

Power Struggle Through Digital Communication in *Novel Everything, Everything* by Nicola Yoon: A Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the dynamics of power struggle through digital communication in the novel *Everything, Everything* by Nicola Yoon using the Foucauldian discourse analysis approach. This study has three main objectives: first, to analyse the representation of digital communication in the story; second, to examine the construction of power struggle through digital communication in the story; and third, to explore the implications of power struggle in human relations in the digital era as depicted in the novel. The study focuses on how digital communication functions as a medium of power relations, especially in the context of the main character, Madeline Whittier, who relies on digital platforms to interact with the outside world due to her isolation. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative, based on Michel Foucault's theory of power, knowledge, and discourse. The results of the analysis show that digital communication in *Everything, Everything* not only facilitates interpersonal relationships, but also becomes an instrument of domination as well as resistance. This study highlights how digital technology mediates emotions, decision-making, and shapes power structures in contemporary society. Through a Foucauldian discourse approach, this study contributes to literary studies and digital communication theory, and bridges the gap between classical discourse analysis and modern technological realities. In addition, the findings offer practical insights for educators, parents, and policy makers in understanding the complexity of digital interactions among teenagers.

Keywords: Power Struggle, Digital Communication, Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

ABSTARK

*Penelitian ini mengkaji dinamika perebutan kekuasaan melalui komunikasi digital dalam novel *Everything, Everything* karya Nicola Yoon dengan menggunakan pendekatan analisis wacana Foucauldian. Penelitian ini memiliki tiga tujuan utama: pertama, menganalisis representasi komunikasi digital dalam cerita; kedua, mengkaji konstruksi perebutan kekuasaan melalui komunikasi digital dalam cerita; dan ketiga, mengeksplorasi implikasi perebutan kekuasaan dalam hubungan manusia di era digital sebagaimana digambarkan dalam novel. Penelitian ini berfokus pada bagaimana komunikasi digital berfungsi sebagai media hubungan kekuasaan, terutama dalam konteks tokoh utama, Madeline Whittier, yang mengandalkan platform digital untuk berinteraksi dengan dunia luar karena isolasinya. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif, berdasarkan teori kekuasaan, pengetahuan, dan wacana Michel Foucault. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi digital dalam *Everything, Everything* tidak hanya memfasilitasi hubungan interpersonal, tetapi juga menjadi instrumen dominasi sekaligus resistensi. Studi ini menyoroti bagaimana teknologi digital memediasi emosi, pengambilan keputusan, dan membentuk struktur kekuasaan dalam masyarakat kontemporer. Melalui pendekatan wacana Foucauldian, studi ini berkontribusi pada studi sastra dan teori*

komunikasi digital, serta menjembatani kesenjangan antara analisis wacana klasik dan realitas teknologi modern. Selain itu, temuan ini menawarkan wawasan praktis bagi para pendidik, orang tua, dan pembuat kebijakan dalam memahami kompleksitas interaksi digital di kalangan remaja.

Kata Kunci: *Perebutan Kekuasaan, Komunikasi Digital, Analisis Wacana Foucauldian*

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital communication technology has brought significant changes in the way individuals interact and build power relations. Ehrenreich et al. (2021) revealed that in the digital era, communication no longer only occurs in person, but also through various online platforms such as email, instant messaging, and social media. Communication through digital media has become an integral part of young people's lives. According to Sebre and Miltuze (2021), today's youth spend most of their time on digital platforms to communicate, build relationships and express themselves. This shift not only changes the way they interact, but also affects their identity formation process. Identities formed through digital communication reflect how individuals present themselves in virtual spaces, interact with others, and how these digital experiences shape their understanding of themselves and the world around them as expressed by Lindemann and Schünemann (2020).

Identity formation is a crucial aspect of adolescent development. Schwartz and Petrova (2018) state that adolescence is a phase in which individuals seek and form self-identity through exploration and social interaction. In the digital era, this process is increasingly complex as adolescents not only interact with the physical environment, but also with the virtual world that offers freedom of expression as well as new challenges. Digital media provides space for adolescents to explore their identity flexibly. Abramova et al. (2020) explain that online communication allows adolescents to create different versions of themselves, experiment with identity, and gain social validation through likes, comments, and messages. However, this can also lead to pressure to conform to the standards set by social media, as revealed by Walton and Rizzolo (2022) in their research on the relationship between social media use and adolescent mental health.

