



## Form of Power Pressure in the Short Stories *Shooting an Elephant* by George Orwell and *Pelajaran Pertama bagi Calon Politisi* by Kuntowijoyo

Azahra Fadiliawati Agustin<sup>1\*</sup>, Ujang Suyatman<sup>2</sup>, Lili Awaludin<sup>3</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Prodi Sastra Inggris, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Jawa Barat, Indonesia

\*E-mail: [azahrafa14@gmail.com](mailto:azahrafa14@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the forms of power pressure and their influence on the decision-making process of the main characters in the short stories *Shooting an Elephant* by George Orwell and *Pelajaran Pertama Bagi Calon Politisi* by Kuntowijoyo. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a power discourse analysis method based on Michel Foucault's theory. Data sources include narrative excerpts, dialogues, and actions of characters that represent power pressure in both short stories. Data collection techniques were carried out through intensive reading (close reading), while data analysis was carried out through the stages of classifying the forms of power pressure (social, ideological, psychological, and symbolic) and interpreting their influence on the characters' decisions. The results show that power pressure in both short stories is not always present in the form of physical coercion, but operates subtly through discourse, social norms, mass expectations, and normalized political practices. In the short story *Shooting an Elephant*, mass pressure and the demand to maintain a colonial image force the characters to make decisions that contradict their conscience. Meanwhile, in the short story *Pelajaran Pertama Bagi Calon Politisi*, ideological pressure and political pragmatism push the characters to sacrifice moral idealism for the sake of power. Thus, this study confirms that power works productively through the internalization of norms that shape ways of thinking and limit the choices that are considered possible, so that the character's decisions are the result of discursive pressure, not entirely free will.

*Keywords: form, power pressure, short story*

## Bentuk Tekanan Kekuasaan dalam *Cerpen Shooting an Elephant* Karya George Orwell dan *Pelajaran Pertama bagi Calon Politisi* Karya Kuntowijoyo

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bentuk-bentuk tekanan kekuasaan dan pengaruhnya terhadap proses pengambilan keputusan tokoh utama dalam cerpen *Shooting an Elephant* karya George Orwell dan *Pelajaran Pertama bagi Calon Politisi* karya Kuntowijoyo. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan metode analisis wacana kekuasaan berdasarkan teori Michel Foucault. Sumber data berupa kutipan naratif, dialog, dan tindakan tokoh yang merepresentasikan tekanan kekuasaan dalam kedua cerpen. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui pembacaan intensif (close reading), sedangkan analisis data dilakukan melalui tahap klasifikasi bentuk tekanan kekuasaan (sosial, ideologis, psikologis, dan simbolik) serta interpretasi pengaruhnya terhadap keputusan tokoh. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tekanan kekuasaan dalam kedua cerpen tidak selalu hadir dalam bentuk paksaan fisik, tetapi beroperasi secara halus melalui wacana, norma sosial, ekspektasi massa, dan praktik politik yang dinormalisasi. Dalam cerpen *Shooting an Elephant*, tekanan massa dan tuntutan menjaga citra kolonial memaksa tokoh mengambil keputusan yang bertentangan dengan hati nuraninya. Sementara itu, dalam cerpen *Pelajaran Pertama bagi Calon Politisi*, tekanan ideologis dan pragmatisme politik mendorong tokoh untuk mengorbankan idealisme moral demi kepentingan kekuasaan. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa kekuasaan bekerja secara produktif melalui internalisasi norma yang membentuk cara berpikir dan membatasi pilihan yang dianggap mungkin, sehingga keputusan tokoh merupakan hasil dari tekanan diskursif, bukan sepenuhnya kehendak bebas.

*Kata kunci : bentuk, tekanan kekuasaan, cerpen*

Submitted  
12/03.2026

Accepted  
16/06/2026

Published  
19/03/2026

Citation	Agustin, A. F., Suyatman, U., & Awaludin, L. (2026). Form of Power Pressure in The Short Stories <i>Shooting an Elephant</i> by George Orwell and <i>Pelajaran Pertama Bagi Calon Politisi</i> by Kuntowijoyo. <i>Jurnal Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Sastra, Volume 5, Nomor 2, Maret 2026, 1403-1416</i> . DOI: <a href="https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v4i3.1307">https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v4i3.1307</a>
----------	--

Publisher  
Raja Zulkarnain Education Foundation

## INTRODUCTION

In contemporary literary studies, the pressure of power is not merely a textual phenomenon, but rather a concrete manifestation of social structures that force narrative characters to move according to a certain logic of domination. Various studies show that in literary works, power is often represented through relations of domination, resistance, and resistance to social inequality, thus not only shaping relationships between characters but also influencing their choices and actions in the narrative flow. Studies on the representation of domination in fictional narratives emphasize that power relations reflect social interactions that give rise to authoritative hierarchies while simultaneously giving rise to forms of resistance from those in subordinate positions (Utama & Dinanti, 2024; Kusuma & Sudikan, 2023; ).

