

"Women's Resistance against Patriarchal Culture in the novella *Al-Lawn Al-Akhar* by Ihsan Abdul Quddus"

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Abstract

This research aims to describe the forms of resistance by female characters towards their husbands and families, as demonstrated through public and hidden forms of resistance in the novella "Al-Lawn Al-Akhar." The data collection technique employed in this study is literature review. The data analysis technique used in this research is the Miles and Huberman model which consists of three stages. All of the stages are essential in qualitative data analysis. The theory used in this study is the theory of sociology of literature using James C. Scott's theory of resistance. The primary data source is the novella "Al-Lawn Al-Akhar" by Ihsan Abdul Quddus. The findings of this research indicate the presence of two forms of resistance in the novella "Al-Lawn Al-Akhar" by Ihsan Abdul Quddus: public resistance and hidden resistance. 1) Female characters in the novella demonstrate public resistance through acts of rebellion, contradiction, anger, and threats expressed with a raised voice and visible facial expressions. This form of resistance is adopted by female characters who feel they are being treated unfairly or denied justice, prompting them to resist to defend themselves and seek their rights or justice. 2) Hidden resistance is practiced by the female character within the novella. It is manifested through silent grumbling and cursing within their hearts, behavior that reflects disapproval, silence, and concealed tears not shown to others.

Keywords: *Women's resistance, Patriarchal Culture, Al-Lawn Al-Akhar*

1 Introduction

Every social group possesses knowledge, values, ways of thinking, and attitudes that align with the foundational infrastructure and socio-political structure they choose (Sumardjo, 1999). These values, ways of thinking, and attitudes are then reflected in literary works, in line with Swingewood and Laurenson's (1972) view that literature reflects socio-cultural phenomena. According to Ratna (2013), literature is a product of individual experiences and a reflection of the social condition. Writers create their literary works based on events occurring in society. As social individuals, writers are influenced by their environment and the surrounding community. It is within this social environment that the writer's thoughts and expressions are shaped. Fananie (in Oktaviani, Sutri, & Muhtarom, 2022) reveals that literature is an art form that reveals societal life. The author depicts the existing social and cultural conditions within society and incorporates them into their literary works. Novels or short stories, as literary works, represent a realm of reality where events and behaviors experienced and enacted by humans (characters) take place (Siswantoro in Istiqomah and Arwan, 2020). As members of society, writers capture the social phenomena around them and portray them in their literary creations. One such social phenomenon that occurs is patriarchal culture.

Patriarchy is a social system that places men as dominant subjects, oppressing and exploiting women. According to Walby (in Damayanti & Ahmadi, 2022), patriarchy can be classified into several structures that operate continuously, resulting in gender inequality practices. According to Walby, the existing patriarchal structures include: a) patriarchal household production, where women are fully responsible for childcare and domestic tasks; b) patriarchal work, involving job segregation between women and men and differences in wages; c) patriarchal politics and the state, encompassing the underrepresentation of women in important government positions and limitations on women's roles in law and politics; d) patriarchal sexuality, where women are perceived solely as providers of sexual services and emotional care or nurturing; e) patriarchy related to male violence, including physical, psychological, and verbal violence; and f) patriarchal culture,

which includes the demand for an "ideal feminine" image imposed on women in family, education, religion, and mass media. Walby (in Damayanti & Ahmadi, 2022) divides the forms of patriarchy into two categories: private patriarchy and public patriarchy. Private patriarchy refers to patriarchy that occurs within the family as the primary domain, while public patriarchy refers to patriarchy that occurs in the public sphere, such as in the workplace, politics, and the state.