In a literary context, depictions of digital communication in novels can reflect how power operates in relationships between characters, as well as reflect broader social dynamics as expressed by Parezanović (2023). Many novels in the literary world have raised the theme of identity formation through digital communication among young people, reflecting the reality of the digital era that increasingly dominates the lives of teenagers. Rainbow Rowell's *Fangirl* and Francesca Zappia's *Eliza and Her Monsters* illustrate how teens use digital platforms to explore and express their identities. *Fangirl* tells the story of Cath, who discovers her identity through online fandoms, while *Eliza and Her Monsters* tells the story of Eliza, who creates an online identity as a famous webcomic writer but has to deal with the tension between the virtual world and real life. These novels show that digital media can be a space for expression and relationship-building, as McInroy (2020) points out, but it can also cause stress and anxiety, as

Takhdad et al. (2021) investigate. This theme also features prominently in Nicola Yoon's novel *Everything, Everything*.

Nicola Yoon's *Everything, Everything* illustrates this dynamic through the main character, Madeline Whittier, who is physically isolated by her parents but remains connected to the outside world through digital communication. Madeline uses digital platforms to interact with Olly, her new friend, and explore her identity beyond the confines of physical space. Madeline, who is confined to her home due to a rare medical condition, relies entirely on digital communication to connect with her friend. In this dynamic, power struggles arise not only between Madeline and Olly, but also between Madeline and her mother, who tries to control every aspect of her life, including her access to digital communication. Digital communication in this novel not only enables interpersonal relationships, but also becomes a tool that reveals the limitations and dependencies that arise from external control. Madeline experiences limitations in establishing direct social relationships, so technology becomes the only way to communicate and explore the outside world. However, the technology that is supposed to provide freedom instead functions as a more subtle means of control, where Madeline remains supervised and restricted by her mother even though she is in a supposedly freer digital space. This novel offers a unique perspective on human relations in the digital era that certainly shapes a power relation in a new era, with new methods that need to be understood more deeply. This is in line with Hollenstein and Colasante's (2020) research, which states that social media can be a space for someone, especially teenagers, to find and express their identity. The story of this novel not only offers the main meaning in the plot of the novel to be learned, but also meanings related to human behaviour in relation to the world of technology in the new era that cannot be avoided. In Madeline's case, her physical limitations make her oppressed and dependent on digital communication as a means of self-exploration. This raises further questions that need to be answered from a deeper understanding of how digital communication positions her in relation to people around her and the outside world. It is assumed that this subtheme will provide alternative meanings for the readers of this novel that are closely related to life in the reality of this digital era.

As an international best-seller that sold more than 1 million copies and was adapted into a movie in 2017, *Everything, Everything* proved its wide cultural influence among readers, especially the younger generation. The novel's market success is inseparable from the relevance of its themes to the realities of the digital age, where virtual communication is the main means of social interaction, as reflected in the story of Madeline, who is physically isolated but remains connected to the outside world through technology. The novel's long-lasting popularity on the *New York Times Best Seller* list and positive responses on platforms such as Goodreads and BookTok show that the issues raised, from teenage identity formation to power relations in digital communication, are highly resonant with contemporary social contexts. However, the average reader only focuses on the storyline presented in the novel without knowing the issue of

power struggle through digital communication in the story. Therefore, a critical analysis of the novel is needed to help readers find alternative meanings that contain important values in their lives other than those revealed in the storyline. This novel is assumed to have a lot of data that will support the issue of power struggle through digital communication, therefore this research is very relevant to do. Thus, *Everything, Everything* is not only worthy of research as a popular culture phenomenon, but also as a literary work that is rich in layers of meaning to be studied academically, especially in relation to issues of power, technology, and adolescent psychology in the digital era.

The Foucauldian discourse analysis approach was chosen to examine power dynamics in digital communication in the novel *Everything, Everything* because of its ability to reveal power relations hidden in discursive practices. Foucault's theory understands power not as something that is possessed, but as a network of relations that work through discourse and technology. This analysis is also relevant because it allows a critical reading of how the medical discourse about Madeline's illness and the discourse of parental protection shape her subjectivity.

From the background description above, several reasons determine this topic based on three main considerations. First, the relevance of the digital era demands a critical exploration of the transformation of power relations in virtual interactions. The development of communication technology not only changes the pattern of interpersonal relationships, but also creates a new field of power struggle that needs to be studied discursively. Second, the significance of identity formation in digital space as a central issue. This research aims to reveal how communication technology, which paradoxically can be a tool of liberation as well as control, shapes individual subjectivity in the modern context. Third, the theoretical contribution of Foucauldian discourse analysis in exposing the mechanisms of power disguised in digital communication practices. This approach not only enriches the study of digital literature, but also provides an analytical framework for understanding the manifestation of power in everyday interactions in the technological era. Through this perspective, the research is expected to reveal power dynamics that are often invisible in contemporary digital relations.

