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**Governing Bodies, Controlling Truth: A Foucauldian Analysis of
Biopower and Docility in Iftikhar's *Divided Species***



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Abstract

Living in the intricate landscape of the postmodern world, with multiple truths and realities shaped by authorities, Foucault's theory of the power & knowledge nexus helps untangle the invisible threads of these realities. Power in *Divided Species* is not only shown through alien warfare, military command, or the struggle over Hextanlo; it also operates through knowledge, secrecy, surveillance, hierarchy, and the normalization of obedience. This study examines Iftikhar's *Divided Species* through a Foucauldian critical lens to explore how power/knowledge dynamics shape social and political relations in the novel. The study focuses on biopower, docile bodies, and normalization, and analyzes the construction and maintenance of power relations through social status, ranks, institutional positions, authority, power structures, and resistance. Using a qualitative research design and thematic analysis, the study interprets selected textual excerpts from the novel in relation to Foucault's concepts of power/knowledge, discipline, biopower, and normalization. The findings reveal that power in *Divided Species* is not distributed equally; it is organized hierarchically and sustained through controlled knowledge, technological superiority, secrecy, surveillance, and institutional command. The analysis further shows that bodies and populations are regulated in the name of protection, security, survival, and order. However, the novel also demonstrates that resistance becomes possible when hidden knowledge is exposed and dominant narratives are challenged. This study contributes to Foucauldian literary criticism, Pakistani speculative fiction, and broader debates on authority, social control, and political resistance.

Keywords: Biopower, docile body, normalization, power/knowledge, Foucault, *Divided Species*, Pakistani anglophone fiction, postmodernism.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Postmodernism, as a movement, began in the second half of the 20th century in response to the shortcomings and limitations of modernism. Postmodernism emphasizes the contingent nature and diversity of reality while rejecting the notion of absolute truth and fixed meaning. Best and Kellner (1991) pointed out that

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postmodernism focuses on “the contingent nature and diversity of reality while rejecting the notion of absolute truth and fixed meaning” (p. 5). Numerous fields, including literature, philosophy, and social theory, have been significantly influenced by this approach. In the Postmodern world, as Baudrillard (2002) argues, modern societies are characterized by an abundance of signs and symbols that conceal the true nature of power relations. According to him, the media and other means of communication produce a hyperreality that substitutes images and representations for the actual world. Understanding the structures and dynamics of human societies has long depended on the study of power and knowledge. Foucault is also acknowledged as an important figure in modern social theory who greatly influenced how we understand these ideas and concepts. His theoretical underpinnings regarding knowledge and power have been applied across several industries, including politics, healthcare, and education.

Foucault’s (1976) interest in knowledge and power emerged from his research on the history of ancient Greek and Greco-Roman society, in which he found that those societies’ perception of sexuality differed from contemporary society’s problematization of sexuality. He argues that in ancient society, sex was not something one did in private; sex was seen as one of the many pleasures that could amuse or divert free men; it was part of the leisure activities of the city (Foucault, 1990). Individuals’ perspective about sex at that time was not something that was done in private; instead, they considered it to be a public action, which was frequently connected to politics and power. The power structure of that time tried to control this behavior by force, but it failed. Later, they used the power of knowledge and discourse. They produced a discourse on norms, culture, and civilization, through which they were able to control individuals. Foucault (1980) considered how the creation of knowledge allowed those in positions of power to control people and mold their subjectivities. In contrast to the use of overwhelming physical force, he also claimed that power in contemporary society is exercised through a variety of social control mechanisms. Such a version of power affected knowledge.

Power structures divide society’s behavior by setting standards for what is “normal” and what is “deviant” through the creation and circulation of knowledge. According to Foucault (1980), “disciplinary and bio power create a ‘discursive

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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practice' or a body of knowledge and behavior that defines what is normal, acceptable, deviant, etc. But it is a discursive practice that is nonetheless in constant flux" (p.56). Foucault (1978) established the concepts of "disciplinary power" and "governmentality". The difference between the two is that 'discipline' operates within specific settings, such as schools, hospitals, and families. On the other hand, governmentality works on specific groups. The data is collected through financial registrations, medical institutes, and surveillance examinations. Power and knowledge are used to direct the population's behavior. The legal system also acts as a tool. Further examination, normalization, and surveillance.

Foucault's theory of knowledge and power has made substantial contributions to history, anthropology, psychology, sociology, and other fields. Foucault's most influential work concerns the knowledge-power nexus. Foucault suggests that knowledge and power are deeply interconnected, with knowledge always serving as a form of power, and power inherently linked to knowledge (Foucault, 1995). He argued that language is a tool used to control social practices and institutions. He further argues that managing, controlling, and manipulating knowledge provides power to control social practices and institutions.

Foucault's archaeological analysis is also particularly important because it reveals historical circumstances that show the possibilities created by control over knowledge. He described language as a "general domain of all statements" (Foucault, 1972, p. 80), which sets forth his argument: discursive practices are tools for constructing, manipulating, and apprehending everything that is further controlled by conditioning through knowledge. In his work, the term 'archaeology' is used differently from how it is used in history; this distinguishes his work from historiography. His focus was on analyzing and comparing how knowledge was formed across several historical eras. This study explores the social and political implications of the power-knowledge nexus to unravel specific ideologies employed in fictional narratives.

Karachi-based fiction writer Muhammad Omar Iftikhar's novel, *Divided Species*, takes readers through the streets of Karachi as the extra-terrestrial beings (aliens) who call themselves 'Taleykens' arrive in the city in search of a secret mineral, Hextanlo. On the order of Commander Kropnock, Taleyken soldiers come to Earth to

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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Online ISSN: 3006-5895

find and protect the Hextanlo buried in Karachi for the last 150 years. General Gooztan wanted to use every possible strategy to dig out Hextanlo in order to carry out his evil plans on Planet Arplon and beyond. Following his agenda, he started a revolution in the Mother Ship through his power. This study aims to explore the power/knowledge relationships evident in the contrasting characters of Commander Kropnock and General Gooztan in the novel. Foucault's theoretical lens on the knowledge-power nexus is based on the use of language as a tool for constituting knowledge through social practices and power relations, which dwell within such knowledge and the relations between them, as he discussed in his works (Foucault, 1972; 1978; 1980; 1985; 1986; 1995). A group of extraterrestrial entities known as "Taleykens" revolts against humans who had protected and guarded the "Hextanlo" for 150 years. The way the text reflects on Foucault's theory of power and knowledge is its most important aspect. By applying the theory of knowledge and power to Iftkhar's fictional narrative, *Divided Species*, one can comprehend and evaluate the theories' concrete arguments.

The word 'bio-power' was first coined by French social theorist Foucault; he described it as a new form of power that "incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize, and organize the forces under it: a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them" (Cisney & Morar, 2015, pp. 3–4). After industrialization, Foucault shifted from the concept of power to biopower in response to the need to regulate the population at large. Power deals only with suppression and control, but biopower also involves regulating and managing the population to make them docile. He believed that in the postmodern world, humans are considered machines that serve the structure (Cisney & Morar, 2015). Biopower is further divided into two parts: disciplinary power and regulatory power. Disciplinary power is an aspect of biopower that manages the population by the use of force and punishment. The government uses disciplinary power to establish its control over the population because "disciplinary power works primarily through institutions" (Taylor, 2014, p. 44), such as the army, the judicial system, the jail, and the school. Another aspect of biopower is regulatory power, which concerns "regulation of social life, social engineering, management or governmentality" (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014, p. 15). It administers life and regulates it

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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in ways that benefit the government at large.

The concept of the docile body refers to the steps by which the powerful control the process of creating bodies that are obliged, regulated, and constructed. Docile bodies can be subjected, used, transformed, and improved (Sargiacomo, 2009). The government, in order to establish its control, develops institutions to implement disciplinary power. In the postmodern world, power is no longer solely dependent on raw physical force; rather, it relies on disciplinary mechanisms that operate through institutions such as schools, prisons, and hospitals. This phenomenon involves surveillance, normalization, and training to ensure that people comply with regulations and keep their actions aligned with the expectations of the social order. To implement rules and regulations through force and the concept of judgment and punishment. Foucault considered the body as a machine whose efficiency and docility can be increased by applying force or disciplinary power.

The pervasive problem of corruption, which has debilitating effects on economies worldwide, including Pakistan, underscores the need to evaluate it. According to a report, “released Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for 2019 by Transparency International (TI) ranks Pakistan as the 120th country out of a total of 180” (Ulain & Hussain, 2020, p. 462). Foucault’s concept of normalization highlights how institutions and power structures use knowledge and power as tools to exercise control and authority. Corruption is deep-rooted and institutionalized to the point that it is considered part of the system. Corruption can take multiple forms; it can be a hunger for power or position. Recent reports on corruption indices highlight Pakistan among the most corrupt countries. In 1995, Pakistan was the second most corrupt nation in the world (Ulain & Hussain, 2020) . Foucauldian theory of knowledge, power, and normalization of such behaviors that benefit individuals or institutional structures in Pakistan can be used to critically analyze how power creates social injustice. Overall, this research can produce theoretical and practical contributions to the literature on power, knowledge, exploitation, and development.