Ihsan Abdul Quddus, a prominent Egyptian writer, captured the social and cultural reality around him and expressed it in his literary works, including the novella "Al-Lawn Al-Akhar" (The Other Color). The novella depicts the story of Mirfat, a young Egyptian girl raised in a progressive family. Her parents granted Mirfat and her sister Nermin the freedom to pursue their desires. Mirfat and Nermin were allowed to choose partners and introduce their boyfriends to their parents. While studying at Cairo University, Mirfat becomes attracted to a dark-skinned Sudanese man named Hasan Babakr. Mirfat wishes to marry Hasan once he completes his studies at Cairo University and returns to Khartoum, Sudan. However, Mirfat's family rejects this desire due to the differences in nationality and culture, and the fact that Mirfat has not yet completed her studies. Mirfat tries to convince her family that she will continue her education in Khartoum and adapt to the cultural differences between Egypt and Sudan. The story unfolds when Mirfat marries Hasan and moves to Khartoum to live with him. Mirfat must adapt to the patriarchal culture prevalent in Hasan's family in Sudan, which differs from the culture of her own family in Egypt.

In the face of patriarchal culture within Sudanese families, the female character in this novel strives to resist and break free from it. According to James C. Scott (1985), resistance encompasses all forms of opposition carried out by lower-class groups to reject or alleviate the claims of ruling or higher-class groups or advance their own claims against the ruling group. Individuals or groups can carry out this resistance. Scott argues that resistance is not always organized but takes the form of everyday resistance, such as foot-dragging, evasion, false compliance, theft, feigning ignorance, defamation, and sabotage. Furthermore, Scott (1990) divides resistance into two forms: public transcript and hidden transcript. Public transcript refers to open resistance efforts, such as demonstrations, protests, boycotts, or other endeavors. On the other hand, hidden transcript occurs through behaviors like foot-dragging, evasion, false compliance, theft, feigning ignorance, defamation, and sabotage. Hidden transcript is sometimes perceived as resistance veiled by compliance. Public resistance tends to yield better results compared to hidden resistance.

This novella has been researched by Ahmad Mulyanor (2009) in a study titled "Musykilah Tarjamah Al-Fadh Al-Mutaqarib Al-Ma'ani wa At-Tharq Tarjamatiha fi Kitab Al-Laun Al-Akhar li Ihsan Abdul Quddus" (Translation Problems of Closely Related Meanings and Their Translation Strategies in the Book Al-Laun Al-Akhar by Ihsan Abdul Quddus). This research aims to uncover the translation issues related to words with similar meanings in this novella. The second study related to this novella was conducted by Imas Fatimah Setiawati and Rohanda (2020) titled "Konsep Cinta dalam Novel Al-Laun Al-Akhar Karya Ihsan Abdul Quddus" (The Concept of Love in the Novel Al-Laun Al-Akhar by Ihsan Abdul Quddus: A Genetic Structuralism Study by Lucien Goldmann). This research reveals the concepts of love present in the novel, such as the concept of love between Mirfat and Hasan, the love and affection of Uncle towards Mirfat, and the concept of love from the author's worldview. The third study related to this novel was conducted by Shofa Syahidah (2021) titled "Pemunculan Unsur Tradisi dalam Novel Al-Lawn Al-Akhar karya Ihsan Abdul Quddus" (The Emergence of Traditional Elements in the Novel Al-Lawn Al-Akhar by Ihsan Abdul Quddus: A Phenomenology Study by Wolfgang Iser). This research describes the textual novel Al-Lawn Al-Akhar to provide a schematic overview of tradition and the concretization of the illustrated tradition schema. The literature approach used in this study is Wolfgang Iser's phenomenology of literature to analyze the phenomenon of tradition present in the novel.

Unlike the three aforementioned studies, this research aims to uncover Mirfat's resistance as the main character against Sudan's deeply ingrained patriarchal culture in the 1990s. Mirfat was raised by moderate and tolerant Egyptian parents. Her parents granted her and her sister the freedom to make choices and pursue their desires. This contrasted with the life in Hasan's family in Khartoum. Due to these cultural differences, Mirfat engages in resistance against certain patriarchal norms that do not align with the Cairo culture in which she was raised.

