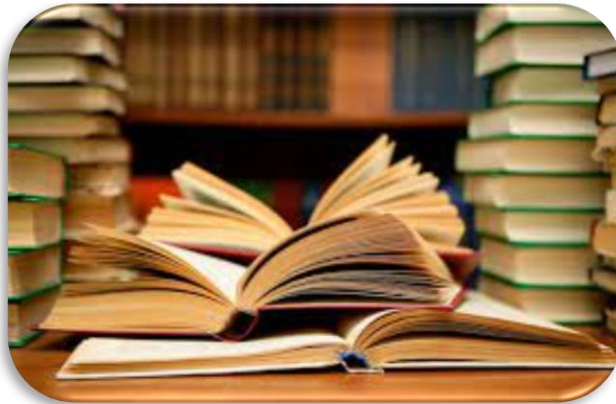


Review Paper



Power and Identity: A Case Study on David Mamet's *Boston Marriage*

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ABSTRACT

This research is an endeavor to shed light on the issues about the mechanism of power and its sociological implications in David Mamet's *Boston Marriage* based on Michel Foucault's views. Power circulates everywhere, or rather as something functioning in the form of a chain so that it is not repressive; rather it is productive and described as biopower. Furthermore, an individual's identity is constructed through social relations over which he/she has less control. In this regard, the center of the discussion is on the concepts of power and identity, subjectivity and relational freedom. Therefore, Mamet's characters live in a special social, and cultural system with which mould their identities. The research demonstrates how Foucault's views about sexuality as an instrument for biopower are shown in Mamet's work to control and regulate individuals. The result shows that individuals attempt to put up much resistance against the authorities via the techniques and practices of self. However, their relational freedom is particularly determined by cultural constraints that are in the discursive regime of truth. Mamet's characters are the products of the regime not a pre-given entity. Thus, the disciplinary control over their bodies and souls both subjugates individuals and constructs their subjectivities.

Keywords: Biopower; Identity; Relational freedom; Subjectivity

بررسی قدرت و هویت در اثر ازدواج بوستونی دیوید مامت

در این تحقیق قصد داریم به مسائل و موضوعات مربوط به قدرت و آثار جامعه شناختی آن در اثر دیوید مامت تحت عنوان ازدواج بوستونی از دیدگاه میشل فوکو بپردازیم. قدرت در هر جایی جریان داشته یا آنچه بوده که به صورت زنجیره عمل کرده به طوری که قدرت عامل سرکوب نبوده بلکه عامل تولید بوده و لذا از آن به عنوان قدرت زیستی یاد می کنند. چنین هویتی از طریق مناسبات اجتماعی شکل می گیرد که افراد کنترل کمتری روی آنها دارند. در همین راستا محوریت بحث پیرامون همین مفاهیم قدرت، هویت، فردیت و آزادی ارتباطی قرار گرفته است. بنابراین شخصیت های ممت در نظام اجتماعی و فرهنگی خاصی زندگی می کنند که به هویت آنها شکل و حالت می دهند. نتایج تحقیق حاکی از آن است که به چه نحوی ممت در اثر خود دیدگاه های فوکو در رابطه با مسائل جنسی به عنوان ابزار اعمال قدرت زیستی را بکار می گیرد تا افراد را بدین ترتیب تحت کنترل و نظارت قرار بگیرند. تحقیق حاضر این موضوع را نشان می دهد که افراد سعی می کنند با استفاده از روش ها و فنون خود، در برابر قدرت حاکم تا حد زیادی مقاومت کنند. هر چند آزادی ارتباطی آنها در عمل متأثر از عوامل فرهنگی بوده که آنها نیز به نوبه خود در رژیم حقیقت گفتمان حاکم قرار دارند. شخصیت های ممت نه تنها متأثر از هر موجودیت از قبل تعیین شده نبوده بلکه خود محصول همین رژیم حقیقت می باشند. لذا آن کنترل انضباطی که روی جسم و روح آنها صورت می گیرد از یک سو باعث مطیع شدن آنان شده و از سوی دیگر نیز فردیت آنها را بوجود می آورد.

واژگان کلیدی: قدرت زیستی، هویت، آزادی ارتباطی، فردیت

INTRODUCTION

David Mamet (1947) is an American Pulitzer Prize-winning essayist, screenwriter, film director, and playwright. Mamet's writing style is based on Mamet speak. It is characterized by a cynical, street-smart, and precisely crafted for effect, so distinct that it is called Mamet or Mametesque. He often uses quotation marks and italics to highlight specific words to draw attention to the repeated manipulations and tricks of her characters in the use of language (French, 2004).

Regarding, the present study focuses on the play written in the modern world through the lens of power and its technologies for exercising on individuals. The significance of this study, as a result, can be to clarify Foucault's notion regarding various kinds of power including disciplinary and biopower in the contemporary world. It also aims to investigate how social strategies are used to control and influence individuals. By means of biopower which is a technology of power regulating human subjects as a population.

