پژوهشگر گرامی

صفحاتی را که مشاهده می‌فرمایید، گزیده‌ای محدود از یک سند پژوهشی طولانی است که شامل:

- صفحه روز جلد
- چکیده فارسی و انگلیسی
- صفحه اول مقدمه

جهت مطالعه دقيق جزئيات بیشتر سند به صورت چاپی به پیگیری پایان‌نامه‌ها در کتابخانه مرکزی و نیز برای مشاهده شکل دیجیتالی آن وارد پنل ذیل شوید:


در صورتی که جزئیات را قم پیدا نمایید، لطفاً به مراجعه به مرکز اطلاع‌رسانی و پشتیبانی دیجیتال کتابخانه مرکزی و مرکز اسناد دانشگاه مراجعه و با نماد پیگیری به‌پرسید.

شماره تلفن: 02133442008
A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of M.A. in English Literature.

Title:
Mechanisms of Power and Power Relations in Oleanna and Venus in Fur

By
Ehsan Barati

Supervisor
Dr. Zakarya Bezdooce

February 2020
In the Name of God
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Abstract
The present research seeks to address David Mamet’s play *Oleanna* (1992) and David Ives’ play *Venus in Fur* (2010) with reference to Michel Foucault’s concepts of power/knowledge, disciplinary power and normalizing power as well as role theory. Both plays in this study are two-hander plays representing power struggle between a man and a woman in two different institutions in the modern society, the setting in *Oleanna* is a university and *Venus in Fur* happens in a theater studio. This thesis demonstrates the mechanism of power relation between men and women, authorities and those who are considered as subordinated in social discourses. The premise of this thesis is that the first step to understand the mechanism of the power in modern institutions (like the two institutions in the subjected plays) is to investigate the predefined and accepted social roles of its members; The roles that are constructed by societies and institutions, and the members who have no other choice than acting the roles for the sake of survival (having a better social position and/or sustaining power). Therefore, in order to explore the origin of the institutional roles and functioning of the power in modern societies, we need to realize how the modern subject is formed. To delve more into the formation of the modern subject, Michel Foucault’s ideas, along with some other concepts of sociologists are of great help. Following that we delve more deeply into Foucault’s ideas about disciplinary power, normalization, surveillance and examination to find out the mechanism of power in modern institutions.

**Key words**: Michel Foucault, Disciplinary Power, Episteme, Role Theory, David Mamet, David Ives.
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Chapter One: Introduction
1.1. General Overview

The present study is intended to analyze the mechanisms of power between men, women, authorities, and those who are considered as subordinated in social discourses by addressing *Oleanna* (1992) by David Mamet and *Venus in Fur* (2010) by David Ives. Despite many Feminists’ and Marxists’ efforts in western societies during recent decades on balancing the power and reaching social equality, there are serious tensions between men, women, authorities, and subordinated groups over power and resources. This issue is comprehended in the two plays and discussed in the present thesis. The present study is an attempt to show power struggle between different members of the society and to reveal the mechanisms of power in western civilized societies through referring to these two plays. The theories used to analyze the two plays are Role Theory as long as with some Foucauldian notions on disciplinary power, power/knowledge, and systems of thoughts throughout western modernization.

In *Oleanna* (1992), John as a male professor and Carol as a female student behave as their social roles requires: at first John is in the domineering position and Carol in the dominated position. But at the end of the play things change and the power moves from one side to the other. Carol goes to John’s office to ask him about the book he has written, she is confused and does not understand his abstruse words in the book. She waits in the office while John is on the phone talking to his wife. All these cues in Act One indicate to the audience that John is in the domineering position and Carol in dominated position. In the next Act power relation between two characters starts to change. In the second Act Carol talks more and does not let John to talk. And in the Third Act Carol has more power over John. Despite the changing of the power relation from John to Carol, at the end of the play John attacks Carol and hits her face which indicates his masculine power and the power which his status has assigned to him.

