

**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**

**Power Politics in Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men***

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**by**

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**Letter of Recommendation**

Mr. Pradip Kumar Dhungana has completed his thesis entitled under my supervision. He carried out his research work from July 20, 2008 to July 29, 2009 recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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This is to certify that the thesis entitled “Power Politics in Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*” by Pradip Kumar Dhungana, submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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## **Abstract**

Warren's *All the King's Men* a typically American tale of politics and power where different politics and tactics are used to rise in power, manipulation betrayal, bribery, and blackmailing, grafting, threatening and frenzied rhetoric are different strategies applied in the process of acquiring exercising and maintaining of power. Warren depicts the picture of power struggle in politics in one of the southern states of the United States. The state is reeling under economic crisis, corruption and, on top, politicians fighting for power. The state is under the grip of graft, blackmail, bribery, and trickery all masterminded by Mac Murfee, government candidate, and rival of Willie. However, Willie rises to the status and achieves power to dismantle the politics in his favour.

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## **I. Power and Power Politics**

Power is the ability of a person to control or influence the behaviour of other persons. The term power becomes interchangeable with several related themes like control, influence, authority, force, might, persuasion coercion, and domination. The general concept of power is centralization within system of hierarchy. The absolute and higher power is conceived only in the centre from where the subordinating elements are controlled and ruled. In this conceptualization, power is vertical it can be seen as evil or unjust because evil and injustice committed by man involve power. It is simply the probability that man will act as another man wishes. This action may rest on fear and rational calculation of advantage. But there is another way of exercising power which is to liberate and serve the people. And this power is creative, formative and productive which is exercised between mutual understanding of subject and object.

Power is closely related to leadership and authority. Power as informal authority is the ability of an individual or a group to secure compliance from another individual or group. And authority as legitimate power is the right to seek compliance from other. Logically power can be divided as personal power and position power. Personal power is derived from personal attribute and expertise while position power is derived from official position.

The idea of power has assumed an importance of its own in the realm of politics. The reason for this is that the meaning of politics has now changed from being a study of state and government to that of being a study of power. The study of politics is concerned with the description and analysis of the manner in which power is obtained, exercised and controlled, the purpose for which it is used. The politics is also concerned with the way by which decisions are made, the factors that influence

the making of those decisions; and the context in which those decisions take place. Therefore, politics are those activities which are performed to acquire, develop and use power to obtain one's preferred outcome in a situation where there is uncertainty of outcome. A great English power theorist Hobbes identified the term politics with power. According to him, man is selfish, egotistic and wicked. He is moved by passion man is the enemy of man. Being a selfish creature and full of egotistic tendencies, man believes in the cardinal virtue of force and fraud. Man is ravening beast and his rights are limited by his physical power. He driven by self-interest directed to the fulfilment of his fundamental urges. In short, it is the condition asking every man "Kill whom you can and springs all possibilities of internecine warfare" (qtd. Mohair 112).

Man is a social and political creature by his nature and necessity. This simply signifies that the pattern of collective life under some form of authority or control is as old as human life itself. Co-operation and competition, concord and conflict, war and peace, domination and subordination have been the twin feature of man's social and political existence.

The element of force has also played important role in acquiring and exercising power. It is the element of force that placed man as head of his family, the chief as the supreme authority of the tribe, and the king as the highest ruler of the biggest unit, a political institution. History is full of tribal wars in which force decided the issue. The victors became the masters and the vanquished had to live and work in concert under a recognized leader for the purpose of defence or aggression against other aggression or barbarians. The coercive force exercised by the leader was eventually established and sanctified. Ultimately it created class system. This was the

birth of another new idea hierarchy. Hierarchy means there are the dominators and dominated.

According to divine origin theory, authority is regarded as the certain of God, and as such, it finds its expression in the religious scriptures. J.C. Johari in his book *Principle of Modern Political Science* says, "The Hindus, the Jews' faith of the world subscribe to the view that the origin of political authority has divine sanction" (96). As dictated in the theory, the state is created by God not only in the general sense in which every thing exists is said to be creation of divine will but also in a special sense of a deliberate, direct, specific act of human race. The ruler is the nominee of God on earth. All rights of the ruler are a gift of the divine will and as such what he does in the exercise of power is Gods will. In this way in the early and Middle Ages ruler legitimized the rule of hereditary succession. At that time certain people who claimed they can communicate with God set themselves apart from the rest of the community, they were priest. They are powerful because they had access to power and they established themselves as the right executors of God's will on the earth. At that time religion and church were the main sources of power. In this way, the cosmic model of God ruling over nature and humans was reproduced in the social model of and elite class ruling over the people.

As elite theory stands on the classical doctrine of the natural inequality of mankind where at the apex remained elite group and the downtrodden and vulnerable at the bottom. In this regard Mosca states:

In every society two classes of people exist, one that rules and other that is ruled. The first class always less numerous performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantages that follow;

where as the second, the numerous class, is directed and controlled by the first in a manner that is more or less legal. (9)

Pointing out nature of ruling class Michaels says "the shrewd leaders influence the people by their oratory and flattery" (65). According to James Burnham, the basis of any elite power lies in the control over the principle means of production and distribution. It is by virtue of their privileged position that the elite group manages to prevent others from gaining power (56). In this way, elite ruling group maintained and intensified the hierarchical and oligarchic patterns of ruling and predominantly grasped the economic hold and absorbed the advantage thereon to maintain power. They sustained the hierarchical social structure in the society, by canalizing the means of production and distribution into their grasp to exercise and maintain their power. Therefore, the hierarchical form of society has always been prevalent in the society because ruling class monopolized the power and ruled the country as their personal property. They suppressed the subversive thinking by various coercive manners. The social structure was based on indiscriminate exploitation and manipulation of the oppressed section society.

In other words, elite group enjoyed power-over. It is the most insidious kind of power. This is the power of domination and control, power that seeks to rule unilaterally. Power-over is voracious. Power takes what's there, it makes no distinctions between right and wrong. Power-over must expand or die. Power-over fills all vacuums, crushes the weak and extends itself whenever it can. The power exercised by Adolph Hitler was power-over. Lord Acton's famous statement "All power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" (27), reflects the basic trend of power. In this regard Bertrand Russell write, ". . . naked power, i.e. to the kind of power that involves no acquiescence on the part of the subject. Such is the

power of the butcher over the sheep, of an invading army over a vanquished nation, and the police over detected conspirators" (57).

Thus, rulers love power-over. They crave the capacity to control the lives of large number of people. Their only goal is acquisition of more power, power for power's sake. They often surround themselves with sycophants and portray themselves as god like omniscient and infallible. If they fail to get hold on the power they use fear to manipulate the people because from the early age people are infected by the fear.

In the course of history, any changes have occurred in term of power exercise and social system but no fundamental change have been seen in social system. It is only the handing over of power from one elite group to another that again perpetrates hierarchical form of power though with slight modification. Similarly the advancement of science and technology has given power or tools to dominate and control as never before. The hierarchical form of society is a universal phenomenon, whether in the east or in the west, class system perpetuates itself in one way or other in every respective society. In this regard, Karl Marx the philosopher and propounded of Marxism mentions that he unequal distribution of property creates gap between people which draws the line of rich and poor or have and have nots resulting hostile class struggle. For Marx mode of production plays a major role in determining power, which, in the society controls modes of production also holds and exercises power. Marx regards wealth as the source of the economic dimension of power in the society, which is divided into classes, the class which owns the means of production has power to control and exploit other classes. The crisis of economy and unbearable injustice to the have nots' create situation for struggle against the exploiters who have to for sake their pleasure of autocratic power. Marx emphasizes that society's ruling

class sets the norms for what is right and what is wrong which help them to rule and hold on power, which doesn't include the needs and desires of ruled so there always occurs class struggle. In this regard Marx says "All hitherto existing history of society in the history of class struggles. In other words history is principally a matter of who is to own the means of production (369)".

