POWER/KNOWLEDGE DISCOURSE IN FIVE NOVELS:
A FOUCAULDIAN INTERPRETATION

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Abstract of the Thesis

The present research project is an attempt to critically overview and investigate the basic issues related to the above stated title. Michel Foucault, one of the most significant figures in twentieth century critical theory, has been the centre of attraction on the concepts of Power/Knowledge and Discourse. The Foucauldian conception of power is neither force nor domination nor authority. It cannot be attributed to anyone or anything as it is not possessed by individuals, groups or institutions. Power cannot be achieved or given as it is always present everywhere. In *The History of Sexuality Vol. I*, Foucault contends that "where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol. I* 95). He asserts that knowledge produces power and power produces knowledge by reciprocating each other and in *Discipline and Punish*, he points out the inextricable relationship between the two. Foucault comments, "Power produces knowledge, that power and knowledge directly imply one another" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 27).

Chapter I entitled "Introduction to Foucault's Theory of Power/Knowledge Discourse: A Critical Appraisal and Reassessment" defines and elaborates the Foucauldian concept of Power/Knowledge Discourse. Chapter II entitled "The Politics of Economic Power and Exclusion: Charles Dickens's *Hard Times* is devoted to identify the relevance of Foucauldian theory of Power. The novel can be justifiably examined from the perspective of Foucault's theory of Power/Knowledge Discourse as Dickens paints a society where there is a huge gulf between the powerful industrialists/politicians and the powerless workers/poor children.

Chapter III entitled "Untouchable: The Dialectics of Power in Caste, Class and Religion" takes up for critical discussion and interpretation Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*. The novel reflects the Foucauldian hypothesis of Power/Knowledge Discourse as it underlines the marginality of the untouchables including women. Chapter IV entitled "The Discourse of Power/Knowledge and The Colonized Other: Reading V.S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*"
evaluates another superb colonial text from Foucauldian viewpoint. Mr. Biswas, the protagonist has been set against the conventional and conservative Hindu ideas, customs, traditions and ideology.

Chapter V entitled "Confronting the Web of Power Politics: An Interpretation of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*" can be interpreted from the Foucauldian notion of power. Ammu, the female protagonist is tortured physically and emotionally by her parents and brother Chacko which reflects that the relations of power are interwoven with other kinds of relations. Chapter VI entitled "Apartheid, Oppression and Counter-Violence: A Foucauldian Reading of J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*" is an attempt to analyse the violence and turmoil in post-apartheid South Africa. The novel presents a harsh picture of new South Africa where the whites have lost their identity, power and privileged position.

**WORKS CITED**
