

POWER AND RESISTANCE IN TA-NEHISI COATES'S THE WATER DANCER AND KAWAI STRONG WASHBURN'S SHARKS IN THE TIME OF SAVIORS

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ABSTRACT:

This article is an attempt to studiously explore both power and resistance and their interactions and relations along with their impacts and functions in the selected novels; Ta-Nehisi Coates's *The Water Dancer* (2019), and Kawai Strong Washburn's *Sharks in the Time of Saviors* (2020). It aims to focus on the way of incorporating magical elements in the narratives to redefine power dynamics in various prospective and it serves to create a magical realism that shapes the new mechanism of resistance. Both power and resistance, in this article, are conceptualized to illustrate the existing power as well as reversed forces in the life of main characters in the novels. Besides, this article employs particular concepts such as knowledge, power, and discipline as defined and explained by Michel Foucault (1926–1984) which are relevant to power and resistance. In the narrative, Ta-Nehisi Coates represents Hiram's, the protagonist of the story, ability of conduction as a supernatural power that is stimulated by the power of memory in the novel. Throughout the magical element, the author creates an alternative reality that memory and trauma used as a source for equality and liberation. Similarly, Washburn utilizes Nainoa's, the protagonist, miraculous ability of healing as a reversed power in a nature of resistance against existed social forces in the text. Nainoa's supernatural ability is deeply linked to Hawaiian mythology in which it serves as a metaphorical force for recovering cultural identity and opposing existed forces that marginalize indigenous Hawaiians. Finally, this article concludes that both novels serve the function of the use of magical power in the two powers in terms of power and resistance. The authors portray power through oppressive systems, by the magical elements, both offer alternative pathways toward self-liberation. It emphasizes on inseparableness of power and resistance, besides, it highlights that magical realism provides a powerful mechanism to reimagine reality encountering social justice and equality in contemporary literature.

KEYWORDS: Ta-Nehisi Coates's *The Water Dancer*, Kawai Strong Washburn's *Sharks in the Time of Saviors*, Michel Foucault's theory of power/Knowledge, supernatural powers, and resistance,

1. INTRODUCTION

This article employs theory of Power/Knowledge of a French philosopher, critic, and historian, Michel Foucault (1926–1984). The main concepts such as discipline and knowledge are mostly relevant to examine the two selected novels based on the emphasis on the power and resistance. To begin with the terms of power and knowledge, and discipline, as it is argued "power and knowledge are joined together" (Foucault, 1978, p. 100), that is, there is a strong relationship between both. Accordingly, power makes use of knowledge and is based on knowledge. While, power is markedly introduced that is not rather attained, as it is stated "Power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the

interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations" (Foucault, 1978, p. 94). While, discipline, as it is argued, "increases the forces of the body and diminishes these same forces, also it dissociates power" (Foucault, 1977, p. 138). Foucault focuses on the prison and disciplinary power over individuals in his book, while, this is implemented on the Lockless Plantation, In *The Water Dancer*, as a place where disciplinary power is managed to control slaves. In addition, the protagonist, Nainoa in Washburn's *Sharks in the Time of Savior* makes use of his supernatural power of healing based on the knowledge that he got in medicine.

In this regard, power is exercised from various ways and it mainly determines the interplay and multi-relations. According to Foucault, power is utilized to maintain the authoritative dominance, to control the ideology, and to

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often guarantee one's constant existence. In addition, power exists everywhere, "Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (Foucault, 1978, p. 93). Foucault asserts that in any system, power is mainly employed as means of assumption or deduction. More significantly is that power is found everywhere and while it is practiced, resistance is found.

In view of that, power and resistance are coherently inseparable terms that intertwined together, as it is stated, "Where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). Likewise, concerning the resistance, "resistance is an oppositional act" (Johansson, 2013, p. 1), and it effectively challenges or defies the force of the authoritative power or a system. Accordingly, Foucault (1978) argues that resistance is another power which opposes the existent power wherever it exists, both are linked to one another, inseparably, resistance has its ways to struggle toward the dominant power in a specific space and time.