In the study of contemporary Indonesian short stories and novels, research also found complex power relations: power relations are not only present as formal institutions, but also work through discourses that discipline characters to dominant social norms, such as the practice of social surveillance, economic domination, and cultural pressures that stifle the voices of subordinate groups. Through a Foucauldian approach, Lulyastuti & Satriani (2025), Rafillah (2025), research shows that power in Indonesian literary texts spreads subtly through language, values, and social practices that shape the obedience and resistance of characters, so that character decisions are often the result of internalizing discourse pressures, not completely free choices (Ramadani & Satriani, 2025; Luthan, 2007; Siswadi, 2024; Nasution, 2024).

Power doesn't always manifest in the form of overt violence or coercion. It often operates subtly through norms, rules, language, and social customs that influence how people think and act. In modern life, many people feel free to make their own choices. However, in reality, choices, decisions, and even ways of understanding truth are often influenced by the dominant knowledge systems in

society. Shows that power not only functions to prohibit, but also to shape obedience, identity, and perspectives that are considered normal. Because it operates indirectly, power is difficult to recognize. It is embedded in various institutions, policies, and common views of what is right and wrong. Power does not exist outside the individual, but operates from within consciousness through an ongoing process of normalization. This means that power is present and operates through the formation of meaning, knowledge, and language in everyday life. In other words, power exists through discourse, as explained by Michel Foucault (1978).

In the poststructuralist view, power operates not only through official institutions but also through rules and customs that gradually shape individuals' ways of thinking and behavior to conform to prevailing norms. In modern society, surveillance often occurs indirectly, so individuals feel compelled to follow rules even when there is no apparent coercion. The concept of the panopticon explains that a person ultimately controls themselves because they feel constantly being watched. As a result, obedience arises not from direct orders, but because the rules have become ingrained in the individual's consciousness. In literary works, this condition can be seen in characters who make decisions based on the awareness that their actions will be judged by their social environment. Therefore, the pressure of power in fiction is often implicit and operates through fear, shame, or the desire for social acceptance (Foucault, 1977).

George Orwell's short story "Shooting an Elephant" illustrates how the pressure of colonial power operates not only through physical violence but also through social demands and societal perceptions. The "I" character is a British police officer in Burma. Officially, he represents the colonial power. However, internally, he feels pressured to maintain his image as a ruler in front of the local people. When an elephant goes berserk and then calms down, he doesn't actually want to shoot it. He realizes that it is no longer dangerous



and that shooting it will only cause harm. However, the thousands of villagers gathered expect him to act decisively. He feels compelled to shoot to avoid appearing weak and being ridiculed. He fears that his authority as a colonizer will be undermined if he does not comply with public expectations. This can be understood through the thinking of Michel Foucault, who explains that modern power does not always operate through direct violence. Power also operates through social pressure, surveillance, and societal expectations that regulate one's behavior. In this situation, the "I" character feels bound to his role as colonizer. He must act in accordance with the image of a powerful ruler, even though it conflicts with his conscience. Therefore, the decision to shoot the elephant is not purely his own will. He did so under pressure to maintain an image of power. This short story demonstrates that in a colonial system, not only the people are oppressed, but also those in power. As a result, the characters lose their moral freedom and act to satisfy the demands of the system, not out of personal choice.

The pressure of power in the short story can be understood as a demand for the colonizer to continually demonstrate his power. He must always appear strong and superior to maintain the colonial system. The narrator faces pressure not only from the indigenous population but also from the rules and expectations within the colonial system itself, which demand that he become a symbol of British power. In postcolonial studies, this situation demonstrates that colonialism not only oppresses the colonized but also binds the colonizer to a specific role. Both are trapped in positions dictated by the system of power. The narrator ultimately loses his moral freedom because, as a "sahib," he feels compelled to act according to colonial expectations, even though this contradicts his conscience and common sense. Thus, colonial power not only oppresses but also controls those who exercise power through the demand to maintain their image and prestige (Orwell, 1936).

George Orwell's short story "Shooting an Elephant" demonstrates how colonial power can

oppress anyone, even those who exercise it. The main character is not truly free to make decisions because he is bound by his role as a colonial official and the demands of maintaining his authority in the eyes of the public. While the pressure in the short story arises from the colonial system, the pressure of power can also be found in other contexts. This is evident in Kuntowijoyo's short story "*Pelajaran Pertama Bagi Calon Politisi*" Unlike Orwell, who highlighted the moral dilemmas of colonial officials, Kuntowijoyo depicts how power is learned early in the political world.

Kuntowijoyo's short story "*Pelajaran Pertama Bagi Calon Politisi*" depicts village-level political life during the New Order. The main character is Sutarjo, a garment entrepreneur running for village head. This story demonstrates that power is not solely exercised through official rules, but also through interpersonal relationships, image-building, and less than honest political methods. From the beginning of his candidacy, Sutarjo faced political pressure. He was considered to have a "dirty" family background because his father was involved in the 30 September Movement. To overcome this stigma, Sutarjo attempted various means to improve his image. He leveraged the reputation of his grandfather, who had served as a village head, held religious activities, and adjusted his political stance to gain public support. Meanwhile, his opponent used more practical and direct methods, such as providing entertainment for residents, distributing money, and playing up security issues. This demonstrates that the political world in the story is full of strategy and pressure, so that someone can be pushed to sacrifice moral values to achieve power.

