

## Analysis of Liberal Feminism According to Naomi Wolf in the Novel *Al Ajnihah Al Mutakassirah* by Kahlil Gibran

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### ABSTRACT

**Keywords:** liberal feminism, naomi wolf, novel, kahlil gibran, broken wings.

Since ancient times, injustice in social life related to gender has become a frequent problem in society. Women are only objects and do not get equal rights in social life, education, and position before the law. Kahlil Gibran, a writer of the Mahjar Era from Lebanon, in the novel *المتكسرة الأجنحة* *Al Ajnihah Al Mutakassirah* (Broken Wings), raises the issue of women's helplessness against the influence of male power at that time. The character of Salma Karamy, the daughter of Faris Affandi, a wealthy man in Lebanon, is helpless in the face of the influence of the power of Bishop Bolus Galib who wants Faris's wealth by forcing the marriage of his nephew Mansour Bey Galib to Salma. Salma and Kahlil Gibran's love ran aground. This journal uses a qualitative-descriptive method to examine the novel *المتكسرة الأجنحة* *Al Ajnihah Al Mutakassirah* (Broken Wings) by Kahlil Gibran, in terms of feminism, especially liberal feminism according to Naomi Wolf. From the results of research and analysis of the novel *المتكسرة الأجنحة* *Al Ajnihah Al Mutakassirah* (Broken Wings) by Kahlil Gibran, it was found that the influence of religious leaders (Bishop Bolus Galib) was very large in social life in society. Women at that time lived oppressed, only as objects, and did not have equal rights with men. "A woman is like a commodity that is bought, offered, and moved from one house to another, then she will become like a piece of old furniture placed in a corner of darkness".



### Introduction

The history of gender differences between men and women has gone through a very long process in the history of human civilization (Astrianti & Jayanti, 2018). The occurrence of this gender difference is due to many things, including being formed and socialized, strengthened, and even constructed socially and culturally through religious teachings and by the state. Through a long process, gender socialization was once

considered to be God's provision (Divine Creation), which is static, rigid, and cannot be changed, so gender differences are interpreted as the nature of men and women (Rokhmansyah, 2016).

Gender injustice needs serious attention because so far in our society there has been an inappropriate perception or understanding of gender misalignment. (Harimurti, Nugroho, Handayani, Murtyoastuti, & Amorrissa, 2024). The term gender is often confused with the term gender. The difference between the type of kela min and gender lies in its aspect. (Maulid, 2022). Gender refers to the anatomical or physical shape between men and women, and this is the nature of Allah SWT, while gene der is a difference in status, function, role, and responsibility of a person. (Rokhmansyah, 2016). Gender issues are a separate thing in society at large and are often justified without considering these factors. (Sastrawati, 2021). The difference is so strong that it is felt necessary to discuss and discuss gender issues by including a more complete picture of some of the things that are considered major gender issues in society. According to Sugihastuti, gender problems arise due to a wrong perception of the difference in the concepts of gender and gender. (Astuti, Mulawarman, & Rokhmansyah, 2018). To conduct gender analysis, it is necessary to have a deeper understanding of the social injustice that occurs to women. Because between gender differences and gender injustice in society, there is often a very close relationship with power. The greater the influence of power, the greater the gender role inequality that occurs in society, where a person is measured based on his ability and productivity (Arab & Nurjati, 2019). Women's productivity is considered less compared to men, because women are considered a reproductive group that only takes on domestic roles. So, women only want to be good wives and housewives, get pregnant, and then give birth to offspring from their male partners and take care of and raise children. Meanwhile, men are considered more productive so they can take on more public roles. As a result, men are more dominant in society (Male Dominated Society/ al-Mujtama' al-Abawiy). This misunderstanding and assumption ultimately makes the dominance of men over women very strong in the sense of gender. One of the things that do not contain a wrong or correct assessment of the understanding of Gen Der is a literary work, in which there is the beauty of the value of life related to aesthetic beauty. (Kurniawan & Kusumaningtyas, 2022). Literary works can also be seen as structural, artistic, social-communicative facts, and intertextual facts. Max Eastman (a poet) argued that truth in literary works is the same as truth outside literary works. But the fact is that many of the literary works that we know in the past were written with pens and men's points of view. Literary works by men often signify a binary opposition, which is more in favor of male dominance. (Rokhmansyah, 2016).