Based on the background of the problem that has been presented, the researcher sets three research objectives in this article. First, to analyse the representation of digital communication in the story, second, to examine the construction of power struggle through digital communication in the story, and third, to explore the implications of power struggle in human relations in the digital era as depicted in the novel.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previously, it turned out that this novel had been studied several times by researchers. From the results of the review of previous research, several statements emerged regarding this novel, namely:

First, several previous studies have found that *Everything, Everything* represents domestic violence and psychological impact (Kayetin Defrita Afra Konggang et al., (2023) and Nurtia Pratiwi Siahaan & Sri Wulan, (2020)). In Kayetin Defrita Afra Konggang et al.'s research, (2023) stated that domestic violence and unhealthy adolescent relationships are two interrelated aspects and can be analysed through a psychological lens. This research focuses on the manifestations of domestic violence, particularly psychological violence, and its impact on the emotional and mental development of the main character, Madeline. Meanwhile, Nurtia Pratiwi Siahaan and Sri Wulan (2020) explored the adolescent relationship between Madeline and Olly, which although full of romantic attraction, is also coloured by negative impacts such as resistance to rules, carelessness, and lies. The two studies complement each other by showing how Madeline's domestic violence affected her ability to build a healthy relationship with Olly, and how the dynamics of the relationship reflected her attempts to find freedom and self-identity amidst the psychological distress she experienced.

Second, in addition to the themes of domestic violence and psychological impact, several previous studies also highlighted the themes of self-discovery and motivation (Linus Rumapea & Yolanda Sibuea (2023) and Sri Wulan et al., (2019)). Linus Rumapea & Yolanda Sibuea (2023) stated that self-discovery and motivation are two interrelated central themes in Nicola Yoon's *Everything, Everything*, which can be analysed through a psychological perspective. This research focuses on Madeline's self-discovery process, which is triggered by internal demands to understand her identity as well as social support from Olly and Carla. This support played a crucial role in helping her face the fears and limitations that had shackled her life. Meanwhile, research by Sri Wulan et al. (2019) analysed Madeline's concept of self-determination based on SDT (Self-Determination Theory), which emphasizes the importance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in driving one's actions and decisions. The two studies complement each other by showing how Madeline's intrinsic motivation to achieve freedom and happiness, as well as extrinsic support from her surrounding environment, catalysed her self-discovery process.

Third, several previous studies have also highlighted the themes of resistance and truth (Siska Dewi Rahayu & Sri Wulan (2019) and Arfa Aprilia et al., (2020)). Siska Dewi Rahayu & Sri Wulan's (2019) research discusses resistance and truth as two interrelated concepts in the novel *Everything, Everything* by Nicola Yoon, which can be seen through the struggle of the protagonist, Madeline, to find her identity and freedom. Meanwhile, Arfa Aprilia et al. (2020) in their research explored aspects of female emancipation reflected in Madeline's struggle to gain equal rights, especially in the context of the Obama era which emphasizes equality and freedom. These two studies complement each other by showing how Madeline's resistance to the pressure and manipulation she experiences is a form of social struggle to achieve truth and freedom, which also reflects the values of female emancipation.

Fourth, the theme of disability and representation in novels also appears in several studies (Daniela Fois (2018) and Awaisha Inayat et al., (2019)). Daniela Fois's (2018) research discusses disability and its representation in literature, especially in Young Adult fiction, being an important topic analyzed in two studies related to the novel *Everything, Everything* by Nicola Yoon. The research focuses on bias and misrepresentation of disability, particularly in the context of chronic illness and invisible disability. The analysis criticizes how the novel may ignore the complexity of disabled people's lived experiences, and tends to simplify or manipulate disability narratives for the sake of dramatizing the story. Meanwhile, research conducted by Awaisha Inayat et al. (2019) explored the portrayal of mental disability and social pressure in Young Adult literature, including its impact on readers. The research questions whether the representation of characters such as Madeline, who experiences isolation and psychological distress, is empowering or reinforces the stigma of mental disability. These two studies complement each other by highlighting the importance of accurate and sensitive representation of disability in literature, as well as its impact on social perceptions and reader understanding.

