

The Sociological Implications of Power: A Case Study on David Mamet's *Edmond*

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Abstract: This research is an attempt to shed light on the issues related to the mechanism of power and its sociological implications in David Mamet's *Edmond* based on Michel Foucault's point of view. Power is present everywhere, and it is something that operates in the form of a network. In this regard, the modern form power described as disciplinary power differs from the negative ruling power that focuses on deduction and torture. In *Edmond*, individuals try to exercise their power by advancing their knowledge as a new discourse to diminish other previous discourses. The society in which *Edmond* enters to reach happiness is a place where he is trapped into the disciplinary power of panopticism. The disciplinary power controls individuals and constructs their identities. Their identities are constructed by the socio-cultural environment; therefore, they become docile bodies and subject to power relations by means of normalization and constant surveillance. The result shows that any deviation from the norms, punishment is exercised on the individuals' souls and subsequently shapes their bodies as well.

Keywords: Disciplinary power, Discourse, Docile body, Identity, Sociological Implications.

Introduction

David Mamet (1947-) is an American Pulitzer Prize-winning essayist, film director, and playwright. His writing style is based on Mamet speak which is characterized by a cynical, street-smart, and precisely crafted for effect, so distinct that it is called Mametesque. He often uses quotation marks and italics to highlight certain words to draw attention to his characters' frequent manipulations and tricks in their use of language. Considering this issue, the current study focuses on the play written in the modern world through the lens of power and its technologies to practice on individuals. The significance of this study, as a result, can be to clarify Foucault's notion regarding sociological implications of power in the modern world. It aims to peruse how social strategies are used to control and influence individuals. This study attempts to show how the characters in *Edmond* struggle to live and enjoy life based on Foucault's views. Foucault observes that there are different kinds of power such as sovereign power and disciplinary power. In the past, people were subject to the sovereign power of the monarch but in modern society disciplinary power has spread its roots everywhere. The transformation of Western societies from monarchical power to disciplinary power is epitomized in Foucault's description of the panopticon, an architectural device advocated by Jeremy Bentham in the late 18th century. Therefore, this study focuses on the concepts of disciplinary power and its sociological implications on individuals' identities.

Methodology and Approach

Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish*, begins his description of the shift from the sovereign society to the modern disciplinary society. He illustrates the shift from the public torture to a prison system in the modern world. He shows a transformation from a single monarchical visible power to an invisible control and regulation. For Foucault, in *The History of Sexuality Vol.1*, the sovereign power is a form of "deduction" whose capacity is formulated as "the power of life and death" and the right "to take life and let live" (136). The disciplinary power, on the contrary, is the power to generate forces, make them grow, and order them. The disciplinary power is for inciting, reinforcing, controlling, supervising, optimizing, and organizing the forces under it.

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Further, Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish*, explains that how the public executions disappears and marks “the decline of the spectacle” (10). In “Two Lectures,” Foucault shows a number of methodological imperatives for studying power. Recognizing that there is the existence of sovereign power, he argues that it is not the only type of power in circulation; he offers some other alternative propositions. First, the analysis of power should not concern itself with “regulated and legitimate forms of power in their central locations but with power at its extremities [...] at those points where it becomes capillary” (96). It means that power should not be directed in its local and regional forms and institution. Accordingly, sovereign power is not effective anymore to support the population growth; therefore, reformists revolt against this monarchical power. The confession of the crime in public and public execution that stirred the audiences’ emotions to protect criminals turned against the sovereign power. Therefore, he analyzes punishment in its social context, and examines how changing power relations affect punishment. He elaborates the function of disciplinary systems in prison and depicts the function of discipline as a form of power. He, in *Discipline and Punish*, elaborates that the reformists stand against the repressive power of sovereign power and propose that “punishment must have humanity as its measure,” and he adds that the decentralization of power gives rise and leads to a punitive mechanism called prison (75). This is the birth of prison which targets the soul in order to ultimately keep the body in thrall and use it in a productive way.

Additionally, O’Farrell, in *Michel Foucault*, writes that Foucault argues that the prison is selected as a preferable method for punishment in western countries because it fits in best with the description of disciplinary society. There is a special way of acting and training on the body and behavior to the way that “the individuals who make up populations” are easily controlled, and this training was exercised through a number of institutions (military institutions, schools, and factories) that appeared at the same time as the prison (43). In this sense, the development of the modern prison system focuses on the discourse of punishment from the body to the soul. The punishment affects the soul of prisoners to the way that refines the prisoner’s body and soul. Foucault examines the techniques of disciplinary power to demonstrate that the soul is arrested under power which is operated through and around people all the times. He considers prison as a form of social and political control for wider society and not just an institution which controls crime and criminal behavior, but an institution of power and regulation and shows how punishment shifts its target from the body to the soul.

