

## IMPLEMENTATION OF MICHEL FOUCAULT'S THEORY OF POWER IN KHUSHWANT SINGH'S NOVEL *TRAIN TO PAKISTAN*

Aurangzaib<sup>1</sup>, Waqar Ul Hassan<sup>2</sup>, Asif Kamran<sup>3</sup>, Muhammad Sajjad<sup>4\*</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4\*</sup>Department of English, University of Education, (Jauharabad Campus), Pakistan.

Email: <sup>1</sup>[aurangzaibm@gmail.com](mailto:aurangzaibm@gmail.com), <sup>2</sup>[malikwaqarkandanwaqarulhassan@gmail.com](mailto:malikwaqarkandanwaqarulhassan@gmail.com), <sup>3</sup>[asifkamran878@gmail.com](mailto:asifkamran878@gmail.com),  
<sup>4\*</sup>[ms1240910@gmail.com](mailto:ms1240910@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

**Purpose of the study:** The present study aims to show Michel Foucault's concept of power in the selected novel *Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan (1956)*, and the theory of power is applied in a way that how power is present in the character Juggut Singh.

**Methodology:** The present research is qualitative in its approach, exploratory in nature, and close reading textual analysis is used to interpret the data.

**Main Findings:** The interpretation of the components of Power by Michel Foucault in *Khushwant Singh's novel Train to Pakistan (1956)* has been focused that resulted in the hidden and invisible form of power is experienced without knowing the power, but it dominates the individual's behaviour and hidden attitude. So, such a form of power is constructed in the child's character through social norms and discourses at the very start of his life.

**Applications of the study:** The paper helps to identify in future studies how Michel Foucault's concept of power in other literary genres and how power is applied in different ways and operated in the contexts of literary genres.

**Novelty/Originality of the study:** The study is based on the novelty of the idea based on power theory. If the child is not stealing or not doing something wrong, then it does not mean that he has a fear of punishment, but he would not want to steal because this thing is inside his psyche. That's why he is unwilling to steal because his inside power is not allowing him to do so. Therefore, the research identifies Michel Foucault's concept of power in the selected novel of Khushwant Singh *Train to Pakistan (1956)*.

**Keywords:** *Khushwant Sing, Train to Pakistan, Foucault, Power Theory, Politics, Discourses.*

### INTRODUCTION

The concept of superiority and letting down someone has been common throughout the history of human beings. People consider others to be superior in different aspects of their life, whether they want to get a command positively or show authority in a negative way over weak people, to repress the rights of someone, to implement a law over people for their betterment and get benefits from the capabilities of other against their will. So, there can be different forms and ways of showing authority over people, institutions, sects, organizations and countries. This supervision and command lead to the inferiority of anyone. It can be seen everywhere in social, economic, political and moral ways, which cause suffering, exploitation, suppression, inequality, discrimination, oppression, violence, as well as manipulations and favourable decisions, rules and regulations to facilitate someone. (Allen, 2009; Dowding, 2006; Fiaz et al. 2019; Jennings et al. 2018; Macey, 2019)

The word power is a vast concept with different interpretations, domains and roles, according to scholars, writers and critics. Power is command, authority, superiority, supervision and domination over others. Such a notion of power is considered harmful in that suppression or expectation of someone is included as higher-class people do with lower-class people to uphold their status in society, so this concept of command negatively refers to power. The frequently asked question about power is, who has the power? Different thinkers gave their views on it. Robert Dahl (1957) gave the view that the individual has power. Hannah Arendt (2007) considered that power is in the hold of people. If people will not come close, then there is no power. But Marxist's view about power differs from other critics and comes up with an opinion that structure has power. Thus, the present paper aims to discover the concept of Power in Khushwant Singh's novel *Train to Pakistan* in the light of Michel Foucault's theory of power.