In this regard, biopower which is power over life, on the one hand, focuses on making individuals subjected to through discipline. On the other hand, regulating and manipulating population. Accordingly, biopolitics is a technology of power connected to biopower. Since Foucault's notion of these technologies of power has not worked on *Boston Marriage* before, this study aims to show how Foucault's notion of various kinds of power intersects with Mamet's selected work. The significance of this study, as a result, is to show how individuals' identity and subjectivity is in accordance with the mechanism of power and truth. Individuals find themselves subjected in the discursive and social relations.

Further, what distinguishes this research is the concept of freedom which is relational. This research aims to depict that freedom can be seen primarily as a structural condition of power. Freedom refers to possible actions or a field of possibilities. Freedom and power are not described in opposition to each other, but are conditions of each other. Foucault defines freedom relationally; in this sense, there is no basic state of freedom, only a defined social and political relationship.

Therefore, the concentration is on the relational aspect of freedom. Freedom is not an absolute state to be achieved, and cannot be an inherent characteristic of being human. Freedom is a political domain in which appears simultaneously within the networks of power between the subjects of power. Although Foucault puts emphasis on the domination and subjection of the individual through normalizing discourses and practice; he opens a certain degree for freedom and resistance in which he postpones it to future. Freedom can be seen as a practice of self; however, there is not ultimate access to it. Practices of the self and techniques of domination are like two sides of the same coin that exist simultaneously in tension with each other. Thus, this research attempts to depict its significance by finding the traces of the different technologies of power in the society and their effects on the individual's subjectivity and freedom.

With reference to, this research tries to show how the characters of *Boston Marriage* (1999) try to live and enjoy life based on the views of Foucault (1926-1984). Foucault observes that there are different kinds of power such as sovereign power and disciplinary power[2]. Despite the past, individuals were subject to the sovereign power of the monarch, disciplinary power has extended its roots everywhere in modern society.



DISCUSSION

Certain individuals depart from the line of authority and want to shape their future according to their light but they are not appreciated and are deemed to show deviant behavior. They are even termed rebels. Some strong individuals appear successful in resisting the ruling ideology while others are silenced and turn into docile bodies by means of social forces. Biopower, for Foucault, is an essentially modern form of power and its purpose is to exert a positive influence on life, to optimize and multiply life, by subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations. Foucault disagrees with the classical sovereign power exercised mainly as a means of deduction, the seizing of things, time, bodies, life and ultimately giving death. Foucault, in *History of Sexuality Vol.1* (Foucault, 1987), states that the sovereign power or the juridical-institutional power is formulated as: “The power of life and death was in reality the right to take life or to let life”(Foucault, 1987). In this way, sovereign or juridical power exercises one’s right to life only by exercising the same right to kill.

However, since the seventeenth century, the West has experienced a transformation in terms of mechanisms of power. Gradually, the violent and severe sovereign power is replaced by the power Foucault calls biopower. The significant point is that there is no longer a matter of death used to be in the field of sovereignty. Little by little, power becomes the matter of generating, growing and ordering forces in order to maintain and develop life in the domain of value and utility. The sovereign power is replaced by biopower to generate life and its task is to take charge of a life that needs a continuous regulatory and corrective mechanism. The logic of biopower is not a deduction but production: “It exerts a positive influence on life, endeavors to administer, optimize, and multiply it” (Foucault, 1987). Biopower replaces the right to “take life and let live” with that of a power to foster life—or disallow it to the point of death (Foucault, 1987).

Instead of being exercised through law and violence, biopower is exercised through the normalizing biological, psychological, and social technologies – through the methods of power capable of optimizing forces, aptitudes, and life in general. Unlike sovereign power, biopower does not celebrate death rather it attempts to be productive and exclude it (Ojakangas, 2005). Instead of death, the focus of biopower is on individuals’ birth. In this regard, not only does a biopower control body into the machinery of production but also it adjusts population to economic processes (Rabinow & Rose, 2006). Simultaneously, this leads to docility and it has techniques of power to optimize aptitudes, forces and life and operates in the sphere of economic process (Boden & Epstein, 2006). Thus, the growth of productive forces and the allocation of profit have been possible by the exercise of biopower.

As a result of the evolution from sovereign power to biopower, the correlation between power and knowledge is important. Knowledge of regulating individuals and populations and governing them is at disposal of a government. As such, the term governmentality, coined by Foucault, refers to the combination of government and rationality. Governmentality refers to all exercises a government uses to control and govern the population. Through governmentality, the relationship between the subject, sovereign changes, and the modern state does not own its subjects.