A Mahjar-era writer from Lebanon named Kahlil Gibran made a breakthrough by creating literary works that began to favor women. In the novel الأجنحة المنكسرة Al-Ajniḥah Al-Mutakassirah, he tries to express the feelings of a woman named Salma Karamy who feels hurt and deprived of her rights (Budianta, 2010). Salma is helpless in the face of the dominance of her father, Farris Affandi, who loves her only child very much. Salma's father could not resist the wishes of Bishop Bolus Ghalib, a priest who abused his power

by proposing Salma to his nephew Mansour Galib to obtain Faris's fortune. The role of religion in people's lives at that time was very dominant. A religious leader can easily influence the way a person lives. By becoming the husband of Salma, who was Faris's only child, Bishop Bolus Ghalib through his nephew Mansour Ghalib was able to control Faris's wealthy property. Farris did not expect that the bishop would turn out to be in a bad mood. The seeds of Salma and Kahlil's pure love ran aground. Kahlil Gibran tries to express his partiality towards women (Ananda, 2022). He explores the feelings of a woman who is hurt, something very rare in that era. The end of this story is a sadness that can win the reader's heart. Readers become more aware of gender roles, where a woman is not just an object, but also has rights that need to be considered.

Here, Kahlil Gibran wants to highlight the perception of the community at that time towards a woman, where a woman is like a commodity that can be traded without having the right to determine her own fate and life path. Women are only used as objects to achieve a goal from a certain party, in this case, the character of Salma who represents the gender of women is used as a tool by Bishop Bolus Ghalib to control Faris Affandi's property through the marriage of his nephew named Mansour Bey Ghalib with Salma Karamy, the daughter of Faris Affandi.

In Naomi Wolf's view, as one of the initiators of the theory of "Liberal Feminism", "A woman should not be seen as a commodity that is bought, offered, and moved from one house to another". Women as human beings have the same rights as men in social and legal positions in society. According to Naomi Wolf, women must have the strength to gain power. The power referred to in this case can be in the form of education, extensive knowledge, possession of a lot of material or wealth, social status as a child of nobility and an influential person, or, formidable physical strength, as well as charming beauty. Furthermore, Naomi Wolf described that a well-managed power of women will be able to gain power (The Power of Feminism, Power). With power, women will obtain equal rights with men. If the power is not managed properly, it will become the force of "Victim Feminism".

## Method

This research uses a descriptive–qualitative method to study the novel *الأجنحة المتكسرة* (Al-Ajniḥah Al-Mutakassirah) by Kahlil Gibran in terms of pessimism so that the author can know the implied meaning of this novel.

The main sources of data are the novel *الأجنحة المتكسرة* "Al-Ajniḥah Al-Mutakassirah" by Kahlil Gibran in Arabic published by Hindawi in 2013 and a translated novel by Kahlil Gibran entitled *Broken Wings* published by Yayasan Bentang Budaya, Yogyakarta in 2002 in Indonesian Language which focuses on gender issues. For Naomi Wolf's liberal feminist theory, the researcher used a book by Free Hearty entitled "Gender Justice: Muslim Feminist Perspectives in Middle Eastern Studies" published by the Jakarta Obor Foundation in 2015. Meanwhile, regarding liberal feminism, the researcher used a book (Rokhmansyah, 2016) entitled "Introduction to Gender and Feminism: An Early Understanding of Feminist Literary Criticism" published by Garudhawaca, Yogyakarta

in 2016. To discuss Kahlil Gibran's life lessons and life journey, the researcher used the book "Kahlil Gibran in Indonesia" by Eka Budianta published by Ruas, Jakarta in 2010.

The author also collects other supporting data sources, such as books, articles, journals, theses, and other media related to this research. The author starts by collecting all the data that is the object of the research, then the researcher explains some problems in the Novel الأجنحة المتكسرة "Al-Ajniḥah Al-Mutakassirah", then will discuss the problems and analyze with feminist theories, especially feminism according to Naomi Wolf.