Macpherson (1976) gave two concepts of power; the first is development power, a positive concept which tells; what we want to do as human beings. And the second is extractive power, an unethical and illegitimate type of power in which there is the use of power to benefit from the abilities of others against their will. He argues that this type of power should not be part of society as "power to the people" is the title of a song by John Lennon and Ono (1971) that refers to the idea of the power from the perspective of holding authority over people same as the British's Power over weaker countries during colonization.

Steven Lukes (1974), in his Book "*Power a Radical View*", discussed three phases of power in his book. First, there is 'power as decision making'. This idea was given by Dahl (1957) in his book. He opined that A has Power over B, and B is working under the Power of A. This form of power can be seen easily in society, e.g. employer over the employee. The second phase of power is 'power as agenda setting', which Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz (1962) gave in their essay

"Two Faces of Power". Here *A* is creating hurdles for *B*, and *B* cannot tell his opinion and voice for his defence, so *A* has agenda-setting Power over *B*. *A* will decide what issues will be discussed and what should not. e.g. ruling party tries to that issues of opposition should not be taken into the parliament. The third phase of power is 'power as thought control'. Lukes defined this phase of power in his book. The wishes and thoughts of *B* are manipulated by *A*, so *A* has such Power of thought controlling *B*. It is a highly hidden form of power, e.g., the advertiser's persuasion of the customer.

Power is a broad term having different types, theories, dimensions and consequences. [Dahl \(1957\)](#) developed a theory in his major work, "The Concept of Power". German sociologist Max Weber described power as "the probability that one actor in a social relationship will carry out his own will against the resistance of others."

This suggests that in society, some people are getting benefits from the abilities of others without having their will and permission, and this is the negative aspect of power given by [Dahl \(1957\)](#). [Mills \(1956\)](#) gave the concept of Power elite theory; according to [Mills \(1956\)](#), the power elite is established by the government or any big institution which together as a ruling class that holds and controls society and works just for the sake of own benefits and interests, not for the citizenry. [Michel Foucault \(1982\)](#), in his essay "*The Subject and Power*", defined that power is everywhere and comes from everywhere, so power is neither an agency nor a structure. Foucault gave this view in [Deacon \(1998\)](#) and says that power is everywhere, so this argument of Foucault does not match with day-to-day life experiences because usually, in our life, we do not see power everywhere. We see it only in such stances and places where someone dominates the other's life, rules, laws and thoughts by force or violence and tries to control them ([Zerzan, 2006](#); [Uphoff, 1989](#); [Scimecca, 1972](#)).

So, the question is that "the power everywhere?" It depends on the scenario and situation how we perceive the concept of power and through which ideology or technique we will understand it. The conventional definition of power is the ability, control or authority, and those with such ability will try to control the others having less Power and this conventional concept of power moves from top to bottom. According to the old view, power is not everywhere. Foucault names it the "juridical view of power" that revolves around a single source. This sovereignty view of power has three ways or models of power: the sovereignty model of power, the commodity model of power and the repressive model of power are included. Those models tell that power is under the command of a single source and its transferable image that it can move from one individual to another while having a negative image to repress the natural rights or desires of someone respectively. So, these models prove that power is not everywhere. Foucault says that these models cannot portray the complete picture of power, and these models can understand only a tiny portion of the total power of society. Foucault points out the hidden form of power, which is invisible to eyes and senses, but people are under the influence of power and do not know power is commanding. Foucault introduced this picture of power. Thus, the present research aims to discover Michel Foucault's concept of Power in Khushwant Singh's novel *Train to Pakistan* (1956) and how the protagonist Juggut Singh portrays it.

The most famous works of Khushwant Singh are [I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale \(2005\)](#), [Truth and Little Malice \(2002\)](#), [Train to Pakistan \(1956\)](#), [Truth, Love and a Little Malice: An Autobiography \(2019\)](#) and [A Company of Women \(2016\)](#) is considered his major works. This paper is going to be more significant because most of the writers have analyzed [Train to Pakistan \(1956\)](#) through different perspectives, like women's representation, partition, suffering, and brutality ([Manavar, 1998](#); [Neheri & Bhabad, 2014](#); [Roy, 2019](#)), but no one has discussed it regarding Foucault's concept of power.