In this short story, the pressure of power is evident in the demands to follow the "unwritten rules" of politics in order to gain or maintain office. Sutarjo faces a dilemma. On the one hand, he wants to maintain his moral values. On the other hand, he feels compelled to adapt to political practices rife with vested interests and manipulation. He

ultimately collaborates with government officials, creates a religious image to garner sympathy, and follows the advice of his political advisor, who says that politics is not about right or wrong, but about possibilities and strategy. However, despite his efforts to conform to the workings of power, Sutarjo is still defeated. His opponent proves to be more adept at utilizing networks and strategies more effectively. This defeat demonstrates that power exerts immense pressure on individuals to continually adapt, even at the expense of personal principles. This short story demonstrates that politics is not merely a place for competition, but also a space that can shape, oppress, and even defeat individuals because the system is stronger than the individual.

In the political situation of the New Order, the pressure of power experienced by Sutarjo can be seen as a form of hegemony, namely power that is accepted by society as something normal. Power is no longer seen as direct acts of violence, but is present in the form of rules and values considered reasonable to maintain political stability. The process of cadre formation in the short story shows that a person is accustomed to following the way of thinking of power even before actually holding office. He learned that to succeed in politics, one must be pragmatic, opportunistic, and loyal. Through this depiction, the short story shows that the pressure of power in modern politics does not always come from direct orders from someone, but originates from the political system and culture that is already rooted and accepted as normal (Kuntowijoyo, 1990).

The pressure to engage in corrupt practices and image building can be understood as a form of group conformity. Individuals tend to follow the customs of the political elite to maintain acceptance and avoid being excluded from circles of power. According to Asch (1951) theory of conformity, people often adjust their attitudes and behaviors out of a desire for group acceptance and a fear of ostracism. As a result, personal values or

principles are sometimes sacrificed to conform to a more influential group. This suggests that the pressure of power in politics stems not only from formal rules or structures, but also from psychological pressures that compel individuals to follow the group's lead.

George Orwell's short story "Shooting an Elephant" and Kuntowijoyo's "*Pelajaran Pertama Bagi Calon Politisi*" both illustrate how power can compel someone to act against their conscience. In Orwell's story, the narrator, a colonial official, feels compelled to shoot an elephant not because it is absolutely necessary, but because he fears losing his authority among the indigenous people. Meanwhile, in Kuntowijoyo's story, Sutarjo, a village head candidate, is forced to follow dishonest political methods to gain acceptance within the village's power system. Both face difficult choices: if they resist pressure, they could lose their positions and trust; if they comply, they must sacrifice the values they believe in. This demonstrates how power can pressure someone into acting not out of their own free will, but to maintain their image and standing within a restrictive system.

Although numerous studies have explored power in literary works, comparative studies specifically examining the forms of power pressure and its influence on characters' decision-making processes are still rare. To date, most studies have focused on discussing colonial domination in George Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant" or political practices in Kuntowijoyo's "*Pelajaran Pertama Bagi Calon Politisi*" separately. These studies have not examined how power pressure operates and influences moral dilemmas and characters' decisions in these two different contexts. Furthermore, previous studies have tended to emphasize social criticism or ideological aspects, but have not explored how power operates through social expectations, normalization processes, and the instillation of values that ultimately shape characters' actions. However,



according to Michel Foucault, modern power not only exerts pressure but also operates through discourse that shapes how individuals think and determine the choices they deem possible. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by comparing the forms of power pressure and their impact on the characters' decision-making processes in the two short stories. In this way, it can be seen that power not only operates externally as pressure, but also shapes the characters' moral awareness and choices from within.

Research on the pressures of power in literary works is important because literature not only depicts social conditions but also shows how power influences one's actions and ways of thinking. According to Michel Foucault (1978), power not only works by suppressing or prohibiting, but also shapes how people think, determine what is considered right, and influence the choices they make through social rules and developing discourses. Therefore, examining the forms of pressures of power and their impact on the decisions of the main character is important to see how an individual in the story faces and responds to the power system around him. By comparing two short stories set in colonial rule and domestic politics, this study hopes to demonstrate that pressures of power can occur in various situations, although the ways they work differ.

1. How are forms of power pressure represented in George Orwell's short story "Shooting an Elephant" and Kuntowijoyo's short story "*Pelajaran Pertama bagi Calon Politisi*"?
2. How does this power pressure influence the decision-making process of the main characters in both short stories?

This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits in the fields of literature and social sciences. Theoretically, this research helps develop literary studies that use the theory of power, especially Michel Foucault's thinking which sees that power works through

discourse, social customs, and the process of norm formation in everyday life. Through the analysis of the short stories "Shooting an Elephant" by George Orwell and "*Pelajaran Pertama Bagi Calon Politisi*" by Kuntowijoyo, it is seen that the pressure of power does not only appear in the form of clear rules or structures, but also exists as symbolic and psychological pressure that influences the character's decisions. Thus, this research helps broaden the understanding of the relationship between literature and power as a depiction of social reality (Foucault, 1978; Faruk, 2012).

## METHOD

This research was conducted through several systematic stages. The first stage was a preliminary study, which involved intensive reading of two short stories: "Shooting an Elephant" by George Orwell and "*Pelajaran Pertama Bagi Calon Politisi*" by Kuntowijoyo to identify key issues related to the pressures of power and the characters' moral dilemmas. Close reading was conducted to understand the narrative structure, social context, and power relations implied in the literary texts (Aini, 2022; Anwar, 2023; Razak, 2017). The second stage was data collection, by selecting narrative excerpts, dialogues, and character actions that represent forms of pressures of power and the main characters' decision-making processes, as recommended in text-based literary research (Rashid, 2022; Endraswara, 2003).