Superpower countries controlling the global economy and political system are currently facing several issues related to power dynamics, including economic injustice, political unpredictability, and corruption. These issues are related to problems of knowledge and power since those in positions of political power

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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frequently use their control over discourse and knowledge to uphold their social and political superiority over others. The normalization of corruption and the governing elite's manipulation of information show that power dynamics in contemporary society continue to pose severe threats to the country's growth across the social, political, and economic arenas. Research on the interrelation between power and knowledge in literature has investigated how language and knowledge can be used as instruments of power.

The ways in which docile body, knowledge, normalization, bio-power, and surveillance function as tools of power in *Divided Species* to construct and maintain control and power, however, are not well covered in the literature. Although some studies have examined the novel's symbiotic subjectivities, posthuman cartography of identity, themes, and motifs, none has explicitly analyzed the power relations that language and knowledge create through discursive patterns employed in the text. This research study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by examining the dynamics of knowledge and power in Iftikhar's *Divided Species*. This study provides a distinctive viewpoint on how knowledge is used to support power structures and lead to normalization in the novel by examining its discursive language patterns, characters, and symbolism through a Foucauldian lens. This research contributes to the understanding of novel themes and sheds light on the broader societal repercussions of the use of knowledge/power, biopower, and the docile body as tools for constructing and maintaining social and political control in Iftikhar's selected works.

This study aims to explore:

1. To explore the selected fiction for social and political implications of the power/knowledge dynamics, specifically focusing on the concepts of biopower, docile bodies, and normalization through a Foucauldian critical lens.
2. To analyze the construction and maintenance of power relationships in Iftikhar's *Divided Species*.

This research study is limited to the application of Foucault's concepts of surveillance, biopower, and docile bodies, which center on his ideas about power and knowledge (Foucault, 1972; 1978; 1980; 1985; 1986; 1995). His key concepts of surveillance, docile body, and biopower regarding power and knowledge provide insight into how

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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political and social ideologies unfold within specific social contexts. The study is delimited to the analysis of the selected novel, *Divided Species*.

This study helps us understand the postmodern condition by examining how knowledge and power work together to establish social or political control within a societal context. Knowledge, which is often a function of power, becomes an essential tool used by society's governing class to wield and retain that power, and it sheds light on how specific counter-knowledge is produced and used to challenge the knowledge and, ultimately, the authority of those in power. It assists scholars and reviewers in comprehending the dual nature of power and knowledge that results from the interplay between this knowledge and power relations. This study outlines how people in power use language to silence dissenting voices and how the oppressed use language to counter oppression. This research contributes to the area of social philosophy by examining how knowledge and power intersect to shape social control and authority, while also highlighting the emergence of counter-knowledge that challenges established power dynamics.

Foucault's concepts of power-knowledge, biopower, and docile bodies, defined in this section, serve as a guiding principle for further research into the complex links between power and knowledge. The said concepts are explained further in the literature review section.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Power and Knowledge

Foucault's theory of power/knowledge relationships has been widely explored and discussed. This chapter focuses on and reviews researchers and critics who have analyzed his work from various dimensions. This survey of the literature examines the numerous sectors in which Foucault's theory of power and knowledge has been used.

French philosopher Foucault initially presented the power-knowledge nexus theory. The book primarily examines medical knowledge and how it is used to control individuals' minds, perceptions, and decisions. Foucault has made substantial contributions to history, anthropology, psychology, sociology, and other fields. Foucault's most influential work concerns the knowledge-power nexus. Foucault (1980) considered how the creation of knowledge allowed those in positions of power

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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to control people and mold their subjectivities. He argued that language is a tool used to control social practices and institutions. He further argues that managing, controlling, and manipulating knowledge provides power to control social practices and institutions. Foucault's archaeological analysis is particularly important because it reveals historical circumstances that show the possibilities created by control over knowledge. He described language as a "general domain of all statements" (Foucault, 1972, p. 80), which sets forth his argument: discursive practices are tools for constructing, manipulating, and apprehending everything that is further controlled by knowledge-based conditioning.

Later writings by Foucault (1995), particularly on discipline and punishment and on the history of ancient Greek and Greco-Roman society, further refined this paradigm. He presented several ways in which knowledge and power are interlinked and how they influence the systematic structure of jails. According to him, modern jails are an example of how people are made docile and controlled. He presented several ways to make criminals docile, so they would fit societal expectations. He established the concept of 'disciplinary power' in these writings, which refers to how power is exercised in settings such as schools, jails, and hospitals, where people are constantly watched and regulated (Foucault, 1980).

Foucault (1986) introduced the concept of 'technologies of self,' the different ways in which an individual can mold and improve themselves for progress. He moves from the concept of governmentality, in which government institutes normalize specific behaviors in individuals, to self-improvement and self-awareness. Once personal and social, self-knowledge occupies a considerable place, of course, and concerns how to construct or recreate oneself in accordance with social norms and standards.

Adriaanse (2018) starts the discussion with the statement that "there is no hope of purifying knowledge in such a way as to get rid of power relations. This means that all scientific inquiry is, in a sense, ideology" (p. 1). His study aims to answer the question of how ideologies of "the ruling class... dominate the realm of ideas of a society" (p. 3). The theoretical framework used in the study is that of Marx and Gramsci. The study analyzes how a society's ideology is set by the superstructure. The knowledge they circulate sets the state's ideology; researchers claim that the

superstructure shapes the “cultural, political, and legal framework of a society” (p. 3). He argues that knowledge resides in the superstructure, with ‘intellectuals’ shaping the beliefs of the ‘proletariat’ beneath. Ultimately, knowledge leads to power. The study shows that both knowledge and power are also influenced by material conditions. According to him, knowledge, wealth, and power are interdependent; “the economic forces that shape society are also the intellectual forces that shape ideas and knowledge” (Adriaanse, 2018, p. 3; Greaves, 2008). It comes to the conclusion that knowledge is in the superstructure, as an individual’s practices and interests depend on their economic positions in a particular society, which are determined by the superstructure. As the superstructure controls knowledge and wealth, it eventually leads to the accumulation of power.

Similarly, a British sociologist examined how people are controlled and managed by the state using the notion of governmentality (Rose, 2001). He believed that the state wields power by creating and disseminating knowledge, which is then utilized to mold people’s attitudes and behaviors. The power-knowledge nexus has been used in political science to examine how political elites use knowledge as a tool of power to maintain their position of dominance. He believed that “knowledge of life and the living body became intrinsically linked to interventions that transformed those living bodies” (p. 14). He also explored how the United States wields power in the international system through the creation and diffusion of information, using the concept of hegemony.

2.2 Moral Corruption Caused by Power

Rich (2016), in his student paper on corruption, argued that *Animal Farm* depicted a revolt by the animals against Mr. Jones, their human owner, as “the animals... [rose] up in rebellion shortly after an elderly pig stirs them up and convinces them of the evils of human beings against animals” because “they use their intellect and political clout to become superior to the other” (p. 1). He argues that *Animal Farm* is taken as an example and compared with the Soviet Union's mid-20th-century revolts. The study notes that although there are obvious similarities between the novella’s narrative and the events of the Russian Revolution, *Animal Farm* presents far more than that. *Animal Farm* is a satire on the political system of the Soviet Union following the rise of the Russian Revolution. Also, it is “a tale illustrating the corruption that power

causes in an individual and the relative ease of obtaining power in relation to using that gained power correctly” (p. 1).

Olivier de Sardan (1999) study explores the rise in corruption in African political systems due to the absolute power held by specific groups. He analyzed the political setup through Foucault’s concept of power and normalization. Each individual believes that without bribery, their issues cannot be solved. Additionally, it gives insight into how power dynamics lead to moral corruption of the whole societal structure because normalization of ‘logic’ of negotiation “gift-giving, solidarity, predatory authority and redistributive accumulation” (p. 25). The analysis provides details on how absolute power granted to a specific group leads to societal corruption and the normalization of corruption.

2.3 Affinity between Power and Knowledge

Nesari and Kamari (2015), in their research, argue that Orwell’s novel demonstrates a relationship among them. They believe that discourse has two possible functions: it can be used to oppress others, and it can also be used as a tool of resistance against oppression. They explored that in *Animal Farm*, discourse is used for both purposes, as Old Major was considered an authority among the animals; for this reason, his speech was properly heard by other animals (Nesari & Kamari, 2015). The discourse he produced through his speech was the discourse of resistance, about the ill-treatment and abuse of animals on the farm at the hands of a human master, which seems to be the major cause of the impact Old Major’s discourse produced among the animals. Power, knowledge, and discourse hold the power to manipulate and control others, “moves in a certain direction to nullify the dominant discourse propagated on the farm of Mr. Jones and the likes of him.

