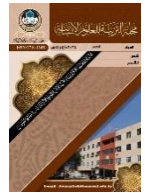




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# "Disciplinary Authority, Spiritual Resistance , and the Evolution of Agency: A Foucauldian Analysis of Benyamin's Goat Days"

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### Abstract

This paper examines the mechanisms of disciplinary punishment and resistance in Benyamin's *Goat Days* via a Foucauldian perspective. This research examines how spiritual consciousness, especially through spirituality and prayer, serves as a counterforce to biopolitical dominance. The study contends that the protagonist's inner conviction creates a heterotopic realm of resistance. It reconceptualizes pain not as subjugation but as a locus of psychological agency and cultural resistance within the framework of labor exploitation. It relies on several Foucauldian notions of counter-conduct, Heterotopias, Hegemonic Power and biopolitics to further broaden and enrich the argument toward a deep understanding of devastated power of people in charge as well as the resistance agency. The story highlights the hardships endured by migrant laborers, who are frequently overlooked and unheard in the larger political and social context. Their issues underscore how institutional power systems perpetuate socioeconomic disparities, reflecting broader themes of marginalized people endured mistreatment and neglect. The protagonist's identity as a foreign laborer is influenced by the prevailing culture's prejudices and preconceptions. This supports Foucault's claim that power is social, which means that it changes both

individuals' identities and the way society works. The protagonist's journey in confinement can be interpreted as a form of resistance. The act of submitting to authority demonstrates a profound understanding of agency, as it is a survival strategy. The protagonist discovers comfort and survival in prayer, spiritual contemplation and social solidarity. Thus, the personal empowerment may arise despite structural oppression. The resistant opposing acts as a counter-narrative to the grim facts of imprisonment, demonstrating how religion may foster psychological resilience to reinterpretation.

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## مجلة التربية للعلوم الإنسانية

مجلة علمية فصلية محكمة، تصدر عن كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية / جامعة الموصل



### السلطة التأديبية، والمقاومة الروحية، وتطور الوكالة: تحليل فوكوي 'لأيام الماعز'

عند بنيامين

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#### الملخص

#### معلومات الارشفة

تدرس هذا البحث آليات العقاب التأديبي والمقاومة في رواية "أيام الماعز" لبنيامين من منظور فوكوي. ويتناول هذا البحث كيف يعمل الوعي الروحي، وخاصةً من خلال الروحانية والصلاة، كقوة مضادة للهيمنة السياسية الحيوية. وأكدت الدراسة أن قناعة البطل الداخلية تخلق عالمًا واقعي لكنه مختلف ومنفصل عن الفضاءات الاجتماعية لغرض المقاومة. وتعيد صياغة مفهوم الألم ليس كخضوع، بل كموضع لتعبئ النفسية والمقاومة الثقافية في ضمن مفهوم استغلال العمال. وتعتمد على عدة مفاهيم فوكوية السلوك و السوك المضاد، والفضاء واقعي لكنه مختلف ومنفصل عن الفضاءات الاجتماعية العادية، والقوة المهيمنة، والسياسة الحيوية، لتوسيع وإثراء النقاش نحو فهم عميق للقوة المدمرة للمسؤولين، بالإضافة إلى فاعلية المقاومة. وتسلط القصة الضوء على المصاعب التي يتحملها العمال المهاجرون، الذين غالبًا ما يُتجاهلون ولا يُسمع لهم صوت في السياق السياسي والاجتماعي الأوسع. تُبرز قضاياهم كيف تُديم أنظمة السلطة المؤسسية الفوارق الاجتماعية والاقتصادية، مما يعكس موضوعات أوسع نطاقًا تتعلق بالأشخاص المهمشين الذين عانوا من سوء المعاملة والإهمال. تتأثر هوية بطل الرواية كعامل أجنبي بأحكام الثقافة السائدة المسبقة والأفكار المسبقة. وهذا يدعم ادعاء فوكو بأن السلطة اجتماعية، مما يعني أنها تُغير هويات الأفراد وطريقة عمل المجتمع. يمكن تفسير رحلة بطل الرواية في الحبس على أنها شكل من أشكال المقاومة.