Marx believes that in all phases of history there has been a conflict between two dominant classes of society. In antiquity's slave society, the conflict was between free citizen and slave. In the feudal society of the middle ages, it was between feudal lords and serfs and later on between aristocrats and citizens. But in Marx's own time, conflict took place between what he called bourgeois or capitalist and proletariat. So the conflict stands between those who own the means of production and those who do not. And since the upper class does not voluntarily relinquish their power; change can only come about through revolution.

In capitalistic society the means of production are owned by capitalist class and the proletarian class whose labour power is brought by capitalist for profit which together taken as 'forces' and 'relations' of production which Marx calls "the economic structure of society", in other words, Superstructure whose essential function is to legitimize the power of the social group owning the means of production. Focusing on the superstructure, Terry Eagleton, in his book *Marxism and Literary Criticism* writes that the superstructure contains more than the political consciousness. It is more than the various elements of the society, like religion, ethics and institutions put together. He writes, "Super structure contains more than this. It is consisted definite form of social consciousness Political, religious aesthetic and so on) which Marxism designates as ideology. The function of ideology is also to legitimate the power of the

ruling class" (6). Thus, these different consciousnesses of superstructure take the form of society's ideology.

Moreover, ideology is the concept and term originated and shaped from Marx and Engels' *German Ideology*, wherein they have given historical and materialistic shape to the concept. In general, ideology is explained as the process of formation and reflection of ideas, living condition, interests and movement of particular class paired with its dialectical nature to control and influence ideas of the other classes as ruling ideas. In regard to ideology Peterson says:

Ideology is a set of beliefs underlying the customs habits and practices common to a given social group. To the member of the group, the belief seems obviously true, natural and even universally applicable. They may seem just an obviously arbitrary, idiosyncratic, and even false to outside or the member of another group, who adhere to another ideology. Within a society several ideologies may coexist, or one or more may be dominant. Ideologies, may be forcefully imposed or willingly subscribed to their components-beliefs may be held consciously or unconsciously. Ideology governs our perception, judgments, and prejudices our sense of what is acceptable, normal and deviant. Ideology may cause a revolution it may also allow discrimination and even exploitation. (445)

Ideology is therefore, the formation and obliteration of social-consciousness emerging on concrete social relation and taking part in the social contradiction. Understanding it as social relation and taking part in the social contradiction. Understanding it as social entity indicates its inseparable dialectical relations with class consciousness and accordingly, its constant motion in the struggle-with other class ideas. In this way,

ideology is the product of base of social structure which is a tool to exercise and legitimize the power of ruling class.

For Marx, in the conflict between capitalist and proletariats ideologies, eventually proletariats ideology turns to be victorious who drive out the non-proletariats to establish control and have power over means of production, the real source of power. But as they obtain power the philosophical vision of politics of equality what they have fought for is forgotten as soon as the rulers take their controlling position. Then again emerges, the power-holder-dominant class of have nots who control the situation in turn. So, the revolution of "Have nots for the welfare and equality of power is cheated again by use of the same power which was achieved with the discourse of politics.

In this way, Marx concept of power is concrete, vertical and repressive in the sense that power is held and exercised through the hands of few people over the large majority through the means of manipulation, suppression, and ideological discourse, on the behalf of the ruling lass.

Regarding to ideological power, the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci gives a different view form Marx regarding power exercise. For him power is exercised hegemonically. Hegemony means ruling by consent. Gramsci conceptualized this hegemony as a centaur consisting of two halves. The black ends, beast, represented the more classic, martial image of power, power through coercion, though brute force, be it physical or economic. But the capitalist hegemony, he argues depends even more strongly on the front end, the human fact, which projects power through consent. In Russia, this power was lacking allowing for a revolution. However, in Western Europe, especially in Italy, Capitalism had succeeded in exercising consensual power, convincing the working classes that their interests were the same as those of

capitalists. In this way revolution had been avoided. Therefore, for Gramsci power is not always imposed over the other and ruled through means so suppression but power is exercised through the consent of ruled class, who given consent themselves to be ruled.

Similarly, regarding the concept of power, the thought of Friedrich Nietzsche underlines much of the 20th century analysis of power. He had disseminated ideas of power on the "Will to Power," which he sees as the domination of other humans as much as the exercise of control over one's environment. In connection to the will to power Nietzsche's psychological presupposition is that humans are always attempting to inflict their will upon others. Every action towards another person generates from deep down desire to bring that person under one's control in one way or another. Whether a person gives gifts, praises someone, claims to be in love with someone or physically harms someone, the psychological motive is same; to impose one's will over others. This presupposition entails that all human beings are ultimately and exclusively egoistic by nature. Therefore, according to Nietzsche there are no altruistic actions. The will to power is not, however, limited to the psychology of human beings; rather it is the underlying nominal reality of the universe, which manifests itself in various ways in everything and everywhere. Growth, self-preservation, domination, and upward mobility are some of the basic elements of this will, which everything in the world exhibits, according to Nietzsche. Nietzsche's will to power is a life-affirming view, in which creatures affirm their instincts to acquire power and dominance. Lasting pleasure and satisfaction come about as a result of being able to live according to one's instincts- the ability to exert one's will to power.

According to Nietzsche will to power is man's most basic drive. He says: "when ever found a living thing there found I the will to power and even in the will of

the servant found I the will to be master. That to the stronger, the weaker shall serve [. . .] (*Thus Spake Zarathustra*, 34). So the will to power is compared with man's basic motive. The will to power is presented as a hypothesis which Nietzsche explains from psychological ground and assembles a great deal of evidence. Simply it is a doctrine which he creates to describe man and situation of man. He claims that man is a horizon creating animal and he has become man by unconsciously projecting horizons, with the conscious projection of it he can be more than man. To describe how a man become more than man 'by working and drive of will, we find difference between and Schopenhauer's will Nietzsche's will to power. Schopenhauer's will which is not concerned with power rather it is blind, striving and unintelligent, though Nietzsche seems to be adopting the concept of will from him but he goes further and suggest that we all are will to power, driven by the desire to keep expanding our vitality and strength. According to Nietzsche, survival is secondary. He insists that vitality itself is the meaning of life, which should be the conclusion of philosophy, not its rejection, not resignation.

In this way, Nietzsche emphasizes the vitality of life we live. He insists that philosophical thought should always be subordinate to our efforts to live well, never the other way around. Fundamentally, Nietzsche disagrees with Darwin. He transforms Darwinian struggle for existence into the struggle for power. According to Nietzsche, to speak the struggle for existence that is, the passive and involuntary condition is to sate the case inadequately. There is something more than this struggle; some other force must be operative. The will to power is this force, and the instinct of self-preservation is only one of the indirect and frequent results thereof. Nietzsche writes in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*:

He who shot the doctrine of "will to existence" as truth certainly did not hit the truth: this will doesn't exist for what does not exist cannot will, but that which is in existence how could it still want to come into existence? Only where life is, there is also will: not will to life but so I teach you will to power. The living creature values many things higher than life itself, yet out at this evaluation itself speak the will to power.

(34)

Humankind prefers to increase his pain and tension to perform actions, which would allow him to feel power. The thinking that one has no power over the other is quite unbearable to this species. The feeling of power is the greatest pleasure for mankind only the exhausted and complacent ones prefer to life of ordinary respectability. A strong individual accepts life as a battlefield where he can exercise power and where are the chances to overpower. Therefore, the strongest and highest will to life does not find expression in a miserable struggle for existence, but in a will to war, in will to power, in a will to over power.