The modern state strives to discipline the subjects and make them internalize the presence of power so that they police themselves. Due to this shift from sovereign to biopower, the form of government transfers from the sovereign’s “power of life and death” to the modern state of a “life-administering



power” (Foucault, 1987). Now, the formidable power of death changes the power of life and has a positive influence on life so that it can administer and optimize it. Through his approach to power and social relations, Foucault also questions the predominant hypothesis about sexuality as the natural expression of individual sexual instincts or desires.

Foucault opposes this notion and argues that sexuality is not repressed but is actively produced: “The institutions [...] prompt people to speak about it [...] discursive fact, how sex is put into discourse” (Foucault, 1987). It is spoken and written in our cultures and this shows the “polymorphous techniques of power” (Foucault, 1987). In other words, it shows how the mechanism of power is productive and is the power of life, “a regulated and polymorphous incitement to discourse” (ibid 34). Sexuality comes into language, knowledge practices, and institutions seeking to speak about and regulate it. Not only do the human sciences such as medicine, psychology, anthropology, sociology, and education help incite discourse, but also bring sexuality into being as a social practice at the same time. The discourse that these disciplines use to speak, describe and define sexuality helps the establishment of assumptions that allow sexuality to be discussed.

Further, disciplinary discourses on personal conduct emerged to make individuals categorize, evaluate and discipline themselves and others. These social and political disciplines emerged for the regulation and proper management of health and sexual reproduction known as biopower. There are multiple and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations that marks the beginning of the age of biopower. Sex education in schools, legislation to support family life, child care, school system, and surveys of population fertility are examples of modern systems of local and international government to regulate and control biopower. Biopower can be thought of as a social and political investment in the regulation and proper management of health and sexuality; in other words, it is the relationship between life and politics.

Further, instead of using violence and menace to force conformity, new technologies of power are used to control individuals by shaping them as subjects. For Foucault, subjectivity, power and ethics inherently have something in common. He explores how an individual is made subject to dynamics of power and truth. The important point regarding his work is that subjectivity is a complicated product instead of a pre-given condition. The subject is neither something given nor a necessary condition; rather, the subject is produced. Foucault attempts to display that the subject is constituted in history. Foucault opposes to the self-sufficient Cartesian ego, and he wants to show that the self is constructed. He tries to show that the self is constructed by the techniques that shape it.

In this sense, Foucault elaborates that “no transcendental constitution would impose the form of the subject,” my goal is to purge it of any transcendental narcissism (Foucault, 2002). He adds that we must rid ourselves of the constituent subject, in order to get rid ourselves of the subject itself, and arrive at an analysis that can explain the structure of the subject in a historical context. For him, the subject is understood as a historical product. Therefore, the subject is the product of discourse instead of being a pre-given entity; discourse produces the subject. The disciplinary control of the body both subjugates individuals and constructs their subjectivity. The individual is carefully constructed by social institutions. When Foucault claims that our subjectivity is historical, it means it is manufactured by discourse and practices. The point is that habits determine subjectivity because conditioned behavior changes attitudes and induces new attitudes.



Further, an individual experiences the world in a specific way as a result of certain behaviors, being classified in certain ways and being treated in certain ways. Care of the self is a practice of self-formation and ethical exercises in which one frees himself not only by socially-constructed norms; but by his ethical exercises. Therefore, it is important to analyze power not just from the idea of mechanisms of domination, but also from perspective of microphysics of power. According to Foucault, his notion of power is positive, and when he states that power is everywhere in contemporary society, he does not consider that domination is universal. Instead, he means that power relations are preliminary for the establishment of social relations. In other words, not only the self is constructed in the interaction of power relations, but also it has sources of resistance and self-creation.

In this regard, for Foucault, in *The Final Foucault* (1988), believes that freedom is important in power relations and can only operate between free people. He points out that power relations cannot exist unless the individuals are free. If one were completely at the disposal of the other and became his object, he can exercise unlimited violence: "There would not be relations of power. In order to exercise relation of power, there must be on both sides at least certain form of liberty" (Bernauer & Rasmussen, 1988). It means that practices of the self are related to the power relations, and individuals can autonomously order their lives and try to influence other individuals. Individuals may construct new forms of subjectivity based on their future challenges.

Similarly, in *Politics Philosophy Culture: Interviews and Other Writings 1977-1984* (1988), Foucault states that "the subject is constituted through practices of subjection, or, in a more autonomous way, through practices of liberation, of liberty, as in Antiquity, on the basis, of course, of a number of rules, styles, inventions to be found in the cultural environment (Foucault, 1987). For Foucault, although this type of self-mastery gives access to a form of an active freedom, this freedom is finally determined by cultural constraints. The freedom that was inseparable from the "structural, instrumental and ontological relation to truth" (Foucault, 1985). 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.