Resistance plays a huge role in opposing the power dynamic. It is a form of reversed power which is mainly defined as an output of the existing power due to practicing dominance over people or institutions. In the two selected novels: Ta-Nehisi Coates's *The Water Dancer*, and Kawai Strong Washburn's *Sharks in the Time of Saviors*, each text dexterously presents a specific type of power structure relevant to; slavery, poverty, social norms, psychological burdens among others. Moreover, each novel adroitly probes through the characters' inner struggle with these varying power structures. In the light of Foucault's power/knowledge, the main characters of both selected novels have obtained a knowledge so as to attain a supernatural power and abilities by the use of magical elements. In addition to the fact that the magical realism which is emerged as an excessive tool that hyperbolizes most of acts of resistance and different power dynamics, allows characters in the narratives to challenge and resist oppressive systems so as to regain the required life based on the freedom.

Therefore, power and resistance are considerably interrelated themes that are encountered in many literary works. In terms of localizing and imperializing the power, it is defined as, "Power is not just a social agent determines almost everything we encounter regularly in our daily lives, power is a systematic sets of operations upon people which works to ensure the maintenance of the social order" (Poorghorban & Ghaderi, 2022, p. 39). In addition, power is conceptualized to be defined in different dimensions, as realized in interpersonal relationships. The one-dimensional understanding of power focuses on individuals' desire for control to achieve power. The two-dimensional perspective encompasses this desire for the power into the public sphere, influenced by underlying interests. The three-dimensional view, however, argues that desires are socially constructed and shaped by societal constraints, making them subject to the control. This perspective highlights how desires can be manipulated to align with the interests of the dominant group, offering a comprehensive explanation for the systemic ease with which domination or authority is justified, legitimized, and maintained (Oprescu, 2018, p. 24).

This article argues that magical realism reimagines these acts as an essential force against existing power dynamics, allowing for the creation of alternative narratives of power and agency. In this regard, the study aims to explore the two selected novels and examines different types of power along with the acts of resistance including Hiram's mystical Conduction as symbolic power in *The Water Dancer*, and Nainoa's divine abilities of healing as a supernatural medical power in *Sharks in the Time of Saviors*.

Accordingly, through magical realism, the two selected narratives highlight the enduring human capacity for struggle, transformation, and resistance, enabling characters to overcome oppressive systems

Power and Resistance in Coates's *The Water Dancer*

Throughout the language of the narrative, the concept of power is explored from various perspectives including dialogue, settings, actions, social attitudes, and different aspect of life.

In *The Water Dancer*, a cruel power dynamics and authority are discovered in the life of Hiram, the main character in the novel, throughout a number of themes such as slavery, hardship of working, social injustice that are linked to the setting of the novel. Concerning the notion of power in the novel, the author distributes it in a very systematic way and utilizes the power structure to figure out certain thematic issues in the realistic life of the characters. Stating form the setting of the narrative which shows the class distinction and socio-economic condition in the realm of slavery.

In the exposition of the novel, the author sets the plot at Lockless plantation where the power is generated in the form of superiority over inferior character, as the place is depicted, "when the Virginia earth was still red as brick and red with life" (Coates, 2019, p. 1), in Virginia, the life is described miserably for those who worked in the Lockless as slaves. As the narrative widely portrays the environmental aspect, "I walked out onto the Street, the common area between two long rows of gabled log cabins where those of us who tasked in the tobacco field made our homes (Coates, 2019, p. 13). The notion of "Tasked (enslaved person)" who works in the Tobacco field refers to the issue of slavery. In the realm of working class people worked in the Tobacco plantation, Coates explores the systematic ideology of landowners or field-owners and the way they impose power over enslaved characters. throughout the life of Hiram, the power dynamics in the perspective of supreme dominance over enslavement is determined in the novel.

The white land owners who administrate the tobacco fields are the one who firmly hold the power over the impoverished black farmers. The protagonist, Hiram narrates the brutality and cruelty of life in these cultivations "I stopped just out of view of Boss Harlan's cabin. Was he part of this? He was the enforcer of Lockless, a low white who meted out "correction" when it was deemed appropriate" (Coates, 2019, p. 13). This emphasizes the power of the Boss Harlan who is the enforcer of Lockless on the life of every slaves. The author showed the realistic power which enforces the Tasked people to work in the field based on the dominant rules.