Rejecting the social instinct praised by Darwin and replacing social drive with egoism and individualism, Nietzsche developed the ethics of power. Nietzschean ethics of power are further developed with his strong belief that the strongest of the human species desire not only to survive but also to gain power over others. The best human instinct is the will to power in this ethical system. For example, Nietzsche when watching young boys play would observe each wanted to lead the group until a strong leader emerged from within this micro society of the children.

Nietzschean will to power is certainly the will to command and the will to rule. The whole mankind, according to Nietzsche, is divided in two basic types:

master and slaves or the superior and the inferior race. Those who can command are the people of master category and those who obey others belong to the slave category.

Thus for Nietzsche the feeling of power, love for power and lust for power is man's basic drive and the feeling of power, love for power and lust for power is man's basic drive and the feeling of power satisfies a man's deeper hunger of being. It makes him happy. Therefore, Nietzsche reveals that the first effect of happiness is the feeling of power, because will to power inspires all human behaviours.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century more debates have been held regarding power and its functions. For sociologists power operates both relationally and reciprocally. For them the balance of power between parties to a relationship: all parties to all relationship have some power: the sociological examination of power concerns itself with discovering and describing the relative strengths, equal or unequal stable or subject to periodic change. Sociologists usually analyze relationship in which the parties have relatively equal or nearly equal power in terms of constraint rather than of power. Thus power has connotation of unilateralism. For structuralist social theory, power appears as a process, an aspect to ongoing social structure. One can sometimes distinguish primary power the direct and personal use of force for coercion; and secondary power, which may involve the threat of force or for coercion; and secondary power, which may involve the threat of force or social constraint. In regard to the types of power, social psychologist French and Raven have stated five kinds of power they are incentive power which is the power to reward, coercive power, the power to punish, legitimate power is the power given to an individual by a recognized authority to enforce standard of behaviour. Referent power is bestowed upon individual by virtue of accomplishment or attitude, and expert power that springs from education or experience.

In regard to power, its function and its other various aspects, the French philosopher Michel Foucault has given great contribution. He has analyzed power from various perspectives, he following the Italian philosopher Machiavelli, sees power as a complex strategic situation in a given society. In his study of power, Foucault has largely inspired by Nietzschean notion of "will to power".

## II. Foucauldian Concept of Power

### Power

Michel Foucault, renowned French philosopher, critic and historian, reveals his thought over power truth, language, discourse and knowledge. For him power is exercised with intention. Power is actions upon others' actions in order to interfere with them Foucault doesn't recur to violence, but says that power presupposes freedom in the sense that power is not enforcement, but ways of making people by themselves behave in other ways than else would have done. One way of doing this is by threatening with violence which is bad use of power. Michel Foucault gives his views regarding the difference between good and bad use of power:

In defining the effects of power as repression, one adopts a purely juridical conception of such power, one identifies power with a law which say no; power is taken above all as carrying the force of a prohibition. Now I believe that this is a wholly negative, narrow, skeletal conception of power, one which has been curiously widespread. If power were never did anything buy to say no, do you really think one would be bought to obey it? What makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that say no' but that it traverses and produces thing, it induces pleasure, from knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression. (60-61)

Foucault argues that the constitution and sovereignty wage their power in juristic terms, where power is posed only in terms of the state apparatuses which in fact are far from being able to occupy the whole field of actual power relations, and further,

the state can only function on the basis of other already existing power relations. In this way, the state becomes super structural in relation to a whole series of power networks that invest the body, sexuality family, knowledge, technology, and so on. The subtle form of power lacks rigidity and other discourses can contest it, power itself lacks any concrete form, occurring as a locus of struggle. In this way, we don't take power as and when it is applied for negative purpose that is abuse of power. In ever society power is exercised through these two ways. But most of the time, power as dominant has more effective influence.

Power is the most fundamental in the whole of political world, the political process is the shaping and exercise of power what man seeks in their political negotiation, is power. The politics is a study of the structure of power in the political systems. Which are there at various levels of cultural, economic and political development, to get power, which is not exercised but is imposed. This sort of politics is based on completion for seeing influence of power. In political field ideological discourses create truth through which power is exercised. One political ideology negates other and tries to over power it, as Foucault says:

. . . The way power was exercise concretely, and in detail-with its specificity, its techniques and tactics, was something that no one attempted to ascertain, they contented themselves with denouncing it in a polemical and global fashion as it existed among the "other", in the adversary camp. Where soviet socialist power was in question, its opponents called it totalitarianism; power in western capitalism was denounced by the Marxists as class domination, but the mechanics of power in themselves were never analyzed. (117)

So, ideological power as domination and control took different types of power exercises which have their own time and degree of activeness. But the fundamental goal of these power users is to rule the people. In every period of historical the way power is exercised and the means employed in its exercises make a difference both to those who use power and to those whom it is used. Contextually sometimes the importance of ideological transformation is realized for stabilizing the bases of any kind of power where politics works for power and power works for politics. The power which takes the form of domination is the source of fear and terror but even this type of power is established with the philosophical discourse of knowledge with the philosophical discourse of knowledge in which everybody believes.

Foucault sees every action and historical events as an exercise in the exchange of power. He has spent large bulk of his career analyzing ebb and flow of power in different situations and with relevance to different aspect of human life structure organizes and broadens the web of power. The society is the huge web, and much of the power tends to be concentrated towards higher echelons. Foucault see the exchange of power in very active terms "isn't power simply a form of war like domination?" it is difficult to sort out just who is fighting the war, since Foucault seems to lean towards the war of all against all notions. Power flows simultaneously in different directions and different volumes according to various forms of power relations is the network of power exchange. As Foucault states:

Now I believe that problem doesn't consist in drawing the line between that in a discourse which falls under the category of scientific or truth and that in a discourse which falls under the category of scientific or truth and that which comes under some other category, but in seeing

historically how effects of truth are produced with in themselves  
neither true nor false. (1139)

Foucault challenges the conditions of the production of certain truths, which in themselves are neither true nor false, for him are the effects of power, deviates in his concept of power and truth from his contemporary thinkers. He doesn't say that power is evil in itself rather his idea of power is related to productivity. For him power is very different from traditional social-political conception of it. Discourse is not a mere effect or end-product of pre-existing power nor is power 'owned' by same privileged person or group and exercised simply as an obligation or a prohibition on those who do not have it. Fro Foucault, repression is negative conception of power. And as such it is incomplete. He further states that power is not only repression it is something positive sometimes, power is needed to prohibit unnecessary and negative things. To control bad manners and attitudes, power is necessary. By applying power positively over justice and equality can be created in the society and country. Similarly if power is forcefully applied it eventually turns into domination and therefore, may result in violence and disorder. He further says, "Perhaps this is because it has always been thought that power is mediated through the terms prescribed in the great juridical and philosophical theories, and that there is a fundamental, immutable gulf between those who exercise power and those undergo it" (140).

Power according to Foucault is a relative source for positive value and it is always practiced under the influence at hegemony. It is the fact that power doesn't have top to down flow and is never used vertically to dominate others. Unlike other theorist, his power theory is not compatible to the repressive hypothesis that sees the functioning of power in the trend that confines power into small group of society. He

argues that power is not just the ruthless domination over weak by stronger of course this idea is very akin to Nietzsche who says that power is not to be 'bad' at all.

Foucault states the nature of power as:

Power is every where not because it embraces uniformly, but because it comes from everywhere power comes from below, that is there is no binary and all encompassing opposition between ruler and the ruled at the root of power relations, and serving as a general matrix-no such duality extending from top down and reacting on more and more limited group to the very depths of the social body. (93)

Here, Foucault's main project is to turn the negative conception of power upside down (by negative conception' we mean the vertical and hierarchical notion of power). In doing this, he owes more to Nietzsche than to Karl Marx who, like Foucault, sees power not simply as a repressive force of tool of conspiracy but as a complex of forces that produce what happens in a society. It is not wielded by somebody because he him self is caught and empowered by retain discourse a practices that constitute power.