Therefore, he believes that human identity is a discourse related to interaction with others. Therefore, he decides to show how individuals' identities are not fixed, and they are related to specific discourses. An individual's identity is related to his interaction with others. 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; therefore, he attempts to give a political meaning to identity. Considering identity as something which is inherent and fixed is the classical view of identity. Foucault, in *The Foucault Reader* (1984), denies the classical thought about the subject as a rational being with a fixed essence and argues that: "Nothing in man - not even his body - is stable to serve as a basis for self-recognition or for understanding others" (Foucault, 1984). He denies the view that a person has an inner and fixed identity.

For Foucault, subjects' identities are constructed through the networks of power: "This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual," marks him by his own individuality, binds him to his own identity and explains that the law imposes upon him a truth which he must recognize and others must recognize in him (Foucault, 1982). In other words, identity is an important instrument for powerful strategies to make individuals subjects.



Biopower in Mamet's *Boston Marriage*

Sexuality is seen as a natural aspect of the individual's life and it is censored and hidden in the seventeenth century. However, Foucault opposes the repressive hypothesis and claims that the evidence from the nineteenth century shows a significant increase in discourses about sexuality so far. Foucault argues that sexuality is not a natural feature of an individual's life. Rather, it is a cultural, social, historical product. In this sense, unlike his previous male plays, Mamet changes completely to appease his critics and writes *Boston Marriage* to prove that he can write for women. He shows how sexuality is considered as a cultural and social product in the disciplinary society of *Boston Marriage* (Mamet, 2000).

Mamet and Foucault are like minded on their description of sexuality; they see sexuality is not something that exists in opposition to power. Mamet tries to show how Anna and Claire's sexual-orientation is in relation to other power relations. Sexuality is one of the most instrumental and useful for the greatest number of maneuvers and can act as a point of support for various strategies. It means that sexuality is the site of power which is linked to its targets (Mamet, 2000).

In this way, power is exercised on sexuality, Anna and Claire become the principal subjects of such politics. By drawing on Foucault's view, Mamet tries to show that sexuality is not "disobedient to power;" rather, it is fundamental for power relations between men and women (Mamet, 2000). Therefore, Mamet shows how Anna and Claire express their sexual-orientation in society. Because the society opposes on them, they live in their own community far from the others. What Mamet wants to show in this play is not the matter of being lesbian, but he shows the repression that impedes their living.

Anna and Claire must live in exile because they are seen as abnormal individuals by marriage institutions in which this discourse of knowledge originates in the heterosexual society. They are seen as perverse from the view of the society, and due to this reputation, they are in exile. Anna cries: "Fell circumstance. Oh, how you chastise my presumption. I am undone. My protector will withdraw his stipend as my love, and I shall starve, the hollow percussion of my purse, a descant to that of my broken heart. But once I was young and world before me. Once men were other than depraved swine time and experience have revealed them to be. Once the world was to me a magic place... I was a Little Girl, Oh, once" (Mamet, 2000). She suffers from an identity which is constructed by a system which oppresses others.

Accordingly, Anna wishes she could be what she is, but her actions are under the supervision of the disciplinary society. We see that the contemporary culture and social structure of *Boston Marriage* affects individuals. Therefore, sexual behavior is not fixed or predetermined; rather, it is something actively constructed by society. Sexuality is not an innate or natural characteristic, but it is something learned through social interaction. One way to understand power is to think of power as top-down and vertical, where the person with authority at the top wields it to prevent or restrain the actions of those at the bottom. However, Foucault questions this view of power. Foucault's concept of biopower leads us to think of power as a horizontal line, instead of the traditional vertical axis. Seeing power in this way allows us to consider the productive value of power rather than its ability to control or suppress in its top-down way. Considering biopower, individuals may shape and mold their subjectivity.

Accordingly, human sexuality and gender diversity can be discussed within gender studies and power disciplines in which individuals define and shape themselves. Individuals try to resolve their sexually-oriented issues; however, the disciplinary forms of power always supervise them and establish norms in



societies in which they are expected to conform to them. Foucault's definition of power and the potential for resistance and transformation can be a progressive movement to explain the gender and identity. Therefore, Foucauldian biopower is shown from a gender perspective.

In this regard, Anna and Claire are two lesbians, in *Boston Marriage* (Mamet, 2000), who want to express their sexual-orientations, and Mamet attempts to show this abnormal orientation in terms of gender and gender identity as shaped by bio-power. The two lesbians are talking about Anna's new lover: "I know that he is rich. That he has been abroad, and that he, willy-nilly, delights in regaling me with various kichshaws significant of the esteem in which he holds me," and Claire, in turn, responds that "...may it continue. [...] Has he, for example, a wife (Mamet, 2000).

Further, Anna and Claire chatted about the man (Anna's lover) who is very rich and spends a lot of money on Anna. Claire asks Anna if he has a wife and Anna answers confidentially that "Why would he require a mistress if he had no wife? Of course he has a wife. But does this "wife" hold his affection? Does she wear The Jewel, magnificently wrought, unique in the world?" (Mamet, 2000). Anna believes that there is no reason not to have a mistress if he has a wife. This shows that Mamet makes use of gender and the power of sex to highlight the biopower by which a woman can get what she wants.