Disciplinary society is to make the bodies useful for production. Thus, it forms institutions that discipline bodies through normalization and continuous surveillance. Foucault states that discipline produces docile bodies. Discipline increases the forces of the body in terms of economic utility and decreases the same forces in terms of political obedience. As a result, individuals discipline themselves and use this disciplinary mechanism which makes them obedient bodies. To him, discipline makes individuals be submissive and efficient body. Further, Foucault, in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture, Interviews and Other Writings 1977-1984*, explains that power relations are “multiple; they have different forms, they can be in play in family relations, or within an institution, or an administration” he explains that power can be “between a dominating and a dominated class power relations having specific forms of rationality, forms which are common to them, etc” (38). Power is not in the hands of some special people or groups instead, it is multi- capacity which moves throughout the community. Foucault, in “Truth and Power,” argues that “now I believe that this is a wholly negative, narrow, skeletal conception of power, one which has been curiously widespread” and he explains: “If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it?” (119). He denies the traditional concept of power which has negative effects.

Foucault, in *The Chomsky-Foucault on Human Nature*, states that it is a totally “negative, narrow, skeletal conception of power” if power were repressive (152). Power does not weigh on us as a force that says no; rather, it produces things, “it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, and produces discourse” (153). For Foucault power is rather a source of pleasure since it is productive; further, it produces things like knowledge and discourse, and it is not exercised in a repressive, negative way. He rejects that the wielding of power is a hierarchical and one-way affair, which is characterized by oppression and prohibition. Therefore, in “The Subject and Power,” he elaborates that the exercise of power is not

simply a relationship between individuals: “Power exists only when it is put into action,” and it means that “power is not a function of consent” (219). It is “not a renunciation of freedom,” the transfer of rights, and the power of everyone to a few (220). He claims that power is diffused in all social relations. According to Foucault, power is not one-sided. Rather, it is multiplicity of power relations in which several power relations overlap in social interactions. In this sense, power originates from institutions in the form of power relations.

Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish*, states that like surveillance, normalization becomes one of the important tools of power. It indicates “membership in a homogeneous social body,” but it also plays a role in classification, hierarchy and the rank distribution (184). For Foucault, “the power of normalization imposes homogeneity,” but it individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialties and to make the differences useful by matching them to each other (184). One of the elements of disciplinary power for success is normalizing judgment. At the heart of all disciplinary mechanisms, there is a small penal system with a micro-penalty of time, behavior and speech. A little deviation from the correct behavior will be punished. Disciplinary mechanisms make a “penalty of the norm” (183). Normalization not only homogenizes individuals, but also measures differences between individuals. Foucault considers productive power as a form of behavior and norm. Foucault, in “What is an Author?” displays his view of human identity. He believes that human’s identity is a discourse related to his interaction with others. Therefore, he decides to show that how individuals’ identities are not fixed, and they are related to specific discourses. In this way, the concept of identity is central to Foucault’s thought in which he gives up the metaphysical notion of identity. Foucault believes that there is no substantive core behind an identity. He denies the search for a true self because nothing about us is determinate or natural. Considering identity as something which is inherent and fixed is the classical view of identity. Foucault, in “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” denies the classical thought about the subject as a rational being with a fixed essence and argues: “Nothing in man - not even his body - is stable to serve as a basis for self-recognition or for understanding others” (87). He denies the view that a person has an inner and fixed identity.

Similarly, Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish*, There is no natural body or pre-discursive, but a subject who is “amputated, repressed, altered by our social order,” and the individual is carefully constructed in it based on the “technique of forces and bodies” (217). For Foucault, subjects’ identities are constructed through the networks of power. In “The Subject and Power,” this form of power exerts itself in the immediate everyday life that classifies the individual, “marks him with his individuality binds him to his identity” (212). The law of truth is imposed on the individual that he recognizes it perfectly and others must recognize it in him. In other words, identity is an important instrument for power strategies to make individuals as subjects. Therefore, based on Foucault’s thought, power is productive and produces individuals, forms of subjectivity, modes of behavior and different forms of identities. The individual is identified by the discourse of power, and power attaches him to his identity. Foucault, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, explains this process of mediation and determination. He defines how individuals’ identities are constructed:

Positions of the subject are defined by the situation that it is possible for him to occupy in relation to various domains or groups of objects. According to certain grids of explicit or implicit interrogations, he is the questioning subject, and according to a certain program of information, he is the listening subject; according to a table of characteristic features, he is the seeing subject, and according to a descriptive type, the observing subject; he is situated at the optimal perceptual distance whose boundaries delimit the wheat of relevant information. (57-8)

The individual as the subject experiences different power relations in different situations that each changes his status and identity. Further, Foucault rejects the possibility of finding our true determinate identity. He reveals the mechanisms of power produce such an idea and the ways operate service of subjection. Foucault explains how disciplinary strategies make criminals be subjected. In this sense, Foucault, in “Questions on Geography,” elaborates that the individual does not have “a pre-given entity;” rather, the individual’s identity is the product of power relationship exercised over bodies,

movements, desires, and forces (73-74). For understanding the unfixed identity of subjects, it is necessary to investigate how Foucault determines identity on a cultural basis. Foucault states that the individual's identity and characteristics are "the product of a relation of power exercised over bodies" (74). His definition on the concept of identity and subjectivity is a cultural rather than a natural entity. Therefore, the individual's identity is unfixed and related to socio-cultural relations.

Textual Analysis

Disciplinary Power in Mamet's *Edmond*

In the one-act-play, *Edmond*, it is seen that Edmond Burke is punished in a different way of punishment. According to a fortune teller, he leaves his wife and job behind him and wants to get a fortunate life; however, he runs into different kinds of misfortune and miseries. When he is in New York, it seems that he is controlled and all the activities he does are checked. For Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish*, the panopticon brings together power, knowledge, body control, and the "control of space into an integrated technology of discipline" (131). In the play, when Edmond and Fortune-teller talk to each other, it can be concluded that Edmond is the exact victim of the life which she has selected:

FOURTHUNE-TELLER. If things are predetermined, they must manifest themselves. When we look back, as we look back-we see that we could never have done otherwise than we did. Surely, then, there must have been signs. If only we could have read them. We say, "I see that I could not have done otherwise my diet caused me to eat what I ate or my genes, or some other things beyond my control forced me to act as I did ...". And those things which forced us, of course, must make their signs: our diet, or our genes, or our stars. (Pause.) And there are signs. (*Edmond* 1.1. 201)

A kind of punishment begins so that the fortune-teller who is the agent of disciplinary order of panopticism recommends that Edmond come out of his comfort zone to reach his real fortune. Accordingly, the fortune-teller refers to the obligatory things in Edmond's life like diet, stars, and genes which control his actions and thoughts, but the question is why he says something like this. The answer to this question is that individuals are in a disciplinary system in which a sort of panopticon control is over them. Individuals should live in terms of them because they should be forced to be what the disciplinary power wants. Because the fortune-teller is aware of Edmond's future life or events, he encourages him to leave his present place to get what he wants. Edmond also trusts her and attempts to go to New York to claim his right. In this regard, Foucault, in *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison*, says "that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge," and he adds that there is no knowledge that does not constitute at the same time power relations (27). The fortune-teller uses her knowledge through Edmond's palm to impose her power on him, a tactic that convinces Edmond to go on his challenging journey. Foucault claims that now the study of the "micro-physics" presupposes that the power exercised on the body is conceived not as property, but as a strategy, that its effect of domination is attributed not to appropriation, but to "dispositions, maneuvers, tactics, techniques," and functioning (26). He explains that one should decipher a network of relations, constantly in tension, in activity, rather than a privilege that one might possess.

Regarding the play, the society in which Edmond enters to gain the lost fortune and happiness is one where Edmond is trapped in a panopticon form of power by which he should be like a docile body; however, he wants to be a person or citizen who is free in terms of his life. In the play, when Edmond is arrested and the interrogator attempts to make him confess his mistake, Edmond makes a lot of tries to introduce himself very simply. It indicates that Edmond tends to show how powerless he is, and he is only a person who is under the control of others (authority and power):

EDMOND. I was bored. Didn't that ever happen to you?

INTERROGATOR. And why did you lie to the officer?

EDMOND. What officer?

INTERROGATOR. Who picked you up? There's no Gregory Brock at the address you gave. You didn't give him your right name.