Because of the complexity of Foucault's power theory, the word 'power' is apt to lead to a number of misunderstandings with respect to its nature, its forms, and its unity. Foucault does not mean 'owner as a group of institutions and mechanism that ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state. He doesn't mean power as mode of subjugation which, in contrast to violence, has the form of rule. He also doesn't mean by it:

A general system of domination exerted by one group over another doesn't mean by it a general system of domination exerted by one group over another, a system whose effects through successive

derivation pervade the entire social body or in other words a system of domination in which there are rulers and the ruled. Rather he says, 'Power must be understood as a multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization. (92)

Foucault views that power is not something that is acquired, seized or shared, or something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; rather he believes that power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of no egalitarian and dynamic relations. Another indispensable thing in his power theory is resistance. Foucault believes that along with the power there is resistance. It is, inherently part of the power relation. So, power works in relationship. Because if there is no one in charge of power and no one to blame then there will be no any way to resist power and this relations of power produces the truth. If there is no resistance there would be no power, because it would be simply a matter of obedience. So, resistance comes first and resistance remains superior to the forces of the process. Power relations are obliged to change with resistance. Therefore, where there is power, there is always resistance. Resistance is never exterior to power. One is always inside power and there is a plurality of resistances which exists in the field of power relations. As Foucault says:

Resistance does not derive from a few heterogeneous principles; but neither are they allure or a promise that is necessity betrayed. They are the odd term in relations of power; they are inscribed in the letter as an irreducible opposite. Hence they too are distributed in irregular fashion the points, knots, or focuses of resistance are spread over time and space at varying densities, at times mobilizing groups or in

dividable in a definitive way, inflaming certain points of the body,  
certain moments in life, certain types of behaviour. (96)

For Foucault, resistance is more effective when it is directed at 'techniques' of power rather than at 'power' in general. It is techniques which allow for the exercise of power and the product on knowledge. So, the east way for the subject, Foucault says, is to develop a critical attitude as the will not be governed 'thus' and deny the 'essentialist' notion by locating oneself of the 'Frontiers'. But in doing so the subject should never attempt to establish the essence on his own.

Hence it becomes clear that in his concept of power, Michel Foucault's main idea was against the hierarchical notion of power. He believes that poser must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as some thing which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here and she, never in anybody's hand, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a nit-like organization. And not only do individuals circulated between these threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercise this power. In other words, individuals are the vehicles or power, not its points of application.

## Truth

Truth according to Foucault is a social construct as each society creates a regime of truth that consist of its beliefs values and mores. Foucault identities the creation of truth in contemporary western society with five traits, the centring of truth on scientific discourse, accountability of truth to economic and political forest, the diffusion and consumption of truth through societal apparatus, the control of the distribution of truth by "political and economic apparatus" and the fact that it is the issues of a whole political debate and social confrontation." Individuals will do well to recognize that ultimate truth, "Truth", is the construct of the political and economic forces that command the majority of power within the societal web. There is no truly universal truth at all; therefore, the intellectual can not convey universal truth. The intellectual must specialize, specify, so that she/he can be connected to truth generating apparatuses of society.

Michel Foucault points out that power and truth are interwoven and attached which are not isolated concepts. In this regard he says:

The important thing here, I believe, is that truth is no outside power, or lacking power: contrary to myth whose history and function would repay farther study, truth is not the reward of free spirit, the child of protracted solitude nor the privilege of those who have succeeded in librating themselves. Truth is the thing of this world; it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regulate effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its general polities of truth that is the types of discourse which is accepts and makes functions as true. (131)

So, truths are all not born equal because some discourses are more powerful than other. At issue remains the relation of knowledge and truth to political action. Truth is the construct of the political and economic forces within societal web. There is no truly universal truth at all. Power is made out in relation to knowledge which creates truth and truth is changed according with the change in power. Therefore, truth is the product of power and of the systems in which it flows, and it changes according to the change in systems. As Foucault further says:

Truth is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statement. Truth is linked in a circular relation with systems of powers which produce and sustain it, and in turn it effects the power which it induces and which extend it to the creation of a general truth. (132)

Power diffuses itself in the system of authority and has the effect of truths, which are produced within discourses of knowledge but the discourses are neither true nor false. The truth is related with power and it changes with the change in power. Truth is a sliding ground which is not lacking power. It entices the regular effect of power. Each and every society had its regime of truth. What power does is conceived as truth, it can't be condemned because it functions as true and tactfully the type of discourse and with the mechanism and instances, which enable one to distinguish true or false statement. Language is nothing but the system that operates within it. It circulates through society and literary cultural text that are part of it. Power has been a tooed relation with systems and it changes as the system changes.

Truth and power are inseparable, it is the linguistic discourse that originates the truth and truth produces the power and again it is the knowledge that brings the better discourse and effective power is produced through the better knowledge. In this

regard R. Selden comments, "The real effect of power is exercised through linguistic discourse which is the result of knowledge because all knowledge is an expression at will to power, and the reform, discourse of knowledge is involved in power but will to knowledge is not power rather it is and impersonal force" (83).

Thus a conceptual connection can be made that knowledge and discourse are inseparable. Language is the only instrument of knowledge and it is creative and active. It is not the role of mind and consciousness which is important in holding the power but the role of language over the mind and consciousness of human faculty. It is the system of the society that controls the language and knowledge through which the power is exercised. The society is not only tied to knowledge but also language. Knowledge is produced through society from where originates the power which is related with the subject and the object and the ruler and the ruled ones. It is knowledge, which is used to exercise power, and this knowledge is generated out of doublets. The determination of power is through the use of knowledge that is the product of the system of language which has relationship with society. All modern political organizations are framed within the association of knowledge and power.

Foucault considers knowledge to be nothing more than an artificial "invention" and as such devoid of any natural ontology. As a human construct, knowledge is the produced fruit of mankind's conflict therefore as conflicts arise and are squelched in political society so also is knowledge in a perpetual current of flux in epistemological formulations. As knowledge is the effect of power, the conscious control or manipulation of power dictates what ever presumed knowledge is or is not taboo within that society. As Foucault says:

These power-knowledge relations are to be analyzed, therefore, not on the basis of a subject of knowledge who is or is not free in relation to

power, but, on the contrary, the subject who knows, the object to be known and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of power-knowledge and their historical transformations. (66)

Therefore, it can be said that power is the necessary condition for the construction of knowledge. And ultimately through the assertion of power which defines knowledge, truth emerges as a temporary non-absolute thing, relative only to a particular moment in history and to particular exercise of power at that moment.

Thus, discourse, truth and knowledge, all are inter-related with power where truth is a function of power and power is fashioned by and circulated through the discourse of truth.

### **Discourse**

There are various types of power that exist in the world. The rulers try to use power to control and rule their citizens. But the present world is highly intellectualized by which the way of exercising the power is not with blood shed, but with the change of concepts and beliefs of the individual in the society and the change in belief is possible only through the various types of discourse. When power is used for power's sake then different tricks are to be applied with better linguistic discourse, so as to maintain one's controlling positions. It is a sort of trick of throwing dust in the eyes of the people.

Knowledge is associated with discourse. They are inseparable. Regarding discourse Paul Rabinow says: "discourse is identifiable collection of utterances governed by the rules of construction and evaluation which determine within some thematic area what may be said, by whom in what context and with what effect" (xvi).

So discourse is not merely a sign but it is a set of practices that constitutes the object in which it is speaking of. Most importantly it is a system of constraint or exclusion which set the boundaries for what can and cannot be said or done in our lives. Discourses are produced within a real world of power struggle. Power can't exist without truth and it is unstable because it is who controls the power also controls the discourse.