The third stage is data classification, which involves grouping data into categories based on the forms of power pressure and their impact on characters' decisions to facilitate thematic and comparative analysis (Bandopadhyay, 2021). The final stage is data analysis and interpretation, which is conducted using Michel Foucault's theory of power to uncover the subtle mechanisms of power relations at work in the text, as well as a comparative literature approach to compare representations of power pressure in two different

cultural contexts (Foucault, 1976; Bassnett, 2022). The results of this analysis are then used as the basis for drawing research conclusions.

## RESULTS

The pressure of power doesn't always manifest itself in direct coercion or violence. It can also manifest itself in more subtle ways, such as domination and hegemony, leading people to unconsciously follow the wishes of those in power. Power operates by creating conditions in which obedience feels natural, as if it were the way things should be. In colonial and political situations, this pressure can be seen in the demands to maintain the legitimacy, image, and stability of power. As a result, figures or individuals often make decisions that actually conflict with their personal desires. Thus, the pressure of power operates not only through physical actions but also through social approval and acceptance of values deemed correct by the dominant party. This aligns with the opinion of Zulkarnaen et al. (2023), Arifudin (2019) who stated that power maintains its control through a combination of domination and hegemony.

Power pressure is a method used by a stronger party to maintain control over a weaker party. This method can be carried out through pressure, coercion, or through influencing thinking. This pressure can appear in the form of direct coercion, threats, ideological influence, or the use of official power to induce compliance. In social and political relations, power pressure often leaves individuals feeling they have no choice but to comply with the wishes of those in power, even when this contradicts their own interests or beliefs. As a result, the weaker party finds themselves in a powerless position and susceptible to oppression. Thus, power pressure becomes a tool for maintaining dominance by controlling the actions and decisions of those in power (Mariani et al., 2024; Pratama, 2023).

## 1. Representation of the pressure of power

In the short story *Shooting an Elephant* by George Orwell

### Data 1

"I could feel their two thousand wills pressing me forward, irresistibly."

Power is represented through collective pressure from the masses. Figures are forced to act not by their own will, but by public expectations. This demonstrates that power doesn't always come from formal authority, but rather from social pressure.

### Data 2

"A sahib has got to act like a sahib; he has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things."

Characters must behave according to their colonial roles. Power operates as a performative demand: rulers must appear firm even when it goes against their conscience.

### Data 3

"*It is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life in trying to impress the 'natives.'*"

Colonial power was maintained through an ideology of superiority. Rulers had to continually demonstrate dominance to keep the system running.

## 2. Representation of the pressure of power

In the short stories *Pelajaran Pertama Bagi Calon Politisi*

### Data 4

"*Ini demi pembangunan, lho.*"

"This is for development, you know."

The term "development" is used as a discourse of power to pressure individuals into compliance. Without physical coercion, the characters feel they have no choice but to comply with the sub-district head's demands. This demonstrates how power operates ideologically through language.



Data 5

*"Siapa berani tidak meluluskan tentara?"*

"Who dares not to pass the army?"

Military power creates collective fear. Without a direct threat, the mere fact of being a former soldier is enough to exert pressure on society and political opponents. This demonstrates symbolic power.

Data 6

*"Politik itu the art of the possible. Tidak harus lurus, tapi boleh bengkok-bengkok."*

"Politics is the art of the possible. It doesn't have to be straight, but it can be crooked."

Characters are pressured to abandon personal morals and follow pragmatic political logic. Power is presented as an arena of manipulation where honesty is seen as weakness.

### **3. Power pressure influences the decision-making process**

In the short story "Shooting an Elephant,"

Data 7

"They expected it of me and I had got to do it; I could feel their two thousand wills pressing me forward, irresistibly."

Social pressure from thousands of Burmese citizens leaves the protagonist feeling he has no choice but to shoot the elephant. The decision is no longer based on rational or moral judgment, but rather on the collective demands of the masses, who expect decisive action from representatives of colonial power.

Data 8

*"A sahib has got to act like a sahib... To come all that way... and then to trail feebly away... that was impossible."*

As a British colonial official, the main character feels compelled to maintain the image of authority. The pressures of his social role force him to make decisions that align with colonial expectations, rather than his personal convictions.

Power here operates through performative demands on the ruler's identity.

Data 9

*"The crowd would laugh at me... every white man's life in the East was one long struggle not to be laughed at."*

Fear of losing legitimacy and prestige before the colonized population drives the protagonist to choose an action he doesn't truly want. The decision is made to avoid embarrassment, not to resolve the situation effectively.

### **4. Power pressure influences the decision-making process**

In the short stories "Pelajaran Pertama Bagi Calon Politisi"

Data 10

*"Ini demi pembangunan, lho."*

"This is for development, you know."

State ideological pressure through the discourse of "development" led Sutarjo to ultimately rent his land at a low price and comply with the sub-district head's wishes. This decision was made not out of personal desire, but out of fear of being seen as hindering development.