Furthermore, the foundation of slavery employs an absolute power on the enslaved laborers, depriving them from their freedom and humanity. Hiram reflects on the demoralization, dehumanization, and trading slaves in the Lockless plantation, states that,

“Used to be they was shamed to sell a man,” I’d heard Pete once say, while I was working in the kitchen.

“Easy to have shame when you got the harvest,” Ella answered.

“Try shame when you a dirt farmer.”

These were the last words I ever heard from Ella. A week later she was gone.

My young way of understanding all of this was singular, a sense that what really had doomed Lockless was not the land but the men who managed it. I began to see Maynard as an outrageous example of his entire class. I envied them. I was horrified by them (Coates, 2019, p. 38)

At this point, Coates emphasizes the nature of the cruel system of power that reveals the brutality of slavery. This illustrates that enslaved people were used as an object traded to preserve the financial stability of owners of the Lockless plantation. In this regard, the shift from refusal to an acceptance of selling human beings proves that poverty and economic hardship erased any aspects of morality among slaves. The power structures of slavery are continued not only through physical dominance, however, it also sustained through psychological manipulation. Even though, in the light of Biblical and Christian understanding, it shows that people were enslaved by force of the human, as stated, “Man made us slave, but God willed us free” (Coates, 2019, p. 246). This shows that, based on their beliefs and history, they were enslaved by the man’s power, in another words, human beings had enslaved them, but, God has willed them free.

The Lockless plantation is considerably representative, based on Foucault’s concept of discipline, as the entrapment of enslaved people where familial relations are even weaponized to preserve power and control. Disciplinary power in the place creates a power to dominate the slaves. In the view of Familial ties, Hiram’s mother has been sold when he was a little child, “My momma was left out of connection. Her father was sold off. Then she was sold off too” (Coates, 2019, p. 310). Nothing has left only to remember her from the collective memory, as he stated, “For my mother,” I said. “For all the so many mothers taken over this bridge from which there can be no return” (Coates, 2019, p. 427). The inclination for “no return” is repeatedly argued among the enslaved that they were hopelessly waiting for the return of those who have been sold or worked in another place. Thus, they are enforced to accept this dehumanization until they get a revers power when time has come to resist against. Consequently, the enslaved were adopted by the ideology and existed power, in the contrary, they have no fear anymore, but they use this threat as revers power of resistance, as it illustrates, “And when she offered her edict—*none shall turn back*—it didn’t fill us with fear, for it did not seem a threat but prophecy” (Coates, 2019, p. 309). This shows how the spirit of resistance start to grow under the pressure of dominant power structures of the Lockless.

In the light of Foucault’s idea on the existence of power that there is resistance wherever there is power, the

reversed power in the narrative is found in the form of resistance. Hiram has exploited the power of memory as a tool to obtain the power ability, so this examines another dimension of power, but it is used in return to stand against the existing oppressive power. However, the superior power made use of history as a deliberate strategy to overwhelm resistance to suppress enslaved along with their cultural roots. However, Hiram’s rediscovery and reclamation of memory, through “Conduction” as a symbolic power, could symbolize an influential act of resistance. Conduction is a magical realist element in the novel that functions as a teleportation which is crossing over the rivers. Hiram has obtained the ability to teleport people or object over across the river by the power of memory.

In the progression of the narrative, Coates utilizes a literary technique that is the magical realist power which is employed to create a reversed power as a principle of resistance. The symbolic power of conduction is described by Hiram’s friend to demonstrate the protagonist’s ability, as he stated,

“Sounds as if you already know, friend,” said Harriet. “Imagine the islands in a great river. And imagine that normal folks must swim from island to island—imagine that is their only method. But you, friend, you are different. Because you, unlike the others, can see a bridge across that river, many bridges even, connecting all the islands, many bridges, each one made of a different story. And you cannot just see the bridges, you can walk across, drive across, conduct across, with passengers in tow, sure as an engineer conduct a train. That is Conduction. The many bridges. The many stories. The way over the river (Coates, 2019, p. 310).