Fifth, some previous studies also highlighted the theme of parenting style and personality (Galuh Fitriana Sakti (2022) and Ade Rahmad Kurnia & Asnani (2022)). In her research, Galuh Fitriana Sakti (2022) focused on Pauline's personality, which was analysed using the Big Five Personality theory. This analysis revealed how the trauma of losing her husband and child shaped her personality, including her tendency towards neuroticism and limited openness, which ultimately affected the dynamics of her relationship with Madeline. Meanwhile, research by Ade Rahmad Kurnia & Asnani (2022) explored Pauline's authoritarian parenting style towards Madeline, characterized by strict control, restriction of freedom, and lack of flexibility in decision-making. These two studies complement each other by showing how Pauline's personality, shaped by her past trauma, influences her overprotective and authoritarian parenting style. This parenting style not only limited Madeline's emotional and social development, but also reflected Pauline's attempts to protect herself from further pain and loss.

In addition, the theme of changing mindsets and the impact of social media is also an interesting theme in previous research. The research by Sri Wulan et al. (2021) focused on how social media, in this case email communication, influenced changes in Madeline's mindset. Social media became a bridge that allowed her to explore new perspectives, build emotional connections, and develop a broader understanding of life beyond the confines of her home. However, the impact of social media is not always positive; on the one hand, it gives Madeline the freedom and courage to challenge the rules that have limited her, but on the other hand, it also poses risks such as emotional dependence and lies that can affect her mental stability. The change in Madeline's mindset from passive and submissive to more independent and risk-taking reflects the power of social media in shaping one's identity and outlook on life. This study invites readers to reflect on how social media can be a transformative tool that opens up new opportunities, while

highlighting the importance of being vigilant about the negative impacts that may arise. As such, this analysis not only reveals character dynamics, but also provides insight into the role of social media in the lives of modern teenagers.

Previous research on Nicola Yoon's *Everything, Everything* has explored various themes, including psychological trauma, self-discovery, resistance and media influence. However, none have specifically examined how digital communication becomes a site of power struggle through Foucauldian discourse analysis. While some studies have analyzed the role of social media in shaping Madeline's mindset, a more in-depth investigation of how digital interactions reflect and reinforce power dynamics especially between Madeline and her mother remains unexplored. This research aims to fill the gap by uncovering how control, surveillance, and resistance operate through digital discourse in the novel, offering a new perspective on the intersection of technology and power in contemporary literature.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with a Foucauldian discourse analysis approach to examine the dynamics of power struggles through digital communication in the novel *Everything, Everything* by Nicola Yoon. The descriptive qualitative method was chosen because it is able to reveal social phenomena in depth through textual data analysis (Paril, 2023). The data sources in this research are divided into two categories: primary and secondary. The primary data source is the novel *Everything, Everything* (2015) by Nicola Yoon published by Delacorte Press. Meanwhile, secondary data is obtained from scientific literature such as books, journals, and academic papers relevant to Foucauldian discourse analysis, the concept of power, and digital surveillance.

The data analysis technique used is Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA). The analysis process begins with data collection through the identification of quotations or passages in the novel that contain elements of power, surveillance, and the dynamics between subjectivity and control. After the data is collected, a reduction process is carried out to filter and simplify the data based on the main themes in accordance with Foucault's theory. The data that has been reduced is then further analysed to reveal how power is manifested through discourse that appears in digital conversations and interactions between the main characters. The results of the analysis are presented in the form of a narrative that illustrates how the power structure works in the novel, especially in the digital interactions between Madeline and her mother, and between Madeline and Olly. The analysis also explores how Madeline's subjectivity is shaped, strengthened, or weakened by the digital communication that occurs, as well as how forms of resistance to power are realized through resistance strategies in the digital discourse. The final stage of this process is the drawing of conclusions, which provide an in-depth understanding of the role of digital communication as an arena for power struggles, and how the characters in the novel negotiate their position through digital media.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

In this section, I analyse the novel *Everything, Everything* to explore the dynamics of power struggle through digital communication according to Michel Foucault's discourse analysis.

Representation of Digital Communication in Stories

This section analyzes the representation of digital communication in *Everything, Everything* through Foucault's discourse perspective, exploring how email, instant messaging, and social media become a battleground of power where control and resistance are constantly contested by marginalized characters (De Fina, 2020).

First, email as a site of controlled intimacy and power negotiation. In the novel, through email, Maddy and Olly develop a deep emotional connection without having to physically touch, creating a private space that transcends the physical boundaries and direct supervision of Maddy's mother. However, this intimacy is not entirely free; it is formed in a digital space that remains within the power structure with the possibility of being watched, censored, or even cut off. In Foucault's framework, email becomes a discourse technology that brings together two forces: the restrictive power of surveillance and personal resistance that creates new relations. Communication through email allows Maddy to negotiate her identity and pioneer sovereignty over her own body and choices, albeit within the confines of a mediated and controlled space.