2 Literature Review

The theory used in this study is the sociology of literature. Sociology provides an understanding of how individuals survive and adapt within specific social groups. This involves understanding the mechanisms of socialization and the process of cultural learning in the environment they inhabit, as well as accepting their roles within the social structure (Swingewood & Laurenson in Istiqomah, 2020). Sociology not only examines the sustainability of social structures and interactions but also delves into the phenomena of social change within a society. Similarly, in literary studies, literature portrays an individual's role within the family and other institutions and the conflicts that arise between various social groups and classes. Swingewood's statement regarding literature and society includes presenting three approaches to literary works, namely: literature as a process of authorial production, literature as a reflection/mirror of the times, and the relationship between literature and history (Andrianto, Supratno, & Tjahjono, 2020). One aspect explored in the sociology of literature is resistance. The theory of resistance utilized in this study is James C. Scott's theory of resistance.

According to Scott (1985), resistance encompasses all forms of opposition undertaken by lower-class groups to reject or alleviate the claims of ruling or higher-class groups, or to advance their own claims against the ruling group. Individuals or groups can carry out this resistance. Scott argues that resistance does not always take the form of organized actions but can also manifest in everyday resistance such as foot-dragging, evasion, false compliance, theft, feigning ignorance, defamation, and sabotage. Furthermore, Scott (1990) categorizes resistance into public transcript and hidden transcript. Public transcript refers to open acts of resistance that are observable, concrete, and involve direct communication between conflicting parties, such as demonstrations, protests, boycotts, or various other efforts (Susilowati & Indarti, 2019). On the other hand, hidden transcript refers to resistance expressed through behaviors like foot-dragging, evasion, false compliance, theft, feigning ignorance, defamation, and sabotage. Hidden transcript resistance is often seen as resistance concealed within compliance. However, if domination and demeaning treatment persist, it can fuel a hidden anger resistance that eventually leads to confrontation. Confrontational action refers to public transcript resistance, which tends to yield better results than hidden transcript resistance. Public transcript indicates a recognized struggle by society because its actions are directly observable. Conversely, hidden resistance tends to lack clear manifestations in terms of actions since it is individualistic and is believed to influence an individual's internalized order (Susilowati & Indarti, 2019).

3 Research Method

This study is a qualitative descriptive research that utilizes literature data and object analysis. The data collection technique used in this research is the literature review method. The literature review is conducted to establish a theoretical foundation that serves as a reference for critical thinking and to formulate preliminary assumptions about the researched problem (Zed in Damayanti & Ahmadi, 2022). This research was conducted in six months by focusing on the novella "Al-Lawn Al-Akhar" and identifying a specific issue, namely the resistance carried out by the main female character against patriarchal domination in Sudan. After identifying the issue, the next step was to search for relevant theory. The analysis of the object is conducted using sociological literary studies, employing James C. Scott's theory of resistance based on observations of the main character in the novella *Al-Lawn Al-Akhar* by I san Abdul-Quddus. According to Scott, in the process of resistance, the weak party engages in two types of resistance: public resistance and hidden resistance. Therefore, this study aims to examine the forms of resistance employed by women in the novella.

The data analysis technique used in this research is the Miles and Huberman model (Damayanti & Ahmadi, 2022). This technique consists of three stages, all of which are essential in qualitative data analysis. The interconnections and relationships among these three stages need to be compared in order to determine the direction and content of the conclusions as the final outcome of the research. The three stages are as follows: (1) Data reduction: The researcher identifies data regarding patriarchal cultures in Khartoum, Sudan, and the resistance of female characters against patriarchal culture in the novella, (2) Data display: The researcher records words, phrases, sentences, and quotations that contain patriarchal culture and the resistance of female characters against patriarchal culture in the novella, and (3) Conclusion drawing and verification: Conclusions are drawn based on a comprehensive analysis of the data, ensuring that they align with the research findings.