Hiram’s friend, description of conduction, it presents a deep insight into Hiram’s capability and its thematic importance. In terms of memory, Harriet depicts conduction as a distinctive ability linked to seeing many bridges, each made of a different tale. This shows that conduction is deeply rooted in memory, especially, the collective memory of enslaved people. To use conduction, depends on Hiram’s ability to remember and connect to the memories, that shows how historical trauma and memory could shape an identity. It is more clearly stated, “Trauma is conceptualized as an event that alters perceptions and identity” (Prasol, 2023, p. 76). Therefore, in the novel, the conduction is used, as a magical element, as the ability to walk across the water by metaphorical bridges that is symbolically described as the outcome of trauma and collective memory. The magical element is employed in the novel as a conduction by Hiram, most importantly, it is used to create an alternative or a new realism which incorporates individual freedom and equality in the societal prospective. Here, Coates uses magical realism to construct a magical realist via a supernatural power as a means of resistance stands against the realist power dynamics in the text.

Due to the employment of supernatural power, Coates enables the protagonist to perform conduction in order to survive and save the enslaved people including himself from the tyrannical dominance over the Lockless Plantation that horrified the life and shaped the ideology of control. According to Foucault’s notion of knowledge, Hiram, the protagonist, has got the knowledge of

conduction in the form of power to survive. Hiram starts to be a conductor of enslaved people to free them from the Lockless' oppression, Robert and his family for instance, "My name," I said. "My name is Hiram, ma'am. Your Robert Ross is my passenger and I am his conductor. On my life, ma'am, he shall not be lost. And nor shall you" (Coates, 2019, p. 316). In the view of that, Hiram had promised to conduct Roberts successfully that he trusts on his power that he gained from the power of memories. After a long trip from the Lockless where they headed to, as it is described,

Early that next morning, before sunrise, down at the Delaware Avenue docks, on the other end of Conduction. Fog rolled off the water, obscuring the city. I looked back at the party and found a weakened Harriet with an arm slung around the shoulders of Henry and Robert. I took command and guided the group to our appointed meeting, a storehouse but a two-minute walk from where we had appeared. There we found Otha and Kessiah waiting for us. Henry and Robert laid Harriet down on a row of crates (Coates, 2019, p. 328).

It highlights the role of escaping from the tyrannical setting into freedom. It also refers to the tactics of survivals during Hiram's performance for saving the lives of enslaved people based on what he already had promised. The protagonist's assumption of facility emphasizes his progressing role as a leader, however, the notion of Harriet's need for support indicates the interdependence amongst the group, put an emphasis on the novel's exploration of collective resilience for resistance. In a conversation between Harriet and Hiram, Hiram fulfilled his promise to save Robert, as it stated, "I ain't tell you, but to get your brother Robert out, I had to make a promise" (Coates, 2019, p. 331). Therefore, the magical power, the conduction, is utilized to collectively enhance the theme of union to achieve the mutual goal which is surviving and freedom in the prospective of creating a reverse power against the dominant power in the plantation. Ultimately, Hiram decided to return back to save another character, the lady that he loved more, Sophia, after his recent conduction for Robert and others. "And there was a promise I had made only a year ago, though it felt like ten years, a promise to bring Sophia out. And even with Bland gone, I was starting to see a way to do it" (Coates, 2019, p. 331). In Hiram's own opinion, whatever he has done for himself and other enslaved characters is clarified to be advocated for the sake of freedom against the Task, as he stated,

But I think this is the lesson in it all. We forget sometimes—it is freedom we are serving, it is the Task that we are against. And freedom mean the right of a man to do as he please, not as we suppose. And if you have not been as we supposed, you have been as you were supposed to be (Coates, 2019, p. 423)

At this point, it is the protagonist's reflections on the concept of freedom and individuality. He emphasizes a tension between the personal independence and societal beliefs. In addition, Hiram figures out that actual freedom is the capability for individuals to live based on their personal desires, not by the way others force them to do. The notion is obviously shown that despite social forces, as the societal dominant power, persons are satisfying their own purposes by being genuine. Seemingly, the idea of

Task represents the oppressive powers that constrain freedom. Therefore, to serve freedom is to stand against the existed oppressive power by the societal dominant ideology.