Cherryholmes (1983), in his classical research study, discussed social studies, phenomena such as socio-economic categorization, scientific and positivist interpretations of social systems and procedures, and ideologies that impact education. The study aims to demonstrate how power and knowledge interact, produce, replicate, and fabricate one another. The study further investigates how institutions influence and shape statements about social studies. In social studies, students often read about voting, land types, laws, natural resources, previous revolutions, and wars, things they sometimes were not part of, but their perceptions and views about the topic are shaped

by the statements in the book. The researcher used speech theory and Foucault's theory of knowledge, discourse and power as his theoretical framework. He discusses the 'power structures' within the committee responsible for deciding content in social studies textbooks (Cherryholmes, 1983). He argues that power in social studies education is centered in the state and its textbook approval processes; he also believes that the statements, discourse, or knowledge found in these textbooks hold influence. Control over this knowledge allows one to shape students' perceptions. The essay highlights another aspect of discursive practices: individuals make commitments to the discourses they engage with. These commitments, known as ideologies, possess both normative and empirical elements (Cherryholmes, 1983). His research shows that after reading the content, students form emotional ties and beliefs about the ideas presented, which are called ideologies. Ultimately, real power is exercised through shaping or controlling these individual ideologies. This aligns with the present study's core interest in how characters influence each other's beliefs through knowledge and power.

Moreover, MacMynowski (2007), in his research study, highlights that knowledge claims in multidisciplinary research studies carry asymmetrical power, and that these studies are not only about sharing or spreading knowledge and awareness in the, in his research study, highlights that knowledge claims in multidisciplinary research carry asymmetrical power and that these studies are not only about sharing or spreading knowledge and awareness of biophysical or social sciences. He argues that power in the modern world refers to having a grip, control, and authority over specific knowledge claims that people might hold in the fields of science and society at large. It can take many forms, such as a person's standing as a scientist, presenting a research study in environmental science, how their ideas and knowledge shape individuals' perceptions, and how they affect policymaking in a specific society.

2.4 Power by Means of Linguistic Enterprise

Jørgensen (2006) in his study on power and language, he argues that language is the center of analysis and that power is ingrained in the way we talk, act, and interact with each other. Language should be understood as creating organizational realities. Language, or you can say discourse, is often connected to a basic position of knowledge as being socially constructed. Foucault's theory of power and knowledge

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originated in literary studies. Foucault's concept of power is unique in some ways. It challenges the concept that power is something an individual or group possesses. Instead, knowledge and the specific language that contains it play a major role in the development of power for an individual or a group of individuals. And that the individuals are socially produced by power relations surrounding them. Power is reflected in the individual's aims and goals; it penetrates into what he/she is passionate about, what their actual intentions are, what they really want, and what their likes and dislikes are. Then the researcher introduced the sub-concept of 'language games', which is a sort of tag-play between language and social context. It not only consists of linguistic dimensions, but language games also perceive language as a broader phenomenon that encompasses both language and the actions in which language is produced or written. The study further emphasizes the statement that "there is no knowledge without power and there is no power without knowledge" (p. 15).

The critical terms of Foucault, including discourse, the relation of power/knowledge, and subjectivity, are analyzed, highlighting their dynamic relationship in shaping social and individual conduct. Generally, discourse is viewed as an instrument for building truth and practicing power through it. Foucault's idea of power is viewed as a source of absolute, omnipresent power that not only suppresses but also produces knowledge and normalizes specific behavior in society that benefits the power structure. The study also delves into discourse and linguistic practices, exploring how the use of discourse and knowledge benefits the power structure. The study highlights that power structures that face resistance operate through alternative discourses and that "resistance avoids detection by masking itself in various discourses, and like power, is omnipresent" (Poorghorban, 2023, p. 323). This resistance is usually masked and unconscious, going undetected because of fear of disciplinary power and punishment.

2.5 Biopower

Cisney and Morar (2015), in their work, expand the discussion with the question, What comes to mind when we think of power? Traditionally power was conceived as a commodity or a badge of honor supervening on life and the living, something one either has or lacks. Operating in a top-down manner, the bearer of power dictates, on possible penalty of death, what those not in power may and may not do. (p. 1)

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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Online ISSN: 3006-5895

The word biopower was first coined by Foucault. He argues that this new version of power is “working to incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize, and organize the forces under it: a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them” (Foucault, 1978, p. 136; Cisney & Morar, 2015, pp. 3-4). Foucault moved from the concept of power to biopower because he believed that, in the modern world, power alone was insufficient. In the 19th century, a brand-new type of socio-economic and political organization emerged, one that required a large population of docile subjects, the mechanization of bodies, and social stratification. This organization or system was named industrial capitalism. Industrialization demanded an increase in force, capabilities, and overall quality of life.

The term “biopower” refers to a type of power that developed in the contemporary era, focusing on managing and governing entire populations rather than the older concept of power. The concept of power focuses on governing and regulating an individual. As Cisney and Morar (2015) explain, “to guarantee its legitimacy, power must produce its own bodies of knowledge, its truths” (p. 1). Similarly, biopower operates on the same principle but at a larger scale within the population. It is considered a power to operate the population at large. It consists of two primary components: ‘discipline’ and ‘regulation’. Disciplinary power regulates an individual’s body using tactics of observation, control and normalization, and regulatory power manages and directs the general condition and well-being of the population.

Taylor (2014), in his book, further explains the two main components of biopower. He believed that biopower operates on two levels: regulatory power and disciplinary power. “Anatomopolitics,” or “disciplinary power,” is the use of force and punishment against an individual to establish control at a larger level (Foucault, 1978, p. 139; Taylor, 2014, p. 45). Punishing a single individual sets an example for the whole population. In simple words, disciplinary power is the use of force and punishment. Foucault believed that “centered on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility” (Foucault, 1978, p. 139). He considered the body as a machine whose efficiency and docility can be increased by applying force

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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Online ISSN: 3006-5895

or disciplinary power. The government should establish control and develop institutions to implement disciplinary power. To implement rules and regulations through force and the concept of judgment and punishment, “disciplinary power works primarily through institutions, while biopower works primarily through the state” (Taylor, 2014, p. 44). The government uses institutions such as the army, the court, the jail, and the school to discipline individuals at two levels of biopower: discipline and regulation, as discussed earlier.

The other pole on which biopower operates is regulatory power. “Biopolitics”, or “regulatory power”, is the means by which the state governs and regulates the population (Foucault, 1978, p. 139; Taylor, 2014, p. 45). Disciplinary power uses knowledge and power to subjugate individuals. Regulatory power utilizes knowledge and power to control the population. It is a type of biopower that operates to “administer... life rather than threatening to take it away” (Taylor, 2014, p. 45). The population is regulated through data collection and surveillance techniques. Information is gathered through schools, hospitals, prisons, airports, and churches. The collected information and knowledge serve as a tool for regulating the population. In the modern world, the census is an important tool, developed within the history of biopower, for collecting key information about the population. Later, this information is used to make important decisions like controlling birth rate or bringing new economic reforms, and “modern census” in which “they did not attempt to gather information about the entirety of the population, but only about specific types of individuals: those who could be taxed, drafted or forced to work” (Taylor, 2014, p. 45). Moreover, biopower is also defined as a form of power used for “taking charge of life” of subjects (Foucault, 1978, p. 143; Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014, p. 4). In other words, it is an advanced version of power; it deals with the everyday lives of the population, birth rates, medical conditions, economics, politics, and migration. It deals with the regulations of social life. The regulatory aspect of biopower is the “regulation of social life, social engineering, management or governmentality in which health, longevity, energy or vitality, stability and growth of social life is in focus” (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014, p. 15). In the existing literature, a gap exists in understanding how biopower manages and regulates the population, which is the key focus of the present study.

2.6 Normalization

In his study, Jha (2024) claims that knowledge and control serve as tools within Foucault's concept of normalization. Normalization means establishing a standard behavior and then forcing the population to act in accordance with it. Setting a standard is important because it helps to identify "appreciate deviations as well as to recognize any irregularities" (p. 186). Once a standard is set, there are several ways to normalize the population according to the set standard. Firstly, "surveillance, inspection, and recording" keep the population under constant pressure to be watched (p. 186). Secondly, through self-regulation, the set norm serves as a behavioral standard, and an individual who deviates from it is considered deviant or abnormal by society. Another tactic used for normalizing the population at large is to "punish the few who consistently and methodically transgress from the accepted standards develop inequities" (p. 187). The government mainly relies on disciplinary power to normalize a specific behavior in society. In a social setting, norms and traditions serve as rules and regulations; the norms of a specific community are considered normal. She also argues that "those who do deviate from the norm are then graded based on the position they lie in a hierarchical structure" (p. 187). The use of force and punishment implants fear in the population. Fear of punishment serves as a tool for docility. The set standards are the rules and regulations of a government through legislation. To implement it on the population, the government establishes institutions. The government empowers these institutions with disciplinary power and aspects of biopower. They are responsible for applying these rules to the population. Dean (2009), in his work, also explains that the regulatory power is a form of biopower that acts "as legislative, prohibitive and censoring; a power that primarily makes use of the law and law-like regulations" (Dean, 1999, p. 105). Jha (2024) concluded that modern-day innovation in the strategic use of normalization has a negative impact because it brings "comprehensive objectification of people who are deaf, criminals, and insane which have negative consequences that are disproportionately concentrated along racialized, gendered, and disabled categories" (p. 189). This discussion shows that a gap exists in the body of literature on how these modern-day techniques are used in literature to normalize individuals and the population at large. Furthermore, Krzyżanowski (2020) found that the normalization of a specific

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behavior within a society is path dependent. It always operates hierarchically, starting at the top and moving down to lower levels. Normalizing a specific behavior within an institutional structure can be achieved by first securing acceptance from higher-ranking officers.