Therefore, it is a sort of strategy that a woman like Anna exploits to achieve her goals. In this case, Foucault, in *History of sexuality Vol 1*, says: "Hence there was an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies [...]. The philosophy of the ideologists, is a theory of ideas, signs, and the individual genesis of sensation, but also a theory of the social composition of interest-ideology" (Foucault, 1978). Foucault wants to declare that the subjugation of bodies and control of people is possible by using the new ideology of bio-power. Bodies are under the influence of their sexuality and many other forces. Anna uses this ideology, bio-power, to control the love of the rich man. When a woman is to act based on her defined gender roles, she is managed by a sort of bio-power. However, Claire is jealous of her because she is in love with Anna; therefore, she asks her "does he not know...does he not know your ..."reputation"? (Mamet, 2000). This shows that Anna is under the gaze of a disciplinary society.

Further, Anna and Claire complain about the cruelty of the world, and attempt to move from a position of dependent to a power position. Therefore, Anna finds that there is only one way to fight submission which is to use the rich man as her financial protector:

ANNA. I come into funds, my FIRST THOUGHT, do you see? Is it for myself? It is for you. Do I expect thanks? I would be glad of mute appreciation. I receive nothing but tale of your new rutting. (Pause) oh how you make me feel. How small. For how can one cherish, nay, how can one respect one, however well formed, who acts so arbitrarily cruel? But yes, [...] the world's betrayal is it not? we are sentenced to strive in the world. (Pause)

CLAIRE. I'm sorry, what [...] Did I miss anything? (Pause)

ANNA. I poured out any heart blood.

CLAIRE. Oh ... [...] I've forgotten what I was going to say.

ANNA. Say something else. (Pause)

CLAIRE. How practical you are.

ANNA. For what is speech?



CLAIRE. I had thought, it is as the chirping of birds, minus their laughable disinterestedness.

ANNA. Oh what a vast, oh what vast and pointless shithole it all is.

CLAIRE. What would that be?

ANNA. Our lives. (Mamet, 2000)

Anna and Claire are talking about Anna's new love, and they refer to the cruelty of the world in which they are sentenced. Anna wants to reveal that the power is to be imposed on their lives and they act uncontrollably and without any choice.

In this way, Anna and Claire discuss about Anna's new lover who is a married man and pays off all Anna's debts, giving expensive gifts and money to Anna. As Anna says, he provides her a "monthly stipend," it is enough to help both her and Claire in comfort" (Mamet, 2000). She finds the only defense against the cruelty of the world is to use the rich man as a financial supporter. Although Anna pursues her new relationship with the rich man, to provide financial security for her and Claire, she is not happy to be with a man. Because Anna loves Claire, she does not want Claire to be with a new lover when she requests Anna to meet her new lover in Anna's house. Therefore, she tells Claire that the reason that she is with the rich man is that "I did it for you, you ill-conditioned sow. I did it for the cause. He is a man. What possible joy and diversion for *me* in this arrangement?" (Mamet, 2000).

Additionally, Anna and Claire complain about the opposite sex, and create their own community. They want to be with each other in order to be strong enough against the opposite sex. However, based on the heterosexual society's norms, the love between Anna and Claire is abnormal and unusual. In this play, for Anna, "men live but deceived [...] Well, what have I done to deceive him?" (Mamet, 2000). She lies that she is heterosexual and tries to sexually attract him. Anna is so happy that she has the capacity to have a rich man, although she does not love him. She uses her gender role which is represented in biopower to deceive the rich man and proudly says that "my protector loves me. He requires my aid. How to continue with me when all the world conspires to the contrary" (Mamet, 2000). The rich man wants to continue his relationship with her, but the norms of society does not allow such action.

Anna tries to deceive the rich man: "For men live to be deceived. They would rather be deceived than sated. We shall prevail" (Mamet, 2000). Similarly, Claire thinks that men are responsible for the cruelty imposed on women. She thinks that they are betrayers who tell lies and exploit women; therefore, they are deserved to be deceived. She complains about their condition and expresses her resistance against men: "All undone by Men [...]. I opined, [...] I made fair to make common cause with you, and do you see? You, ravaged and abandoned. Myself done out of my birthright. By Men. (*To MAID*) Where are you rushing to? (Mamet, 2000). Anna and Claire decide to be with each other and make their own community.

Therefore, Anna believes in the disciplinary power which is penetrated into the different layers of a society. Individuals are sentenced by the power (bio-power) through which sexuality and sexual behaviors are defined. As Foucault and Mamet are like-minded, they believe in breaking the norms; however, power as a determining factor forms a kind of bio-power through which a woman like Anna should be distanced from her love. Due to productivity of bio-power, Anna tries to use this kind of power imposed on the body to reveal her freedom, choice, and liberal conformity, although her identity and freedom is constructed by socio-cultural environment. Anna's and Claire's words about men and their love are quoted as follows:



ANNA. A man gave it to me.