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النظرية الفوكوية، أيام الماعز، الأخلاق الروحية، التضامن الاجتماعي، هيمنة الدولة.

#### معلومات الاتصال

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يُظهر فعل الخضوع للسلطة فهمًا عميقًا للوكالة، لأنه استراتيجية للبقاء . يكتشف بطل الرواية الراحة والبقاء في الصلاة والتأمل الروحي والتضامن الاجتماعي. وبالتالي، قد ينشأ التمكين الشخصي على الرغم من القمع الممنهج. تعمل العمل المقاومة كسرد مضاد للحقائق القائمة للسجن، مما يُظهر كيف يمكن للدين أن يعزز المرونة النفسية لإعادة التفسير .

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## 1.1. Introduction

*Goat Days* has garnered the interest of literary critics, especially for its exploration of the concept of alienation and subjugation. The story, centered on the lives and challenges of its protagonist Najeeb, an immigrant from Kerala working on a goat farm in an unspecified Arab nation, offers a genuine depiction of modern existence in the Gulf region. Najeeb's daily efforts to enhance agricultural productivity from goats and cattle under arduous working conditions reflect a significant transformation from a self-imposed state, shaped by violent attitude and patriarchal constructs, to an assertive identity that embraces emancipative universalism, a noteworthy contribution to global Malayalam literature. In *Goat Days*, the protagonist Najeeb endures Foucauldian disciplinary mechanisms: surveillance, physical regulation, coerced work, and isolation—all evocative of what Foucault (1977) refers to as the “docile body.” The desert goat camp transforms into a carceral environment, akin to Foucault's examination of prisons: a spatial apparatus that governs time, movement, and conduct.

The research employs a Foucauldian analysis to reveal an "emancipative dynamic" within the story. Consequently, Foucault's writings exhibit a significant difference stemming from his unwavering emphasis on the dynamic character of knowledge creation in direct connection to power relations (Lee, 2020). The dynamic indicates that the ongoing social interactions and spiritual solidification are mitigating and advancing the conflicts between Najeeb's identity and supranational authority. These

tensions primarily unfold within the private sphere. The analysis further demonstrates how this process fosters profound spiritual solidification and resultant progression. The study examines the liberal and existential critical discourses that have interpreted the book, highlighting their fragmented approaches to the novel and emphasizing the need of illuminating Najeeb's effort for survival. The process of maturing to review a certain part or notion from the given text and scholarly analyze via critics and theorists. The study relies on the main part of introducing a conceptual intervention that clarifies the significance of a Foucauldian analysis in the context of cultural identity interpretation and establishes a connection between the concept of a "emancipative function" and literary works.

Dörner Andreas (2013) has established the inception of a "sociology of knowledge" or "styles of thought," illustrating that certain cognitive frameworks not only mirror societal order but also play a role in its normalization via the conceptions they generate. The trajectory established by Dörner was subsequently advanced by other sociologists and is further "elaborated" here by Foucault, who, for the first time, attempted to construct a "history of the future." Before conducting a sociological and historical investigation of the discourses around the subject of study, Foucault examines the interplay between "thought" or "knowledge" and "power," an examination that inherently addresses the issue of power itself. Foucault states "Power is neither an organization nor a building; it is not only a certain power we possess; rather, it denotes a complicated strategic position inside a given civilization (qtd in Tierney, T. F. 2008, 93). The logic of power, elaborated by Foucault, limits freedom and independence, and that everyone does the same thing. It is also known that building an identity is never done on its own; it is always a complicated process of socio-political and economic change related to the experiences of the punishments.

The power enforcement is a fundamental concept in decision and policy-making. Foucault distinguishes between two types of power: the power of discipline, characterized by the rigid enforcement of authority's directives, and the power of surveillance, which emphasizes societal observation rather than individual scrutiny (Schuilenburg, 2021). This power actively or passively shapes individuals' identities and informs them of their roles. The concept of bio-power emerged in the 18th century, aiming to regulate and utilize populations both biologically and politically (Pearce and Pearce 2020). Foucault posits that the history of incarceration is inherently liminal, elucidating the mechanisms particular to the segregation of abnormal prisoners. This study will elucidate the mechanisms of discipline and control generated by the operation. The power of surveillance is another aspect that does.