## Research Statement

It is like human beings who want dominancy, authority and supervision in their life either to repress the natural rights of others, to get benefits from the capabilities of others or to threaten the people just for the sake of becoming powerful. Still, the present study will identify the positive use of power to make people well-disciplined or to save humanity from another powerful source threatening or causing people difficulties.

The present study will demonstrate Michel Foucault's concept of Power in Khushwant Singh's novel [Train to Pakistan \(1956\)](#), how the brutal society will kill innocent people, and Jaggut Singh is fulfilling Foucault's concept of power to save the people from the brutality of society.

## Research Objectives

To display Michel Foucault's concept of power in the selected Khushwant Singh's novel [Train to Pakistan \(1956\)](#).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

[Michel Foucault's \(1976\)](#) concept of power is widely used in English literature. Still, the current study will be critical in Khushwant Singh's novel [Train to Pakistan \(1956\)](#) because researchers have broadly applied different theories according to their perception of the selected novel. Many of them used theories in the novel that are the representation of women, communal Frenzy or sectarianism, theory of partition, Nationalism by Amitav Ghosh, and communal violence is the most important that are already used by researchers. Foucault's concept of power can be seen in [William Shakespeare's King Lear \(2020\)](#).

In 1976, Gallimard published Foucault's "*Histoire de la sexualité: la volonté de savoir (The History of Sexuality (1976): The Will to Knowledge (1976))*". This work is strongly revolving around Foucault's concept of power. This study is unique compared to other critics who have written on various facets of Gordimer's literature since its introduction more than 60

years ago. Although Gordimer's work has received much criticism, there have been relatively few attempts to examine his books via the prism of Foucault's theories. Rita Barnard emphasizes the necessity of giving South African literature a new identity. The current study was created to close the gap in Gordimer's research. The following vital studies are worth knowing for any Gordimer reader.

*The Novels of Nadine Gordimer: History from the Inside*, written by [Stephen Clingman in 1986](#), demonstrates how Gordimer's writing is intertwined with South Africa's critical literary and ideological movements. He investigates Gordimer's perception of how history affects her as a writer while also acting upon or moulding her conscious thinking. Gordimer's political and formal evolution may be seen in her writing. [Clingman \(1986\)](#) analyses Gordimer's work within a historical context. To fully explore the strong connection between the historical shift inside South Africa and Gordimer's evolution as a writer, which is delicately reflected in each of her works, his contribution to the analysis of Gordimer's writing is essential. While other critics concentrate on other conditioning variables, [Clingman \(1986\)](#) continues to be the prominent critic of her work's historical and political aspects.

The Novels of Nadine Gordimer: Private Lives/Public Landscapes by [John Cooke \(1985\)](#) examines the relationship between the private and public spheres in Gordimer's works. It examines the connections between Gordimer's personal and private preoccupations and her political and public issues. According to Cooke, the slow accumulation of public resonances surrounding her private subjects is how the private and the political in her novels appear together ([Cooke, 1985, p. 10](#)). [Cooke \(1985\)](#) looks at the connections between the personal topic of children being freed from controlling parents, Gordimer's society's political climate, and the nation's general emancipation. The researchers agree with Cooke's claim that "changing the predominate political order also requires complete liberty from private, familial limitations" (p. 11). This essay focuses on the liberty that Gordimer continually explores at the intersection of racial and sexual interactions.