EDMOND. I was embarrassed.

INTERROGATOR. Why?

EDMOND. I didn't have my wallet.

INTERROGATOR. Why?

EDMOND. I'd left it at home. [...]

INTERROGATOR. Why did you kill that girl?

EDMOND. What girl?

INTERROGATOR. That girl you killed. (*Edmond* 1. 18. 258-9)

It is obvious that Edmond's discourse here has been different from the first scenes of the play. Like a docile body, Edmond is often controlled by the interrogator. In this regard, he endeavors to show that he is innocent, but he is guilty of what he has done, though unknowingly. Edmond is in the hand of power and here he plays the role of a controlled citizen. Absolutely enough, the order of panopticism can be felt in this play. In fact, he is punished and sent to jail in order to be supervised. Therefore, in their co-authored work "A Foucauldian Analysis of Power Distribution in David Mamet's *Faustus*", Nahid Mohammadi and Mahya Hajigholam argue, "punishment and confession are techniques in the hands of the disciplinary power to control the production of discourses in Foucault's model of power relations" (61). Punishment is the strategy of the judicial power by which a prisoner or criminal confronts the discourse of power that he is under complete surveillance; therefore, Edmond goes to prison due to his criminal action. Accordingly, Foucault believes that escaping the power mechanisms needs a change of reality in a society, or individuals should obey what power relations announce as the truth dominates all the aspects of society. Edmond cannot escape the power mechanisms, and he is in the hands of disciplinary power. Edmond believes that his life and the events that happened to him are out of his control and people or humans are doomed to the destiny that panopticism imposed on them. Mamet believes in the power relations which are imposed on humans in any society. The panoptic schema is extended throughout the society without losing any of its characteristics to the way that Edmond finds himself under the surveillance of such disciplines.

Further, Foucault, in *The Courage of the Truth*, focuses on the truth that the discourse of power can produce to serve power. In this respect, Foucault claims:

It seemed to me that it would be equally interesting to analyze the conditions and forms of the type of act by which the subject manifests himself when speaking the truth, by which I mean, think of himself and is recognized by other as speaking the truth. Rather analyzing the forms by which discourse is recognized as true, this would involve analyzing the form in which, in his act of telling the truth, the individual constitutes himself and is constituted by others as a subject of a discourse of truth, the form in which he presents himself to himself and to others as someone who tells the truth, the form of the subject telling the truth. (2-3).

The subject constructs or shapes the truth that is constituted by the discourse of power. There is a mutual relation between the truth and the subject. Therefore, Edmond is the subject telling or manifesting the truth constituted by the power relations. In other words, the power relations form a subject's identity through panopticism and other power strategies.

At the end of the play, Edmond and prisoner are chatting with one another and their words show the exact discourse of what power relations try to impose on humans to take control of them. Their philosophical chat shows that Mamet tends to reveal that individuals are to control their lives, but the power relations do not allow them. In fact, animals are used symbolically to show how humans are supervised by the mechanisms of power. Through discipline, individuals are gazed by hierarchical observation, judgment and examination. In this regard, discipline makes individuals be efficient and submissive body. According to Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, he shows the analysis of the discourse itself apparently very tight, of words and things and the emergence of groups of rules corresponding to the discursive practice. These rules do not define the existence of reality, but "ordering of object" (54). Words and things is the strictly serious title of a problem, and the "ironic title of a work"

that changes its form, and “reveals at the end of the day a quite different task” (54). Mamet and Foucault agree that the rules define the reality of objects and subjects. In fact, by the order of disciplinary panopticism, the reality of the subjects is defined in terms of the reality of objects like discourse and words. When prisoner says that “we’re the animals” and Edmond confirms him, it shows that their reality of existence is to be altered by the order of panopticism which has been imposed on them. It illustrates that they accept what is imposed on them and they are like objects which are defined by the power relations. They follow what is defined for them. By the nature of panopticism, they are like objects that are considered the docile bodies:

PRISONER. I don’t know. (Pause)

EDMOND. Do you think that we are there?

PRISONER. I don’t know, man. (Pause)

EDMOND. Do you think that we go somewhere when we die?

PRISONER. I don’t know, man. I like to think so.

EDMOND. I would, too.

PRISONER. I sure would like to think so. (pause.)

EDMOND. Perhaps its Heaven.

PRISONER. (pause): I don't know.

EDMOND. I don’t know either but perhaps its. (pause.)

PRISONER. I would like to think so.