Accordingly, power and resistance are widely conceptualized throughout the narrative that showcases the significance of providing an extraordinary power to imbalance the situation. Furthermore, to react against power dynamics that lead to injustice is to resist through a reverse power aimed at overwhelming the oppressive and systematic dominance. In this regard, Hiram, as the protagonist of the Novel, uses the power of conduction by the help of memory for survival and saves other enslaved characters in the Lockless Plantation. In this regard, Coates illustrates that the past, as it refers to memory and history, is not merely something to be simply remembered, it is something which dynamically shapes the present for those who make use of it and offers a right path to freedom. Hiram's ultimate mastery of Conduction characterizes a reversal of the power. Throughout that supernatural ability, he actively resists the systemic destruction of his identity and other enslaved ones, referring his connection to his ancestors and their firm resistance. By recovering the hidden power of conduction, he did not only liberate himself but also other enslaved families. So, Hiram's Conduction is a power as a form of defiance to rebel against the dehumanization and to challenge the institutional structures of slavery.

Power of Healing as a means of Resistance in Washburn's *Sharks in the Time of Saviors*

The theme of power and resistance is also clearly examined in Kawai Strong Washburn's *Sharks in the Time of Saviors*. The power dynamics is also described along with the ways to resist through the realm of certain issues related to the social and economic aspects, and their impact on the characters' development. The novel demonstrates the financial hardship and social struggles of native Hawaiians, showing the way that their traditions and people are marginalized. Washburn skillfully employed magical realism through the use of Nainoa's ability of healing as a medical power to change the power dynamics. The story is narrated by multi narrators giving different family member's perspective. Thus, the power of healing that the protagonist possesses after his survival by the shark in his childhood showcases different dimensions of interpretations. Historically, the concept of Shark as savior is originally rooted in Hawaiian myths and tradition. When Noa's Mother described her son's survival, she stated, The next time I went for air you were at the surface, sideways, prone and ragdolling in the mouth of a shark. But the shark was holding you gently, do you understand? It was holding you like you were made of glass, like you were its child. They brought you straight at me, the shark that was holding you carrying its head up, out of the water, like a dog (Washburn, 2020, pp. 16-17).

Nainoa is saved by the shark in the sea and safely delivered to his mother. The concept of cooperative or guardian shark in the Hawaiian mythological perspective is deeply rooted to the Hawaiian belief. Thus, Barrow (1999, p. 50), in his "Aumakua (Guardian Ancestors) in the Context of Contemporary Hawaiian Religious Beliefs", explored Guardian ancestors which are so-called Aumakua which

are created as family members, parents, or relatives. Accordingly, ancestors' spirits, over a period of time or emerged eternity, are transformed into gods. So, Aumakua became family ancestor gods that refer to many different physical forms as it could be sharks, among other physical form, as owls, caterpillars, lizards, rats, eels, mud hens, rocks and plants. Therefore, Aumakua were believed to serve as both protectors and messengers in Hawaiian tradition. They could warn of impending misfortune or offer protection in times of danger. As ancestral spirits, they maintained a deep, caring connection with their descendants, watching over them and ensuring their safety. According to the Hawaiian mythologies, the shark refers to spirits of family ancestor. Accordingly, Nainoa is saved by his family ancestor's spirits to be protected, at the same time, he later possessed a supernatural power of healing which it helps him to be differently viewed and respected by the whole society. This miraculous event occurred to the protagonist that leads to provide him with a power of healing. In this regard, the event shows the power of knowledge, as Foucault argues, it is the medical power of healing, since, he worked as a medic. Consequently, the protagonist attempts to help people and has to protect his family from the poverty and societal expectations on the social status and hierarchal social structure. Washburn, in this prospective, has put an emphasis on the magical power used as a tool to change the actual image of that society into an alternative realism. Besides, Nainoa possession of power, mainly his ability of healing, symbolizes the reverse power of resistance against the existed oppressive forces.