## Results and Discussion

In Naomi Wolf's view, a woman's equality of rights can be achieved if she has power. With strength, a woman can achieve power, so that with her power she will be able to achieve equality or equal rights. Equality of rights can't be achieved without strength and power. (Hearty, 2015).

The author tries to describe what is meant by power Naomi Wolf is:

1. The power of education and science.

With good science and education, a woman can achieve recognition or equality in society in many ways. A woman can become a teacher, lecturer, legislative member leader of a community organization, or even a state official.

2. Material strength

With material power in the form of owning a lot of property, a woman has a good social position in society and eventually, she will be able to arrange for many people to follow her orders.

3. Social forces

A woman who comes from an influential family such as the descendants of nobles or kings or descendants of the ruler of a country, has its social power in society, so it is not easy to be harassed and played.

4. Physical strength

A woman who has a charming beauty can be used as a force to conquer the men who are in power to follow her wishes. Likewise, mighty physical strength can be the capital to gain power to achieve equality of rights. History records that a mighty woman from Aceh named Admiral Malahayati led the Inong Bale army which was feared by opponents and respected by friends. In a single battle with the Netherlands colonizers, Admiral Malahayati was able to defeat and kill Cornelis de Houtman, the commander of the Netherlands expeditionary ship in a one-on-one fight on the deck of the ship. This shows that physical strength can be used as a tool to gain power to achieve equality of rights in society.

Sometimes the forces mentioned above cannot stand alone. Often one force must be supported by another force to complement, for example, material power must be supported by social power and physical power to obtain power to achieve equality of rights.

According to the author, Naomi Wolf tries to portray power as a social and legal tool that can regulate and influence society and can be used as a tool to achieve the ambitions of the owner of power.

The owner of power can gain power, but power that is not managed properly can also bring problems. This kind of situation is described by Naomi Wolf as "the power of victimization".

Material power in the form of wealth without being supported by social or scientific forces will plunge a woman into a condition of victimhood as experienced by Salma Karamy.

In the novel *الأجنحة المتكسرة* *Al Ajnihah Al Mutakassirah* (Broken Wings) by Kahlil Gibran, the figure of Bishop Bolus Galib has power in society as a religious leader who is respected by the community. So that all his orders and words are difficult not to be given by the community. The Bishop's desire to marry his nephew Mansour Bey Galib to Salma Karamy, the daughter of Faris Affandi, to obtain a fortune from Faris Affandi is difficult to refuse. Faris Affandi did not want the marriage because he knew that his daughter did not like Mansour Bey Galib who behaved badly, greedily, and deceitfully. This is illustrated in the sentence in the novel which states:

أجاب الشيخ طلب المطران مضطراً وانحنى أمام مشيئته قهراً، فعرف خشونته وطمعه و انحطاط أخلاقه.  
(وحدة السادسة بحيرة النار صفحة ٣٣)

"Faris Affandi was forced to accept the Bishop's request and submit to his wishes even though he did it all by force. He knew that he was a deceitful, greedy, and ill-tempered person. (Gibran Kahlil, 2002, Chapter 6 Telaga Api p.43)".

أن ذلك الشيخ كان قدراً على مخالفة المطران بولوس والوقوف أمام مطامعه يظل اسمها نقياً من أوساخ الشفاه والألسنة  
(وحدة السادسة بحيرة النار صفحة ٣٢).

"If Faris Affandi opposes the Bishop and rejects his wishes, then Salma's good name will fall, she will always be mentioned by the lips and tongues of dirty people (Gibran Kahlil, 2002, Telaga Api Chapter 6 p. 43)".

As a woman, Salma tried to resist and rebel. However, the culture of cultivation that prevailed in society at that time placed the bishop in the position as if he were God's representative who must be obeyed. He did not have the strength and courage to fight back, so he had to sacrifice himself and destroy his future and his whole life. The situation at that time put women in a weak position where women did not have the strength or ability to determine their own fate and life path.