Data 11

*"Coba tanda tangani kuitansi ini... Boleh ambil asal jangan terlalu banyak."*

"Please sign this receipt... You can take it, but don't take too much."

The normalization of corruption by officials led Sutarjo to indulge in markup manipulation. He knew the practice was wrong, but chose to follow the system to ensure his candidacy for village head. The pressure of power pushed him to sacrifice his moral integrity.

Data 12

*"Politik itu the art of the possible... tidak harus lurus, boleh bengkok-bengkok."*

"Politics is the art of the possible... it doesn't have to be straight, it can be crooked."

Political advisors pressured Sutarjo to abandon idealism and follow manipulative political logic. He ultimately decided to renovate graves, perform rituals, and cultivate a religious image to win voters' sympathy, even though it conflicted with his beliefs.

## DISCUSSION

The form of power pressure in the short story *Pelajaran Pertama Bagi Calon Politisi (First Lesson for Aspiring Politicians)* is not only present through direct coercion, but also through discourse and symbolic strategies that shape the way the main character makes decisions. This pressure is apparent when the character is directed to carry out political actions that contradict his personal beliefs in order to gain public legitimacy. In Foucault's perspective, power works productively through discourse that normalizes certain actions so that individuals voluntarily conform to the demands of the system (Foucault, 1980). Thus, the character is not physically forced, but rather conditioned through social expectations, advice from political advisors, and the ambition for electoral victory. This situation shows that power pressure operates in the ideological and psychological realms, where individuals feel as if the decisions they make are personal choices, even though they have been shaped by a larger power structure (Haryatmoko, 2016).

Data 1, the quote "I could feel their two thousand wills pressing me forward, irresistibly" in George Orwell's short story *Shooting an Elephant* indicates the presence of very strong social pressure on the main character. He felt as if two thousand people were staring at him, pushing him to act, and this urge was impossible to resist. When linked to Michel Foucault's theory of power, power does not always take the form of direct orders or physical coercion. Power can operate through the expectations, views, and social pressure of those around him. In this scene, the "I" character does have a position as a British colonial official, but at the same time he feels pressured by the gaze and expectations of the native

masses. The phrase "pressing me forward" shows that the decision to shoot the elephant is not entirely based on his personal desires, but rather because he is afraid of appearing weak and losing his authority. The word "irresistibly" emphasizes that he feels he has no other choice. Thus, this data shows that the main character is in a complex position: he is a representative of colonial power, but also a party controlled by social pressure. This is in line with Foucault's idea that power works in a reciprocal relationship, so that a person can be both an actor and an object of power at the same time.

Data 2, the pressure of power is not only seen in the form of violence, but also through social demands that shape the way the main character acts. The quote, "A sahib has got to act like a sahib; he has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things" (Orwell), shows that as a "sahib" or colonial master, the "I" character feels compelled to be firm and confident, even though he actually has doubts in his heart. His identity as a ruler prevents him from freely acting according to his conscience. He acts not because he truly wants to, but because he is afraid of being seen as weak by the society that witnesses him. In Michel Foucault's view, power works by shaping a person's way of thinking and behavior through social rules that are considered normal. Therefore, the main character in this short story can be understood as an individual whose actions are controlled by the demands of the colonial role attached to him.

Data 3, "It is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life trying to impress the 'natives.'" (Orwell, 1936) demonstrates that colonial power was exercised not only through physical force, but also through the demand to maintain an image of superiority. A colonial ruler must always appear strong and authoritative before the colonized population to maintain their authority. In this context, the "I" character, as a British police officer, is actually under pressure. Although he holds a position as a representative of the colonial government, he feels compelled to act according



to the expectations of the surrounding community. He is not free to make decisions based on personal will, but is instead compelled to maintain his image as a ruler. This aligns with Michel Foucault's view that power operates through social norms and expectations that shape individual behavior. In other words, the main character not only exercises power but is also controlled by the system of power itself.

Data 4, In Kuntowijoyo's short story "*Pelajaran Pertama Bagi Calon Politisi*," the sentence "*Ini demi pembangunan, lho.*" (Kuntowijoyo, 2013, 126) demonstrates a form of power pressure that is not carried out through direct coercion, but through language. The word "development" is used as a reason that sounds good, rational, and difficult to refuse. The character in the story ultimately feels as if he has no choice but to comply with the sub-district head's request, because refusing "*pembangunan*" could be seen as an action that does not support progress. Modern power does not always operate through violence or direct orders, but rather through discourse or ways of speaking that shape a person's way of thinking. In this context, the term "*pembangunan*" becomes a discourse that is considered correct and positive, so that anyone who opposes it will be seen as wrong or irrational. As a result, the character experiences ideological pressure. He obeys not because he is physically forced, but because the language used makes him feel that following orders is natural and right. This aligns with Foucault's view that power works by shaping what is considered truth and regulating what individuals are allowed to think and do.