Discourse is the way of presenting something, it is talking and communicating using signs to designate things. It also shows implication for speech and the relationship between signifiers and what they signify. But in broader sense it can help us to interpret many aspects of our social and political systems that we have never even considered before. It also helps to illuminate part of the ordinary world that is controlled by the expert in the society that affects how we speak, act and interpret things. In Foucault's words:

Each society has its regime of truth its "general politics" of truth: that is the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true the mechanisms and instances with which enable one to distinguish true and false statement, the means by which each is sanctioned the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth, the status of those who changed with saying what counts as true. (73)

The system of discourse in regard to everything constantly changes with in years, decades, and centuries according to who has the power. And power holders use the discourse according to their benefits. Thus, discourse is formative and action oriented. It is constructed to achieve particular goals rather than representing facts. And it helps power holder to create truth and have control over people. The people have to believe on presented truth because when one doesn't have what one wants, he has to believe

on what he has. Our social lives are dominated by the written or role words of discourse. Any form of discourse considered to be source of power, because it tells us to speak and act in certain ways. And those who is in power creates different discourse and controls the people by legitimizing the discourse which turns out to be truth which further increases the power of the discourse users.

In his *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault says: "A discourse is a series of sentences or propositions" and that it can be defined as a large group of statements that belong to a single system of formation/ -a so called discursive formation (125)." The working of power is always through discourse; acknowledging this fact Hans Bertens says:

In any case, power works through discourses and discursive formations. In its policing of abnormal behaviour, the power of human since derives from what they claimed to be knowledge; it derives from their claims to expertise. Such a cluster of claims to knowledge is what Foucault calls a discourse. To be more precise, a discourse is a loose structure of interconnected assumptions that makes knowledge possible. (154)

In any society, the production of a discursive act is always controlled selected, organized and redistributed according to mores or social conventions whose role is to avert its power and its dangers to cope with change events, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality. Individual freedom of expression is surrendered to a particular, exterior, determining demeanour acting interiorly within whole society. Logic shows that this is good; without these governing procedures anarchy will reign. It is the characteristic of these that they are no affirmative, but they ruled by exclusion. They speak to a society in terms of which is prohibited to do. As Foucault has put it simply:

We know perfectly well that we are not free to say anything that we can not simply speak of anything. When we like or where we like; not just anyone, finally, may speak of just anything. We obey power, are loyal to it, even to the point of policing and repressing ourselves, because it makes us feel what we are. (125)

The subtle phrasing of 'not just anyone' is most intentional in Foucault's sentence. For in fact, there are those for whom it is possible to ignore the exclusive procedures that the rest of the society must follow. These exceptions are the individuals who wield power in that milieu. They are able to exempt themselves from the prohibition because it was they who invented them.

While talking about discourse it becomes essential to acknowledge the fact that discourse is the site where power and knowledge are joined together, and because of this reason discourse must be conceived as a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable. To be more precise one must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominated discourse and dominating one, but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that come into play in various strategies. Discourse is more of an invisible type of power that we take for granted and do not question in our everyday lives. This invisible form of power of society, manipulates people, who are governors govern us by their qualities and their position in the social structure. And every act of one lives, whether in the sphere of politics of business in our social conduct or our ethical things, we are dominated by the relatively small number of person who understand the mental process and social patterns, of the masses.

Thus discourse is about production of knowledge through language, and through practices; a discourse is used as a means to gain or sometimes even to subvert power.

### III. Power Politics in *All the King's Men*

Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men* is all about politics and power. In absence of power, politics and politicians turn into meaningless absurd creatures. As theirs existence cannot be imagined in absence power and dominance. Without the concept of power, no politicians would achieve the glory of imposing one's will to the public and the nation, which is often termed as a 'vision to develop the nation.' Power, enjoyed by the politicians through the backing of the state machineries is makes a statesman, a real politician. The combination of both these would, in turn, leave a lasting sense of impression on the public. It in turn, often turns a naïve person like Willie Stark lethal and fatal.

Lust for political power corrupts even the most humble and the sincerest of a common being, as it is impossible to remain aloof from the glow and glitter of magical feelings of diplomatic supremacy. However, there is a rise and fall of everything in the world, so is in the case of Willie Stark, Governor of one of unnamed southern states of the of United States of America, during the 1930s. Willie, simply referred to as "the Boss" undergoes a radical transformation from an idealistic lawyer and weak gubernatorial candidate into a charismatic and extraordinarily powerful governor – thanks to the pomp of politics. Jack Hugh, a political critic, comments on the charismatic authority of politics that is able to turn an individual to lethal weapon, as:

The complicated personality Governor Willie Stark is, but, an example of the powers of politics. On one hand, there is a progressive vision personality to the public and, behind it lies a deadly person, who is all the time concerned on collection of powers. *All the King's Men* exemplifies many of the themes that recur in concerned with the

struggle of the individual for self-recognition in politics; however, later turning more personal than public. (43)

The game of politics is all about achieving power, which, in most of the cases is through the policy of by hook or by crook in demolishing the opponents. That is why, it is truly said, 'politicians are double faced,' like that of Governor Willie.

This rush for power is the ultimate factor to corrupt the politicians and finally the society, as a whole. Through the powerful character of the governor Willie, referred by his fellow mates and opponents as "the boss" is a man of complicated personality. He is attractive enough to spell his charm on any woman around him. At the same time is equally dangerous, as he does all the steps necessary to eliminate his rivals. Due to his charismatic personality, people follow him everywhere. They want to touch, listen and fell him. As the narrator of the story, Jack describes:

. . . stepped up beside the Boss and asked him if he was going to make a speech, but the Boss didn't even look at him. [. . .] The red, long faces with the eyes in them watching like something wary and wild and watchful in a thick fell back, and there wasn't a sound. The crowd creamed back from his passage, and we followed in his wake, all of us who had been in the Cadillac and the others who had been in the second car. (10)

The boss's charming personality with vigour of life made him popular wherever he went. People waited in long queues to watch him and to hear him. That is what makes a normal man a successful politician.

*All the King's Men* starts with Willie becoming a noticeable politician after he warns many people that a school building was going to collapse. No one listens until

one day the building does collapse killing three children. He then is chosen to run for governor but, he soon learns he is a mere dummy candidate to break up the vote. After he learns this he tells the rural people that the government only thinks of them as "dummies" and he drops out. He eventually runs for governor and wins a few years later and wins. Jack becomes very interested in Willie after covering Willie when Jack was a reporter and eventually Jack becomes Willies right hand man.

Stark's character is often thought to be inspired by the life of Huey Long, former governor of Louisiana, the U.S.; however, Warren denied that the Stark character was based on Long, referring to attempts to relate the two men as innocent bone headedness. Yet the fact remains, that Stark, like Long, is shot to death in the state capitol building by a physician, in the end of the story. In introduction to the "Modern Library Edition," Warren writes:

One of the unfortunate characteristics of our time is that the reception of a novel may depend on its journalistic relevance. It is a little graceless of me to call this characteristic unfortunate, and to quarrel with it, for certainly the journalistic relevance of *All the King's Men* had a good deal to do with what interest it evoked. However, he stands all alone in the race not equal to any one. (23)

Willie is a lonely person, by heart. He cries, when he knows he is a mere "dummy candidate to break votes" (36). But, he soon learns the game, as he as to be a sure shot success in politics; one has to be away from rest of the people, and kill his spiritual sense. He is lonely, as he wants to work on strategies to reach to the top of the political post. He finds time to hatch plans, when he is with women, who are attracted to him through his charismatic appeal and convincing voice.

Willie is a leader by birth. He wants to dominate and rule on the fellow friends around him. He virtually rose from the middle class standards to become one of the most ambitious governors of the Louisiana. He applied all sorts of measures to reach the top post. He protects the criminals, lures his opponents, if not sufficient, he blackmails them, but makes sure that he remains at the helm of politics. He is not satisfied not less than the top, so is politics and the nature of the politicians. He is a man with a vision and a mission, as witnessed in the case of making a public school and hospital in the region.