The imprisonment is a significant state institution where individuals are subjected to constant surveillance. The downtrodden people are subjected to surveillance and authority, primarily due to their unlawful invasion into the nation. The leader of the environment informed Najeeb at Adasi that it is the location "where individuals are detained for traversing the incorrect path" (52). Najeeb encountered surveillance in numerous harsh and insidious manifestations from various individuals and organizations. Najeeb's confinement close in the meaning from the panopticon which is a conceptual framework for a novel type of institution. It endeavors to elucidate the concept of power in its optimal form and demonstrates the extent of accomplishments attainable through it. Rather than employing the direct force of legislation to curtail individual liberty, the state attains the same outcome more efficiently by favoring compliance instead of obstruction, promoting obedience rather than impeding the will. The coercive apparatus functions effectively without opposition as the individual willingly adheres to the law. The internalization of surveillance and authority is evident as Najeeb integrates into the mechanisms of discipline and punishment.

The term 'hegemony' is a crucial notion in modern political and social contexts, encompassing two distinct groups: a populace and a ruling elite that governs the former through ideas, beliefs, and force. This study of '*Goat Days*' examines hegemony in post-independence India via the perspective of an expatriate who, being unemployed, sustains his living as a laborer.

*Goat Days* exposes the squalid environment and unpleasant existence of workers in the Gulf field, as shown by its cover. It received accolades and was designated as "a classical novel" by a critic. The novel explores the private lives and working situations of an Indian laborer subjected to modern slavery, initially depicted as a "thriller" in the early 2000s, while employed in waste management in the Gulf region. The author sequentially depicts humanity, characterized as wage labor and "an end-product of this state," through embedded comedy involving guest laborers.

The story also explores postcolonial themes of state enforcement, solidarity, spirituality within the newly established, or unestablished, realm of colonial paternalism, shaped by the oil showers following the dust rains. Foucault argues that "the pastoral power transcends mere authoritative command and legal enforcement; it encompasses a nurturing, guiding influence that attends to the welfare of individual souls." (qtd in Tierney, T. F. 2008, 93182). As a reader, it honors humanity while simultaneously capturing the exquisite intricacies of the Arabian Peninsula in the unrefined vernacular of the laborer. In the context of the novel's success, the author embodies both form and content, yet one does not represent the other. The tagline positions the author as the societal preference transcending across colors, classes, and communities. Nonetheless, irrespective of limits, the subjectivity of the "literature" consistently transcends colonial boundaries. Authors consistently express ideas in unique, individual manners, perhaps adopting a personal, introspective tone. The analysis of the novel through the lens of labor migration and global political-economic policy serves as a means of filtration.

*Goat Days* by Benyamin offers a compelling narrative that can be examined via a Foucauldian perspective, especially with the interplay of power, resistance, and individual agency. It is a significant and impactful work that examines the changing frameworks of authority and social control. It explores the cultural and political development that resulted in the formation of contemporary punitive systems and the internalization of individual roles within customary frameworks. The text explores themes including the hierarchical practices of torture and punishment, the stringent lifestyle of Bedouin communities, social unity, spiritual rites, and diversified social empowerment. It offers persuasive ideas concerning the evolving dynamics of power and societal control (Paik, S. et al 2021). The framework provides a comprehensive analysis of power dynamics and patterns of societal resistance in '*Goat Days*,' utilizing allegorical language alongside ideas from sociology and political economy.

Smitha Mary Sebastian's (2018) analyses Benyamin's *Goat Days* through Michel Foucault's notion of the "apparatus," emphasizing power and control. Najeeb, the protagonist and a migrant laborer in Saudi Arabia, endures tyranny from his Arab owner, Arbab, characterized by monitoring, brutality, and isolation. The desert and language further ensnare him, as his aspirations for a better existence are obliterated. Najeeb's association with the goats he tends signifies his dehumanization. Notwithstanding his affliction, his faith fortifies him. The piece examines the idealized perspective of Gulf migration, exposing the abuses and hardships faced by undocumented workers.

