertain history, framing of narratives, and a chilling reminder of the fact that in the future any power structure that might exist will simply have naturalized it. The frame story, where a male writer presents his manuscript to a woman in control in a future matriarchal society, even historiology itself becomes a feminist concern. Who writes history? Who is believed? What violence can be normalized as the archive has learned to talk about it as natural?

Normal People is a reflection of feminism with a very diverse aesthetic. Rooney does not design an epic dystopian picture; she demonstrates the functioning of gender in mainstream social life. The relationship involving Marianne and Connell is characterized by the difference in their classes, at school, family ineffectiveness, sexual and sexual insecurity, intellectual ambition, emotional lapseness. Feminism in the novel is thus not embodied in the form of slogans and institutions that are publicized. It manifests itself in the challenge of rendering intimate life ethical. It does not ask whether or not a woman has choice but whether she can identify her value at the time when family, school, and desire instilled this idea into her mind of it being ordinary to feel pain (Rooney, 2018).

However, one figure that is particularly crucial is Marianne, as she is not purely weak or strong. She is bright in intellect and weak in social life, which is sexually desiring and emotionally traumatized, defiant of certain norms and vulnerable to other people. The home setup creates a trend whereby brutality takes root. The feminist meaning in this representation takes the form of not isolating the agency and harm. Marianne is able to make decisions, talk, read and love, but her decisions are driven by a past of feeling demeaned. Her tale thus makes postfeminist festivals of choice problematic. However, as Gill (2007, 2017) claims, in the modern day culture, choice and self-management is conventionally seen as an indicator of freedom, yet the novel by Rooney demonstrates that choice can and can be organized around shame, attachment, and the need to feel recognized.

The place of Connell is also significant since the novel explores the concept of masculinity as an aspect of social training. Connell is not introduced as a mere tyrant, he is rather good natured, he is insecure, class conscious and is emotionally stunted. But the fact that he could not recognize Marianne publicly at first, indicates how sexual and social forces can be in conflict with each other, where the tenderness of the human is not accompanied by the bravery of the man. The damage he inflicts is not dramatic, yet it exists. Normal People is thus a feminist work of ethics of recognition. A relationship is also made unequal by non-forceful means through silence, embarrassment, concealment, and unequal dispersion of social reputation.

In the center of this representation is the class. The mother of Connell has to work in the family of Marianne and it is this economic relation that determines the self of both characters. In the university, cultural convenience becomes more significant to Marianne and Connell feels insecure and alienated. This movement of the classes does not allow the novel to project gender in terms of a dichotomy of men and women. It allows an intersectional interpretation since the issue of gendered intimacy cannot be discussed outside the framework of classed belonging (Crenshaw, 1991). Femininity alone is not a sufficient explanation of the vulnerability of Marianne; family violence and social isolation impact it as well. The emotional silence of Connell cannot be due to masculinity only; it is influenced by the shame of the class and fear of being exposed.

The novel is sensitive to the issues of consent and desire. It does not introduce consent as just the yes and no that is legal, but as an emotional, social state that needs some self knowledge,

communication and recognition. The subsequent relationships of Marianne pose some hard questions on pain, submission and internalization of unworthiness. An overly simplistic interpretation would consider these scenes to be the evidence of individual pathology. A feminist reading will want to consider, though, how social and family violence can go internal. In this aspect, Normal People resonate with the views of hooks that feminism needs to stand up to the systems that inculcate the people to tolerate sexist violence (hooks, 1984). The realism by Rooney reveals that domination may still be maintained without any publicly held ideology since it has already become self perceived.

The Testaments shifts the focus of the analysis to a dystopian institution, but its varied form does not resemble The Power. The novel of Atwood is not a reversal fantasy. It is a collection of testimony of women who are placed in various positions in Gilead and Gilead itself. Aunt Lydia is the problem of the female apparatus of discipline; Agnes is the girl conditioned by the ideology of Gilead; Daisy/Nicole is a stranger, but is sucked into the politics of resistance. The feminist portrayal in the novel relies on the reality that no mono voice has the entire truth. Overlapping testimony reveals patriarchy (Atwood, 2019).