The novel "*Nadine Gordimer*" by Judie [Newman \(1988\)](#) explores how gender muddles the novels' interlocking themes of race, sex, and colonialism. In Gordimer's writing, [Newman \(1988\)](#) highlights the relationship between the psychological and political, particularly concerning the categories of gender and sexuality. Two collections of essays that offer a range of complex readings of Gordimer's novels and short fiction, including [Rowland Smith's Critical Essays on Nadine Gordimer \(1990\)](#) and [Bruce King's The Later Fiction of Nadine Gordimer \(1993\)](#), both of which concentrate on "the changing face" of Gordimer's later fiction. He is thoroughly discussed by [Dominic Head in Nadine Gordimer \(1994\)](#), who pays great attention to the texts as a reflection of real-world events and circumstances and as proof of the ongoing reconsideration of her craft. His analysis of the book focuses mainly on the concept of identity formation. Still, he also offers some excellent insights into how this theory is connected to the politics of the body. [Head \(1994\)](#) demonstrates how Gordimer's concerns, evident in her early novels, develop through an increased emphasis on the politics of sexuality. He then explores the implications of this development to consider how Gordimer's later work adds to the recentring of political engagement in an uncertain period.

[Saul Dubow's Apartheid, 1948-1994 \(2014\)](#) gave a new perspective on apartheid South Africa and was inspired by the author's lifelong interest in the history of racial segregation. Dubow positions apartheid in both local and global contexts. This new study's overarching goal is to combine resistance studies with power analysis while recognizing the significance of institutions, ideas, and culture. Dubow takes fresh stances while discussing South Africa's history of racial supremacy. He inquires as to how apartheid endured for so long, in addition to why it was eradicated. He does not predict either the emergence of or the end of apartheid.

In their article "*Truth Problematization and Identity Formation: A Foucauldian Reading of Martin Amis's Money*" ([2016](#)), [Marwan Kadhim Mohammed et al.](#) discussed the theme of transgression in the postmodern age as a particular social and cultural aspect in re-forming the identity of the postmodern man. They did this by applying Foucault's theory of transgression to [Martin Amis's novel Money \(2000\)](#). In their analysis of how Amis' characters violate social conventions to reflect their identities, the researchers found that "Amis's blatant manipulation of transgressing the established rules of truth marks a turning point in his literary work" ([Mohammed et al. 2016, p. 133](#)).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research is qualitative in its approach, and the close textual analysis technique is used in an exploratory way. This research explores Michel Foucault's concept of Power in Khushwant Singh's novel [Train to Pakistan \(1956\)](#).

### Theoretical Analysis

[Michel Foucault \(1982\)](#) is a postmodernist French writer, philosopher, historian, politician and critic of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He also identified the interconnection of power and truth. He is one of the most influential writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was inspired by many personalities like Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Friedrich Nietzsche, Judith Butler, Jean-Paul Sartre, Pierre Bourdieu and Martin Heidegger.

According to scholars, writers, and critics, the word power is a vast concept with different interpretations, domains, and roles. Power is command, authority, superiority, supervision and domination over others. Such a notion of power is considered harmful in that there is suppression of someone, as the elite class do with the lower class to uphold their status in society, so this concept of command negatively refers to power. The frequently asked question about power is, who has the power? Different thinkers gave their views on it. Robert Dahl gave the view that an individual has power. Hennah

Arendt considered that power is in the hold of people. If people will not come close, then there is no power, but Marxist's view about power differs from other critics and comes up with an opinion that structure has power. (Isaac, 1987; Tina, 2013).

Thus, the present paper aims to discover the concept of Power in Khushwant Singh's novel *Train to Pakistan* in light of Michel Foucault's theory of power. Foucault gave a view of power step forward to juridical or conventional power models. According to him, Power models cannot fulfil the complete picture of power because they only work on power's concept, which is not present everywhere. It means that power is the authority and supervision of single sources like an individual, sect, institution or any commanding organization, showing that power is never dispersed but centralized. It has transferable nature moving from one individual to another. Thus Foucault depicts that this concept is correct to some extent. Still, it cannot give the complete picture of power as a whole in society, and this concept of old models can cover only a tiny portion of our society's total power. He further explains that many forms of power are hidden in society; our eyes and senses usually cannot understand those invisible or hidden forces. Power operates in society in many ways, and sometimes, people are under the influence of power and are unaware of its domination over them. Foucault argues that these hidden forms of power cannot be captured through conventional power models. Foucault introduces how power operates invisibly in our society and further proves that, in modern times, power is produced, also called disciplinary power, used for the betterment of the people. Foucault says that "Power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything but because it comes from everywhere" (Foucault, 1982).