"From: Madeline F. Whittier

To: genericuser033@gmail.com

Subject: Hello

Sent: June 4, 8:03 PM

Hello. I guess we should start with introductions? My name is Madeline Whittier, but you can tell that from my e-mail address. What's yours?

- Madeline Whittier

P.S. You don't have anything to apologize for.

P.P.S. What is that Bundt made of?" (p. 34)

"From: genericuser033

To: Madeline F. Whittier<madeline.whittier@gmail.com>

Subject: RE: Hello

Sent: June 4, 8:07 PM

you are a terrible spy madeline whittier if you haven't already figured out my name. my sister and i tried to meet you last week, but your mom wasn't having it. i really don't know what the bundt is made of. rocks?" (p. 34)

The quote above shows how digital communication in the story becomes a space of contested power relations. From a Foucauldian perspective, this initial email exchange shows Madeline's attempt to control the discourse of her structured and polite tone ("Hello. I guess we should start with introductions?") in contrast to Olly's subsequent informal reply, which reveals a subtle power struggle. P.S. notes function as discursive tactics: while the former ("You don't need to apologize") is reassuring, the latter ("What's that Bundt made of?") shifts authority to Madeline by injecting humour and curiosity, which disrupts the conventional patient/caregiver dynamic. Email headers like "Subject: Hello" further assert power, framing the interaction as a formal request rather than a casual dialog. Through digital mediation, Madeline regains agency in her limited existence, challenging Foucault's notion of institutionalized control over bodies and communication.

"From: Madeline F. Whittier

To: genericuser033@gmail.com

Subject: Future Perfect

Sent: July 10, 12:30 PM

By the time you read this we will have met. It will have been perfect." (p. 51)

Meanwhile, the quote above shows how email gives Madeline the power to organize her meeting with Olly. By writing "we would have met" and "everything would have been perfect," Madeline uses email to create the future she wants, something she cannot do in real life due to her illness. From Foucault's perspective, this is an example of how digital technology can change power relationships. Normally, Madeline is trapped in strict rules because of her health. But through email, she can take control: deciding when they meet and how the story goes. These short messages are not just communication, but a way for Madeline to fight against her limitations. Email becomes her tool for independence, at least in words, and makes language an arena of resistance to domination and surveillance.

Second, instant messaging (IM) as real-time resistance and privacy battle. Instant messaging (IM) in *Everything, Everything* represents a form of real-time resistance to the power that limits Maddy's access to the outside world, including her interactions with Olly. Unlike email, which is more formal and delayed, IM allows for spontaneous and immediate communication, creating a gap in the surveillance system implemented by Maddy's mother. In Foucault's perspective, IM becomes a discursive practice that challenges power relations by facilitating instant connections that are difficult to fully monitor. Every message sent and

received quickly becomes a form of resistance to control over time, space and privacy. However, this battle does not take place in a free space; IM also remains within a technological territory that can be monitored, hacked, or controlled, thus making it a battleground of privacy that is constantly negotiated by subjects in power relations.

"Saturday, 8:01 P.M.

Olly: how come you don't log on until after 8?

Madeline: I'm usually not alone until then.

Olly: someone's with you all day?

Madeline: Can we please not talk about this?

Olly: curiouser and curiouser madeline whittier" (p. 37)

Through the quote above, Yoon shows how digital communication becomes a battleground between curiosity and privacy. Olly keeps pushing ("someone's with you all day?") while Madeline tries to maintain her privacy boundaries ("Can we please not talk about this?"). In Foucaultian discourse analysis, this interaction reflects a power struggle over knowledge. Olly tries to penetrate the regime of truth about Madeline's life, while Madeline uses discursive strategies such as topic shifting and subtle requests to maintain control over her narrative. Digital space becomes an arena where marginalized subjects, such as Madeline, can control the extent to which they want to be recognized, challenging traditional power relations between the healthy and the "sick". Even the timing of communication ("after 8") becomes part of the resistance strategy: Maddy controls when she can be present online and with whom she wants to interact.

"Monday, 8:07 P.M.

Olly: what'd you do to get so grounded?

Madeline: I'm not grounded and I don't want to talk about this.

Olly: does it involve a guy?

Olly: are you knocked up? do you have a boyfriend?

*Madeline: Oh my God, you're insane! I'm not pregnant and I don't have a boyfriend!
What kind of girl do you think I am?*

Olly: a mysterious one

Madeline: Have you spent all day thinking that I was pregnant? Madeline: Have you?

Olly: it crossed my mind once or twice or fifteen times Madeline: Unbelievable.

Olly: don't you want to know if I have a girlfriend?