Body, language, religion, surveillance, and education are the components of power Gilead wields over women. The girls are conditioned to be afraid of sex, accept an arranged future and as a spiritual obligation to be obedient. Governance of the body occurs in the form of clothing, reproduction, ritual and shame. This is a good example of gender being created institutionally and through this, Foucault explains the disciplinary power when the subjects are taught to control themselves and each other (Foucault, 1977). However, Atwood puts a distinctly feminist spin on this: Gilead does not just punish women, it triggers some women into women management. The power held by the Aunts demonstrates that patriarchy can even endure through dispersion of limited power to women who impose the system.

The most complicated character of this structure is Aunt Lydia. She is both victim and perpetrator, survivor and strategist, collaborator and saboteur. Her story does not allow the reader to come up with a blind example of resistance. According to Atwood, authoritarian patriarchy can be endured by compromising, keeping secrets and being contaminated. There is no excuse to be cruel and this is the reason why Feminist analysis must think of the cost of resistance within institutions where people cannot revolt openly. The testimony of aunt Lydia is turned into a weapon since she knows about the archive, about the secrets, as well as the corruption of the regime. In this sense, knowledge would be a feminist resource.

The story of Agnes demonstrates an idea of how the patriarchal ideology turns into the norm. She does not first perceive Gilead as an abstract dystopia; she perceives it as school, family, clothing, ceremony, and teaching. This matters since systems that uphold oppression thrive under the norm since they are brought up within such systems. The loss of consciousness and slow awakening of Agnes is thus a feminist education narrative. It is not that she suddenly comes across empowerment but a gradual realization that the world she has been taught to cope with is one based on fear and control. The story of Daisy/Nicole brings in another layer of resistance: the movement is necessary both among boundaries and identities and even narratives. It is not until she comes to appreciate the fact that her body and name are politically charged.

Feminist action is of particular interest to the Testaments on the subject of testimony. The very title shows that narration is important. The voice of women turns against a regime which relies on a secret. This links the novel to feminist dystopian criticism, in which language and memory tend to harbor utopian potential in oppressive worlds (Baccolini, 2004; Cavalcanti, 2000). The hope depicted in the novel is not based on the possibility that oppression simply falls. It is a by-product of repressed knowledge. The weak aspects of Gilead are that tales, records, associations, and memories go beyond the frontiers that the government attempts to enforce.

Through the comparison of the three novels, it becomes evident that there are three modes of feminist representation. The first one embodies agency which is best dramatized in The Power.

This mode poses the question of what occurs when the female body ceases to be the culturally coded weaker entity. The second agency is intimate, embodied by Normal People. This mode poses the question of the manifestation of feminism in emotional life, assent, classed shame and capacity to identify harm or not. The third one is the testimonial agency, which can be found in The Testaments. The question that this mode poses is how women's voices and archives can resist institutions that overwrite them or take them in hand. These modes are overlapping, yet the novel preference is paid by each novel to another form.

Empowerment is not sufficient, as it can be seen in the comparison. Empowerment may turn out to be domination in The Power. Choice is possible in the presence of emotional injury at a time in the book, Normal People. In The Testaments, the complicity may be inevitable in order to survive. Feminist literature of the day is not therefore an ode to the power of women. It poses the question of the meaning of strength in the circumstances of inequality. This is in line with Ahmed's description of feminism being a lived practice that entails struggle, grievances and naming what is wrong (Ahmed, 2017). The novels are feminist not in the sense that they introduce ideal heroines but in the sense that they reveal the structures that create gendered damage and the partial strategies women use in response.