Nainoa uses is supernatural power as means of healing as a blessing power to heal injuries and illness among the people in his society, he widely worked on using the miraculous power for the sake of people to save their lives as many as possible, as he states,

A seventeen-year-old girl with A collapsed lung was breathing no oxygen but death, I kept her alive. A construction worker with a severe incision of his left forearm, dropping into hypovolemic shock, I held him together. Parks in the ceaseless damp of a late cold spring and their gray alcoholics, stripping their clothes in a fever of hypothermia, so drunk and cold they were delirious, how desperate their heart thumps were, body cores falling below ninety degrees as they grew waxy, fetaled underneath benches, I kept even the coldest ones alive. (Washburn, 2020, p. 121)

At this point, the quote provides multiple matters and offer various issues related to the healing and saving of people by the miraculous magical power as well as showing the different medical cases along with Nainoa's taking responsibility and his emotional isolation. As a healer and savior, Nainoa seemingly challenges the natural limits of medicine and death by his supernatural ability to sustain life regardless of risky injuries, for instance, hypovolemic shock, a collapsed lung, and severe hypothermia. This places him as a divine figure in which this occurrence recalls Hawaiian mythology and wider spiritual prototypes. In the religious perspective, the power of healing is mainly illustrated as "The Power of Healing comes as a Biblical guide to help the Christian Believer to heal supernaturally, spiritually, mentally, physically, emotionally, and to maintain their healing" (Franklin,

2014). That is, the power of healing is interconnected with religious belief and spirituality to save the health of human beings. The repetition of Nainoa's expression that he kept patients alive emphasizes his Miraculous-like role in continuing life, however, it also highlights taking a weight of responsibility. In the magical realism's perspective, Washburn shows the realistic image of Hawaiian people throughout the outcome of magical realist power. To create a protagonist who saves the lives of many people by a supernatural power shapes the Hawaiian identity to be savior and preserving Hawaiian heritage by reinforcing the mythological power as a symbol of resistance. Due to Nainoa's super ability, many other people attempt to meet him and heal their patients as they heard about well-known power. As it is described by KAUI, Nainoa's younger sister stated that,

Neighbors came every now and then. Steady but slow. Some local auntie with her just-woke hairstyle, two-year-old son riding her hip, the son with diabetes, and her saying, We heard some things about Nainoa. And can he help. Or the man who came another time, hapa Korean I think, a size-small shirt stretched over a size-large chest, rubbing his arm, saying stage four had spread all the way to his toes. And can your son help. (Washburn, 2020, p. 28)

The protagonist's use of his extraordinary powers of healing demonstrates that visitors repeatedly keep asking him for the help to save their loved ones. Apparently, the lack of medications is clearly illustrated by the author to demonstrate the real image of the Hawaiian society in the prospective of realism. According to Foucault's idea on that Knowledge is power, Nainoa's knowledge of medicine along with the blessing ability of healing enables him to get the power. Therefore, the magical element, the ability of healing, is proficiently utilized to create a reversed power of resistance in shaping the true character in the Hawaiian mythological viewpoint. Accordingly, Nainoa's supernatural medical power is used to encounter certain issues and purpose in response to the previous existed power in the text.

In the context of Hawaiian history, the author portrays the lives of Hawaiian people, their contemporary experiences, the land, and the economic state throughout the life of Flores Family. In the realistic perspective, the novel arouses certain images of collective struggles, displacement, and poverty before the emergence of the magical element that the protagonist later possesses. The financial struggles of Flores' family further demonstrate the systemic powers of colonialism. The loss of traditional ways of life and the forces of modernization rise to create a series of displacement and poverty. While, Malia, the mother of the Flores family, reflects on the destruction of Hawaii's natural beauty. as she stated, "The kingdom of Hawai'i had long been broken—the breathing rain forests and singing green reefs crushed under the haole fists of beach resorts and skyscrapers—and that was when the land had begun calling" (Washburn, 2020, p. 3). At the very beginning of the novel, it opens with a vivid depiction of Hawaii's colonial history. It begins with the mother's reflection on the Hawaii's nature and its destruction where the native culture and land have been forcibly subjugated by external powers.

Malia, Nao's Mother, focuses on the exploitation of Hawaii's resources by haole (foreign) interests. Thus, the Portrayal of imagery highlights the pervasive power of colonialism, which has not merely changed the physical landscape. However, it also disturbed the spiritual and cultural material of the islands. Regarding the economic condition compared to the former living of the family, Maui depicts that,

He asked me did I know how we were living.