Madeline: No." (p. 37-38)

The quote reinforces that digital communication is not only a means of proximity, but also a battleground for power in intimate relationships. Olly tries to invade Madeline's privacy with provocative questions ("pregnant?", "have a boyfriend?"), while Madeline firmly sets boundaries ("I don't want to discuss this"). From Foucault's perspective, this conversation shows two main things: first, Olly's attempt to control the narrative by conducting interrogations that force Madeline to open up; second, Madeline's resistance to maintain authority over her body and identity through refusing to answer. The tension of this discourse culminates when Madeline reverses the power of interrogation by asking back: "Have you been thinking about me being pregnant all day?" a discursive strategy that shifts the position of the subject-interrogation from herself to Olly. Madeline's final refusal to ask back about Olly's personal life ("No") becomes the final form of asserting her independence. This shows how digital space allows marginalized subjects to reject normative romantic relationship scripts and position themselves as active agents in shaping equal social relations.

Third, social media is a paradox of visibility and isolation. In *Everything, Everything*, social media represents a complex duality: it enables connection with the outside world while simultaneously emphasizing deep separation. Characters like Maddy can access other people's lives through digital platforms, seeing travel, family togetherness and romance, but she herself remains locked in a space of physical isolation controlled by her mother. In terms of Foucault's discourse theory, social media expands the field of power by creating an illusion of participation as if Maddy is present in a wider world when in reality, she remains in a position as a subject that is watched and restricted. The visibility offered by social media not only exposes Maddy to others, but also implicitly makes her an object in a regime of digital representation, able to be seen but not fully able to act. Maddy's agency over her online identity collides with the limitations of her body and the tightly controlled social space, making social media a liminal space: between connectedness and separation, between symbolic freedom and concrete isolation.

"Aside from my mom, Carla, and my tutors, the world barely knows I exist. I mean, I exist online. I have online friends and my Tumblr book reviews, but that's not the same as being a real person who can be visited by strange boys bearing Bundt cakes." (p. 23)

This quote highlights the paradoxical existence of Maddy who, despite having a digital presence through online friends and book reviews on Tumblr, still feels unreal in the physical world. In Foucault's context, platforms like Tumblr function as sites of discursive control of space where Madeline can shape and perform her own identity. However, her offline reality remains dictated by her mother's power and her medical condition. The figure of the "weird boy with the

Bundt cake" symbolizes the hope of real physical presence, as well as the irony that while she is digitally connected, her physical agency is still limited. Thus, social media in Yoon's narrative reveals complex power relations: on the one hand, it enables self-expression, but on the other hand, it remains within a surveillance structure that limits the subject's movements. Power operates through domestic forms of surveillance, but also through digital mediation that appears empowering yet controlled.

"In two years of tutoring I've only met Mr. Waterman in person twice. Usually all of my tutoring, including architecture, takes place via Skype." (p. 41)

This quote emphasizes how digital communication is not only a means of connection, but also a structured tool of power. Madeline's interaction with her teacher, which takes place almost entirely through Skype, reflects a controlled model of social relations: efficient yet impersonal, connected yet distant. In Foucault's perspective, this kind of technology is not a neutral medium, but part of a system of power that spreads through institutions (education, family) and digital tools. Maddy, as a subject in the system, tries to navigate the communication spaces (email, IM, social media and Skype) as a form of resistance to her mother's domination. Thus, social media and other communication technologies not only illustrate the development of human relations, but also show the battleground of discourse, where discipline and resistance intersect in a continuously negotiated power structure.

Construction of Power Struggle Through Digital Communication in Stories

The struggle for power through digital communication in *Everything, Everything* is powerfully portrayed through the experience of the main character, Madeline Whittier, who lives in isolation due to a rare medical condition she is believed to have. For 18 years, her life has been controlled by her mother, who also acts as a medical authority and guardian. She could only access the outside world through books, windows, and over time digital media. Digital communication, which was initially the only window of social interaction for Madeline, turned into an arena of power struggle between the desire for freedom and the control structure that restrained her. When Madeline begins to communicate online with her neighbor Olly, digital media becomes not only a means to build relationships, but also an instrument to challenge the authority that has been governing her life.

Madeline and Olly's meeting online slowly shifts the centre of power from her mother to herself. Olly becomes a symbol of the outside world that she could previously only dream of, a world full of freedom, risk, and real experience. When Madeline finally decides to leave the house and travel with Olly, she not only resists her mother's rules, but also rejects the biopolitical structures that have shaped her reality. In Foucault's terms, Madeline is creating a technology of self, a form of resistance to the medical discourse that limits her body for safety. Her decision to leave home is a subversive act that asserts her right to experience, autonomy and existential freedom, even if it means risking her own life.