Another paper, by Taskeen, S., & Mohsin, S. (2015), examines, Benyamin's (*Goat Days*), Gulf Indian labour migrants' sufferings. The authors highlight solitude, resilience, and migration. Najeeb is exploited, lonely, and dehumanized in a desert after migrating to the Gulf for a better life. The story emphasizes his emotional link with his goats, symbolizing a loss of self and humanity. It criticizes the Kafala system, a new kind of worker exploitation, and shows how cultural differences and poor communication worsen Najeeb's condition. Based, the book critically condemns



migrant worker persecution and labour migration. This article describes the novel's touching picture of human endurance in the face of hardship. Yet, this paper inspects another peculiar and unexplored area of how ordinary ritual practices and seek God's salvation is sufficient to create a solid foundation for endurance and persistent. Likewise, social solidarity plays another role in providing a social circle of relative security, filled with cooperation and shared concerns.

## **1.2. Methodology**

The study relies on Foucault's idea of counter-conduct mentioned in "Security, Territory, Population," where people resist through alternative practices, he illustrates "There is always resistance where there is power, but this resistance is never outside of power" (69). Spiritual rehearsal and social solidarity could be a form of counter-conduct, creating a space outside dominant power structures. Social solidarity might relate to Foucault's thoughts on community and resistance. The concept of "heterotopia" spaces that exist outside the norm. Foucault, *Of Other Spaces* (1986) defines Heterotopias are counter-sites, effectively realized utopias where actual locations are concurrently represented, contested, and inverted. If oppressed groups form such spaces through social bonds, that could be a basis for resistance. Also, his later work on spiritual beliefs and ethics might tie into how individuals transform themselves collectively. Markha Valenta's (2016) article on Foucault and religion, discusses how spiritual practices challenge power. Kevin Anderson's(2020) analysis of Foucault and insurrectional selves may connect social solidarity to resistant subjectivities.

Foucault rarely employs the term hegemony; yet, his concepts of counter-discourse and power resistance can be aligned with the establishment of an alternative hegemony.

Additionally, contemplate Foucault's concept of biopower. When the state regulates populations, spiritual and social unity may provide a means to regain sovereignty. Religious groups offer alternative support structures that diminish dependence on authoritarian institutions.

### **1.3. The Hegemonic Power**

'Goat Days' is a notable and influential piece that explores the evolving structures of power and social regulation. This idea coincides with Foucault's notion of hegemonic power that "Discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise" (*Of Other Spaces* 1986, 194). this is the phrase that describes the malicious process of authority by which individuals are made. It examines the cultural and political evolution that led to the establishment of modern penal systems and the internalization of individual responsibilities within traditional frameworks. The essay examines subjects such as the hierarchical systems of torture and punishment, the austere lifestyle of Bedouin communities, social cohesion, spiritual rituals, and varied social empowerment. It presents compelling concepts on the changing dynamics of power and social control (De Malsche & Cornips, 2021). The framework offers an extensive examination of power dynamics and social resistance patterns in '*Goat Days*,' using allegorical language in conjunction with concepts from sociology and political economics. The article seeks to clarify the harsh facts and abysmal living circumstances of feudal times, emphasizing the behaviors and coping mechanisms they engendered, along with the fight to survive.

Foucault exceeds several domains of thinking and activity, including literature, history, society, and politics. Traditional definitions characterize power as systems of repression that are solid, fixed, and hierarchical; but, according to Foucauldian theory, several dimensions of power can interdepend, indicating that power does not function as a rigid, unchanging, and hierarchical structure. The operation and backdrop are intricate and extensive (Ding et al., 2022).

In other words, power is dynamic, scattered network that "produces reality, domains of objects, and rituals of truth" rather than a static, oppressive force (Foucault, 1977). In *Goat Days*, this shows itself as the acceptance of violence—where inmates, under economic bondage and monitoring, absorb their servitude. Operating as a heterotopic location within a larger carceral society, the prison exposes how power functions via systematic discipline instead of just hierarchy. Subtle resistance highlights Foucault's assertion that authority and defiance are co-constitutive. This keeps the fundamental point of contention while distilling it for economy.