EDMOND. I would, too (pause.)

Good night. (pause.) (*Edmond* 1. 23. 274-5)

From these dialogues, it might be inferred that they do not know anything about their destiny, they just think about what would happen. They are like the mesmerized ones who do not know anything and are completely under the control. In this regard, Foucault, in “Truth and Juridical Forms,” states that in panopticism, the individuals are supervised not at the level of what they do but at the level of what they are; “not at the level of what one does but of what one might do,” and he adds that with this system, “supervision tends increasingly to individualize the author of the act, while ceasing to take account of the juridical nature, the penal qualification of the act itself” (70-71). Foucault shows how a person is individualized by what he or she might be and act. With this system of supervision, the person is individualized in terms of his would-be activities.

In *Edmond*, both of the prisoners, Edmond, and the prisoner, think about what might happen in the future or after their death. Exactly enough, they are under the system of supervision in which the individuals and their identities are defined by the system or the disciplinary order of panopticism. Therefore, in the play, the power relations and their strategies define the characters’ identities and individualities.

Power Dynamics and Identity Crisis

For Foucault, the identity of an individual is not self-determining. An individual’s identity is constructed through socialization system over which he has relatively little control. Individuals are born into a particular political system, social setting, a society with a specific set of values, and a religious system all of which shape and mould their subjectivity. The individual looks at the world with a view that tends to show the surrounding social discourse of power. In this section, the researcher tries to analyze the important issues of power and its impacts on individuals’ identities and culture. *Edmond* recounts the story of a man’s quest to find identity and his failure to find it due to the effect of power relations.

In this regard, *Edmond* shows the story of identity which is defined in terms of the discourse of power, and his identity becomes an unfixed identity due to endlessly repeated play of power. Edmond is confused about his relationships with women; therefore, he experiences an identity crisis which leads him to consult to a fortune-teller. She tells him: “You are not where you belong. [...] The world seems to be crumbling around us. You look and you wonder if what you perceive is accurate,” and she adds that “you are unsure what your place is. To what extent you are cause and to what an effect” (*Edmond*

1.1. 202). Edmond is concerned with his identity as a man, and he seeks to find his independence and freedom.

Therefore, he believes that he is in a world that has fallen apart, where old roles and interactions do not work for him anymore, if they ever did. He is unsure where he stands now and seeks to redefine himself or, at least, to find himself. However, his search for identity is constructed by the Foucauldian power, the notion that, an individual's identity is constructed by socialization system. This can be seen to the way that the man in the bar says to Edmond: "We're bred to do the things that we do" (*Edmond* 1.3. 207). The Fortune-teller tells Edmond that "things are predetermined surely," and "when we look back-as we look back-we see that we could never have done otherwise than as we did" (*Edmond* 1.1. 201). This depicts that the mechanisms of power produce such an idea and the ways operate service of subjection.

Edmond is subjected to the disciplinary strategies, as the subject experiences different power relations in different situations that each changes his status and identity. Edmond is not where he wants to be, and his free will set against predetermined strategies. The fortune-teller who is the agent of disciplinary order of panopticism makes Edmond believe that he is trapped by such disciplines and subjected to them. The fortune-teller describes the order of the world and says that "my stars... which caused me to eat what I ate... or my genes, or some other thing beyond my control forced me to act as I did," and she adds that "those things which forced us, of course, must make their signs: our diet, or our genes, or our stars" (*Edmond* 1.1. 201). Such description of the world can be considered as a metaphor of panopticon society where individuals are under the surveillance of power, and their actions are related to the system of power relations; in this sense, their identities are affected by the mechanism of power. Since Edmond feels disappointed in who he is and loses himself, he listens to the fortune-teller who motivates him that he does not belong to the place where he is, and Edmond decides to leave his wife to reach his identity through the gates of journey to New York. Therefore, the fortune-teller gives courage to Edmond to leave his wife that it can be seen in scene two in their discussion. While his wife is complaining about the cleaning woman, Edmond says, "I'm going, and I'm not coming back" and their discussion gives rise. Edmond's argument with his wife reveals to what extent he is influenced by the fortune-teller's advice to the way he decides to disrespect his wife and leave her.

After he leaves his wife, he wanders into a bar to find solace there. Edmond starts speaking with a man there and asks him for advice:

MAN. A man has got to get *away* from himself [...]

EDMOND. What do you do to get out?

MAN. What are the things to do? What are the things *anyone* does? . . .