Another pertinent comparative issue is the public and the private divide. The Power seems to be communal and worldwide, yet the revolution commences at the close and personal encounters of fear and body frailty. Normal People seem intimate but it is an intimate world that is formed by the widespread structures of classes and gender, education and social reputation. The Testaments seems institutional, yet its political activity relies on individual memory, obscure documents, relations between mother and daughter, and embodied danger. The three novels thus combat the notion that feminism has to decide whether to take private ownership over public organization. They demonstrate that the personal is already political and that institutions are undertaken by close practices.

Another difference in the novels is the treatment of men. The Power inverts the weakness of men and challenges the readers to feel like they are the oppressed objects in a woman-dominated society. Normal People is more of a more personal attestation of a man who can care but is molded by emotional restraint and social dread. Patriarchal institution is the dominant characteristic of the Testaments, however, in many ways it is depicted that the authority of Gilead is being relied on by the women who control rules in Gilead. The comparison indicates that current feminist fiction is less pre-occupied with the pronouncement of men as nature than the exploration of ways systems are being instructed in the various subjects to incorporate power, silence, fear, and entitlement.

These differences revolve around narrative form. The Power has a frame that is based on future-historical that destabilizes the authority of the past. Normal People relies on the close third-person narration and switches between Marianne and Connell, creating a close form of narration where misunderstanding is made structurally apparent. The Testaments make use of various testimonies, transforming the story into evidence. These are not some decorative forms; they are elements of feminist argument in each of the novels. Form is what establishes the meaning of agency to the readers. Who is the master of history is a question posed by a future archive. Alternating intimacy poses the question of why individuals, who love one another fail to communicate. To test how truth can survive in totalitarian environments, testimony is questioned.

Violence also comes in differently in the three readings. The Power poses fancy violence and inquires on whether domineering gender-flipped changes the morals. The Testaments looks ahead to institutional violence, and demonstrates how violence is ritualized, juridified and schooled. Normal People anticipate less obvious eruptions of suffering: family brutality, self-degradation, emotional obfuscation, social disgrace and painful bonding. These forms need to be addressed as interconnected but not ranked in a comparative feminist reading. Different, yet capable of

controlling gendered life is physical violence, institutional discipline and emotional harm.

The three novels eventually prove the significance of contradiction. The texts do not allow simplistic answers; hence, the feminist representation becomes credible. The Power does not even seek to assure that the reign of women will carve out a remedy to history. Normal People do not assure that love is the only key that will overcome social damage. The Testaments do not hold promises of cleanliness and moral uprightness of resistance. It is the abdication of easy things. It enables modern feminist literature to make women play a role in contaminated worlds as agents rather than as a symbol of an ideal liberation. It is also consistent with feminism being mired in neoliberal culture as Fraser views it, such that emancipatory discourse could be yoked by systems that do not eradicate structural inequality (Fraser, 2013).

In the case of a conference paper, this comparison is important in that it provides a generalized, yet, consistent overview of feminist representation today. Feminism is presented as a narrative issue in the three texts: How can fiction account agency of women without relinquishing vulnerability? In what way is it not harmful because it causes women to be victims? What can it conceive to enter into which it will not reproduce domination? And how can there be resistance when this resistance is partial, intimate, risky or compromised? These are not one doctrine, but a collection of literary strategies that the three novels answer. Speculative reversal, intimate realism, and institutional testimony show various aspects of feminist struggle.

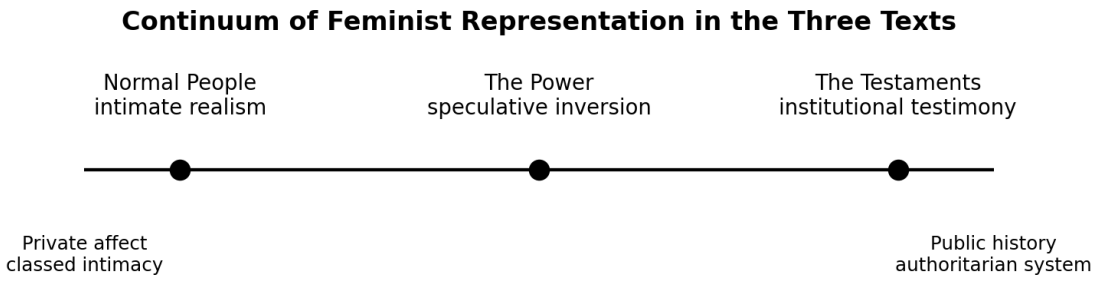


Figure 2. Continuum of feminist representation across the three primary texts.