*Goat Days* shows how state hegemony affects society. Power shapes people's ideas, actions, and identities; it is not only a repressive force. The chapter shows how Najeeb has accepted his persecution as a fact of life, which shows how power hegemony is sneaky. The fact that Najeeb says, "Even when it is set free, a goat reared in a cage will return to the cage, I had become like that"(2012,144) shows how he has fully internalized his subjugation; he no longer views himself as an independent person but as an animal conditioned to confinement. This is in line with Foucault's theory that power shapes people's subjectivity, making them domination themselves. Najeeb's identity is so shaped by his oppressive environment that he cannot fathom a life apart from it. The idea of ideological state apparatuses, which shape individuals' beliefs and behaviors, is mirrored in Najeeb's transformation. Althusser (1971) would see Najeeb's self-discipline and acceptance of his condition as a result of the internalization of state ideology. The idea of ideological state apparatuses, which shape individuals' beliefs and behaviors, is mirrored in Najeeb's transformation. Najeeb's analogy of himself as a caged goat illustrates the normality of his subjugation. Foucault (1998) contends that power functions by rendering specific situations appear natural and immutable. Najeeb's living in the masara has become his "normal," and he cannot conceive of an alternate life. This normalization functions as a crucial mechanism of state dominance, ensuring that people submit to their subjugation without critique.

One of the functions of power, according to Foucault, is to create particular types of subjects, as opposed to simply limiting freedom. The state's dominance has dehumanized and subservient Najeeb, and his metamorphosis into a "goat" is a metaphor for this. The fact that he views himself as "scruffy" and deserving of no freedom demonstrates how power has influenced his desires and self-image, leading him to accept his state as inevitable and normal. *Goat Days* starkly illustrates the harsh treatment of prisoners, emphasizing their dehumanization and the pervasive violence they experience. Foucault's analysis in *Discipline and Punish* (1977) contends that prisons function not solely as punitive environments but as institutions that institutionalize control, surveillance, and the systematic subjugation of individuals, transforming them into compliant entities.

Some even unbuckled their belts to whip the prisoners till their anger subsided. The policemen would keep an eye on the scene from a distance, and might not even pay attention. Knowing this, some prisoners who spotted their sponsors from a distance, lost all courage and cried loudly. It was only then that one realized how a man becomes a coward when he feels completely helpless. (2012, 23)

Foucault labels prison as surveillance and discipline. The state authority regulates the violence from afar, following the Panopticon model, which says that people will do what you say as long as you can see them. The prisoners take this monitoring personally, which helps them control themselves. The alleged beatings are not anomalies but rather common and almost anticipated. Institutionalized violence serves as a mechanism for preserving order, making pain a quotidian experience for inmates. The prisoners' impotence and lack of fortitude illustrate how institutional cruelty erodes their resistance, becoming them subservient entities. Foucault would argue that this is the planned outcome—prisons are designed to dismantle persons rather than rehabilitate them (Sargiacomo, M. 2012).

The contradictory notion that incarceration offers "relief" from greater suffering outside highlights the pervasive influence of carceral logic beyond prison boundaries. Foucault asserts that disciplinary mechanisms, such as colonial or authoritarian violence, are present in society much before the advent of imprisonment; incarceration only represents another point within this network.

The novel's depiction of Gulf migrant workers in terrible circumstances supports Foucault's claim that repressive institutions normalize prisons. Power hierarchies dehumanize inmates, causing them pain. He mentions "The continuous punishment that permeates all locations and monitors every moment within disciplinary institutions categorizes, contrasts, ranks, standardizes, and excludes" (*Of other space* 2008, 183). Some prefer prison over returning to their Arab sponsors, suggesting that the brutality outside is even more entrenched, like Foucault's thesis that disciplinary regimes exercise control everywhere. The violence in *Goat Days* is not haphazard but rather methodically representing how authority functions via institutionalized cruelty. The jail is not an exception; rather, it is a focused location of the same repressive logic controlling the life of the inmates outside. Foucault reveals how contemporary authority operates—not via overt spectacles of punishment but rather through daily, accepted violence—by considering prisons as "regular" venues where discipline is imposed.

#### **1.4. Spiritual Solidarity as Counter-Conduct**

Najeeb's continual involvement in prayer, recollection, and spiritual contemplation is what Foucault refers to as pastoral authority in *Security, Territory, Population*—a mechanism of self-care and internal regulation. Religion functions as a non-institutional mechanism that cultivates psychological resilience and liberates the soul from being just "the prison of the body" (1977 p. 30). Najeeb's spiritual rituals enable him to create a moral counter-space, or what Foucault subsequently designates as a heterotopia—a realm of crisis and contemplation that reflects yet also challenges hegemonic authority.