*Venus in Fur* (2010) written by David Ives is a two-hander play adapted from the Austrian novel written by Leopold von Sacher Masoch with the same title. The play can be considered as a meta-theater and like the novel has an elaborated plot which shows the intense power struggle between the two characters. Thomas, the male character is a theater director who yields himself to the hand of the charming female character, Venda who has come for an audition. It is at the end of a long and exhausting audition day. Venda enters the theater studio as the last person for audition. Thomas asks her to leave because it is late and he
feels tired and has an appointment with his fiancé. But Venda does not leave the studio and rapidly persuades him to stay and test her acting. At the beginning Thomas as the writer and director of the show and Venda as an actress who has come for an audition behave based on their social status, Thomas is in a domineering position and Venda in a dominated position. After sometimes Venda shows her skill in acting and directs some of the scenes. Their relation then becomes somehow complicated which makes it hard to say who is directing, seducing or torturing the other. Finally, at the end of the play Venda completely dominates Thomas. But it seems it was what Thomas really desired, because he enjoys being dominated by Venda.

The formation of modern societies and modern institutions is rooted in early years of the Enlightenment which Foucault calls it Classical age. During and abreast of formation of modernity in the 17th and 18th centuries modern subject was shaped. The new attitude of human being towards world and himself resulted in the concept of self and other. Gradually this new brand of European worldview led humanity into implementing power over nature and other civilizations. Consequently, implementing power in social institutions are utilized and new technics of controlling emerges. Michel Foucault in Discipline and Punish studies modern technics of controlling. He mentions disciplinary power, normalization, observation, and examination which are new types of implementing power without corporal punishment.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The present dissertation seeks to investigate mechanisms of power and power relation between male and female as well as between social status in David Mamet’s Oleanna and David Ives’ Venus in Fur. To do so, and to answer some other questions which this thesis propounds, role theory is presented along with some genealogical thoughts of Michel Foucault about disciplinary power, power/knowledge, episteme and systems of thought throughout western modernization. In genealogy, Foucault analyzes the historical conditions of human development and different episteme, and deals with their relationships with power technologies, how they establish regimes of truth. In fact, Foucault through genealogy centers his study on relation of power with knowledge, system of thoughts and prevailing discourses. Modernity “refers to way of producing and classifying knowledge” and “the
emphasis it gives to the construction of cultural and social identities as part of the formation process.” (Hall, 6). Formation of modernity was accompanied with “construction of a sense of belonging which draws people together into an ‘imagined community’ and the construction of symbolic boundaries which define who does not belong or is excluded from it.” (Hall 6). The structure of modern institutions is a result of construction of modernity, therefore modern institutions construct identities, language, images and symbols which are shared among their member and shape a community different from other institutions. As a result, shared cultural knowledge among members of institutions define their action and behavior. Thus, people with the same social positions in an institution based on shared knowledge among the members, take same social roles and experience same constrains. (Eagly, Wood & Diekman 2000, p. 136). The characters in Oleanna and Venus in Fur, based on shared knowledge, their status and their gender have different social roles, and act according to their social and gender roles. Each social and gender role entails a knowledge structure or a set of beliefs about their and others’ roles.

In the plays studying in this thesis, characters struggle for sustaining or obtaining power. The struggle over power in Oleanna happens between a man whose position is the professor of the collage and a woman who is a student. Their social roles are scripted based on the knowledge structure diffused among them. In Venus in Fur the same power play occurs between a man whose social position is a director and a woman whose social position is an actress. The same power struggle happens between two characters of Venus in Fur, differently, because of masochistic fantasy of the male character.

David Mamet’s Oleanna and David Ives’s Venus in Fur has many things in common, which one can study them comparatively. Although the purpose of this thesis is not a comparative study of these plays. At the beginning of two plays, men are dominant, because power is given to them by their gender and position. However, at the end of both plays women are empowered and men lose the struggle they had started.