I said I did: Mom and Dad were busting their asses, but we were at least better than we were on the Big Island, after the sugarcane plantation shut down. And obviously whatever he was doing now was getting us money, too.

Noa rubbed his face. Hard. Like there was something there he couldn't get off. "See, that's what I mean, you don't understand. 'We' doesn't mean you and me and Mom and Dad. 'We' means Hawai'i. Maybe even more than Hawai'i." (Washburn, 2020, p. 11)

In the above quote, throughout the dialogue between the characters, the power of Colonial forces and the power of Economy are clearly portrayed through the collapse of sugarcane plantation in Hawaiian island. Historically, plantation in Hawaii is described as a power system of exploitation of the native labors, as it is stated, "The plantation is historically based on cheap labor, foreign capital, and foreign management as a means of developing and exploiting export crops, notably sugar, rubber, tea, and coffee" (Mollett, 1965, p. 7). In the view of that, throughout the trading system, labors were forcibly exploited to work by low wages as they were so-called Cheap Labor. So, in the colonialist's view, the act of dominance over a land by a means of trade is a key aspect of colonialism for the purpose of the control and exploitation. More considerably, mentioning the sugarcane plantation's ending in the novel links the family's struggles and difficulties to the wider economic and historical context of Hawaii. The breakdown of the plantation represents the destruction of traditional ways of life due to power of colonialism and globalization. Accordingly, Noa's responsibility to the history and ways of life of Hawaii can be clearly perceived as a form of resistance against the existed colonial forces and economic power, since he pursues to reestablish a sense of balance and healing to a land, property, and people that have already been exploited and marginalized.

Moreover, economic oppression is another procedure of power that the Flores family struggles with. In the economic power prospective, the family faces financial instability after the collapse of the sugarcane industry, in which it forces them to move to O'ahu in search of better opportunities. As Malia affectingly states, "suddenly everything pointed to O'ahu. We'd sold some of our stuff and then we sold more, roadsiding it in Waimea, that made our move to O'ahu so much easier" (Washburn, 2020, pp. 13-24). Their financial struggles and movement are symbolic of the wider economic challenges faced by, not only Flores Family, many Native Hawaiians in their own land. This event captures the family's realization of their unjustified position under a power in a system that exploits native people in Hawaii.

Through an in-depth analysis of the novel, it explores the existing Hawaiian experiences that undergo through various types of forces including colonial, economic, and

social-cultural power. In terms of resistance in the postcolonial perspective, Hithayath Khan (2023) in an article titled "Magical Realism in Indian Literature", explores that most of the writers who belong to colonized countries include a literary genre, magic realism, in their texts as an approach of resistance specifically towards western rationalism. Therefore, the author intentionally incorporates magical realism in *Sharks in the Time of Savior* as a mode of resistance. In the depiction of the Flores family, from the beginning of the novel until the emergence of the magical element, the author purposefully utilizes the magical power of healing by the protagonist as a form of resistance. Nainoa's ability of healing symbolizes resilience and can be considered the act of reversed power against the existed forces imposed on the Hawaiian people.

Obviously, Nainoa is prominently described as a legend by his mother, as Malia optimistically states, "That you were made of the gods, that you would be a new legend, enough to change all the things that hurt in Hawai'i. believed that you could defeat this" (Washburn, 2020, p. 60). In the view of the quote, Malia, Nainoa's mother expresses this phrase as she regards Noa's extraordinary ability along with the faith that she has in him to heal not merely the family but also the larger difficulties facing Hawaii. It is thought that Noa, since who was saved by sharks in his childhood, was divinely selected by the gods (aumakua), and his abilities including the power of healing are considered a gift from God. Malia's illustration determines her belief that Noa's skill is not simply personal but it has a form of resistance that uses a reversed force against colonialism, economic exploitation, and environmental ruin have affected to Hawaiian people and land. Therefore, the author significantly uses supernatural elements as a magical power to serve both as a remainder of lost power in the Hawaiian history and as an inspiration of hope, in the form of healing, for revival and resistance used as a reversed force against the existed systematic power.