Foucault, in notion of counter-conduct, demonstrates how spiritual solidarity may undermine hegemonic authority. In *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault portrays counter-conduct as a kind of resistance that "refuses, opposes, and reconfigures" dominant modes of governance (2007). For marginalised people, counter-conduct serves as a method of recovering agency via spiritual practices, rituals, and ethical self-formation. These activities enable people to oppose oppressive institutions by fostering alternative forms of subjectivity and community. "A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed, and improved" (Foucault, 1986, 136). In *Goat Days*, the work camp aims to mechanize and control the migrant's body; yet, prayer and introspection counteract such diminishment. Foucault theorizes that spirituality may serve as a position of resistance against prevailing power systems. Spiritual activities often include a reconfiguration of the self, redirecting focus from outside power to interior verities. This may constitute a sort of counter-conduct as it contests the methods by which authority tries to regulate people's lives.

Foucault examines how early Christian asceticism and monasticism functioned as forms of counter-conduct against the Church's pastoral authority. Likewise, *the Goat Days*, highlights Najeeb's resilience and devotion. His spiritual activities, such as prayer and meditation serve as a source of fortitude and a means to bear the profound hardship. He says "while in prayer I could feel my past miseries flowing out in a torrent. I cried tears of joy as I thought about how much Allah loved me and how he had protected me throughout my struggle and helped me get through the long sandy stretch of sorrow.!" (2012, 17) he experiences as a migrant laborer in the desert. It illustrates how religion and spirituality can provide hope and solace even in the most challenging situations. Spiritual pursuits, particularly those that are founded on ethical self-creation or community rituals, may foster rebellious subjectivities that reject the soul-training imposed by oppressive systems.

According to Markha Valenta (2016), marginalised communities frequently employ spirituality to "reassert control over their own subjectivation," thereby establishing "modes of existence that evade the disciplinary reach of power" (p. 432). Through the adoption of spiritual forces, subjugated individuals reorient their relationship with power, transforming spirituality into a strategy of resistance.

Najeeb reveals in this part "While in prayer I could feel my past miseries flowing out in a torrent"(2012, P 17) The difficulties he has faced have left him feeling overwhelmed. All the sorrow and anguish he has carried with him till now is released as he prays. Like a torrent sweeping away his sorrows, he is able to let go of his previous problems via the act of prayer. spiritual practices can, for marginalized groups, serve a comparable purpose. Through practices such as meditation, prayer, or communal worship, individuals can establish realms of autonomy and defiance against external domination. These practices enable them to reconfigure their relationship with power and their self-perception. In another situation Najeeb asserts:

Won't you make such a miracle happen in my life? You just need to will it. What if a hay truck driver stopped his vehicle for me? A man in a water truck took me to a safe place. What if the arbab himself felt sorry for me and sent me back? Your will alone is needed, along with your kindness. I looked at the heavens. There were pale clouds floating like orphans. (2012, 199)

Spiritual power can be interpreted from a Foucauldian perspective as a form of influence that influences the beliefs and behaviors of individuals by utilizing the concepts of subjectivity and discipline. It underscores the ways in which power is exercised not only through institutions, but also through personal experiences and internalized beliefs. In this regard, spiritual power pertains to the methods by which individuals pursue transformation, hope, and meaning, frequently situating themselves within broader social and cultural narratives that establish what is viable or desirable. This power has the potential to enable individuals to foresee change and take action in pursuit of a different reality.