Michel Foucault’s notions about disciplinary power, normalization power, observation and examination are great help to analyze the mechanism of power relation in Oleanna and Venus in Fur. In Discipline and Punish, Foucault reveals the implementing and manipulating of the power in modern institutions. In his studying of the history of prison and penal system, Foucault mentions Bentham’s Panopticon, which to Foucault is a metaphor to the way modern
the individuals constructed in institutions through the social roles are so strong that whoever violates them is disciplined and punished not by an almighty power, but by the other members of that society. Therefore, this system of controlling keeps the individuals under pressure and constrain. All characters in both plays are threatened by each other, if they don’t confirm to their social roles. The power in modern institutions as represented in the subjected plays is not always from up to down, it is diffused among the members, it is exercised through its agents, through each of its individuals who are given a specific role, therefore, each role expects some specific behavior and actions from others which constrains their thought, behavior and action.

In both play telephone is used as a normative apparatus to remind the characters their social roles, and the normal way of living in modern institutions. The phone calls are utilized by both characters instead of chorus in Greek tragedies, which indicate how one should behave in order not to be considered as abnormal and consequently get excluded from others. Both playwrights through the phone call and the dialogues conversing through the calls beware the characters and the audience from their destruction if they don’t follow their defined social roles.

5.3. Suggestion for Further Research

Theories of Foucault which were highlighted in the present thesis could be applied in the practical reading of a number of David Mamet’s other plays; including Glengarry Glen Ross and American Buffalo, in Glengarry Glen Ross the struggle over power can be studied among four desperate Chicago real estate agents. The power relation could be analyzed in American Buffalo, where three young men are fighting for money and power. Anarchist is another play by David Mamet that power relation and social role theories can be applied on it. Grounds of knowledge and the relation between self and other can be explored on Sexual Perversity in Chicago, another play by David Mamet. Disciplinary power and normalization power could be explored in Yasmina Reza’s God of Carnage, another adaptation of Roman Polansky that happens in a confined place. David Mamet’s Oleanna and David Ives’s Venus in Fur could also be read in the light of another critical reading, both plays can be read in terms of Lacanian and Freudian psychoanalytical approaches. Marxist reading is also
suggested for studying David Mamet’s *Oleanna* and David Ives’s *Venus in Fur*. These two plays could also be read by semiotic and linguistic approaches.
Bibliography


چکیده:
پژوهش حاضر بر آن است تا بر اساس مفاهیم فلسفی و جامعه‌شناسی میشل فوکو نظریه فهم‌های قبلی در مورد قدرت، قدرت انظباطی، و قدرت هنجارسازی به‌منظور تحلیل می‌گردد. در این دو نمایشنامه، اولئانا (1992) و ونوس در خز (2010)، اثر دیوید ممت و دیوید ایوس، نمایش‌گری جنگ قدرت بین یک زن و یک مرد در دو نهاد اجتماعی است. مکان نمایشنامه‌های اولئانا دانشگاه است و ونوس در خز در یک استدیوی تئاتر اتفاق می‌افتد. هدف این مطالعه تا ارائه اتفاقاتی از این دو نمایشنامه در دانشگاه دانشمندان مکانیزم قدرت در این دو نمایشنامه را بررسی کند. در این دو نمایشنامه، حضور زنان در موقعیت اجتماعی به ترتیب در موقعیت برابر و نیاز به برآورد و افرادی که برای ادامه بقا، بهتر باقی بمانند، برای ادامه بازی نقش‌هایشان بررسی می‌شود.

کلمات کلیدی: میشل فوکو، قدرت انظباطی، نظریات اجتماعی، جامعه‌شناسی، دیوید ممت، دیوید ایوس
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پایان‌نامه‌ای ارائه شده به عنوان بخشی از فعالیت‌های تخصصی لازم
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پرسه مکانیسم جایی و روابط قدرت در دو نمایشانه و توس در یوست‌خز و اولانات

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این پایان‌نامه در تاریخ 09/02/1394 توسط کمیته تخصصی و هم‌اکنون داوران زیر مورد بررسی قرار گرفت و با درجه
خیلی خوب به تصویب رسید.

امید

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