CONCLUSION

The article thoroughly examines the manner of the two authors Ta-Nehisi Coates and Kawai Strong Washburn who employ the narrative technique of magical realism to bring forth significant themes relevant to power and residence in both novels, *The Water Dancer* and *Sharks in the Time of Saviors*. Coates and Washburn noticeably present power not only as a mechanism of dominance and control but rather as a resistance, subversion, and redefinition through the acts of defiance. By the combination of realism with magical realism, both authors create novels where supernatural capacities work as symbolic means of resistance, allowing their protagonists to regain agency in some widely oppressive environments. By doing that, these narratives broadly challenge formal understandings of the concept of power and provide various and new viewpoints on the struggle for different purposes including justice and liberation.

In *The Water Dancer*, the author demonstrates the ability of survival by Hiram, the main character, as a deep act of defiance in contrast to the systemic cruelty of slavery. Hiram's supernatural power, deeply-rooted in memory that allows him to exceed psychological and physical borders enforced by a repressive society. This ability does

not only grant him the ability as a means to escape, but also enables him to rescue and liberate others, by this means, an oppressive past is turned into a source of power. In a wider prospective, Coates has emphasized that memory is not passive and refers merely to the history while it is rather a dynamic and active force which enables to shape the future once employed with purpose and determination. Throughout retrieving his history and utilizing it as a means of empowerment, Hiram alters the realist power structures as a form of resistance where aimed to eliminate his identity. Through the portrayal of Hiram's symbolic power, the novel demonstrates that real resistance is found in the retrieval of one's past, the affirmation of true identity, and maintaining to regain liberation.

Similarly, in *Sharks in the Time of Saviors*, Washburn explores the power and resistance through Nainoa's, the protagonist, supernatural ability of healing. His extraordinary power, which is deeply linked to Hawaiian mythology, serves as a reversed power against the colonial and economic power structure. Nainoa's ability of healing is utilized as a metaphorical power for cultural protection and renovation when the systemic and existed power seek to marginalize and subjugate his people. Besides, the protagonist's role, as a healer, serves to challenge all types of forces that control his family and society, as well as threaten Hawaiian identity by a mechanism of reaffirming the durability of his heritage. The author employs a magical element in the form of reversed power to highlight that resistance is not constantly about direct conflict; it is often about preserving heritage, questing for better life economic condition, empowering the community resilience, and regaining the true identity. Therefore, through Nainoa's supernatural ability as a power of both individual and collective survival, the text emphasizes the lasting power of native mythological force in the face of historical domination.

Coates and Washburn clearly illustrate that power does not merely exist as it is constantly encountered with resistance in most of the forcible environment. Moreover, by weaving together realism and magical realism, these authors craft alternative and relevant routes to resistance. Furthermore, they utilize traumatic memory, ancient mythology, and supernatural powers as instruments to confront dominant power structures and oppressive systems. In terms of trauma and memory, Coates positively makes use of memory, on the contrary to other writers, to create a powerful element for altering lifestyle and pursuing freedom in the midst of slavery. Despite depicting resistance simply as form of a battle against the existed powers including oppression, both novels propose that a proper act of resistance also depends on rescuing identity, modifying history, as well as redefining the reality. Therefore, these novels clarify that power and resistance are interrelated in which the resistance is not regarded as a singular act, but it is highly depicted as an ongoing process. Additionally, the act of resistance is profoundly rooted in the history or the past, however, it is constantly shaping the present along with the future.

The article testifies to Foucault's concepts of power, resistance, and knowledge, wherever power exists, there is accordingly resistance, both refer to face in most of the events in different forms. Whether through Nainoa's miraculous ability of healing, as a magical element used as

a tool of cultural and social preservation or Hiram's ability to employ memory as a means for self-emancipation and others' liberation, both the protagonists represent the source of resilience of those who decline to be controlled by oppressive systems and imposed powers. Both of the authors effectively illustrate that magical realism in the narratives is not simply utilized as a literary technique, but it is used as a powerful tool to create an alternative world free from the oppressive power. Furthermore, it is reaffirmed for designing the act of resistance. The supernatural abilities used in both novels symbolize the lasting strength of anyone who stands against any imposed forces that quest for dominance. Ultimately, by blending both socio-historical realities with supernatural elements, both narratives strive to challenge the dominant power structures by magical elements in the form of resistance as well as highlight the visions of hope, revolution, reshaping the future.

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