4 Result and Discussion

The Sudanese society remains highly traditional and deeply entrenched in patriarchal culture. In marriage, the roles and positions of men and women are clearly defined: men are the heads of the household and hold authority within the family, while women are expected to submit to their husbands and focus on domestic duties and raising children (Bubenzer & Stern, 2011). In this novella, the female character experiences various forms of patriarchal dominance from her Sudanese family. These include restrictions on women appearing in front of men, the prohibition of walking side by side with her husband in public areas, the requirement to seek permission from her husband to speak or meet with anyone, the obligation to be accompanied by her husband, adhering to the dress code dictated by her husband and Sudanese family, being forced to undergo female genital mutilation in accordance with Sudanese culture, and being prohibited from delaying childbirth since the purpose of marriage is to bear her husband's children.

In facing the dominance of patriarchal culture, the female character in this novella, who is an Egyptian girl raised in a moderate family, engages in various forms of resistance. Based on James C. Scott's theory, there are two forms of resistance: public resistance and private (hidden) resistance. Hidden resistance refers to resistance carried out covertly, often through symbolic and ideological means. Symbolic acts may include engaging in gossip, spreading rumors, or harboring negative thoughts internally.

4.1 Public Transcript in Novella Al-Lawn Al-Akhar

In the novella Al-Lawn Al-Akhar, the female characters also engage in open forms of resistance in confronting the dominance of patriarchal culture. Some examples of public resistance performed by the female characters in this novella include: (1) Engaging in direct resistance through dialogue and conversations with male characters representing patriarchal authority, (2) Expressing personal desires and aspirations that contradict patriarchal norms. (3) Engaging in acts of protest, such as refusing binding rules and expressing disapproval of unfair treatment, (4) Taking the initiative to seek information and knowledge that helps them understand their position and explore alternatives to liberate themselves from patriarchal domination, and (5) Upholding personal autonomy and expressing their own desires, even when they conflict with the wishes or decisions of male counterparts. Through this public resistance, the female characters in the novella Al-Lawn Al-Akhar strive to challenge or transform existing patriarchal structures, fight for their rights, and express their identities and desires as liberated individuals.

After living in Sudan for some time, Mirfat feels that she is becoming part of Sudanese women because she consistently wears traditional Sudanese clothing and cooks Sudanese cuisine. She takes pride in these aspects and shares them with Hasan. However, Hasan tells her that she is not a Sudanese woman unless she undergoes female genital mutilation (FGM). FGM has been practiced for hundreds of years in the Middle East and Africa, including Sudan. Historically, the practice of FGM was performed by both men and women in ancient Egypt since the mid-15th century BCE. The practice then spread and was adopted by Sudanese society (Elduma, 2018). It is considered an honor for men if their wives and daughters undergo FGM. Women who have undergone FGM are believed to be loyal and not betray their husbands. However, Mirfat, as an Egyptian raised with freedom and modernity, cannot accept this request from Hasan. She refuses to undergo FGM and expresses that the World Health Organization (WHO) has banned the practice as it is harmful to women and can cause various health issues, such as cysts and others. Mirfat engages in open resistance when Hasan pressures her to undergo female genital mutilation (FGM), as depicted in the following excerpt:

"Female genital mutilation (FGM) has been prohibited for decades worldwide. It harms the well-being of girls and women to the extent that the medical field now strongly advises against it".

He confidently stated, almost as if he wanted to impose his opinion:

"For millions of years, girls in Sudan have been subjected to female genital mutilation, following the Sudanese tradition, and all of them, praise be to God, are in good health and well-being. Their children are even healthier than the children in Egypt."

She replied, bewildered: "You surprised me... Let me think before I respond to you." (Abdul Quddus, 50).