The first of these should be dubbed “post-Foucauldian” and macro-social, as it looks at normalization in a top-down way, i.e. as the key strategy of wider social, including public, discourses, which, through their hegemonic power, regulate the social reality and impose – via the introduction and legitimisation of norms – the conduct of various social groups and/or individuals. The second approach should probably be seen as considering normalization in a more horizontal or processual manner, i.e. as a token of social and individual, including linguistic/ discursive, behaviour and conduct in specific “cultures” embedded by public/ private organizations or other social contexts. (Krzyżanowski, 2020, p. 436)

This distinction is crucial for the current study because it demonstrates that normalization extends beyond visible institutions, laws, or direct sanctions. It also manifests through discourse, repeated social routines, and the gradual perception of certain behaviors as natural, necessary, or inevitable. In a Foucauldian framework, normalization becomes influential when individuals compare themselves and others to standards created by dominant knowledge structures. Consequently, normalization closely relates to biopower and the crafting of docile bodies, illustrating how power shifts from external enforcement to internalized acceptance. In *Divided Species*, this approach helps analyze how authority is upheld not just through violence or commands but through the construction of knowledge, fear, obedience, and regulated identities. The novel can thus be seen as a fictional space where normalization influences both personal actions and collective social behavior.

2.7 Previous Scholarship on *Divided Species*

Limited scholarship exists on *Divided Species*, but Ishaq & Saleem’s (2026) article is particularly significant as it offers one of the earliest posthumanist readings of Iftikhar’s novel. The study compares *Divided Species* with Becky Chambers’ *The Long Way to a Small, Angry Planet*, using Hayles’ posthuman identity theory to emphasize “fragmented embodiment, distributed consciousness” and the human-artificial intelligence-nonhuman species relationship (p. 27). This article is valuable to

the current research because it highlights the novel's Pakistani speculative setting and argues that "modern Karachi, a Pakistani metropolis, decenters western hegemony" (p. 27). Although Ishaq & Saleem emphasize identity, hybridity, technological mediation, and interspecies coexistence, it does not directly explore Foucauldian mechanisms of discipline, normalization, and control over bodies and populations. Even when noting control structures, such as "The Master Key" representing "power", the analysis focuses more on posthuman technological agency than on Foucault's concepts like biopower, the docile body, normalization, and power/knowledge (p. 38). Thus, while it provides a vital foundation, it also opens a clear critical pathway for this study, which shifts from posthuman identity to an exploration of how power disciplines and regulates in *Divided Species*. This research extends existing scholarship by revealing that the novel not only envisions hybrid identities and interspecies contact but also depicts the production of obedient bodies, controlled knowledge, and normalized social behaviors through Foucauldian power mechanisms.

2.8 Research Gap

The existing literature indicates that Foucault's ideas on power/knowledge, biopower, normalization, discourse, and the docile body have been extensively utilized across various academic disciplines and literary analyses. Nevertheless, most scholarship discusses power broadly, covering political dominance, ideology, corruption, surveillance, and institutional control, without thoroughly exploring how biopower and the docile body function together as mechanisms that produce obedient, functional, and governable subjects in contemporary Pakistani speculative fiction. Specifically, Muhammad Omar Iftikhar's *Divided Species* has yet to be thoroughly examined through a focused Foucauldian perspective that links power/knowledge, normalization, bodily discipline, and population control. This research fills that gap by analyzing how authority in *Divided Species* constructs truths, manages knowledge, disciplines bodies, and promotes obedience as normal. As a result, it advances Foucauldian literary criticism by illustrating how the novel depicts power not only as repression but also as a productive force shaping behavior, identity, and resistance in a postmodern Pakistani context.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The study design adopted in this research is qualitative. Qualitative research is an approach that seeks to examine the process of analysis, drawing on diverse methodological traditions to explore a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014). This research study is qualitative because it examines the intricate relationship between the knowledge/power nexus in *Divided Species* through the lens of Foucault's theory. This study offers an in-depth analysis of the knowledge structure and power dynamics, focusing on how they are constructed and maintained in selected works. By using different methodological approaches, i.e., thematic analysis and purposive sampling. This study is qualitative research because it is based on non-numerical data and focuses on thematic analysis of selected work.

The research philosophy used in this research is social constructivism, which guides how knowledge is formed, spread and normalized. Foucault's theory of knowledge and power and social constructivism guide researchers in examining how knowledge is constructed and maintained through social factors.

The research study follows the thematic analysis, introduced by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis is the process of identifying, analyzing, and summarizing patterns or themes in a body of work that help illuminate an important subject or phenomenon (Braun & Clarke, 2006) . For this method to work, a representative sample of texts must be selected and then categorized into predetermined categories or themes. For the analysis, this research study uses the Foucauldian model to examine the language of the novel's major characters. To examine how the power/knowledge nexus is constructed and practiced, and how it leads to the normalization of individuals, with reference to concepts such as 'docile body,' 'surveillance,' and 'bio-power'.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This study uses Foucault's theory of power and knowledge to analyze selected fiction. It highlights how power and knowledge are two sides of the same coin, and their importance in shaping rules, traditions, and norms within a societal structure, benefiting individuals and the structure alike, and how these traditions and norms are normalized in society. Power plays a key role not only in the production of knowledge

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but also in its distribution. Power structures use knowledge gained through their positions and authority to validate their legitimacy within the given societal structure (Foucault, 1978). The early works of Foucault, such as *The History of Sexuality* (1978) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), highlight well-grounded concepts of how power and knowledge dynamics impact societal and individual behavior and “normalization or pathologization with respect to all behavior” (Foucault, 1978, p. 105).

Knowledge and power exist together; they are interdependent and inseparable. Their existence together is necessary to attain social order (Foucault, 1978). Knowledge is a tool for gaining power, controlling its flow, and empowering individuals and structures. It holds the power to influence and manipulate the behaviors of individuals and the population at large. Power is an intricate network of institutions, governments, and authorities. These power structures develop and disseminate knowledge, influence behaviors, and establish control over the target audience (Foucault, 1980).

According to Foucault (1978), to establish a system and normalization within society, power and knowledge must coexist. ‘Normalization’ can be defined as a process of forcing people to adhere to and become used to socially acceptable behaviors, values, and norms. This procedure depends on the creation and diffusion of knowledge that establishes what constitutes the ‘normal’ and the ‘abnormal’ (Foucault, 1978). The nexus of power and knowledge leads to normalization within a social setup. The production and propagation of knowledge that defines what is normal and acceptable in society is how normalization works.

The concept of biopower was discussed by Foucault from the very start; in his works (1972; 1978; 1980; 1995). According to him, the term biopower developed in the contemporary era, focusing on managing and governing the entire population. After industrialization, the world demanded a labor force. He believed that biopower is a way “to ensure, sustain, and multiply life, to put this life in order” (Foucault, 1978, p. 138). It focuses on managing and governing the entire population rather than on the old concept of power, which focuses on managing individuals.

The present research examines a selected novel to examine the relationship between power and knowledge and to challenge specific political and social ideologies within

a social context. The researcher draws on a range of theoretical perspectives, including Foucault's concepts of power/knowledge, docile bodies, and bio-power, to analyze how power relations are constructed and maintained through the production and dissemination of knowledge.

3.2 Setting up the Theoretical Framework for the Analysis

Thematic analysis, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), is suitable for explaining and analyzing the relationships between power and knowledge and how they complement each other. To analyze the selected work, the six-step thematic analysis approach by Braun and Clarke (2006) can be used.

3.2.1 Familiarizing with the Text

There are six steps: the first step in familiarizing yourself with the selected text is to understand its main idea, key points, and content, and to become familiar with its key concepts and ideas, which can be linked to Foucault's theory of knowledge and power. The familiarization step helps one become familiar with the basic ideas presented in the text and theory. The selected work is *Divided Species*. Foucault's theory of Power and Knowledge serves as the theoretical framework for the study.