This concept of power does not match with day-to-day life and experiences because, generally, in our life, we do not see power everywhere. We see it only in such places and stances where someone dominates the other's thoughts, rules, norms and rights, and they not only dominate but also try to control them. Here the question arises, "is power everywhere?" It depends on the scenario in which perspective the concept of power is going to be percept. Foucault is proving his argument that people will be doing right without fear of being caught and punished. If some rules and regulations are made to make people well-disciplined from childhood, this is the proper way. There is another topic of discussion: when these laws and punishments are excluded from society, people will do what they want .because it is the instinct of man that if he has a fear of punishment and strict laws are there, then he will do nothing that is against the rules.

So, Foucault says that the desire to avoid sin should be a part of personality through the norms of society. For example, if a child is taught by his parents, family, school and friends that stealing is a bad habit. Then, with growing age, this thing will be stuck in his mind, and he will not steal because he does not avoid stealing without the fear of punishment. Even in the weaker system of security where there are chances of stealing, he will not do so because these things were set in his mind by different methods since childhood. He will internalize this point gradually, becoming a permanent part of his identity because a socially desirable existence does not come automatically. Still, this particular behaviour of a child could be created by power. It can be seen how power constitutes and produces the personality and identity of a child; Michel Foucault highlights such a concept of power, which is productive instead of the negative image of power. It is clear that such behaviour, which is constructed through the social norms and discourses, is not due to the threats of punishment but is constructed through his social norms and identity. So, power is working through these discourses and norms in society. Foucault's definition of power has different components in which power and the permanent flux of human nature are necessary, which will be discussed in the data analysis of the present paper.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Michel Foucault argues when a child learns all the ethical values and the difference between good and bad things from his family, friends and teachers. He will get these things and internalize them from the very start of his age, as this is when anyone can become a good or lousy individual based on their upbringing. Foucault argues that due to the child's proper upbringing, the desire to do the right thing should be a part of that child's psyche and identity. It is not innate in children; this particular form of conduct or personality is a product of a power, also known as the power of thinking, which is responsible for producing such personalities. Michel Foucault highlights the concept of power, which, according to him, is called productive power. Such social construction and production are not produced through the threat of punishment; if someone tries to do wrong, he will be punished. The best example of Foucault's theory of power is depicted by Juggut Singh, the protagonist of the novel *Train to Pakistan* (1956) by Khushwant Singh. He stood against the brutality of the people willing to kill the migrants coming to Pakistan during the partition in 1947. He did not care about the severe outcomes would be killed after doing this act, but he knew only one thing that he was going on the right way because the act was wrong to kill innocent as it is not allowed in any religion. It was the hidden or invisible power that existed in the mind of Juggut Singh, and he proved it by sacrificing his life after saving innocent people. Michel Foucault has pointed out that such a form of power is more commanding than other forms, and the present authority inside pushes someone to the right way. The same was in the mind of Juggut Singh during his childhood education. He learnt from his norms and religion that killing someone is not good. He used his power socially constructed in his mind without fearing punishment. The power inside him was acting through the norms and rules of his society and religion that were stuck in his mind (that good is good and bad is bad) from childhood.

The famous quotation of Khushwant Singh in *Train to Pakistan* is:

"Poor people cannot afford to have morals. So, they have a religion" (Singh, 1956).