To ensure clarity regarding the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) in Sudan, Mirfat inquires with Khodum about how it is carried out. According to Khodum, FGM is not performed by experienced doctors but rather by an elderly woman, and the entire female genitalia is cut. According to Hesken (cited in Elduma,

2018), there are five types of FGM performed in Africa: 1) Mild Sunna, involving the piercing of the clitoris with a sharp instrument; 2) Modified Sunna, where a portion of the clitoris is removed; 3) Clitoridectomy/Excision, which entails the removal of all or part of the clitoris and labia minora; 4) Pharaonic circumcision, which involves clitoridectomy while preserving the labia minora and inner labia majora; and 5) Infibulation, which includes the enlargement of the vaginal opening with a sharp instrument. These practices instill fear in Mirfat, leading her to decide not to follow Hasan's insistence on undergoing FGM. This can be seen in the following quote:

Mirfat decided not to subject herself to the practice of female genital mutilation, no matter how insistent Hassan was or how much she loved him and desired to make him happy. Love does not grant a man the right to harm his beloved. The happiness of a man cannot be built upon depriving a woman of her identity as a human being or inflicting torture upon her. (Abdul Quddus: 52).

Hasan continues to pressure Mirfat to undergo female genital mutilation (FGM) because, in Sudanese culture, a married woman is not considered complete unless she has undergone the procedure. Women from other countries who marry Sudanese men often undergo FGM according to Sudanese customs. In Sudan, the practice of FGM also marks the transition from childhood to adulthood, although socially the girl is still considered a child until she enters marriage (Landifo, 2008). According to Almroth et al. (2001), marriage is one of the reasons why women undergo FGM. In response to Hasan's coercion to undergo FGM, Mirfat decides to remain silent to avoid confrontation and states that she is waiting for permission from her mother.

Mirfat's next act of open resistance occurs when she confronts another cultural norm in Sudan, which prohibits women from walking alongside men in public. While strolling in the park with Hasan and his sisters, as customary, Hasan walks ahead of the women. Mirfat decides to catch up with Hasan because she wants to walk alongside him. In this situation, Mirfat is aware of the Sudanese custom that men should not walk side by side with women, even if it is his own wife. However, Mirfat still pursues Hasan and walks beside him because she wants to enjoy the beauty of the park with her husband. Hasan reprimanded Mirfat and said that Sudanese men are more honorable than women and are in charge of looking after women therefore men must walk in front of her with the aim of opening the way for women and being a guard for women if anything dangerous appears on the road. This thought was rejected by Mirfat by saying;

"If a man truly wants to protect a woman, he should walk behind her, not in front of her. By doing so, he can shield her from any attack that may come from behind while simultaneously being able to see any potential threat approaching from the front and rush to defend her. However, I must note that cultural practices and beliefs may differ in Sudan. In some contexts, men may walk in front of women to assert their superiority and show off their status". (Abdul Quddus: 61).

Another public resistance performed by Mirfat is when Hasan inquired about her pregnancy, and Mirfat stated that she was considering postponing having a child as she was still adapting to life and customs in Sudan. This made Hasan angry because Sudanese women do not take birth control pills for pregnancy postponement.

- I decided from the beginning to postpone. I first want to live in Sudan and see everything before motherhood preoccupies me. I will have a Sudanese son and his mother must first be Sudanese.
- What is this nonsense! A woman does not get married to take a tourist or study trip. A woman gets married to have children".

From the quote above, it is evident that Hasan holds patriarchal views. Hasan believes that married women have the duty to bear children for their husbands. The maternal instinct will arise only after a woman gives birth to a child and cannot be learned beforehand. This contradicts Mirfat's viewpoint. Mirfat believes that women should learn and prepare themselves to become good mothers. Mirfat takes birth control pills because she contemplates having children when she is ready to be a mother and when her family's conditions are better. However, Hasan cannot accept this and considers Mirfat to be killing their potential children.