(Pause.)

Pussy . . . I don't know. . . Pussy . . . Power . . . Money . . . uh . . . adventure . . . (Pause.) I think that's it . . . uh, *self-destruction* . . .

I think that that's it . . . don't you? . . . [...]

EDMOND. I don't feel like a man.

MAN. Do you know what you need?

EDMOND. No.

MAN. You need to get laid.

EDMOND. I do. I know I do. (*Edmond* 1.3. 209)

Therefore, he is disillusioned, and knows that he wants to construct his identity, but the construct of his identity is based upon gender or, more specifically, upon sex. The man tells him to go the Allegro bar where he can have sex with whores to the way that he can find his identity as a man. Edmond wants to live free and acts to the way that he wants; therefore, he says yes to sex. He wants to stylize his life to the way that he wishes. Although the man gives some advice and pearls of wisdom to Edmond, they do not seem like enough, and send Edmond to his collapse. After his conversation with the man, he comes to conclusion that he needs to prove himself as a man through sex. Then, he decides to go to bar to have

relationship with whores because the core feature of his identity is related to sexuality. Foucault, in *The History of Sexuality Vol. 1*, writes, much of our identity is determined by the deployment of sexuality and each individual should be able to “access to his own intelligibility [...], to the whole of his body [...], to his identity” (155-6). On his journey, he seeks to conquer and destroy other individuals. He focuses on a form of war which is a form of power relations.

This conflict is between him and many other types of discourses which are employed in power relations. Accordingly, Edmond is not able to have successful relationship with women throughout the play. His self-involvement, insensitivity to other individuals and self-indulgence are all behaviors that cause his demise. When the interrogator asks him why he assaults a woman on the subway, he responds that “did you ever kick a dog? (pause.) Well, that’s what I did. Man to man. That’s what I did. I made a simple, harmless comment to her, she responded like a fucking bitch” (Edmond 1.18. 257). This insolent answer depicts the contemporary American culture in which there is chaos. Due to this event, all individuals’ relationships and identities are under the influence of such culture.

Additionally, we see that Edmond’s racial view causes him to scorn the black pimp, and screams: “YOU MOTHERFUCKING NIGGER! [...] You motherfucking *shit*... you *jungle* bunny... (He strikes the PIMP again. He drops his knife.) [...] You *coon*, you *cunt*, you *cocksucker*...” (Edmond 1. 240). All these insults that he uses against the black pimp shows to what extent he is arrogant and racist. This events display the racial culture of America to the way that the white try to exercise their power through such stereotypes. What is more, through Edmond’s action, we can find how his identity is under the influence of power relations. After Edmond wins a desperate street fight with a pimp, he feels powerful enough to attract a woman’s attention. Glenna is a waitress in a restaurant, and decides to sleep with Edmond voluntarily. In this sense, individuals autonomously order their lives and try to influence other individuals. Individuals can construct new forms of subjectivity based on their future challenges.

However, Edmond’s narcissism does not allow him to be sensitive to Glenna’s feelings and destroys her. Edmond knows that something is uncomfortable about his position as a man. He wishes to escape from the pressured situation, and cares of himself. Edmond, in his debate with Glenna, argues regarding the norms and laws that are bred to do:

EDMOND. [...] All of us. We’re doomed. [...] And do you know *why*? ...Sit down...

GLENNA. I can’t. I’m working.

EDMOND. And do you know *why*—you can do anything you *want* to do, you don’t sit down because you’re “*working*,” the reason you don’t sit down is you don’t *want* to sit down, because it’s more comfortable to *accept* a law than question it and live your life. All of us. *All of us*. We’ve bred the life out of ourselves. And we live in a fog. We live in a dream. Our life is a *schoolhouse*, and we’re dead. (Pause.). (Edmond 1.16. 242-3)

Edmond is aware of his uncomfortable positions and wishes to escape, but he cannot. How he can escape from what he is bred to do is the question that he has in his mind throughout the play. This displays that Edmond and the other individuals’ identities are related to the relations of power. Accordingly, Edmond wants to exercise control over her by his own descriptions; however, she resists and expresses “I am what I am” (Edmond 1.16. 249). She makes a clear distinction between the sex act, and her position. She tells him, “WHAT DID I DO, PLEDGE MY LIFE TO YOU? I LET YOU FUCK ME. GO AWAY” (Edmond 1.16. 251). She wants to maintain her subjectivity; however, she is in the interplay of power and her identity is affected by the present chaotic culture. Her refusal to be controlled or renamed makes Edmond feel uncomfortable for himself; therefore, he attacks her and calls her crazy. He stabs her with the survival knife that he buys earlier in a pawn shop. Even after murdering Glenna, he cannot control and define himself and others.