CLAIRE. A man.

ANNA. They do have such hope for the mercantile.

CLAIRE. And those hopes o rarely disappointed.

ANNA. Well, we do love shiny things. [...] The Jewel.

CLAIRE. Yes.

ANNA. Not only is it real, and it is a Family Heirloom.

CLAIRE. An Heiroloom. How better-than-good!

ANNA. Been in his family five generations.

CLAIRE. O finders Keepers. Well done!

ANNA. Only conceive, I pray you that the jewel is real, my debts are cleared, I have an account at Dressmaker's, and he has settled upon me, into the bargain, a monthly stipend... (Mamet, 2000).

Anna believes that the rich man can protect her in terms of her comfort and cost of living; however, Claire does not believe the man's love and even his successful business.

The modern mechanism of power, here, is to give the Jewel to a woman with no good reputation. In this regard, Foucault, in *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College de France 1977- 1978* (2007), says:

Not in a way that would amount. To say that, finally understanding the importance of the population, the ruling classes set naturalists to work in this area, who mutated into biologists as a result, grammarians who were consequently transformed in philologists, and financiers who became economists. It did not take place like this, but in the following form: Constant interplay between techniques of power and their object gradually carves out in reality, as field of realty, population, and its specific phenomena. A whole series of objects were made visible for possible forms of knowledge based on the constitution of the population as the correlate of techniques of power. Because their forms of knowledge carve out new objects, population could be formed, continue, and remain as privileged correlate of modern mechanisms of power (Foucault, 1985).

Foucault believes in the object of power that in the play is Anna's greediness and her body in which they are at the service of power. Anna's knowledge about the mechanism of power is that she can be sexually attracted to the rich man and the rich man in return can provide her with a lot of pleasure and comfort.

Therefore, Mamet and Foucault concentrate on the same mechanism of power, that is, bio-power; more specifically, Anna refers to the man as a protector who can bring her comfortable life by serving him sexually. Thus, it can be inferred that Mamet wants to focus on the strength of bio-power that serves the woman or the women positively. As noted earlier, power can be positive and negative; that is, here bio-power or its mechanism can be positive for Anna who looks for a comfortable life by which she can live a long life without any concern for the unknown future.

Anna and Claire's Identity

Foucault, in his last works, *The Use of Pleasure* (Foucault, 1985) and *The Care of the Self* (Foucault, 1986). and several interviews, raises the question of how people make themselves as ethical beings. His



concentration in these works is sexuality and sensual pleasure; in this sense, he elaborates his notion of identity and subjectivity. He argues that the current belief that sexuality is an important and unavoidable aspect of a human life. Mental and physical health requires that one's sexuality be carefully analyzed, and managed due to a series of changes in power relations occurred over the past three centuries. Sexual identities such as heterosexual and homosexual are not natural kinds; rather, they are social phenomena constructed due to changing power relations.

In fact, sexual identities and other important aspects of our existence are historically contingent. Foucault attempts to explain that they are constituted in history; it does not mean that we can change them at our will. By understanding different aspects of ourselves and our societies as historical event, we can find out the individual's subjectivity is culturally produced. It means that the individual is subject to the regulations of other individuals and institutions. In this sense, Claire cries for their imposed condition and says, "but perhaps they'll come again. Perhaps my Love, and perhaps your Protector. [...] probably they approach now. Yes, as all things can be mended by wishing; as a child, mangled by cart, can be made whole by apology. You fucked my life into a cocked hat" (Mamet, 2000).

Therefore, due to patriarchal society, Anna and Claire decide to make their own community and be in exile far from the norms that the society imposed on women. As Anna describes, "we shall end life together, old and friendless, desired by no one, devoid of all save memory, and these most wistful of words" (Mamet, 2000). By drawing on Foucault's view regarding subjectivity, this brings to mind Simone de Beauvoir's famous phrase, in *The Second Sex*, that "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (De Beauvoir, 1949). It means that women are defined by society, culture and history as we explained earlier. Indeed, by expressing this famous phrase, de Beauvoir wants to criticize patriarchal institutions. Instead of rejecting 'otherness' which is an imposed cultural construct, she recommends that women should cultivate it as a source of self-knowledge and expression and resist against the patriarchal institutions.