Earlier, he had envisaged building a sturdy Schoolhouse, which would give confidence to its students to learn well and put in their best efforts. When he becomes the governor, he plans to use the State funds for developmental activities like making good roads and building hospitals. He decides to build a model hospital, which would provide the best facilities and medical treatment to the patients. With this in view, he invites the efficient Adam Stanton, a good doctor but his enemy. By persuading even his enemies to work for him, he builds an invisible power structure around him and rules.

Willie is a political demagogue who can hold the attention of the people and induce them to act according to his wishes. As a popular axiom goes, “power tends to corrupt,” the political highway is the most appropriate image for the aforesaid statement. In political highways one should focus straight, and even the slightest distraction would lead for severe damage and destruction. Jack Burden, the narrator of the story, and a friend of Willie terms the political highway as:

*All the King's Men* starts on the highway of, quite literally, on a straight and narrow path: Highway 58. This highway is the political highway with sharp turns and falls. With the black line down the centre

coming at and at you, driving down this road, if you don't quit staring at that line and you don't take a few deep breaths and slap yourself hard on the back of the neck you'll hypnotize yourself and lose control. You will crash and burn, not because you were distracted from your original goal, but because you were too intent upon it. You were looking too far down the straightaway. Focused on the end of your trip, you neglect to be careful about how you get there. (2)

Similar to highway is politics. Both require utmost attention and a deeper level of attention, otherwise, the chance is high that there might be an accident; and certainly a fatal.

Warren's *All the King's Men* is a deepening and complicating narrative of conventional wisdom that suggests that all politicians are corrupt, and therefore politics is a particularly grim and unsavoury business. In these terms, the novel explores the relationship between political power and corruption on much more multifaceted and unnerving terms. It uses all sorts of tactics, strategies and policies that politicians use to reach to the highest post.

In those first few sentences, on the dangers that attend travelling a straight and narrow path, Penn Warren suggests that in practice, political corruption does not always arise from selfishness, ignobility, or base greed. Against thinkers dating back to Aristotle, who defines corrupt regimes merely as those in which the ruler thinks of private gain rather than public good, the novel suggests that the path to corruption may begin with an opposite, and nobler, impulse. If you focus on the glimmering end of the road with too much intensity, you might lose your grip on the wheel. If you focus on your political ends – even moral and public-spirited ends – with too much

intensity, you might lose your grip on the means of getting there. You might lose your grip on yourself.

Unlike the previous boss Tiny Duffy, Willie does not occupy political office just for his own sake; he is always driven by his vision of public good. He is conscious to the public demands and need. He projects highways, schools and hospitals in the state. He moves around the United States to get the best idea for the medical college, he is soon going to operate in the state capital. So, even when he is at his most corrupt, in all conventional ways, there is a core of belief in him that remains noble if not transcendent. His nobility is being stick to the core ideas of the people's welfare though, corrupt at heart.

The very memorable public official at the centre of the narrative is, of course Willie, who emanates his real-world prototype interest in his unfailing populist commitments and his grand public visions. Willie remains constant in his assertion that all citizens have a right to decent health care from his first awkward stump speech. He sets his sights on building a hospital, a majestic and technologically advanced hospital, which will serve all those who need it.

Willie amasses and manipulates power not merely for the sake of the power itself, but for that gallant and public-spirited goal. His disturbing transformation, from a temperate and naive country boy into a hard-drinking and harder-bargaining boss man, happens in the service of his highest ideals, not in the abandonment of them. (371)

This may in part explain why, even as Willie's descent into sleaze begins to anguish and even betray those closest to him, most of those same people continue to see him in something of a hallowed light. The glory of power rests on him largely. He doesn't

let any obstruction in his path, nor can he allow anybody to raise voice against him – thanks to the political happenings.

Political will is the most essential core necessary for any politician to reach the top. To act on this undeterred will, he has to be determinant and imposing at times. Willie has the power to dominate and rule on his opponents. He openly saves the criminals, to impose his tyranny on his opponents. In one such case, he protects Byram White, a culprit and his previous partner on oil corruption. When reminded that he was protecting Byram by his opponents, he face blank replies, "White's hide be damned," the Boss said, "I'm saving something else." (163). He openly demands his opponent to "let that game off" (163).

Critics often raise voice on the catalytic moment of Willie's political career. In *All the King's Men* that are often catalytic moment of Stark's political career, when he has learned that the party officials are running him as a gubernatorial candidate only to split a vote and prevent their enemy's election. Stark spends a highly liquid evening, weeping and railing at the realization that he is a "decoy." The next morning, hung over or maybe still drunk, he fumbles his way to the local fairgrounds and gives a raging diatribe in which, much to the party bosses' chagrin, he tells an enraptured audience of what he has learned. To the people he calls "hicks," he announces, "That's what they think we're for, to fool. Well, this time I'm going to fool somebody" (178).

What makes Willie admirable is difficult to extricate from what makes him contemptible. To the extent that Penn Warren gets his readers to root for Willie in such moments, he demonstrates the extent to which certain kinds of political charisma trade on a simmering iniquity. The corrupt man is often a seductive man; what seduces you may well be what corrupts you, and in politics both go hand by hand.

First of all, one has to be seduced and, once that happens, corruption is easy. The system of politics is such that no one can escape its mystery and chasm.

Politics is taken as an imitation to ridicule or to criticize. It is essential to evaluate parody in terms of politics to get its right meaning. Simon Blackburn defines parody of politics as:

Politics can be best described in terms of three features; pretence, echoic mention and the maintenance of multiple mental representations. We suggest that charade is an important part of satire and that echoic mention is an important part of parody. Such discriminations are useful because distinction among text genres to have psychological significance. (97)

An effective politician knows his or her subject well; however, the parodist does not need to affect a pretension of ignorance. In fact, the parodist makes his or her familiarity with the original work obvious. To be effective, the parody criticizes or flatters.

Corruption in modern day comes closer to political sarcasm. Less or more, it is politics what has made the modern men's life absurd and meaningless. They are largely affected in the cross wars of the political leaders within the nation, and outside, as well. Politics makes man lowly and superior. Although politics tries to flatter every man to the height, but only for temporary period, and the selfishness of politics is over, a common man remains as where s\he was, but not the leader.

The corruption in *All the King's Men*, accordingly, is not Stark's alone. It is of Jack Burden – the narrator, Anne Stanton – beloved of Jack, Adam – the humble medical professional, MacMurfee – the opponent leader, and many more. Jack is a former graduate student and newspaper columnist turned into personal aide to Willie,

from whose perspective the novel is written. At no small cost to himself, Burden becomes complicit in some of Stark's more dangerous plots. One of the most powerful dynamics in the novel is the Burden-Stark relationship, and the question of why a man as smart and pedigreed as Burden would give himself so wholly to Willie, even when it is clear to him that there are massive problems with Willie's method. The answer in words of Hugh is:

Willie has something to do with the fact that Burden, for all his privilege, is deeply alienated. He is rootless. Like so many Americans, Burden feels disconnected, disinherited, disenfranchised. And he finds in Stark a figure of order. Stark offers Burden the connection to a communal vision, and connection and communion are what Burden dearly lacks. Communion and connection on terms that are corrupt may be preferable, we learn, to no communion and connection at all.  
(372)

Burden and the Governor, once partners in the oil company has secret of huge tax avoidance by Willie in their oil corporation. Burden often becomes threat to him; however, the Governor saves him with dynamism with warning to the opponents, who dare to expose them.

Given the conventional cynicism about politicians and politics who dominate many public opinions, it might be particularly important one to intensify on 'power corrupts mentality.' Power and corruption are not just friends but equals; both leads to a dim view of political life. In comparison, Penn Warren crafts a picture in which political corruption exists and maybe pervades, but in which politics retains – as does Stark – both by force and charm.