Table 3. Comparative findings.

Analytical concern	The Power	Normal People	The Testaments
Mode of feminism	Speculative reversal of gendered force	Everyday feminism of intimacy and recognition	Testimonial feminism against patriarchal institution
Agency	Bodily force produces new possibilities and new dangers	Agency is shaped by class, shame, consent, and emotional injury	Agency appears through secrecy, testimony, alliance, and survival
Main risk	Empowerment becomes domination	Choice is confused with internalized harm	Resistance is morally compromised by survival inside the system
Narrative strategy	Future-historical frame questions who writes history	Alternating intimate realism makes misrecognition visible	Multiple testimonies turn voice into political evidence
Feminist contribution	Challenges essentialist belief that women's	Shows private life as a site of structural inequality	Shows archives and memory as tools of feminist resistance

	power is automatically just		

Conclusion

This paper has argued that The Power, Normal People, and The Testaments represent feminism through three distinct but connected narrative modes. The Power talks of speculative reversion in revealing the instability of empowerment in keeping power bound with domination. Normal People employ intimate realism to imply that gender inequality exists in the mundane relationships of love, class, silence and self-worth. The Testaments relies on dystopian narrative to point out how institutions that are patriarchal socialize women into submission and how memory, records and intergenerational comradeship can erode the process of authoritarianism. The texts combined prove that feminist representation of modern English literature is not single but plural.

The thing which seems to be the most crucial is that none of the three novels is willing to give a necessarily simple equation between female agency and liberation. Agency could be bodily, intimate or testimonial yet it is always a construct of structure. Women in these novels are motivated by the internal circumstances that they did not decide: violence, social stratum, family cruelty, religious discipline, spying, historical obliteration, or emotional hunger. Their agency is thus biased and contingent. This makes the novels worthy of feminist criticism since the novels transcend the overly celebratory empowerment and are critical of what social conditions render empowerment significant, threatening or wanting.

There is also a comparison that contemporary feminist fiction traverses through scales. It affiliates the body with the state, the couple with the class, the household with ideology and the individual voice with the archive. The given movement is one point why the chosen novels are so strong as literary objects. They do not separate feminism as a theme that is portrayed only by women characters. They construct feminism within the narrative form, genre and structure. The politics of historiography is challenged by Alderman future history; the secrets executed the ethics of recognition by Rooney when she reflects on the topics of intimacy and clarity alternately; the testimonies Atwood turns the narration of women into evidence on gender politics.

The value added by the paper is thus two-fold. First, it offers comparative reading of the three significant contemporary texts that should not necessarily be studied simultaneously. Second, it suggests a model to understand feminist representation in terms of embodied agency and intimate agency and testimonial agency. Such a frame can be applied to other modern day novels that broker gender, authority, and voice or storytelling. It is also a reminder to researchers that feminist literary criticism cannot seek merely strong female characters, but inquire about the measures of such strong characters, their arrangement and configuration of what strength, voice, survival and resistance may be.

This study can be further developed in the future by including more current writings by authors with different races, nations and tongue backgrounds. It can also feature checked page close readings of a single edition of every primary text, or compare the novels to the television versions of them. The other helpful suggestion would be to look at how such feminist representations are translated by the readers with various cultural backgrounds. In the case of the current conference paper, though, the chosen novels already demonstrate that contemporary writing in English portrays feminism as a contestive, structurally conscious and formally innovative. Feminism does not seem like a final solution but rather an ongoing way of interpreting power, bodies, institutions, intimacy and voice.

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