In this sense, Anna attempts to be a free woman who resists to be possessed. The temptations of love, financial security, and the sense of purpose or status that come with a man are all provided for her; however, she should extend her effort toward the man to choose the path of independence. Anna and Claire attempt to experience subjectivity and be conscious by means of self-overcoming or self-creation as a way of life. Although the rich man is he protector, Anna and Claire decide to plan a *séance* to deceive him:

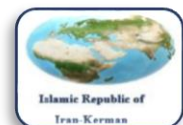
ANNA. What have I done but to deceive him? My protector loves me. He requires my *aid*. How to continue with me when all the world conspires to the contrary. We will mint for him his excuse. And our poor simpering efforts will, once again, conquer all. (*Pause*)

CLAIRE. I have underestimated you.

ANNA. I'm quite aware of it. Oh, my word: we shall have a *séance*. Eh? Eh? (Mamet, 2000).

Anna is so bright who tries to design a plan to use the opportunity to change her life for better by means of technologies of power and self-construction.

As just described, Anna and Claire are expected to act based on their gender roles in society. However, they show their resistance to patriarchal norms. They attempt to stylize their life to the way that they can be independent. Then, through the interplay of power relations, we see the exchange of positions. The rich man finds the reality of Anna's life, and asks her to return the jewel; however, she asserts that the



jewel is stolen. The rich man does not believe and threatens her that if she does not return it back, he will report her as a thief. After a while, it becomes clear that the story of robbery is a lie. By this technique of power that Anna utilizes, she wins Claire back.

Then, when Claire understands such a story is only a lie to make her return to Anna, she returns back.

Their words are quoted as follows:

ANNA. And you returned to me.

CLAIRE. With all my heart.

ANNA. But will your feelings never change?

CLAIRE. That is not within my gift. But I will never leave you. Might that do?

ANNA. I am content. (Mamet, 2000)

By means of technologies of biopower, Anna wins to return Claire back. They decide to bond their relationship stronger than before in order to be independent and find their subjectivity by practices of self. Anna and Claire are considered as deviants due to their sexual orientation. They live in a heterosexual society that rejects the homosexual; therefore, they are forced to go into exile and live together.

Accordingly, the Foucauldian subject is one in which there is no natural, pre-given identity to which we might be able to endow with particular rights; this type of subject does not have any fixed and permanent features because it is always changing, re-creating and re-forming. Since sexuality is initially assumed to be heterosexual, Anna and Claire need to explain an experience which is not related to the others. Their subjectivity is about finding a context to transcend a marginalized position and search for their sexual identity.

Anna and Claire refuse the imposition of heterosexuality on their subjectivity. They attempt to create relational possibilities through ethical self-creation. They engage in a meaningful ethics of self-creation and recreation through the habitual practice of the self. Thus, although Anna and Claire attempt to construct their identities and may escape from whatever culture imposed on them through certain practices of self, these practices of self are not freely chosen. In other words, the Foucauldian subjects have a degree of self-determination and their subjectivity is a cultural rather than a natural entity.

Technologies of the Self: A Potential Challenge for Self-Creation

By means of technologies of the self, Anna contributes to her way of discourse. Practices of self aim at transformation. Our understanding of self and identity always develops in cultural and historical contexts. Self-transformation requires criticism of social and historical conditions and norms. An individual engages in practices of the self to make self-transformation in a social context. Practices of the self are based on the rules, methods, and customs of one's culture, but are practices of freedom as well, that is, they create new nonnormalizing ways of existence and relationships. Practices of freedom are ethical practices that need working on oneself on oneself. Work of oneself takes place in social and historical contexts, but with the aim of understanding how that context constructs us, and with a view to social and political change.

In this regard, Claire believes that Anna is exploited by the rich man, but Anna does not think in this way. Anna attempts to care of herself by means of technologies of the self. She contributes to her own



self-creation by means of certain number of operations on her own body, soul and thought. She tends to transform herself to achieve a certain state of perfection, wisdom and happiness. When Anna sets up to have a séance with the rich man and his daughter, she tries to use pearls of wisdom to gain an advantage in her negotiation: “We shall deluge them with, folk wisdom. Women’s wisdom, do you see? [...]. Let it extract us from the difficulties. I shall adopt it as that axiom which rules my life” (Mamet, 2000). By means of technologies and practices, she attempts to transform herself and finds her own self or identity into different activities.

Accordingly, since she is caught up in power relations, she interacts with others, and potentially takes the effects of her interactions. Therefore, social and individual contexts are such environments for the self practices. Anna wants to produce a particular mode of identity by methods of self-discipline, self-disclosure and self-contemplation. Their discussion is quoted as follows:

CLAIRE. You must keep it, of course.

ANNA. The Jewel. I cannot.

CLAIRE. You Must.

ANNA. How can I?

CLAIRE. He gave it to you.

ANAN. It was not his to give.

CLAIRE. Are our possessions, and our joys, but loaned on *sufferance*, and subject to the whim of men? He’s broke his promise. He’s deceived you. He’s had using your body, and paid for it with stolen goods. For God’s sake keep the necklace

ANNA. You are distraught. [...] Doth not the Bible teach us to leave ungleaned the corners of fields.