3.2.2 Generating Initial Codes

After reviewing, understanding, and familiarizing myself with the data, the next step was to create initial codes or a list of ideas regarding the concepts identified in the text and their relevance to the researchers' interests, aligned with the study's theoretical framework and research questions. This phase then involves generating preliminary codes from the data. Basically, "codes identify a feature of the data (semantic content or latent) that appears interesting to the analyst, and refer to 'the most basic segment, or element'" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 63). The generation of themes in the future depends on whether the codes the researcher generated were 'theory driven' or 'data driven'. In this study, the initial codes generated are theory-driven. During the study, researchers identified several ideas used to generate initial codes. During the course of study, initial information or codes collected are seen as tools to establish control, explore the dynamics between power and knowledge, and examine how knowledge acts as a source of power. Here, the initial codes were generated through close reading and then organized under the preselected Foucauldian concepts.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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Table 1: *Codes*

Main Theme	Sub-theme	Initial Codes
Power & Knowledge	Power/Knowledge Nexus	Control of information; production of truth; hidden knowledge; restricted access to knowledge; knowledge as authority; use of knowledge to command others; knowledge as a source of legitimacy; secrecy and disclosure; manipulation through information
Power & Knowledge	Normalization	Defining normal behavior; marking deviant behavior; creating obedience through accepted rules; making control appear natural; social acceptance of authority; repeated discipline; internalization of fear; acceptance of imposed order
Power & Knowledge	Biopower	Regulation of population; control of collective behavior; surveillance of bodies and groups; management of life and survival; protection of species/community; security-based control; monitoring movement;

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Power & Knowledge	Docile Body	controlling danger and risk Obedient body; trained body; useful body; disciplined conduct; bodily control; submission to command; transformation of behavior; punishment and correction; body as an object of power Elite privilege; social superiority; class-based influence; access to resources; social recognition; unequal treatment; authority based on background; symbolic prestige Military hierarchy; command chain; superior/subordinate relation; obedience to seniors; rank-based decision making; institutional discipline; official titles; structured authority Institutional position; leadership role; administrative control; decision-making authority; strategic placement; access to restricted spaces;
Construction and Maintenance of Power Structures	Social Status	
Construction and Maintenance of Power Structures	Ranks	
Construction and Maintenance of Power Structures	Position	

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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Construction and Maintenance of Power Structures	Power	responsibility through office; power attached to role Command over others; coercive control; technological superiority; control of resources; domination; threat; strategic knowledge; capacity to punish; capacity to protect Organized hierarchy; institutional control; rules and commands; surveillance system; military/political order; centralized authority; loyalty to command; maintenance of order through discipline Questioning authority; refusal to obey; counter- knowledge; moral opposition; exposing hidden truth; protecting others against power; challenging domination; disruption of control; alternative use of knowledge
Construction and Maintenance of Power Structures	Power Structure	
Construction and Maintenance of Power Structures	Resistance	

3.2.3 Theme Generation

The next step in thematic analysis, after generating the initial codes for the study, is theme generation. After making a list of codes, the next step is to compile and classify the initial codes in more general groups and themes: “some initial codes may go on to form main themes, whereas others may form sub-themes, and others still may be discarded” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 96). These initial codes were created through repeated close readings of *Divided Species* and were aligned with the study’s Foucauldian theoretical framework. Since the research is driven by theory, the codes were not randomly derived from the text but developed in relation to preselected concepts such as power/knowledge, normalization, biopower, the docile body, and power structures. Words, actions, dialogues, character roles, discursive language patterns, symbolism, institutional behaviors, and narrative situations were coded whenever they indicated knowledge production, body regulation, authority construction, or resistance to power. These codes were then grouped into sub-themes and ultimately organized under two main themes: Power & Knowledge and the Construction and Maintenance of Power Structures.

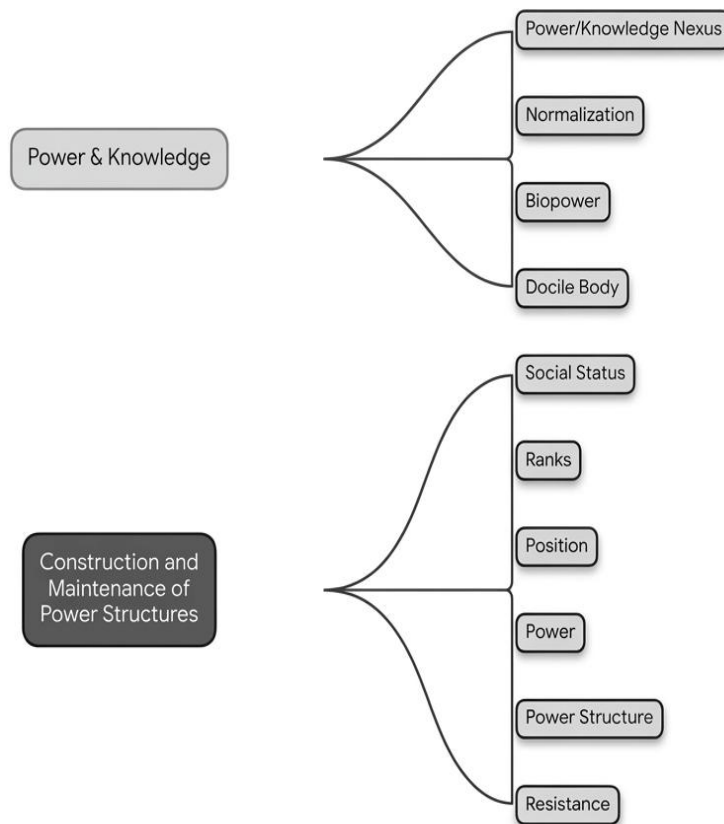
3.2.4 Familiarizing Themes

Reviewing the themes is the fourth step in the thematic analysis method; it mainly involves ‘mind mapping the themes.’ Once the jumbled-up themes are put in the order of ‘thematic map’, the researchers review the themes again.

3.2.5 Defining and Naming Themes

This stage of the thematic analysis method focuses on the essence of the themes to refine and redefine them. Each theme should capture a specified aspect of the selected work. Themes derived from the codes include ‘knowledge and power’, which further branch into sub-themes like normalization, biopower, and docile bodies. Another theme is ‘construction and maintenance of power structures’, which branches into sub-themes such as social status, ranks, and positions used to construct and sustain power structures, along with the resistance encountered in maintaining them.

Figure 2 : Themes



3.2.6 Discussion and Analysis

Once themes are set, discussion and analysis of them begin. This step of the thematic analysis method will be covered in the analysis section of the present study.

3.3 Sample Literary Text for Analysis

In this research study, Iftikhar's *Divided Species* (2020) is chosen as the sample for analysis. Qualitative research is one of the most common data collection techniques (Creswell, 2014). The process of examining the whole population through data collection and analysis from a small group is known as the sampling method (Taherdoost, 2016). Purposive sampling is used in this research study. Purposive sampling is a nonprobability sampling technique. Non-probability sampling is commonly related to qualitative research. As qualitative research is often concentrated on smaller samples (Yin, 2003). It is typically believed that the sample used in qualitative research is chosen with the intention of providing information-rich examples (Patton, 2002). This research study uses purposive sampling to ensure that

the selected literary works complement the theoretical framework and research objective.

Iftikhar (2020) novel, which is set in Karachi, features extra-terrestrial beings, the Taleykens' race, arriving on Earth. The aliens arrived on Earth in search of an ancient mineral resource, the 'Hextanlo'. The aliens aboard their mother ship are divided over whether to extract the mineral without precautions or to slow extraction to avoid exposing the human race to radiation. The power tussle can be seen not only between humans and aliens, but also among aliens. It also represents Taleykens' struggle to gain power and dominate the mothership, a tussle between Commander Kropnock and General Gooztan.

CHAPTER 4

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

This section offers a thematic analysis of Iftikhar's *Divided Species* using a Foucauldian critical perspective. It is structured around two key themes: 'Power and Knowledge' and 'Construction and Maintenance of Power Structures'. The first theme explores how knowledge is created, managed, circulated, and employed as a form of authority in the novel, focusing on the power/knowledge nexus, normalization, biopower, and the docile body. The second theme investigates how power relations are formed and sustained through social status, ranks, authority, institutional hierarchy, and resistance. The analysis reveals that *Divided Species* depicts power not just as physical control or military force but as a productive system that constructs truth, guides behavior, classifies bodies, regulates populations, and produces obedient subjects. This corresponds with Foucault's view that power is not simply possessed by one person or institution; rather, "Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (Foucault, 1978, p. 93).

4.1 Power and Knowledge

The primary theme, Power and Knowledge, examines how knowledge functions as a form of authority in *Divided Species*. In the story, both Taleykens and humans rely on hidden knowledge, such as technological data, secret histories, and controlled communication, to assert their dominance. The Hextanlo is more than just a mineral; it is a secret around which power is centered. The prologue mentions that the Taleykens "entrusted upon humans" the "safety of the Hextanlo" (Iftikhar, 2020, p. 1).

This act sets up a longstanding historical dynamic in which knowledge is selectively shared and kept secret. Knowing the location, value, and danger of Hextanlo grants certain characters authority, giving them a privileged position, while those unaware are vulnerable to manipulation and risk. This aligns with Foucault's view that power and knowledge are intertwined, as power depends on a "certain economy of discourses of truth" to function (Foucault, 1980, p. 93).