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"From: Madeline F. Whittier

To: genericuser033@gmail.com

Subject: (no subject)

Do you have my daughter? Is she OK?" (p. 149)

"From: Madeline F. Whittier

To: genericuser033@gmail.com

Subject: (no subject)

I know she's with you. You don't understand how sick she is. Bring her home." (p. 149)

"From: Madeline F. Whittier

To: genericuser033@gmail.com

Subject: (no subject)

Please tell me where you are. She could get seriously ill at any minute." (p. 150)

"From: Madeline F. Whittier

To: genericuser033@gmail.com

Subject: (no subject)

I know where you are and I'm on the next flight. I'll be there first thing in the morning. Please keep her safe." (p. 150)

"From: genericuser033

To: Madeline F. Whittier <madeline.whittier@gmail.com>

Subject: (no subject)

Please don't worry, mom. And please don't come here. I'm really OK and it's my life too. I love you. I'll see you soon." (p. 150).

The above quote reveals a tense digital power struggle between mother and daughter through their email exchange. The email exchange above is the culmination of the power struggle between mother and daughter. Her mother utilizes email as a tool to maintain control, using a narrative of fear ("She could get seriously ill any minute") as justification to reorganize Madeline's body. However, Madeline fights back by hacking the communication channel to reply to her mother's email through Olly's account, a symbolic act that illustrates the takeover of narrative control. In a Foucauldian context, this reflects the conflict between the biopower of power that organizes life through medical and institutional control

and the subject that constructs its own agency. Madeline's final message, which combines compassion and boundaries ("It's my life too. I love you. Please don't come here."), confirms that digital communication is not just an intermediary, but a discursive terrain where resistance and negotiation of power take place.

In this novel, digital communication such as email and instant messaging become the main foundation in building closeness between Madeline and Olly. Due to physical limitations caused by SCID, they are unable to have direct contact, and digital media becomes an alternative space for intimacy. However, this space also creates new limitations, as the closeness that is built virtually is still unable to replace the full physical experience. Madeline is aware of these limitations, and this is evident in their digital dialogue:

"Later, 12:05 A.M.

Madeline: It's not better than nothing. It's absolutely worse than nothing.

Olly: what?

Madeline: Do you think we can go back to the way it was before?

Madeline: You want to go back to decontamination, and short visits, and no touching and no kissing and no future?

Madeline: You're saying that's enough for you?

Olly: it's better than nothing

Madeline: No it's not. Stop saying that." (p. 169)

Meanwhile, the quote above shows a discourse of resistance to the compromise of a relationship limited by medical fears. Olly tries to normalize the situation with the "better than nothing" argument, but Madeline rejects that logic as a form of denial of the integrity of the relationship. In a Foucauldian reading, this is a form of rejection of the regime of truth that reduces love and relationships only within medically safe limits. Madeline rejects her passive position as a patient and demands her right to love fully, including the risks that come with it. Digital communication, in this context, becomes a tool to challenge the order that has been redefining her body in terms of limitations, not desires.

In the end, Madeline's courage to cross the boundaries created by medical discourse and parental power is not just a form of teenage rebellion, but a manifestation of existential struggle. She uses communication technology as a weapon to voice her subjectivity and reclaim her own life narrative. The novel *Everything, Everything* shows how digital communication is not only a means of connection, but also a discursive arena where power is upheld, challenged and renegotiated. In a space controlled by algorithms, protocols, and surveillance, Madeline's voice emerges as a form of resistance to a silencing system, proving

that even within the limitations of space and body, the discourse of freedom can still be fought for.

Implications of Power Struggle in Human Relationships in the Digital Age in the Novel

The power struggle between Madeline and her mother Pauline in *Everything, Everything* reflects the complex dynamics of human relationships in the digital age. In an age where technology is not just a means of communication, but a battleground for control, freedom and autonomy (Erol, 2020). The novel highlights how digital devices can be both a weapon and a space of resistance in even the most intimate personal relationships. The conflict between Madeline and Pauline mirrors how power is exercised, maintained and challenged through the digital medium, with profound consequences for family and individual relationships.

In the novel, digital communication through instant messaging and email becomes Madeline's secret weapon to build independence amidst her mother's strict supervision. Pauline, as a doctor and authority figure, monopolizes almost every aspect of Madeline's life, from the air she breathes to her access to information. However, digital technology opens up cracks in this seemingly absolute control system. Cell phone and laptop screens turn into secret windows for Madeline and Olly to build their own world, a space where Pauline's rules do not apply. When Pauline realizes the connection and tries to cut off Madeline's internet access, the children still find a way to maintain communication despite the limitations, proving that creativity and determination can defy strict supervision. In this context, technology is not just a tool, but a field of resistance where Madeline reclaims her right to privacy, relationships and identity. A digital liberation from the physical cage built by traditional authorities.