CLAIRE. I have no idea. (Mamet, 2000)

By practices of the self, Anna concerns her body, soul, and happiness. She uses practices of the self concerning her body and soul in order to become an art of existence. Claire worries about their condition, and she feels wretch. In this regard, Claire asks Anna “are you not, then, chilled by the spectre of poverty?,” but Anna does not feel unhappy and answers “if we have enough to eat, suitably cut raiment and shelter from the storm, why do we care (Mamet, 2000).

Anna and Claire’s confession is a practice of self. The act of confession makes the bond between Claire and Anna stronger. Claire decides to tell the truth about herself to constitute herself through confession.

CLAIRE. You shall guide me—for you are gifted to move in the world I cannot see. The world you see is not cruel, and possessing neither falsity nor guile. [...]

ANNA. And you are returned to me.

CLAIRE. With all my heart.

ANNA. But will your feelings never change?

CLAIRE. That is not within my gift. But I will never leave you. Might that do?

ANNA. I am content.

CLAIRE. Then I count the day a triumph. (Mamet, 2000)

Indeed, confession is related to subject’s participation in self-construction. Through the process of confession, Claire wants to achieve a certain degree of subjectivity and freedom. By means of confession, Claire expresses her desires and thoughts in order to connect to her own identity. What is more, because



Claire's confession is compulsory and happens due to the patriarchal society, it reinforces her dominance, too. Claire and Anna become subjects whose subjectivities are shaped and limited by social norms.

Relational Freedom for Anna and Claire

The visible representation of power depends on a subject's choice of freedom and rational choice through which he can feel himself. The power can be represented through hidden devices which can be the choices of a subject. For Foucault, in *History of Sexuality Vol.3* (1986), this examination is a "test of power and a guarantee of freedom," and it is a way to make sure that one will not become dependent on something that is not under our control (Foucault, 1985). Constantly monitoring one's representations is not to inquire into the deep origins of the idea that presents itself; however, "it is to assess the relationship between oneself and that which represented, to accept in the relation to the self only that which can depend on the subject's the free and rational choice" (Foucault, 1985). Foucault defends the possibility of freedom and openness to achieve it in future.

The possibilities and differences that the individual uses to stylize his existence based on the values and practices at a given moment are his best practices of self. For Foucault, this self-stylization is a form of self-discipline; therefore, he considers care of the self fundamental for "practice of freedom, in order to know oneself," and forming oneself, surpassing oneself, mastering the appetites that threaten one (Foucault, 1977). It means that self-stylization is a practice in which the individual uses to counteract disciplines and norms imposed upon him in society. Although Foucault puts emphasis on the domination and subjection of the individual through normalizing discourses and practice, he opens a certain degree for freedom and resistance that he postpones it to future.

In this respect, freedom can be considered as a practice of self; however, there is not ultimate access to it. Practices of the self and techniques of domination are like two sides of the same coin that exist simultaneously in tension with each other. Foucault states that it is "a critical ontology of ourselves" (Foucault, 1984). It means that we examine how we think, do, and are what we are; however, with the possible goal of never doing, thinking, and being in the same way again. In this way, we can practice freedom. Practices of freedom do not occur outside social practices or normalizing discourse, but it is possible to create new possibilities.

Further, Foucault states that "it should also be noted that power relations are possible only insofar as the subjects are free" (Foucault, 1977, 1984). For power relations to work there must be at least some degree of freedom on both sides. In other words, there is always the possibility of resistance; if not; there would not be relations of power at all. Therefore, when there is power everywhere, it is because there is freedom everywhere. Anna and Claire choose to live in exile. They resist the boundaries and limitations of society.

They take advantage of opportunities and other people's weaknesses. Just like Mamet's men, they are strong, enthusiastic and satisfied. By drawing on Foucault's view, as much as possible, they try to escape from the type of relationships that society suggests for us and try to create a relationship in the empty space where we are in new relational possibilities. Thus, Foucault sees the possibility of having a relational choice for marginalized groups.



CONCLUSION

The characters are controlled by the power relations that define their identities and subjectivities. They are in a world in which they are to be supervised by the strategy of bio-power and disciplinary order of panopticism. Truth, existence, and real characters operate in a system run by power relations. Foucault describes institutions that have increasingly become more prison-like and are aimed at creating what he calls docile bodies. Anyone who takes a part in society is subjected to power. For example, prisons and marriage institutions supervise personal information in different ways.

In this regard, characters seek to construct their identity; they are in a disciplinary society whose relationships are under supervision. Although they attempt to choose to be what they want, their identities and subjectivities are constructed in accordance with power relations in society. Although the actions of the self allow the individual to actively construct the self, these actions are not freely chosen by the self. It means that practices of self are not invented by the individual himself. They are patterns that he finds in his culture and are suggested to him by his culture, society, and social group.

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