Data 5, the quote "*Siapa berani tidak meluluskan tentara?*" ("Who dares not to pass the army?") in Kuntowijoyo's short story "*Pelajaran Pertama Bagi Calon Politisi*" demonstrates the indirect pressure of power. The sentence is not just a simple question, but contains a hidden threat. Being a soldier is enough to instill fear, so that others feel they lack the courage to refuse or thwart his interests. When linked to Michel Foucault's theory of power, power does not always take the

form of physical coercion or actual violence. Power can operate through language and discourse. In the quote, the rhetorical question shapes society's way of thinking that the army is a party that should not be opposed. As a result, without the need for a direct threat, people already feel afraid and choose to submit. This is what is known as symbolic power that works through psychological influence and the social construction of who is considered powerful. Thus, the pressure of power in the quote influences the decision-making process of the characters and their surroundings, because the choice to refuse becomes seemingly impossible.

Data 6, represents the pressure of power that operates subtly through discourse, not direct coercion. From Michel Foucault's perspective, power is not merely present in the form of physical domination, but operates through the production of truth, the normalization of values, and the formation of individual ways of thinking. This sentence functions as a legitimizing discourse that instills the belief that moral deviance is normal even necessary in political practice. Thus, figures in the process of becoming politicians are encouraged to conform to the pragmatic logic of power. The pressure of power is apparent when the principle of "it's okay to bend" is not presented as a personal choice, but rather as a norm that must be accepted in order to survive in the political arena. This discourse shapes self-discipline in the figures, so that they voluntarily internalize manipulative values as part of the politician's identity. Within a Foucauldian framework, this process demonstrates how power operates through the mechanism of normalization: individuals are not explicitly coerced, but are led to perceive unethical practices as rational and inevitable. Consequently, the pressure of power manifests itself in the form of fear of failure or alienation if they persist in upholding moral ideals. This expression also reflects the power relations between political mentors and aspiring politicians. The seemingly realistic advice actually functions as a disciplinary technique that produces political subjects who comply with the system. The

characters no longer see uprightness as the standard of truth, but rather the effectiveness of power as the primary measure of action. Thus, this short story illustrates how political power operates through language, advice, and pragmatic doctrines that shape individuals' thinking and decisions. Pressure does not come as a direct threat, but as a demand to adapt to the normalized logic of power.

Data 7, the main character's decision is not born of personal will, but rather from the pressure of power operating through mass expectations. When read through Michel Foucault's perspective, power is not merely repressive or physically coercive, but productive and distributed within social relations and discourse. In this context, the Burmese crowd functions as a mechanism of social surveillance that creates norms about how a colonial official "should" act. The "I" becomes a subject disciplined by this collective gaze. The pressure of power influences the decision-making process because the character finds himself in a paradoxical position: structurally, he represents the empire, but psychologically, he is controlled by the ruled. Foucault emphasized that power operates through the internalization of norms, so that individuals act as if of their own free will, even though they have been shaped by networks of power. The character feels "compulsory" to shoot the elephant not out of objective necessity, but out of fear of losing symbolic legitimacy as a ruler before the masses. Thus, this decision is the result of discursive pressure to maintain the image of colonial authority. This quote demonstrates that power operates through the mechanism of normalization: the act of shooting the elephant becomes the standard of behavior expected of a colonial policeman. When the character becomes aware of the "two thousand wills" pressing upon him, he experiences what Foucault calls the panopticon effect a constant awareness of surveillance that forces the subject to discipline himself without direct coercion. The decision-making process is ultimately no longer an autonomous space, but rather an arena where various social, ideological, and symbolic pressures converge and determine action. Thus, this short story demonstrates that the pressure of power not only

imposes from the outside but also shapes an individual's thinking and choices from within. The decision to shoot the elephant is evidence that colonial power actually traps its own implementers, so that the main character acts not as a free agent but as a product of the network of power that constructs his identity and actions. This analysis confirms that, within a Foucauldian framework, power directly influences the decision-making process through the internalization of norms, social surveillance, and the demand to maintain symbolic authority.

Data 8, The term "sahib" (English lord/ruler) is not simply a marker of social status, but rather a discursive identity that carries certain behavioral expectations. The "I" character feels that as a representative of colonial power, he must act decisively and dominantly in the Burmese community, even though he personally does not want to shoot the elephant. Within the framework of Michel Foucault's theory of power, this condition demonstrates that power operates through internalized discourse and norms, not just physical coercion. The character is not coerced directly by colonial authority, but by the construction of his inherent role as an imperial agent. This pressure creates a situation where decisions are made not based on personal moral or rational considerations, but rather on maintaining the image of power. The fear of losing legitimacy in the eyes of the masses makes it impossible for the character to withdraw without action. From a Foucauldian perspective, the watching masses actually become a mechanism of social control that disciplines the subjects of power. Thus, colonial power in this short story is paradoxical: the character is both an agent of power and an object controlled by the expectations of that power itself. The decision to shoot the elephant ultimately results from discursive pressure to "act like a sahib," thus demonstrating that power not only determines what can be done, but also shapes how individuals feel they must act.