Foucault (1987) reviews the ancient practices of self-care were a form of resistance to the prevailing social conventions in the care of the self. It emphasizes how self-care goes beyond simple personal improvement to become a political act of opposition against repressive systems. By examining one's wants, habits, and beliefs, people may reject external dominance and assert their individuality and survival. He contends that these practices enabled individuals to establish themselves as ethical subjects, rather than being passively influenced by external forces. He asserts in the interview, the practice of freedom is the care of oneself, he writes and consistently interrogating internalized standards to recognize and dismiss oppressive forces

Najeeb profoundly thinks in the mercy and might of Allah, especially during challenges accords him conviction and optimism. He recalls the “Merciful Allah, you perform great miracles in the lives of many: a beggar strikes gold by winning a jackpot, a sick man regains his health one fine morning, the victim of an accident leaves the place without a scratch” (2012, 133). By reflecting on these instances of divine intervention and miracles, Najeeb aims to reinforce his conviction that Allah can enact the extraordinary in his life as well. It underscores his fortitude and faith in God's design, even amidst dire circumstances. he adheres to the belief that, akin to others who have encountered unforeseen blessings or salvation, he too may eventually attain divine assistance and direction. This mentality provides him with solace and impetus to endure challenging periods.

### **1.5. Social Solidarity and Heterotopic Spaces**

The word **heterotopic** derived from Greek heteros ‘other’, and topos ‘place’ means "other spaces", it identifies actual environments that operate in non-hegemonic ways beyond normal standards that concurrently challenge and invert society systems (Dehaene, 2019).



In his quest for self-reconfiguration and survival, Najeeb also takes social solidarity into consideration. Foucault further says These 'counter-sites'—heterotopias—function as reflections and inversions of prevailing social structures. They mirror the current state while suggesting potential possibilities (qtd in Guédon, J. C. 1977). The idea of heterotopia, which Foucault proposed as places apart from the normative social order, provides insight into the ways in which social solidarity gives rise to hegemony that resists normative power. The oppressed can find a safe haven in solidarity networks, which act as heterotopias. implement different rationalities that defy capitalist or statist logics (Luxon, 2013). These places facilitate the creation of counter-discourses that contest prevailing epistemologies. Kevin Anderson (2020) emphasizes how Black Lives Matter galvanizes social solidarity to "recode the radicalized biopolitical order," establishing a "collective body politic that refuses the necropolitical calculus of modernity" (Anderson, 2020, 118).

In *The Goat Days*, Najeeb derives significant advantages from social solidarity, which are essential for his survival in a harsh and alienating milieu. Social solidarity offers him emotional, practical, and psychological assistance, allowing him to withstand his challenges. "After noting the two new arrivals, someone from a Malayali-looking cluster looked up to say, 'Don't worry, most of us here are Malayalis. Join any group you like,' and returned to the discussion (2012). Najeeb experiences a sense of belonging and emotional solace while engaging with other Malayalis or members of his community. This is apparent when he is embraced by groups or when he recounts his experiences to others who comprehend his cultural and linguistic heritage. The strategic codification of these points of resistance makes a revolution possible (Foucault 1998) resistance occurs within power's networks rather than outside of them and that distributed resistances when deliberately connected provide revolutionary possibilities.

Whereas it is not a revolution in the traditional sense, the Malayali group's solidarity represents a micro-level resistance, a "strategic codification" of their shared identity to navigate their environment. Foucault: "The strategic codification of these points of resistance makes a revolution possible"(1990, 96). Thus, Najeeb's perception of others' pains enables him to attain perspective on his own sorrow. Indeed, some distressing stories facilitated my emergence from personal sorrow and enabled me to persist in sharing my experience (2012). This insight cultivates empathy, linking him to the wider human experience of pain. Through his involvement in the challenges faced by his companions, Najeeb derives strength and determination to surmount his own difficulties. Their narratives of anguish remind us that suffering is a collective experience that can bond individuals. "Solidarity is not simply a strategy but a heterotopic space where novel life forms—and thus new power structures—are produced" (Luxon, 2013, p. 147). Recognizing the challenges faced by others underscores the notion that mutual support and comprehension can facilitate recovery. Najeeb's capacity to persist in life and convey his narrative exemplifies the strength of communal ties notwithstanding hardship.

The importance of family in creating community cohesion is well shown in *The Goat Days*. The development of meaningful relationships and emotional bonds during trying circumstances exemplifies this subject. Najeeb honors his family by giving their names to his household pets:

He named his pet for his family "I kissed Sainu's growing belly. My Nabeel, my Safia names I had chosen to call my child; my kunji, my chakki—pet names I had for them. Oh my son ... my daughter ... Your uppah will not be near to see you come into this earth with wide eyes. But, whenever I return, I will bring enough presents for you, okay? (2012, 33)

The family functions as a fundamental unit of social cohesion, offering emotional support and a sense of belonging.