In *Divided Species*, knowledge is portrayed as strategic and politically charged rather than neutral. The Taleykens do not observe Earth out of mere curiosity; they collect information to understand, predict, and influence human behavior. The novel mentions that they "interpreting human's communication to learn about their languages, terminologies and their way of life" (Iftikhar, 2020, p. 1). This exemplifies how knowledge is generated through surveillance, transforming human communication into a studied object that enables the Taleykens to infiltrate human society discreetly. Foucault's archaeological perspective on discourse is relevant here, as he states that discourses are not just signs but "practices that systematically form the objects" they examine (Foucault, 1972, p. 49). In the story, the Taleykens' understanding of humans shapes them as objects of observation, classification, and intervention.

The existing study by Ishaq and Saleem (2026) also recognizes that *Divided Species* is deeply concerned with issues of identity, technology, and interspecies contact. They argue that the novel's setting in "modern Karachi" contributes to the decentering of western hegemony in science fiction (p. 27). While their interpretation is significant, it primarily emphasizes posthuman identity and symbiosis. The present study diverges by demonstrating that the same technological and interspecies interactions also function as relations of power. The Taleykens' superior knowledge enables them to observe, classify, and intervene in human affairs. Consequently, the novel's science-fiction framework is not solely posthuman but also Foucauldian, as knowledge serves as a tool for governing bodies, spaces, and populations.

4.1.1 Normalization

Normalization within *Divided Species* manifests through the establishment of standards that determine which bodies, behaviors, and identities are deemed acceptable. A prominent example is General Gooztan's perspective on humans,

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wherein he characterizes humans as a “far inferior species than the Taleykens. When we can destroy Earth and take over its resources, why should we befriend the humans?” (Iftikhar, 2020, p. 148). This remark is not merely an insult; it constitutes a judgment of normalization. Gooztan constructs a hierarchy positioning Taleykens as superior and humans as inferior. Once such standards are established, justifying violence against humans becomes more straightforward. In Foucauldian terms, normalization functions by delineating categories of the normal and the abnormal, the superior and the inferior, the useful and the disposable. Foucault elucidates that “the power of the Norm” operates through disciplinary measures and establishes systems of classification, comparison, and correction (Foucault, 1995, p. 184).

Gooztan’s discourse regularizes domination by framing exploitation as an unavoidable necessity. His intention to extract Hextanlo “*at any cost* [emphasis added]” illustrates how the survival of one group is utilized to validate the annihilation of another (Iftikhar, 2020, pp. 202, 108). This is not mere random villainy; it reflects a particular political logic. Gooztan fabricates a truth whereby Earth, Karachi, and human life are subordinate to Taleyken expansion. Through this reasoning, destruction is systematically normalized as an effective strategy. Foucault’s assertion that contemporary power operates through norms rather than solely through legal mechanisms is pertinent here. Normalization renders domination plausible by transforming violence into a matter of necessity, security, or progress.

The reviewed literature also indirectly supports this interpretation. Ishaq and Saleem (2026) observe that General Gooztan’s desire for Hextanlo signifies greed and interspecies conflict, whereas Commander Kropnock embodies empathy and cooperation. Nonetheless, from a Foucauldian perspective, this conflict is not solely moral; it is also disciplinary and biopolitical. Gooztan’s language constructs a regime of truth whereby certain lives are regarded as less valuable than others. His authority relies on categorizing humans as inferior, thus renderable to governance, exploitation, or disposal. This is where normalization directly intersects with biopower: the classification of life becomes the foundation for determining whose life is to be protected and whose may be sacrificed.

4.1.2 Biopower

Biopower in *Divided Species* manifests through the regulation of life, survival,

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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population, and planetary security. The Hextanlo poses a significant danger because its extraction endangers not only individuals but entire populations. The novel recurrently illustrates that improper use of Hextanlo can devastate Karachi and jeopardize human, animal, and plant life. This transition shifts the conflict from personal rivalry to population-level management issues. Foucault characterizes modern power as a force that governs life, described as “a power bent on generating forces” rather than merely destroying them (Foucault, 1978, p. 136). In the narrative, both Kropnock and Gooztan address life at the macro level of populations: Kropnock aims to preserve life, whereas Gooztan seeks to sacrifice one population for the advantage of another.

This biopolitical logic is particularly evident in the contrast between Commander Kropnock and General Gooztan. Kropnock’s leadership is founded on the prevention of mass destruction, whereas Gooztan’s leadership revolves around resource extraction and territorial expansion. Kropnock regards Hextanlo as a threat that must be meticulously managed, while Gooztan perceives it as an energy resource to be seized. This dichotomy exemplifies the distinction between ethical regulation and exploitative biopower. Cisney and Morar (2015) elucidate that biopower reveals the “emergence of life into politics,” indicating that life itself becomes an object of political calculation (p. 1). In *Divided Species*, the life of Karachi is incorporated into a broader political calculation among Taleyken factions.

Taylor’s analysis of biopower further supports this view. He suggests that biopower functions by overseeing populations and safeguarding the “normal” or healthy parts of society (Taylor, 2014, p. 189). In the novel, ensuring Karachi’s security relies on surveillance, technological oversight, secrecy, and selective intervention. The Hextanlo remains unknown to the public but is regarded as specialized knowledge by certain authorities. This demonstrates how biopower operates through security measures. While life is safeguarded, such protection also introduces new levels of control. Rayan becomes a trustee of Hextanlo, and later, AERA starts “protecting and monitoring” him because he has access to dangerous knowledge (Iftikhar, 2020, p. 230).

4.1.3 Docile Body

The sub-theme of the docile body manifests through training, discipline, obedience,

and bodily regulation. The Taleyken mission is not spontaneous; it is meticulously prepared through simulations, protocols, mission briefings, and military discipline. Members of the Mission to Earth undergo comprehensive training sequences prior to their descent onto Earth, and the Mother Ship operates under a highly organized command structure. This exemplifies Foucault's definition of a docile body as one that "may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (Foucault, 1995, p. 136). The Taleyken soldiers are disciplined entities because their skills, movements, decisions, and actions are sculpted by institutional training.

Bamberdon's actions are notable because he opposes the creation of docility. Daleyton notes that Bamberdon does not "follow protocol" and "also remained absent from most of the training sessions" (Iftikhar, 2020, p. 95). Although this may seem minor, it is crucial since discipline relies on routine, obedience, and physical engagement. Bamberdon's refusal to train with the others marks him as a deviant figure within the military framework. From a Foucauldian perspective, his body becomes a space where power monitors for irregularity. His secrecy, isolation, and refusal to comply heighten suspicion, as disciplinary systems expect bodies to be visible, trainable, and predictable.

Taylor's analysis of disciplinary power substantiates this argument. She articulates that disciplinary institutions generate "docile bodies," which are characterized as "efficient in performance" and compliant with authority (Taylor, 2014, p. 75). In *Divided Species*, the Mother Ship crafts this type of soldier through systematic training, surveillance, mission briefings, and technological oversight. The soldier is not inherently brave; rather, he is shaped by discipline. This directly links the novel's military framework to Foucault's perspective that modern power cultivates bodies that are useful and obedient, rather than merely punishing disobedience.

4.2 Construction and Maintenance of Power Structures

The second key theme, Construction and Maintenance of Power Structures, explores how authority is established and sustained within the novel. In *Divided Species*, power is created via social status, military ranks, institutional roles, technological dominance, and possession of secret knowledge. It is preserved through command systems, surveillance, loyalty, secrecy, punishment, and resistance. Foucault emphasizes that power isn't solely held by a central authority but is exercised through numerous

relations, strategies, and institutions (Foucault, 1978). This perspective is crucial for analyzing *Divided Species* because power is exerted not only by Gooztan or Kropnock but also by entities such as the Mother Ship, AERA, NASA, military ranks, technological tools, and covert knowledge networks.

4.2.1 Social Status, Ranks, Position, and Power

The construction of power in the novel begins with hierarchy. Characters are repeatedly identified through titles such as Commander, General, Major General, Captain, Lieutenant, soldier, advisor, and trustee. These titles are not decorative. They define who can speak, command, decide, and access knowledge. Foucault asks an important question in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: “Who is speaking?” (Foucault, 1972, p. 50). This question applies directly to the novel because the authority of speech depends on rank and position. When Commander Kropnock speaks, his words carry institutional force. When General Gooztan speaks, his words mobilize violence. When Rayan speaks, his authority grows only after he becomes linked with Taleyken’s knowledge.

In the *Divided Species* narrative, power can take several forms, ranging from the use of physical force to subjugate others, as exercised by General Gooztan. The concept of power in the novel has undertones of Hobbes’ “Leviathan.” Biopower in its purest form is the one that is exercised from a higher point or by a singular authority (Hobbes, 1651). Such power is demonstrated by the story’s antagonist, General Gooztan. The authoritative power and dominance of General Gooztan is clearly represented from the moment in the novel when Commander Kropnock inquires about his plans to invade planet Earth. In the following utterance by General Gooztan, it is clear that he holds power and authority over the mother ship and sits at the top of the novel’s power structure.