Data 9, the pressure of power does not always operate through physical coercion, but rather through social and psychological mechanisms that shape the subject's consciousness. According to Michel Foucault's theory of power, power operates



productively through discourse and social relations, allowing individuals to internalize the expectations inherent in their position. The “I,” as a British colonial official, actually possesses formal authority, but at the same time, he is under the symbolic surveillance of the indigenous masses, who demand that he act in accordance with the image of the ruler. The fear of being ridiculed demonstrates the existence of social discipline that makes him feel obligated to maintain colonial superiority, even though he personally does not want to shoot the elephant. This pressure directly influences the main character’s decision-making process. From Foucault’s perspective, the decision to shoot the elephant is not a free act, but rather the result of a network of power that produces shame, honor, and performative obligations as a representation of empire. The “I” ultimately acts to fulfill the expectations of colonial discourse that a “sahib” must be firm and must not lose his authority rather than based on moral considerations or situational rationality. Thus, colonial power in this short story appears to operate paradoxically: the ruler becomes a subject oppressed by his own role. The decision to shoot the elephant is a form of conformity to this symbolic pressure, showing how power according to Foucault penetrates the inner realm and determines individual actions without having to use direct violence.

Data 10, according to Michel Foucault’s theory of power, power does not always manifest in the form of physical coercion, but rather operates through the production of truth and the normalization of discourse that forces individuals to voluntarily conform. The term “development” in this context functions as a dominant discourse legitimized by the state, so that all actions in the name of development are considered correct and irresistible. As a result, the characters in the short story experience ideological pressure that influences their decision-making process: they are compelled to accept or carry out actions that actually contradict their personal moral values in order to conform to the logic of power. Thus, the decisions taken are no longer purely the result of individual rational considerations, but rather the

internalization of the discourse of power that has shaped ways of thinking and the limits of choices considered possible. This confirms Foucault’s view that power works productively creating obedient subjects because individuals perceive their decisions as conscious, when in fact they have been directed by discursive pressures in the name of collective interests.

Data 11, based on Michel Foucault’s theory of power, power does not always come in the form of direct coercion, but rather through practices, norms, and discourses that shape what is considered appropriate. In this context, the order to sign a receipt accompanied by the permission to “take” creates a mechanism for normalizing corruption as a seemingly legitimate practice within the sphere of power. The character is not explicitly coerced, but is directed through hierarchical relations and institutional culture that make refusal difficult. This pressure operates on both the psychological and social planes: the character is faced with the choice between maintaining personal integrity or conforming to the system for the sake of his political career. As a result, the decision-making process is no longer based purely on moral considerations, but rather on an effort to adapt to the expectations of the power that surrounds him. Thus, this quote demonstrates that power, as Foucault argued, operates productively shaping individual actions, choices, and even rationality so that the character’s decisions are the result of internalizing the pressures of power, not simply free will.

Data 12, this pressure influences the character’s decision-making process by limiting the horizon of perceived possible choices. The character is pushed to accept that political success can only be achieved through ethical compromise, manipulation, or “crooked” strategies. Within a Foucauldian framework, this condition demonstrates how power produces obedient subjects not through threats, but through the internalization of norms. The character ultimately makes a decision that contradicts his initial idealism because he has adopted the logic of power

as the new truth. This decision appears to be a personal choice, but is actually the result of discursive pressures that shape his way of thinking and perception of political reality. Thus, the short story “*Pelajaran Pertama Bagi Calon Politisi*” demonstrates that the pressures of power operate subtly through the production of the discourse of political pragmatism. The character’s decision-making process is no longer based on autonomous moral considerations, but rather on the need to conform to the mechanisms of power that define what is “possible.” This confirms Foucault’s view that power is most effective precisely when it appears not as coercion, but as a truth voluntarily accepted by the subject.

## CONCLUSION

This research shows that the pressures of power in George Orwell’s short stories “Shooting an Elephant” and Kuntowijoyo’s “*Pelajaran Pertama Bagi Calon Politisi*” (“First Lesson for Aspiring Politicians”) are represented through mechanisms that are not always coercive, but rather operate subtly through discourse, social norms, and collective expectations. Based on Michel Foucault’s perspective, power in both short stories operates productively by shaping the characters’ ways of thinking, identities, and boundaries of action. Therefore, the decisions they make are not entirely born of free will, but rather from the internalization of the discursive pressures surrounding them.

In the colonial context of “Shooting an Elephant,” the pressures of power emerge through performative demands to maintain an image of authority before the masses, which pushes the main character to make decisions that conflict with his conscience. Meanwhile, in the domestic political context of “*Pelajaran Pertama Bagi Calon Politisi*,” the pressures of power emerge through the normalization of political pragmatism, manipulative practices, and demands to follow “unwritten rules” to gain and maintain power. Both short stories demonstrate that power not only oppresses those who are controlled but also

shackles those who exercise power through social, ideological, and psychological mechanisms. Thus, it can be concluded that power pressures significantly influence the main characters’ decision-making processes by limiting perceived possible choices, shifting moral judgments, and encouraging actions that conform to the logic of domination. This finding confirms that in literary works, characters’ decisions are often the result of negotiations with power structures larger than themselves. Therefore, this analysis reinforces the view that power operates universally across both colonial and modern political contexts and plays a crucial role in shaping individual consciousness, actions, and moral dilemmas in literary narratives.