Another resistance against the cultural and patriarchal hegemony carried out by Mirfat is when she learns that her cousin Yasser has feelings for Khodum, Hasan's cousin. Mirfat informs Hasan that Yasser wants to marry Khodum. This angers Hasan, who states that Sudanese girls are not allowed to marry foreign men. It is a custom and tradition in Sudan. A father would slaughter his daughter if she insists on marrying a non-Sudanese man. Mirfat rejects this view and says that it is an outdated mindset. Hasan reported to his family and Khodum's family that Yasser, Mirfat's cousin, wants to marry Khodum. This causes Hasan's entire family to distance themselves from Mirfat, considering her as the link between Yasser and Khodum. Hasan also avoids Yasser and no longer meets him as before. Khodum is also prohibited by her family from meeting Mirfat and is not allowed to speak to her. This angers Mirfat, and she threatens Hasan that she will return to Egypt if the situation does not change.

"You are living with all your old emotions and thoughts. Egyptians now marry Sudanese women just as they marry Indian, Lebanese, or European women.

"Listen, if you don't go to Yasser's place tomorrow morning, Yasser will leave Khartoum and return to Egypt. And if Khadum don't come to the house tomorrow, I will join Yasser, and I will be traveling with him.

Hassan casually responded, "He is free, and you are free."

This time, he didn't abandon her. She was the one who left him, throwing a pillow and a blanket, choosing to sleep on the floor (Abdul Quddus: 86-87).

Mirfat refuses to sleep with Hasan and decides to sleep on the floor as a form of resistance and protest against Hasan's decision to avoid meeting Yasser due to Yasser's desire to marry Khodum, which goes against Sudanese customs and traditions.

After Yasser returns to Egypt, the atmosphere in Hasan's house remains unchanged. Hasan's siblings are not allowed to play with Mirfat anymore as it is considered to teach her values that contradict Sudanese customs. In Sudan, women's movements are restricted to prevent them from being influenced by others and desiring equal status with men (Almroth et al., 2001). Being treated coldly by Hasan's family, Mirfat decides to return to Cairo.

Mirfat's return to Egypt is a public act of resistance, as she firmly rejects the treatment from Hasan's family, who perceive her as teaching negative values and conflicting with Sudanese cultural norms to Hasan's cousin. After returning to Egypt, Mirfat does not wish to go back and live in Sudan. She believes that the only way to ensure the safety of her marriage is for her and her husband to reside in Egypt. James C. Scott indeed argues that public resistance aims to eliminate the acts of domination and oppression by the ruling class against the weaker groups. Public resistance is a means for the marginalized and oppressed to challenge and confront power structures, seeking to dismantle or transform them to achieve greater equality and justice. By openly resisting, individuals and communities assert their agency and challenge the authority that perpetuates their subjugation (Susilowati & Indarti, 2019).

4.2 Hidden Transcript in Novella Al-Lawn Al-Akhar

Hidden resistance as described by James C. Scott, is a form of resistance that is carried out covertly and is symbolic and ideological in nature. Symbolic acts of resistance in closed resistance are often manifested through actions such as gossip, slander, or silent resentment. These actions may not directly challenge the power structures or oppressors but serve as covert expressions of dissent and defiance. They can foster a sense of solidarity among the oppressed and create a shared understanding of resistance against dominant forces.

In the novella "Al-Lawn Al-Akhar" by Ihsan Abdul Quddus, several data can be found that indicate forms of resistance carried out covertly by female characters towards male characters and society. The following are examples of covert resistance found in the novella. These data show that the female characters in the novella use covert forms of resistance to express their disapproval and dissatisfaction towards male characters or society. These actions can serve as a way for them to convey messages indirectly or silently influence changes in power relations and social dynamics. The hidden resistance carried out by the female character is internal grumbling. She expresses her dissatisfaction or discontent silently within herself. Silent grumbling is when female character may harbor negative feelings towards male character or society within themselves without openly expressing them. They may keep their dissatisfaction or disagreement hidden as a form of covert resistance.