Secondly, their ‘Ranks, Position and Social Status’ empower them. The word ‘rank’ is used in order to indicate a group or individuals working under another individual (Blau & Scott, 2003). Their ranks as General, Colonel, and Commander give them power over others. Aliens gathered data for almost three years, analyzing every event. It is mentioned in the first chapter, titled “They are watching us,” that “for three years, the Taleykens had been collecting, gathering, recording, analyzing, interpreting, examining, and summarizing their findings of human life on Earth.”

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They were amazed, enthralled, and appalled by their analysis” (Iftikhar, 2020, p. 4). Data collected by Taleykens provides them with knowledge that empowers them as they know about all the weaknesses and capabilities of humans. It represents a strategic surveillance of planet Earth to gather information to enhance knowledge of the social dynamics of the human race. To develop effective weapons that can influence the power dynamics of war with humans. Taleyken race mainly focuses on “information gathering” and “research” (Iftikhar, 2020, p. 6) before attacking Earth. Commander Kropnock and General Estek are heads of the research department that collects minute details about the human race. The systematic way in which aliens conduct ‘research’ before invading Earth represents how armies establish power and dominance through the production of Knowledge. The army affirms its interventions and establishes its power by creating a database of information about the population it is going to attack. The Army defines acceptable policies and norms for soldiers to follow, depending on the area they are in, to normalize the population. Mainly, the process of data collection, observation, and research becomes a tool for constructing and maintaining control over a population (Jacobson, 1998).

Disciplinary power is an aspect of biopower that focuses on the use of physical violence and disciplinary punishments to subjugate others, as used by General Gooztan. His ideology revolves around the perception that by using crude physical force and violence, he can subjugate Taleykens and humans. However, he also uses language as a tool to gain power, along with physical violence he spread his discourse on mother ship for gaining trust of fellow aliens and other staff on mother ship, “I believe in the equality of existence. If someone killed our species, then another species, somewhere in the universe, must also face extinction... humans have Hextanlo. I need it!” (Iftikhar, 2020, p. 09). Secondly, General Gooztan uses an institutional army structure as a tool to construct his control. The hierarchical structure of an alien’s army empowers him to the point of corruption: “The hierarchical structure creates conditions of compliance that can institutionalize amoral reasoning and corruption” (Brief et al., 2001, p. 486). In the hierarchical system, lower-ranking officers follow the orders of higher-ranking officers.

General Gooztan, from the start, wants complete, authoritative power over the lives of the Talekyen and human races. In several places, Tariq and Commander Kropnock ask

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the reason for destroying planet Earth; General Gooztan always claims, “I am not mean! I want Planet Arplon to become what it once was, a great empire?” (Iftikhar, 2020, p. 220). But he wanted complete dominance and biopower with the aim of controlling and regulating both races. Daleyton claims that “No! You want authority and power! You even killed Bamberdon and Zaczon for your cause!” (Iftikhar, 2020, p. 216). His desire for absolute power corrupted him; he killed his own loyal soldiers, Bamberdon and Zaczon. Absolute power leads the holder to misuse it to pursue personal goals at the cost of others’ lives (Wang & Sun, 2016).

General Gooztan develops his control over the Taleykens and the human race through the character of Bamberdon, who represents crude physical force. Through the character of Bamberdon, General Gooztan kills anyone who resists and uses him to spread his doctrine among the other aliens so they will follow his command. General Gooztan uses Bamberdon as a source of both Disciplinary power and regulatory power. By using physical force, he disciplines the population by using fear and also regulates the masses by disseminating knowledge through the character of Bamberdon.

The only way to end the power and authority of General Gooztan on the mother ship is to resist his discourse and the knowledge he spreads. It is evident that the Taleykens have the full potential to escape the tyrannical regime of General Gooztan from the outset of the Kropnock uprising and take control of the mother ship. The breakthrough for aliens on the ship happens only when Commander Kropnock can present a counter narrative to the one perpetuated by General Gooztan: “Knowledge standards are developed and issued by different experts and institutions in different societies or moments” (van Dijk, 2011, p. 8). Commander Kropnock can influence the beliefs of his fellow aliens through his knowledge and power. The knowledge he gathered on Earth is that humans are good and that there is still humanity left in them; they deserve a chance to survive. It is primarily this discourse that entices them to go against Gooztan, towards the end.

The Mission Briefing Zone is one of the clearest examples of institutional power. It includes Commander Kropnock, advisors, subordinates, crew members, and screens showing mission details. The layout of this area demonstrates a clear hierarchy, with information flowing from command to subordinates. The novel’s

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reference to “advisors... and subordinates from the Command Deck along with the crew” shows that authority is organized through rank (Iftikhar, 2020, p. 85). This aligns with Foucault’s idea that power generates knowledge, which then reinforces power. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault states that “power produces knowledge” and that power and knowledge directly imply one another (Foucault, 1995, p. 27).

A major part of the novel focuses on explaining the strategies Commander Kropnock uses, including rhetorical devices and his position, to counter the influence of General Gooztan. Kropnock used to call his alien friends “Comrades” to win their trust. A leader’s discourse should be supportive and respectful; this approach builds trust among subordinates, binding them together (Glaser, 2014). Lieutenant Daleyton was called to his office chamber, where Kropnock attempted to earn Daleyton's trust and loyalty. Kropnock said, “You can calm down Daleyton... You are in my cabin, not at the Command Deck!” emphasizing his authority through careful word choice (Iftikhar, 2020, pp. 28–29). However, the speech that Commander Kropnock delivers at the end addresses both humans and aliens. He presents crude facts to an audience that influence them. This represents the knowledge and power nexus. Knowledge of the facts he gains from his position as Commanding Officer of the research department empowers him as he disseminates that information to humans and aliens alike. He skillfully tempers and demolishes the General Gooztan influence on other aliens. In this process, he generates new discourse and provides other aliens with a blueprint for the peaceful extraction of mineral ‘Hextanlo’ from planet Earth. Commander Kropnock resists and takes down the ‘authoritative regime’ established by General Gooztan on the mothership through his own knowledge and power.

General Gooztan’s dissemination of knowledge serves as a means of asserting his power. His character exemplifies how knowledge functions as a powerful tool for acquiring, building, sustaining, and manipulating power, and for influencing others through propaganda. This underscores the close relationship between knowledge and power, showing that knowledge is both a tool and a product of power (Foucault, 1978). This also implies that language mastery and higher intelligence can affect the target audience. Knowledge and discourse contribute to shaping the concept of power, as widespread knowledge among the masses fosters “the social construction of class, gender and individuality; the rhetoric of polarizing social controversies religious and

fundamentalism” (Lemke, 1995). It becomes evident here that knowledge not only generates power but also questions the current power structure, weakening it and making it more open to change.

General Gooztan and his men are removed from the ship once his mutiny is uncovered, restoring the aliens’ sovereignty as confirmed by Commander Kropnock. He then addresses the ‘High Council of Taleykens,’ which sentences Gooztan to 100 years in prison. This marks a reversal of Gooztan’s previous knowledge. The new ideology strengthens Kropnock’s power and consolidates his control over the ship, leading to cohesive leadership: a unified alien fleet directly commanded by Commander Kropnock.

Social status manifests in the human world through caste and class distinctions. Naila’s family initially refuses to let Rayan marry because he belongs to a different caste. This illustrates that power extends beyond military or technological dominance; it also encompasses social and cultural influence. The society depicted in the novel has its own systems of classification, exclusion, and hierarchy. Naila’s rejection on the basis of caste highlights how social status influences personal relationships and choices. This aligns with Foucault’s later ideas on subjectivity, in which experiences are shaped by the “correlation between fields of knowledge, types of normativity, and forms of subjectivity” (Foucault, 1985, p. 4). Essentially, people comprehend themselves and others through pre-existing social rules.

4.2.2 Maintenance of Power Structure

Power structures in *Divided Species* rely on secrecy, surveillance, loyalty, and technological control. The Hextanlo secret is passed down through generations, with its value linked to limited circulation. Knowledge is unevenly shared: some characters hold it, others are excluded, and some attempt to steal it. This disparity in knowledge sustains power. Foucault’s power/knowledge theory is relevant here, as he suggests that society is shaped by power through truth, with power functioning by creating truth (Foucault, 1980). In the novel, those who control the truth about Hextanlo hold political and strategic superiority.

Technology also upholds power. Devices like the Hocop, BodyScanX, Earth Simulator, and Master Key are not neutral; they extend authority over bodies and spaces. Ishaq and Saleem (2026) correctly note that “The Master Key” symbolizes

power in the novel because it grants control over the Earth Explorer and influences others' fates (p. 38). This study further argues that such technology is disciplinary, as it renders bodies measurable, controllable, and functional. Foucault states that "power produces; it produces reality" (Foucault, 1995, p. 194). The Master Key creates a reality in which bodies and machines are subordinate to its controller's will.