الصبايا المنتقلات كالسلع من منزل إلى آخر فتزول بهجتهم، ونظير الأمتعة العتيقة يصير نصيبهن زوايا المنزل حيث الظلمة  
( الوحدة السابعة أمام عرش الموت صفحة ٤١ )

"A woman is like a commodity that is bought, offered, and moved from one house to another. When its beauty is completely gone, then it will become like the crumbs of old furniture placed in a corner of darkness" (Gibran Kahlil, 2002, Chapter 7 In Front of the Throne of Death p. 64)".

Material forces, in this case, Salma's father's wealth, because they are not supported by other forces, become negative forces or victim forces that plunge Salma into a position of persecution or victimhood.

مال والدي إلى ساحة النخاسين فبتاعني رجل من بين الرجل أنا لا أحب هذا الرجل لأنني أجهله، ولكنني سوف أتعلم محبته سوف أطيعه و أخدمه وأجعله سعيدًا ، سوف أهبه كل ما تقدر المرأة الضعيفة أن تهب الرجل القوي (الوحدة السادسة بحيرة النار صفحة ٣٥).

"My father's wealth put me as a slave sold in the market and this person bought me with his money. I had never known this man let alone loved him. And I'll learn to love her. I will give all that a weak woman can do to a mighty and strong man (Gibran Kahlil, 2002, Chapter 6. Telaga Api p.50)".

و سلمى كرامة هي كالكثيريات من بنات جنسها اللواتي يذهبن ضحية ثورة الوالد وأماني العريس، فلو لم يكن فارس كرامة رجلاً غنيًا لكانت سلمى اليوم حية تفرح (وحدة السادسة بحيرة النار صفحة ٣٢)

"Salma Karamy is one of those who fell victim to her parents' wealth and the groom's desires. If it weren't for her father's wealth, Salma would have lived happily (Gibran Kahlil, 2002, Chapter 6. Telaga Api p.44)".

If Salma Karamy has the courage and sufficient knowledge, then she will be able to manage the material power (her father's wealth) that she has into a positive force that can be used to gain power to achieve equality of rights and justice in social life. With the influence of material forces that are managed well, Salma will be able to achieve an influential social position in the community. If she had enough knowledge and wanted to emulate the story of Siti Khadijah, the wife of Bagin da Prophet Muhammad SAW, then Salma would not have fallen into a difficult life. Siti Khadijah with her material strength was able to gain power and had a great influence in the life of Arab society at that time.

بالحيائل ، بينما كانت تسبح لأول مرة على أجنحة الحب البيضاء في فضاء تملأه أشعه القمر و تعطّرة رائحة الأزاهر

(وحدة السادسة بحيرة النار صفحة ٣٢)

"Fate has shackled Salma and made her no different from a despicable slave as the fate of a miserable Eastern woman. Thus the great soul fell into a trap after flying freely for the first time with its white wings of love in the sky sprinkled with moonlight and the fragrance of flowers (Gibran Kahlil, 2002, Chapter 6). Telaga Api p.44)".

Mansour Bey Galib was a nephew of the then-ruling Bishop Bolus Galib. He easily used his uncle's power to achieve his lust and ambition. Mansour Bey Galib's habits

resemble those of his uncle who is thirsty for luxury. What distinguishes the two is that Bishop Bolus Galib to obtain everything he wants is done vaguely and takes refuge under the church robe and the golden cross worn on his chest, while his nephew does everything openly. The goal of both is the same, namely the pursuit of worldly satisfaction.

كان المطران يبلغ أمانية مستنترًا بأثوابه و يشبع مطامعه باصليب الذهبي المعلق في صدره. كان المطران يذهب إلى الكنيسة في الصباح، و يصرف ما بقي من النهار منتزعاَ الأموال من الأمرال و اليتيمى و بسطاء القلب (وحدة السابعة أمام عرش الموت صفحة ٤٢)

"The bishop obtained everything vaguely, coming from under the protection of the church robe and the golden cross worn on his chest. He went to church in the morning and skipped his lunch break by looting the property of widows, the poor, and the innocent (Gibran Kahlil, 2002, Chapter 7. Before the Throne of Death p.67)".