In a moment, she saw Hassan quickly approaching her, entering through the door and pulling her aside near the window, whispering forcefully:

"It's not appropriate for you to expose yourself to men."

She replied in astonishment:

"I'm not exposing myself, but I wanted to check on my cousin."

He angrily muttered, trembling:

"Now is not the time for that."

Surprised, she asked:

"Why?"

He turned his back to her and walked away, saying:

"Because we are in Khartoum, not Cairo." (Abdul Quddus, 49).

When Hasan reprimands and scolds her for peeking into the male area, Mirfat simply asks questions and complies with what Hasan says. This can be seen as a form of hidden resistance. Another form of hidden resistance performed by Mirfat is when she tries to explain her reasons for not wanting to undergo female genital mutilation (FGM), but she is still forced by Hasan due to his embarrassment in front of his friends if his

wife is not circumcised. In Sudan, a wife who is not circumcised is considered a disgrace to her husband. Mirfat attempts to explain the consequences of FGM, but her explanations are not accepted by Hasan.

Mirfat fell silent in despair. She realized that she wouldn't be able to convince Hassan. (Abdul Quddus: 54).

In Sudan, all aspects of Mirfat's life are controlled by Hasan and his family. Mirfat cannot meet other people without her husband's permission and must be accompanied by him or other family members. The clothing Mirfat wears is no longer according to her preferences but follows her husband Hasan's rules. In this situation, Mirfat complies with these rules as mentioned in the quote but conceals feelings of frustration and boredom in her heart.

She doesn't leave the house without his permission, and it is not her right to go out alone. She can only go out with him or accompanied by a group of female family members. She is not allowed to receive anyone in the house, not even her cousin Yaser, without her husband's permission and in his presence. She cannot be alone except with his mother or his sisters, and she only feels comfortable when she is secluded in her own space with Khodum (Hassan's Cousin). Furthermore, she discovered that she cannot wear regular clothes that she is accustomed to, as Hassan forbids her from leaving the house in ordinary attire. He deems it inappropriate and a violation of Sudanese traditions. (Abdul Quddus: 58-59)

When faced with the rules and restrictions imposed on wives in Sudan, Mirfat often remains silent and cries in her room. This demonstrates that Mirfat's resistance takes the form of silent resistance, by avoiding direct confrontation with her husband and his family.

5 Conclusion

Based on the analysis and discussion of the novella "Al-Lawn Al-Akhar" by Ihsan Abdul Quddus, two forms of resistance against patriarchal culture can be identified as being performed by the main female character: open resistance and covert resistance. Mirfat's open resistance includes refusing her husband's order to undergo female genital mutilation (FGM) due to its health risks for women, directly expressing her reasons for postponing pregnancy, rejecting the notion that men should walk ahead of women as they are superior and protectors, and opposing Hassan's family's belief that Sudanese women should not marry Egyptian men. Mirfat's open resistance is driven by her desire to uphold her beliefs and rights as an individual, pursue happiness, and attain justice within her husband's family. She challenges societal norms and expectations that restrict her freedom and agency. By expressing her concerns and asserting her autonomy, Mirfat aims to create a space where her voice is heard and her needs are acknowledged and respected. Her resistance is fueled by a quest for personal fulfillment and equality within her marital and familial relationships.

Mirfat's hidden resistance is evident through her silence and hidden emotions in response to her husband's reprimands for appearing in the presence of men, her inability to convince Hasan of her viewpoint on circumcision, and her tears when Hasan pressures her to conceive a child. In these instances, Mirfat chooses not to engage in direct confrontation or challenge Hasan openly. Instead, she internalizes her frustrations, bottling up her true feelings and expressing them privately. This form of resistance allows Mirfat to maintain a semblance of peace while quietly preserving her own thoughts, emotions, and personal autonomy within the constraints of her marriage and cultural expectations.

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