The maintenance of power is also evident at the novel's end. After Gooztan's defeat, the power structure isn't eliminated but reorganized. Rayan takes charge of Hextanlo, while AERA begins covert collaboration with NASA and the Taleykens. The Taleyken ambassador shares information selectively on a "need-to-know basis" (Iftikhar, 2020, p. 230), highlighting that even benevolent authorities rely on controlled knowledge. Although Gooztan's fall ends a violent regime, it does not abolish surveillance, secrecy, or institutional control. This echoes a Foucauldian idea: resistance may change power dynamics, but it rarely eradicates power entirely.

4.2.2.1 Resistance. Resistance in *Divided Species* is not outside power; it develops inside power relations. Rayan, Kropnock, Daleyton, Tandez, Zaczon, and Major General Yasir oppose Gooztan through knowledge, technology, alliances, and institutional strategies. This supports Foucault's claim that "where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). In the novel, resistance does not equate to escaping power but involves employing alternative knowledge and moral agency to confront harmful authority.

Rayan's role is crucial. He starts as an ordinary person but becomes a symbol of counter-knowledge after discovering the truth about Taleykens, Hextanlo, and Gooztan's plans. His insight enables him to oppose the primary threat, not just physically but epistemologically. He gains strength through his unique knowledge, which others lack. Foucault's concept of "subjugated knowledges" is relevant here, as marginalized or suppressed knowledge can challenge dominant narratives (Foucault, 1980, p. 81). In the story, the concealed truth about Hextanlo serves as a foundation for resisting Gooztan's destructive influence.

Commander Kropnock's declaration that "Gooztan's era has ended" marks the defeat of one form of domination (Iftikhar, 2020, p. 227). The ending is not just a victory of good over evil; it signifies a shift in power dynamics from violent extraction to controlled guardianship. Kropnock doesn't eliminate power but redirects

it, while Rayan remains under surveillance but enters a new protective network. Thus, the novel's conclusion aligns with a Foucauldian view of resistance: resistance doesn't oppose power outright but influences its direction, structure, and impact.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The analysis reveals that *Divided Species* depicts power as an intricate network of knowledge, discipline, hierarchy, surveillance, and resistance. The core conflict centered on Hextanlo isn't just a science fiction dispute over an alien mineral; it also involves struggles for control of knowledge, the definition of truth, the safeguarding of life, and the decision of which lives can be at risk. The first key theme, Power and Knowledge, illustrates that knowledge in the novel is never neutral; it is employed to observe, classify, conceal, command, and regulate. The second major theme, Construction and Maintenance of Power Structures, highlights that power is established through social rank, position, status, technological dominance, and institutional secrecy.

The analysis affirms the study's two main research objectives. Firstly, the novel highlights social and political themes of power and knowledge, particularly through concepts such as normalization, biopower, and docile bodies. Elements such as Gooztan's classification of humans as inferior, Taleyken soldiers' training, Hextanlo's management, and Rayan's surveillance illustrate how power influences both individual bodies and entire populations. Secondly, the novel demonstrates how power dynamics are formed and sustained via military hierarchy, social stratification, institutional secrets, technological tools, and controlled access to information.

The study further broadens the existing research on *Divided Species*. Ishaq and Saleem (2026) primarily analyze the novel through the lenses of posthuman identity, technological mediation, and interspecies symbiosis. Their work highlights the scholarly significance of *Divided Species* and its role in Pakistani science fiction. However, this analysis argues that a Foucauldian perspective is also necessary, as the novel consistently depicts themes of surveillance, normalization, bodily discipline, population control, and resistance. Therefore, *Divided Species* is more than a tale of interspecies friendship and posthuman coexistence; it also explores how power shapes truth, organizes bodies, governs life, and maintains authority through knowledge.

This part of the research examines *Divided Species* through two main themes: 'Power

and Knowledge’ and the ‘Construction and Maintenance of Power Structures’. The analysis indicates that the novel depicts power as both repressive and productive. Gooztan’s power is primarily repressive, aiming for domination, extraction, and destruction. In contrast, Kropnock’s power is more regulatory, focusing on protection, order, and managed coexistence. Both types of power rely on knowledge, hierarchy, surveillance, and technological control. The novel supports Foucault’s view that power functions not only through violence or law but also through discourse, truth, discipline, norms, and the regulation of life. In *Divided Species*, bodies are disciplined, populations are seen as either protected or threatened, and knowledge becomes the key tool through which power is built, sustained, challenged, and reshaped.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

This study analyzed Iftikhar’s *Divided Species* using a Foucauldian critical approach, focusing on concepts like power/knowledge, biopower, normalization, docile bodies, and the creation and maintenance of power systems/structures. The analysis reveals that the novel does not depict power solely as physical force, military violence, or overt domination. Instead, power is portrayed as a complex network that generates knowledge, influences truth, governs bodies, defines normality, and shapes social and political relationships. With this perspective, *Divided Species* transcends being just a science fiction story about aliens, Hextanlo, and interspecies conflict; it becomes a critical fictional space where modern mechanisms of control, authority, discipline, and resistance can be explored.

In response to the first research question, the study shows that power/knowledge dynamics influence how knowledge is created, concealed, shared, and employed to control individuals and communities. Taleykens’ surveillance of Earth, their research on human language and behavior, and the secrecy surrounding Hextanlo demonstrate that knowledge is never neutral in the novel. Instead, it serves as a tool for establishing and reinforcing authority. The idea of normalization is evident in the classification of humans as inferior, weak, or governable, particularly in General Gooztan’s ideology. This classification renders domination plausible and politicizes violence. Biopower appears in the management of life, survival, and population threats, especially during the Hextanlo conflict, which endangers both

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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individuals and the collective safety of Karachi and Earth. The concept of the docile body is depicted through military discipline, mission training, obedience to protocol, bodily control, and institutional surveillance. Overall, the novel portrays a society in which bodies are trained, monitored, corrected, and made useful to larger systems of power.

The study's second research question reveals that power dynamics and structures in *Divided Species* are shaped by hierarchy, social status, rank, institutional roles, technological edge, and access to secret information. Characters like Commander Kropnock, General Gooztan, Major General Yasir, Rayan, and the Taleyken soldiers each hold different levels of authority within established systems. These roles determine command, obedience, access to data, and exposure to surveillance. Power is preserved through secrecy, loyalty, military discipline, technological tools, limited information, and repeated institutional authority. Yet, the novel demonstrates that power is never entirely unchallengeable. Resistance arises through counter-knowledge, moral opposition, strategic alliances, and the revelation of hidden truths. Rayan's evolution from an ordinary human to a holder of crucial knowledge illustrates that resistance starts when marginalized subjects access the truth and use it to oppose domination.

This study addresses the previously identified issue by filling an important gap in the existing research on *Divided Species*. Prior scholarship has primarily examined the novel through the lenses of posthumanism, identity, hybridity, technology, and interspecies relations. While these perspectives are valuable, they do not fully account for how power functions through knowledge, discipline, normalization, and control over populations. This research offers a focused Foucauldian analysis, demonstrating that *Divided Species* is not only about speculative imagination but also explores the political mechanisms through which authority is created, justified, challenged, and restructured. As a result, the study provides a clear resolution to the research problem by proposing a theoretical framework that interprets the novel as a narrative of power dynamics, rather than merely a work of posthumanism or science fiction.

The study also makes considerable contributions across multiple domains. In the theoretical realm, it utilizes Foucauldian concepts to analyze Pakistani speculative fiction, illustrating how power/knowledge, biopower, normalization, and docile

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Online ISSN: 3006-5895

bodies can be employed to interpret contemporary narratives. In the academic sphere, it broadens the limited scholarly research on Iftikhar's *Divided Species* and paves the way for new avenues of investigation into Pakistani anglophone science fiction. Societally, the research emphasizes how systems of authority promote obedience, classify individuals, regulate knowledge, and suppress resistance. Consequently, it underscores broader discussions concerning corruption, hierarchy, institutional control, surveillance, and social inequality. From a policy perspective, the study subtly advocates for transparent institutions, accountable governance, ethical knowledge utilization, and opposition to systems that rely on secrecy and hierarchy to sustain dominance. In the political sphere, this study shows how authority often sustains itself by controlling information, influencing public perception, and framing domination as order, safety, or necessity. It also promotes a critical view of political power by demonstrating that resistance begins when concealed truths are revealed, mainstream narratives are challenged, and marginalized voices have the opportunity to contest imposed systems of authority. Culturally and literarily, it reinforces the standing of Pakistani speculative fiction as a legitimate field of critical inquiry.

Ultimately, *Divided Species* shows that the most dangerous form of power is not always the one that attacks openly, but the one that defines truth, controls knowledge, organizes obedience, and makes domination appear normal. This study has shown that fiction can expose these hidden mechanisms with unusual force. By reading *Divided Species* through Foucault, the research reveals that the struggle over Hextanlo is also a struggle over truth, life, authority, and resistance. The novel's real impact lies in this deeper warning: societies are not only divided by species, class, rank, or power, but by who controls knowledge and who is forced to live under the truth produced by others.

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