## REFERENCES

- Addina, N., & Hanif, M. (2024). Pendidikan dan Kekuasaan: Antara Pembebasan dan Dominasi Perspektif Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, dan Paulo Freire. *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan dan Pemikiran Islam*, 2(1), 34–47. <https://doi.org/10.31004/fdsww377>
- Aini, R. (2022). Metode Penelitian Sastra Kualitatif: Pendekatan Deskriptif Analitik. *Jurnal Penelitian Humaniora*, 14(2), 101–115.
- Anwar, H. (2023). Qualitative Literary Method: A Refined Approach for Textual Interpretation. *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies*, 8(2), 55–64.
- Arifudin, M.U.A. (2019). Relasi Kuasa dalam Novel *Canting Karya Arswendo Atmowiloto* (Kajian Michel Foucault). *Jurnal Sapala*, 6(1), 1–10. <https://ejournal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/jurnal-sapala/article/view/31742>
- Bandopadhyay, S. (2021). *Methodologies for Comparative Literature*. *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, 48(2), 1–18.
- Bassnett, S. (2022). *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.



- Foucault, M. (1976). *The history of Sexuality: Volume I – An introduction*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Endraswara, S. (2003). *Metodologi Penelitian Sastra*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Widyatama.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1978). *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Haryatmoko. 2016. *Membongkar Rezim Kepastian: Pemikiran Kritis Post-Strukturalis*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius.
- Kuntowijoyo, K. (1990). *Pelajaran Pertama bagi Calon Politisi*. Yogyakarta: Bentang.
- Kusuma, S. S. K., & Sudikan, S. Y. (2023). Relasi Kuasa dalam Novel Gadis Kretek Karya Ratih Kumala: Analisis Wacana Kritis Michel Foucault. *Jurnal Sapala*, 10(3), 24–34. Retrieved from <https://ejournal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/jurnal-sapala/article/view/56512>
- Latupeirissa, E., & Tjahjono, T. (2021). Relasi Kekuasaan, Pengetahuan dan Moral Tokoh Bujang dalam Novel Pulang Karya Tere Liye (Kajian Relasi Kuasa Michel Foucault). *Sastronesia*, 9(4), 17–29. <https://doi.org/10.32682/sastronesia.v9i4.2195>
- Lulyastuti, L., & Satriani, I. (2025). Relasi Kuasa dalam Novel Anjing Mengeong, Kucing Menggonggong Karya Eka Kurniawan: Perspektif Michael Foucault. *DIDAKTIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*, 3(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.33096/didaktis.v3i1.789>
- Luthan, S. (2007). Hubungan Hukum dan Kekuasaan. *Jurnal Hukum*, 14(2), 166–184
- Mariani, T., Surip, M., & Lubis, M. (2024). Representasi Dominasi Kekuasaan dalam Novel *Saman* Karya Ayu Utami: Kajian Teori Michel Foucault. *Jurnal KIBASP*, 7(2), 522–536.
- Nasution, S. Y. (2024). Relasi Kuasa dalam Novel Rindu Kubawa Pulang Karya S. Baya: Analisis Wacana Kritis Michel Foucault. *Al-Furqan: Jurnal Agama, Sosial, dan Budaya*, 3(1), 196–216. <https://publisherqu.com/index.php/Al-Furqan/article/view/832>
- Orwell, G. (1936). *Shooting an Elephant*. London: Penguin Books.
- Pratama, R. A. (2023). Pemikiran Foucault dan Baron: Kekuasaan dan Pengetahuan dalam Pendidikan dan Bahasa. *Jurnal Filsafat Indonesia*, 4(1), 45–57. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jfi.v4i1.30543>
- Rafillah, R. A. (2025). Wacana Kuasa ala Foucault atas Peran Negara dan Institusi dalam Melanggengkan Ketimpangan Kuasa pada Anak Perempuan Korban Kekerasan Seksual di Pontang, Serang. *Jurnal Ilmiah Nusantara (JINU)*, 2(5), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.61722/jinu.v2i5.5177>
- Ramadani, A. S., & Satriani, I. (2025). Relasi Kuasa dan Wacana Resistensi dalam Novel Janji Karya Tere Liye Perspektif Michel Foucault. *DIDAKTIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*, 3(2), 67–76. <https://doi.org/10.33096/didaktis.v3i2.919>
- Ratna, N. K. (2015). *Teori, Metode, dan Teknik Penelitian Sastra*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Rashid, M. A. (2022). Reconstructing Methodology in Comparative Literary Studies: A Qualitative Perspective. *Asian Review of Literary Studies*, 7(3), 89–103.
- Razak, A. (2017). *Menggapai Mixed Methods Bidang Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia*. Pekanbaru: Ababil Press.

- Siswadi, G. A. (2024). Relasi Kuasa terhadap Konstruksi Pengetahuan di Sekolah Perspektif Michel Foucault dan Refleksi atas Sistem Pendidikan di Indonesia. *Sang Acharya: Jurnal Profesi Guru*, 5(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.25078/sa.v5i1.3405>
- Solomon E. Asch. 1951. "Effects of Group Pressure upon the Modification and Distortion of Judgments." Dalam *Groups, Leadership, and Men*. Pittsburgh: Carnegie Press.
- Utama, N. G., & Dinanti, P. A. (2024). The Depiction of Power Relations in Wish (2023) Through Foucauldian Perspective. *LANGUAGE: Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra*, 5(3), 188-197. <https://doi.org/10.51878/language.v5i3.6526>
- Zulkarnaen, R., Ruminda, & Awaludin, L. (2023). The British Colonial Power in George Orwell's *Burmese Days*. *CALL*, 5(1), 67-77.