Although his desire to “to get laid” to prove his manhood makes him dependent on women, he does not know how to behave women. When he visits Glenna, he seeks to dominate her through use of force, horror and violence. Through his sexual relationship with Glenna, he learns more about his identity and

the deepest part of his temptations. The knowledge is driven from his relationship becomes an instrument for his power; however, there is violence behind his power that causes to kill the girl. Due to his action, he must be punished by going to prison. On his quest to find his identity, he finds that he is caught between the belief that actions are pre-determined and programmed to behave a certain way and there is a certain position to stand in. In fact, his behavior is the reflection of his identity; his identity is the product of power relations exercised on his body, desires and interests. Due to chaos, racism, misogynistic views exist in the society; he is contaminated by a set of power relations in which sends him to his collapse. Edmond is the carnation of narcissistic culture. He takes the objectives of power and make them part of his own aim and behavior; in this way, power shapes his behavior and identity and makes him be subjected. He wants to impose his power on Glenna by asking her to announce that she is a waitress; however, she denies saying what Edmond asks her. Edmond forgets that freedom is the essential of all power relations, and it can only operate between free individuals.

By drawing on Foucault's view, in "The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom," there will not be power relations unless the subjects are free. "If one or the other were completely at the disposition of the other and became his thing, an object on which he can exercise an infinite and unlimited violence, there would not be relations of power," and Foucault elaborates that "in order to exercise a relation of power, there must be on both sides at least a certain form of liberty" (12). It means that the prerequisite of power relations is free subject otherwise; power will not be productive in terms of Foucault. Thus, Edmond must be punished and imprisoned because he is the murder of Glenna and does not allow her to express herself.

Edmond and Punishment

The murder of Glenna leads him to prison, and he meets more challenges to his identity. He finds himself to a position where he has feared, but it comes true for him. He is imprisoned and must be punished due to his wrongs. He tells his cellmate: "I always knew that I would end up here. (pause.) (To himself:) Every fear hides a wish. I think I'm going to like it here" (*Edmond* 1.20. 262). He confronts with a black African-American prisoner and whatever that he fears before. Edmond is a selfish individual whose identity is produced by the system that he wants to flee. He is part of destructive surroundings that his life is ruled by fear and anxiety. His racial identity, sexual identity and social identity are constructed by an ill and destructive system. Then, the black prisoner enforces him to have sex with him; in this way, this event can be considered as a kind of punishment that affects the soul and thoughts of Edmond. Edmond feels sad and regretful; therefore, he complains to the chaplain. He feels he is so alone and empty. Since punishment refines the prisoner's body and soul, Edmond's soul is under the power which is operated through and around individuals all the times to be refined. The prison is a place of incarceration where affects Edmond's body and soul to the way that Edmond's personality changes.

As Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish*, argues, the soul is something that "exists, it has a reality, it is produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of a power that is exercised on those punished" (33). The soul, for Foucault, is the housing in which "the effects of a certain type of power and the reference of a certain type of knowledge, the machinery by which the power relations give rise to a possible corpus of knowledge" is set (33). The prisoner is the result of a subjection "more profound than himself" because while the soul "inhabits him and brings him into existence [...] the soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body" (30). Edmond feels regretful for his guilt; in this way, confessing to his sins plays an important role for him. Edmond is subjected to the power, and is ready for conformity by disciplinary strategies.

Therefore, the chaplains oblige subjects to confess to reveal the smallest desires or temptations. Now Edmond begins to confess and blames himself for his flaws. He expresses he feels sorry for his wrong actions. When the chaplain asks him why he murdered Glenna, he stammers "I ... (Pause.) I ... (Pause.) I don't ... I ... I don't ... (Pause.) I ... (Pause.) I don't ... (Pause.) I don't ... (Pause.) I don't think ... (Pause.) I ... (Pause.)" (*Edmond* 1.21. 268). Edmond's confession shows that he wants to open up his repressed desire and access knowledge on it. Through the process of confession, he is able to guarantee his identity and status. By drawing on Foucault, in *History of Sexuality Vol.1*, "the evolution of the word

avowal and of the legal function it designated is itself emblematic of this development: from being a guarantee of the status, identity,” and he explains that “value granted to one person by another, it came to signify someone’s acknowledgment of his own actions and thoughts” (58). In this sense, Edmond’s confession shows a fragile self-caught in a pervasive system of power relations. This depicts his interest in the possibility of self-constituting subject. By confession, he wants to challenge for freedom; in this sense, he attempts to care of his self. The care of the self is a practice of self-formation and ethical exercises in which he frees himself not by socially-constructed norms, but by his ethical exercises.