Najeeb's views on naming his child and his bond with Sainu underscore the significance of familial connections in fostering hope and resilience. He feels a profound connection to his family even when they are physically absent through the act of naming his goat after the son he longs for. Sociologist Emile Durkheim argued that "the family is the primary source of social integration" (1893), and this is in line with his findings. Emotional support, which families offer, is crucial for dealing with the difficulties that life throws at us.

Familial bonds extend beyond biological connections to include broader social networks. Sasi's willingness to give up work for Najeeb which illustrates the communal solidarity that arises from shared backgrounds and experiences. As sociologist Robert Putnam notes, "Social networks have value, and communities with strong social networks are more resilient" (Putnam, 2000). This highlights how the support of extended family and community members fosters resilience in the face of adversity. The thought that Sainu may have given birth instills a sense of hope and continuity in Najeeb's life. It underscores the notion that familial bonds surpass geographical distance. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz asserts, "The family is a web of social relations, a system that binds individuals to one another" (1973). This connection establishes a framework for comprehending one's position in the universe and cultivates a sense of purpose.

As Najeeb thinks about his loved ones and the community in *The Goat Days*, it is moving to see how family plays a part in societal solidarity. The importance of family in overcoming obstacles and building resilience is highlighted by the strong emotional connections, mutual support, and shared aspirations that are a part of these experiences. These ideas are in line with what sociologists have long known about the power of social networks and families to strengthen communities and ensure everyone's safety.

### 1.6. Resistant Hegemony: Biopolitics and Collective Power

Foucault's biopolitical framework clarifies how resistant hegemony operates. Dominant hegemonies regulate populations through biopower—control over life processes 'health, reproduction, labor'. "Biopolitics addresses the population as a political issue, simultaneously scientific and political, encompassing both biological and power-related concerns." (Foucault, 2007, P. 245 ). Foucault outlines the essence of biopolitics: the state's control over life itself, not just through law or force, but by managing populations biologically—through health, birth rates, sanitation, and labor. Biopolitics thus naturalizes power, embedding it in the functions of life. On the other hand, spiritual and social solidarity, however, reclaim biopolitical agency by fostering autonomous networks of care, as Johanna Oksala (2013) notes, such practices "disrupt the state's monopoly on biopolitics" by redefining life's value outside capitalist or colonial metrics (92). This collective reimagining constitutes **counter-hegemony** that "reverses the poles of power" enabling marginalized groups to dictate the terms of their existence.

### 1.7. Conclusion

This paper further employs the ideas of surveillance and power to examine Benjamin's fictional character Najeeb. It demonstrates that the elite groups generate power and knowledge about subaltern groups based on prejudiced information and preconceptions about them. Furthermore, the study also explores that resisting this biased knowledge is possible through, Foucauldian strategy of resistance the individual's growth in spiritual dimension and social solidarity that occurs based on self-governance. Foucault's theories reveal that spiritual and social solidarity are not merely reactive but generative forces. By nurturing counter-conducts, heterotopias, and biopolitical alternatives, oppressed communities construct a resistant hegemony that destabilizes existing power structures while prefiguring emancipatory futures. As Foucault reminds us, where there is power, there is resistance (1978).

Likewise, the study has contributed to and expanded the perspective by revealing how subaltern groups replicate the biased knowledge about them due to their alternative subaltern worth, and thereby legitimates the hegemonic structure. This study concludes by joining other scholars that the emancipative dynamic is possible for subaltern groups by claiming their autonomous self-governance, which is a key element of their democratic existence.

The interaction of subjectivity, resistance, and subjection renders *Goat Days* a manifestly interrogative text that is readily misunderstood, undervalued, and vilified. This article employs an analytical framework and incorporates gender factors to reexamine these issues. Therefore it revitalizes their significance within both regional and diasporic contexts. The study addressed the narrative and rhetorical components of *Goat Days* on two levels: empirical and theoretical, using a gender viewpoint that highlights the novel's complex nature. Such connections might be established via various analytical perspectives and are not antagonistic to subjectivity in the book.

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