Interestingly, Penn Warren gives Willie Stark the final word on the issue of 'power corrupts.' From the book's first pages, Stark seems fond of recounting the 51st psalm, albeit with some poetic license. "Man is conceived in sin and born in corruption and he passeth from the stink of the didie to the stench of the shroud," runs his refrain. "There is always something" (4). In other words, Stark says, there is no such thing as an un-corrupt person. Willie's challenge to the maxim that "power corrupts" is the assertion that human life itself is already corrupt. Politics does not do the corrupting. Politics is just one of many human crafts, and it is the humanity rather than the craft that is the trouble. For a democratic citizenry, this teaching may be most disturbing. But it also may be most true.

These are the lucrative words of a successful politician. They appeal in the name of civilian supremacy and promise to abide by the law, but are contrary in action. They not only disregard it, but, soon forget they the power they receive is for the welfare of the people and the public. They do not even remember that they are mere servants to fulfil the people's wish and will. Jack's mother in the context narrates one of the greatest, yet simple truths. She rightly says that one who cannot forget the past and act shameless cannot be great politician. In politics one need to forget his past. She tells him, ". . . if you could not accept the past and its burden there was no future, for without one there cannot be the other, and how if you could not accept the past you might hope for the future, for only out of the past can you make the future" (527). Thus, one of the grandest qualities of a politician is to make sure that they forget their vows and promises they have made to the public.

And then there is the parody of politics, as well. Warren is sometimes purple, and often reiterates word-for-word a description which loses its power in repetition. But there are also passages like this one:

... the clammy, sad foetus which is you way down in the dark which is you too lifts up its sad little face and its eyes are blind, and it shivers cold inside you for it doesn't want to know what is in that envelope. It wants to lie in the dark and not know, and be warm in its not-knowing. The end of man is knowledge, but there is one thing he can't know. He can't know whether knowledge will save him or kill him. He will be killed, all right, but he can't know whether he is killed because of the knowledge which he has got or because of the knowledge which he hasn't got and which if he had it, would save him. There's the cold in your stomach, but you open the envelope, you have to open the envelope, for the end of man is to know. (9)

The politicians are like the artists, who create songs on poor, but are not poor. They are also like sages, who preach knowledge whose future is uncertain, yet claim to be able to interpret other's future. Similar are the politicians who address programmes against corruptions, but are engulfed in it, from head to toe.

Jack co-mingles his own personal story with the political story of Governor Stark. His telling of these two stories side by side creates a striking contrast between the personal and the impersonal. While his wry, detached, often humorous tone suggests an attempt to stand apart from the other characters' passions and intrigues, the highly personal content of his narrative suggests an awareness that he cannot truthfully remove himself and his own history from the story of Willie Stark, because his own story has paralleled and helped shape the tragic outcome of Stark's story.

Jack's overall character development might be roughly described as a journey away from an amoral perspective on human history as a chain of uncontrollable events, toward a belief in the fundamental interconnectedness of all of history. In

other words, he might be said to trace a path from refusal to acceptance of personal responsibility. On the other hand, one defining trait that remains a constant throughout Jack's development is a passion for discovering the truth of history, "And all times are one time, and all those dead in the past never lived before our definition gives them life, and out of the shadow their eyes implore us. That is what all of us historical researchers believe. And we love truth" (342).

Anne, Jack's lover and the daughter of Willie Stark's political predecessor, Governor Stanton is another example of 'power corrupts.' Externally, like many of Jack's friends, Anne disapproves Willie, the Boss. However, in the wake of a devastating revelation regarding one of her father's moral lapses, she develops an affair with Willie. It is not out of love, but partially, because of his charismatic personality to dominant, to which she falls prey to. However, she feels no guilty of having an affair with another guy, the Governor. She does not disclose Willie's name, but frankly accepts her relationship with another fellow, as:

She looked at me, still cool, and said, "Jack, I did kiss a man up in Maine. He was a nice boy, Jack, and I liked him a lot and he was fund to be with. But I didn't love him. And if you and I hadn't had that row and I hadn't feel that the world had sort of come to an end and I wouldn't be with you again, I wouldn't have done it. (363)

Anne is attracted to the personality of Willie, but more than that it is the 'power concept' he enjoys. Jack is a mere assistant to Willie and Willie is the boss. So, when in Maine, Anne meets the holidaying dashing Governor, she falls for him.

Similarly, Adam Stanton, brother of Anne and son of former Governor is a highly successful doctor. He is Jack's childhood friend. Adam and Willie are men of two differing poles. Jack rightly calls him, "the man of idea" (528). Elsewhere, he

describes Adam's central motivation as a notion based on need to "do good." The position initially strikes Adam as repugnant because of his revulsion to Stark's politics, but Jack and Anne ultimately persuade him to accept the invitation, essentially by removing his moral high ground. In an attempt to win over Adam, Governor Willie invites him to be the director of his pet project, a new hospital and medical centre. But, Adam, a transparent man by nature, knows the intention hidden behind his appointment as a director and rejects the project. But, he cannot escape the fury of political plans, and has to accept it.

All actions have consequences, and that it is impossible for an individual to stand aloof and be a mere observer of life, as Jack tries to do. Some attempt to do so by living vicariously through a messianic political figure like Willie Stark, but this will ultimately fail. Thus, Stark fulfils the wishes of many of the characters, or seems to do so. For instance, his faithful bodyguard Sugar-Boy, who stutters, loves Stark because "the b-boss could t-talk so good"; Jack Burden cannot bring himself to sleep with Anne Stanton, whom he loves, but Stark does so; and so on. Ultimately Jack realizes that one must "go out of history into history and the awful responsibility of time" (502).

The novel explores conceptions of power through Calvinist theology, such as original sin. As Willie says, "It says that man is conceived in sin and born in corruption, and he passed from the stink of the day die to the stench of the shroud" (122). Willie, when told that no adverse information about an opponent would be likely to be found, he was hopeful engulfed by power, that "there's always something," and total depravity "you got to make good out of bad," (124). This shows the ruthlessness of Willie, or in exact words the magic of power running in his head.

Another motif in the novel is the "Great Twitch." When Jack Burden unexpectedly discovers that the love of his life, Anne Stanton, has been sleeping with Governor Willie Stark, he impulsively jumps in his car and drives to California to obtain some distance from the situation. Jack's description of his trip contains overt and indirect references to the notion of Manifest Destiny, which becomes somewhat ironic when he comes back from it believing in the "Great Twitch."

The "Great Twitch" or the nihilism can be found temporarily in the concept of power; however, that Jack embraces during this journey westward. Jack's feeling was like, "All the words we speak meant nothing and there was only the pulse in the blood and the twitch of the nerve, like a dead frog's leg in the experiment when the electric current goes through" (508). On his way back from California, Jack gives a ride to an old man who has an involuntary facial twitch. This image becomes for him the encapsulating metaphor for the idea that all life is but the dark heave of blood and the twitch of the nerve. In other words, life is without meaning; everything is motivated by some inborn reflex action and nobody is responsible for their choices or even their own destiny. The emotional distance permitted by this revelation releases Jack from his own frustration stemming from the relationship between Anne Stanton and his boss, and allows him to return to circumstances which were previously unbearable.

Subsequent events (including the tragic deaths of Governor Willie, his life-long friend Adam Stanton, and Judge Irwin, Jack's father) convince Jack that the revelation of the "Great Twitch" is an insufficient paradigm to explain what he has seen of history. "[H]e saw that though doomed [his friends] had nothing to do with any doom under the godhead of the Great Twitch. They were doomed, but they lived in the agony of will. Ultimately, he grows to accept some responsibility for his part in the destruction of his friends' lives" (526).