بعلمها فكان من أولئك الرجل الذين يحصلون بغير تعب على كل ما يجعل الحياة هيئة ولا يقنعون، بل يطموحون وهكذا يظنون معذبين بمطامعهم إلى نهاية أيا مهم وبطلاً كنت أرجو الطمأنينة لفارس كرامة ، لأصهره لم يستلم يد ابنته ويحصل على أموالها حتى نسيه و هجره ، بل صار يطلب حقه توصلًا إلى ما يفدقي من ثورته (وحدة السابعة أمام عرش الموت صفحة ٤٢)

"Mansour Bey Galib is a man who can get all forms of luxury and live so easily. But behind it all, he never felt satisfied. After marrying Salma, he abandoned his father and lived in loneliness, praying for her death. So that he can inherit the wealth of Salma's parents (Gibran Kahlil, 2002, Chapter 7. Before the Throne of Death p.67)".

Bishop Bolus Galib considers himself a messenger of God who has great power and he has abused that power by using it as a tool to fulfill his ambitions and evil passions. With his power and strength, Bishop Bolus Galib created a rule where those who disobeyed him were considered unkind. The quote in the novel can be seen in the following sentence:

أي مسيحي يقدر أن يقاوم أسقفًا في سوريا ويبقى محسوبًا أي رجل يخرج عن طاعة رئيس دين و يظل كريمًا بين الناس (وحدة السادسة بحيرة النار صفحة ٣٢)

"In Lebanon, there is no Christian who opposes his bishop and he is still considered a good man. No one denies the religious leader who is glorified by the community (Gibran Kahlil, 2002, Chapter 6. Telaga Api p.43)".

To achieve his ambition, Bishop Bolus Galib is willing to do anything without heeding the rules of religion and society.

وقد اختارها المطران زوجة لابن أخيه، لا لجمال وجهها ونباله روحها، بل تكفل بأموالها الطائلة مستقبلاً منصور بك وتساعدته بأموالها الواسعة على إيجاد مقام رفيع بين الخاصة والأشراف (وحدة السادسة بحيرة النار صفحة ٣١)

"The Bishop's desire to choose Salma is not based on her beauty and clean soul, but to obtain material benefits, namely the wealth of Salma's father who will guarantee Mansur Bek to become an honorable person and will appoint her to be an important person in his environment (Gibran Kahlil 2002, Chapter.6 Telaga Api p.42)".

According to the author, from the discussion above, Naomi Wolf views the need for a woman to manage her power properly so that it can be synergized into a positive force to achieve equality and equal rights in society. A woman's inability to cultivate the capital of her power will plunge her into a victim as experienced by Salma Karamy in the novel الأجنحة المتكسرة Al Ajniḥah Al Mutakassirah (Broken Wings) by Kahlil Gibran.

## Conclusion

In the novel الأجنحة المتكسرة Al Ajniḥah Al Mutakassirah (Broken Wings), Kahlil Gibran tries to describe the condition of Arab women at that time living in an oppressed state. They are used as objects only. They can only resign themselves and submit to the rules made by the holders of power that tend to benefit the rulers and men. At that time, Arab women did not have the same rights as men in terms of social standing in society, education, employment, and legal justice. Arab women at that time seemed to have no right to determine their fate and future. According to Gibran, this situation must change. Kahlil Gibran tried to raise this issue into a novel so that it was hoped that it would make the people and rulers at that time aware and open the hearts of the people and rulers at that time to be able to start respecting women's rights. According to Naomi Wolf one of the initiators of liberal feminism, to achieve equality in rights and justice in society, a woman must be willing to learn and transform herself to become a smart person and have positive strength so that they can gain power. Because with the strength and power she has, a woman can obtain the same rights and justice as men. According to Naomi Wolf, power will be a positive thing if it is managed properly so that it can gain power (the Power of Power Feminism), to achieve equality of rights and justice in society. But power if not managed properly can become a negative force or "The Power of Victim Feminism", where the owner of power can become an object or victim of the owner of power as in the case of Salma in the novel الأجنحة المتكسرة Al Ajniḥah Al Mutakassirah (Broken Wings) by Kahlil Gibran. Salma's character cannot determine her life path because she has to follow the wishes of her father, Faris Affandi, who is forced to submit to the power of Bishop Bolus Galib.

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