By drawing on Foucault’s belief on the productivity of power, Edmond feels a degree of autonomy and independence to his actions after his challenges for future freedom. He begs God: “Let me walk out of here and be free” (*Edmond* 1. 21. 267). This indicates that he attempts for a self-transformation; he wants to have a significant shift from his earlier shit life. He can relatively resist and challenge the structure of chaotic culture of America. Therefore, he can potentially challenge the way that he has been constructed by power relations so far. By confession which can be considered as practices of self, he tries to fashion his subjectivity more. It is important to analyze power not just from the idea of mechanisms of domination, but also from perspective of a microphysics of power. In this regard, not only is the self-constructed in the interaction of power relations, but also it has sources of resistance and self-creation. Edmond takes challenges and tries to transform his self through practices of self and confession; however, his identity is also under the surveillance of power. Now he has an inner fight, and begs God for help.

At the beginning of the play, Edmond seeks for his self-fulfillment through lust, greed and violence to the way that he goes astray. When he is imprisoned, he begins practices of self because he feels lonely and bored of his shit life. Therefore, he tries to confess and begins practices of self in prison. Indeed, he practices to find freedom because he seeks to find his soul. Although this type of self-mastery gives access to a form of an active freedom, this freedom is finally determined by cultural constraints. According to Foucault, in *History of Sexuality vol. 2*, “a freedom that was indissociable from a structural, instrumental and ontological relation to truth” (92). In this regard, individuals might have a degree of choice to prove their existence; however, such practices achieved through self-mastery are always conditioned and determined by the socio-cultural environment. In other words, individuals can actively construct their own identities and may escape from whatever culture imposed on them through certain practices of self and techniques. Although the practices of the self-let the individual actively fashion himself, these practices of self are not freely chosen. For Foucault, in “The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom,” practices of self are “not something invented by the individual himself. They are models that he finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by culture, his society, and his social group” (12). Indeed, Foucault’s notions on the concept of the self, shows that he tries to give a degree of self-determination to individuals without denying his view of the subject.

Thus, although at first Edmond despises black people, he seeks to find his freedom through his friendship with the African-American prisoner. His dialogue with the black prisoner depicts that Edmond gradually feels peace. They talk gently about the mystery of life, and it seems that they have the same ideas now. At the end, we see Edmond stands up, embraces the black prisoner, kisses him gently, and they say goodnight. The punishment is performed in mind and soul of the Edmond. Actually this is where Foucault, in *Discipline and Punishment*, considers the soul as the prison of the body and states that “power exercises over the body. The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body” (30). Edmond tries to strip away from his past assumptions to be able recreate his identity through participating in power relations.

Conclusion

Power is not an object in the hands of someone or a group. Therefore, power is exercised by individuals or institutions in which stand at different directions within the power structure. Foucault elaborates that power comes from the below; it means there is no binary here and the all-encompassing bipolar oppositions between the ruler and the rules is replaced by a complex matrix of power relations. Power is tied with resistance; in a sense, resistance is the inherent characteristic of power. In *Edmond*,

characters are supervised by the relations of power that define their identities. They are in a world that is supervised by the disciplinary order of panopticism. Characters operate in a system which is governed by power relations; therefore, they are subjected to power. The characters attempt to construct their own identities; however, they are in a panopticon society whose relationships are monitored. Although they try to choose what they want, their identities are shaped by relations of power in society.

Further, the primary function of modern disciplinary institutions is to correct abnormal behavior. An individual who does not conform to standards of society will be restrained to be subjected to norms as a docile body again. After losing his place in relation to his wife, Edmond feels emasculated. For construction of his identity, he tries to have a woman to get laid. He begins his journey to New York in desire of finding his identity; however, he is trapped in difficulties due to his criminal activities. Because he does not try to care of the other individuals in power relation, he is doomed to be punished. After imprisoned, Edmond is subjected as a docile body, and his identity is constructed in accordance with his socio-cultural relationships.

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