The book also touches on Oedipal imagery and themes, as Jack discovers his father's true identity after having caused his death. The theme of one's father's identity and its effects on one's own sense of identity is explored twice in the novel, first through Adam and Anne's painful discovery that their father (the late Governor Stanton) once assisted in the cover-up of a bribery scandal. Then Jack discovers that his biological father is Judge Irwin, not, as he previously believed, "the Scholarly Attorney." In each case, the discovery catalyzes an upheaval in the character's moral outlook.

Time is another of the novel's thematic fascinations. The idea that every moment in the past contains the seeds of the future is constantly explored through the novel's non-chronological narrative, which reveals character continuities and thematic connections across different time periods. As, Adam Stanton, the medical director appointed by Willie says to Jack:

I will do those things. So, help me God. I shall live in fulfilling of that right and that will I'll break him. I'll smite crashed the right fist into the left palm. "Like that!" I'll smite him. Hip and thigh, shinbone and necklace, kidney punch, rabbit punch, uppercut, and solar plexus. And I don't care what I hit him with. Or how!" (316)

However, the destiny in the game of power and politics is always doomed. It is power without which a leader rarely reaches the top post, and the equally fact scenario is that he will have his doom out there only. As, Jack narrates:

He (Jack) had seen his two friends, Willie Stark and Adam Stanton, of the other. Each had killed the other. Each had doomed the other. As a student of history, he could see that Adam Stanton, whom he came to call the man of idea, and Willie Stark, whom he came to call man of

fact, were doomed to destroy each other, just as each was doomed to try to use the other and to yearn toward and try to become the other, because each was incomplete with the terrible division of their age.

(528)

It was the diplomacy it ruined two of the friends. It was the game of will, to rule and dominate the other. Jack, as the mediator and friend was in the mid-way; nevertheless, he was more near to Willie because of his vigour and political enigma.

In the battle of politics and power, Jack finds himself siding to Willie, not because he likes him or finds in him a model, but he is an indecisive man. He cannot take his own decisions, and for the same, sticks to Willie, who is outspoken and quick to make decision. As Jack lacks the decision power and manly vigour, his girlfriend finds him less reliable to have spent her life with, so she options for the governor, Willie. She maintains a secret physical relationship with Willie.

This relationship with Anne sufficiently shows the power of attraction and persuasion of Willie. Willie knows, he needs the favour of the best and the worst, and all at the same time. Anne is of course, the best, and she could be a great tool to manage woman and girls for his side. Willie wanted to flourish his character as a good governor to continue to persuade the voters, as such he wanted Adam. However, Adam was aware of the intention of Willie and denied his offer.

Politics is a game for the dynamic individuals, who can rule the rest. People like Adam, cannot be a great politician, as he is hypersensitive and touchy. When he is tempted with the offer made by Willie, his conscience rebels and he feels restless. To give vent to his suppressed feelings, he plays jarring music till he gets exhausted. Later, when Jack shatters his moral values by exposing the guilt of his father, he reacts in a similar manner. These are the traits of an honest person, who can be a good

husband, father but not a leader. As Jack Hugh writes, "Politics is for the brave hearts that can lift themselves above the issues of moral and ethical values. One who is victim to the family chores and issues can rise to the level of a good politician, but not an exemplary leader" (32). The difference between Adam, a good doctor and a good person and Willie, the leader is seen in their contrasting nature. In a case, when After Hubert Coffee comes to bribe Adam, he feels insulted, whereas, Willie feels privileged when he bribes other. In retaliation to offering of bribe Adam hits the man (217), and tenders his resignation letter to the Boss. On the other hand, the Boss takes such action in full conscious against his rivals and enemies. In fact, Willie is always digging in their past lacunas to involve them in cases and take them in grip. Finally, when he hears about the liaison between Stark and Anne and presumes his sister's "influence in procuring him the job, his ego is hurt and he feels frustrated" (379). In desperation, he shoots the Boss and he himself becomes the target of a bullet. Adam brings about his doom through his super-sensitivity and anger, an act of mere a normal human being.

Adam is a loving person, a dear friend and above all a man of softer heart. He cares for Anne and is protective about her. Thus he feels hurt when he hears about her affair with Stark. To Jack, he is dear friend and companion in distress. He listens to Jack's suggestions and gives in to his wishes when it does not contradict his conscience. Adam is a good man with a generous heart but a sensitive soul.

Similarly, Jack, too, is a common man least below the height of a man deserving the highest post. He is a man of ethics and moral. Upon knowing his girlfriends relationship with the Boss, he feels dejected and blames himself for the same. He runs away to the west, instead of facing the problem. As he narrates:

That was why I drowned in West and relived my life like a home movie. That was why I came to lie on a bed in a hotel in Long Beach, California, on the last coast amid the grandeurs of nature. For that is where you come, after you have crossed oceans and eaten stale biscuits while prisoned forty days and nights in a stormy tossed rat-trap, after you have built cabins and cities and bridged rivers, after you have lain with women and scattered children like miller seed in a high wind, after you composed resonant documents, made noble speeches, and bathed your arms in blood to the elbows, after you have shaken with malaria in the marshes. (373-74)

So, neither Jack can rise to the status of a leader, as he is an escapist. He is a mere follower and not the ruler. He enjoys relationship which, even his long time girlfriend, Anne does not find strong enough to hold her ties. So, she sleeps with Willie the boss, the man with dominance and determination.

Thus, the game of politics is all about achieving power, which, in most of the cases is by hook or by crook. However, this rush for power is the ultimate factor to corrupt the politicians and finally the society, as a whole. As rightly said by Foucault, power is truth; however, not free from corruption.

#### IV. Conclusion

Robert Penn Warren's classic *All the King's Men* depicts a strong voice that politics cannot remain aloof from power and power, in turn, corrupts. In absence of power, politics cannot be imposing to the general people and hence loses its charm. As Foucault rightly claims that power is truth, so is politics, when backed by power. Power in turn creates authority and imposition, which drags politics in track.

*All the King's Men* depicts how power corrupts a simple and humble man, represented by Willie Stark. When Willie tastes blood of politics turns into a man-eater. He uses all kinds of tactics from lure to lust and wealth to flesh, to reach to the post of Governor, of one of the Southern States of the United States of America. He was initially a weak candidate competing for the post of governor, but soon, he tastes politics and climbs to the post, in no time. In the course of rise to political top post, he bribes, threatens and dominates his opponents and lures his friends into following and adoring him. However, the greatest reality of life is, no one can remain at the top post for long, and neither can they continue to persuade others for a long time in politics, as it is destined to doom.

Similar is the case with Willie, who cannot hold on with power forever. Power is related with authority, which has its root in domination, generally created by crushing the ideologies of the meek and weak people. Willie, on one hand makes hospitals, highways and schools, but on other hand goes on using his charismatic charm to the people around him. In the course, he sleeps with Anne Stanton, daughter of his predecessor Governor and beloved of his most faithful aide. This in turn, brings him destruction, as the Ann's brother Adam Stanton, who is a humble and transparent civil servant cannot digest the feeling that he had received the post of Medical Director in cost of his sister's sleeping with the Governor.

So, there are two vision of power; one on the good aspect that of Adam Stanton, and other of Willie, the boss and the Governor. Adam wants a simple, yet meaningful life, and on other hand, Willie wants a life full of power domination that will eventually come through his political affiliations. But the fact, is power is an absurd entity, and cannot be hold or enjoyed by an individual for long. One day, all has to go and so does power. Moreover, power makes an individual self-centred and corrupted, which is destined to doom its possessor.

Thus, Penn Warren's *All the King's Men* is a portrayal that power is certain to corrupt individuals, who posses it. The mechanism of power provides an individual the mechanism to rule and dominate a majority of people, making his/her voice to be heard and obeyed by all, which in turn rots the possessor's mind, and hence corruption is almost certain to occur.

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