This conflict also displays a sharp generational clash through different attitudes towards technology. Pauline represents the older generation who views the digital world as a threat and seeks to control it for her daughter's safety, utilizing her dual authority as a doctor and mother to limit Madeline's digital space. In contrast, Madeline represents the digital generation that sees technology as a portal to freedom and a space for self-expression as Davydov and Davydova (2020) stated in their research. Every message Madeline sends to Olly is not just a violation of the rules, but a declaration of independence and an attempt to rebel against the definition of life imposed by her mother. This tension culminates when Madeline secretly maintains communication despite being forbidden, showing how the younger generation uses technology to assert the autonomy of their identity, while the older generation struggles to maintain control in an increasingly digitized world. This conflict is not simply about permission to communicate, but a philosophical battle between the sense of security that Pauline represents and the right to experiment with life that Madeline fights for through digital devices.

Madeline's dramatic escape to Hawaii becomes the symbolic climax of her struggle against her mother's restraints, a heroic and tragic act that pays for

freedom at the risk of death. In her farewell letter, Madeline reveals the painful dilemma between filial love and the right to personal autonomy. While Pauline wraps her control in a narrative of protection, Madeline resolutely rejects this logic, choosing the possibility of death in the outside world over living in the prison of her mother's affection. This decision is not simply an adolescent rebellion, but a philosophical manifestation that life without freedom is no life at all. Yoon metaphorically suggests that even in the digital age, true freedom can often only be achieved through the violation of systems and the sacrifice of relationships, challenging readers to reconsider the boundaries between protection and oppression in the name of love.

The novel also cleverly reflects the contemporary tension between digital privacy and parental surveillance through the dynamics of Pauline and Madeline. As an obsessive doctor, Pauline implements a strict health monitoring system. A metaphor for the modern digital surveillance culture where parents track their children's every online activity. On the other hand, Madeline's act of routinely deleting her message history with Olly represents the digital generation's resistance to authority intervention. A tactic that many teenagers today use to defend their private space. This conflict not only highlights the power struggle between generations, but also raises ethical questions about the limits of surveillance in family relationships in a technological era that allows for almost totalitarian control. Through the lens of this mother-daughter relationship, the novel invites readers to reflect on modern dilemmas: to what extent protection can turn into an invasion of privacy, and how young people can maintain digital autonomy amid increasingly sophisticated surveillance systems.

Overall, *Everything, Everything* charts the transformation of the power landscape in human relationships in the digital age, where technology is both a weapon and a battleground (Sharkov et al., 2022). The novel reveals a modern paradox: digital communication empowers individuals like Madeline to resist Pauline's authoritarian control, while simultaneously creating new dependencies and inequalities of access in her romantic relationship with Olly. Power struggles are no longer just physical conflicts, but battles over access to information and the right to communicate, as seen in Madeline's efforts to maintain her private space in the digital world. The novel presents the eternal dilemma between security and freedom, protection and autonomy, which is increasingly complex in an era when technology enables both surveillance and liberation. In doing so, it invites readers to take a more critical look at the role of technology in redefining human relationships, power and freedom in the digital age.

CONCLUSION

This article has discussed how the novel *Everything, Everything* depicts digital communication as a complex battleground of power through the lens of Foucauldian discourse analysis. Through a reading of digital communication elements such as email, instant messaging, and social media, it appears that technology does not only function as a tool of control used by authorities such as

the character Pauline, but also as a medium of resistance for marginalized subjects, such as Madeline. The novel shows that digital space allows for the negotiation of identity, privacy, and autonomy, and exposes the paradox of isolation and connectedness that characterizes the digital age. Thus, Nicola Yoon's work confirms that digital communication is not a neutral space, but a discursive arena where power relations are continuously negotiated and contested.

Furthermore, the article also highlights generational tensions in understanding the function of technology, where parental supervisory practices collide with the need for digital independence of the younger generation. Through the dynamic relationship between Madeline and Pauline, the novel invites readers to reflect on the boundaries between protection and restraint, and highlights the potential of technology as an instrument of both liberation and subjugation. Ultimately, *Everything, Everything* not only criticizes oppressive power structures, but also celebrates the individual's agency in designing his or her own life narrative, despite having to fight against a shackling system. Using a Foucauldian approach, this analysis shows how digital discourse reshapes power relations in human relationships in the contemporary era.

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