In the light of this quotation, Khushwant Singh is referring to that people were willing to kill innocent people even though this thing is not in their norms, rules, ethics, customs, religion and values, but still, they stood on their point to kill and to kill. It means they only have religion but do not have ethics and morals, which are central to any belief. On the other hand, Juggut Singh, who is fulfilling these ethics and values on behalf of hidden power, is stuck in his mind that it is not the right thing to do. Singh depicts religious values, and Foucault's concept of power is also experienced for good use and the sake of productive deeds and the benefits of human beings.

"We are of the mysterious East. No proof, just faith. No reason, just faith" (Singh, 1956).

Here Khushwant Singh refers to Juggut Singh and others that are very difficult to understand. On the other hand, one of them is standing against them because he was thinking about his faith, values, rules and religion that killing someone is not a good thing and is not allowed according to our faith. So he took a stand and did not care about the suffering after going against society. He listens to the only voice inside himself that is the part of his personality, constructed and built by social norms. He did what he wanted without thinking about the punishments, allegations and criticism he would face later.

"Consciousness of the bad is an essential prerequisite to the promotion of the good" (Singh, 1956).

He argues the power that was going to be experienced by the people except Juggut Singh was an unethical or brutal attempt. On the other hand, the power that was hidden inside Juggut Singh to save the innocent people became the condition of doing good, and such type of power that Juggut Singh experienced depicts Foucault's concept of power.

"There is no crime in anyone's blood any more than there is goodness in the blood of others" (Singh, 1956).

The best example ever to depict Michel Foucault's concept of power is in which Khushwant argues that if someone wants to do something wrong, it cannot harm someone or become the cause of crime if someone has goodness in his behaviour. If he is on the right path, no one can compete with him and will not be able to do wrong with him because the power of truth is more powerful than the power supporting the crime, as in the novel. Juggut Singh has the hidden power of truth, and he firmly believed that he was on the right path, so he succeeded and defeated many people going wrong. So Juggut Singh proved that he was on the right path, no matter that he could not save himself.

## CONCLUSION

The present research is based on the interpretation of the component of Power by Michel Foucault in Khushwant Singh's novel *Train to Pakistan* (1956), which shows the hidden and invisible form of power is experienced without knowing the power. Still, it is dominating the individual's behaviour and attitude hidden. So, such a form of power is constructed in the child's character through social norms and discourses at the very start of his life. If the child is not stealing or not doing something wrong, then it does not mean that he fears punishment, but he would not want to steal because this thing is inside his psyche. That's why he is unwilling to steal because his inside power is not allowing him to do so. The present study fulfils the objective stated above and highlights the concept of Foucault's "productive power" in Singh's novel *Train to Pakistan*, which is prominent in the character Juggut Singh.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Showing command and authority has been used for a long time, and everyone knows that power is authority. Mainly it is used negatively to suppress someone, threat, or get advantages from the abilities of others just because of power. Still, Foucault gave a hidden or invisible concept of power dominating the people, but they are unaware of it because it is constructed in their behaviour. That is an accurate representation of power that comes from doing right. It is a very subtle idea of power, yet it applies to Khushwant Singh's novel, and there is no proper research on this work which employs the notion of power. However, the concept of sexuality and power is already used in the non-fictional text of Khushwant Singh. Some other theories that are used in Khushwant Singh's novel *Train to Pakistan* (1956) are women's representation, Communal frenzy, partition, nationalism and violence are included.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the current study outcomes, Michel Foucault's other power concept can also be applied to the selected novel as the element of social power. Other categories of traditional approaches are found during the research. Further, it is suggested that in literature, hegemony and other power practices are broadly discussed, but lesser attention is paid to the idea of Foucault. Therefore, this research will also open the way to apply this concept in literature in another genre.

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## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Mr. Aurangzaib wrote the analysis after reading the primary text and corresponding with the journal.

Mr. Waqar Ul Hasan worked on the introductory section.

Mr. Asif Kamran worked on secondary sources.

Mr. Muhammad Sajjad worked on the references list and proofread the script.

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