

A Foucauldian Analysis of Power Distribution in David Mamet's *Faustus*¹

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Abstract

Faustus has a long history in European literature although its origin is obscure. David Mamet, in a modern version of the old legend, presents a new perspective on the issues of power and truth. Michel Foucault, the influential post-structuralist historian and philosopher of the 20th century, gives a novel insight into the nature of power relations and its manner of operation within human societies. In this sense, Foucault posits that power and knowledge are the same; moreover, power and resistance coexist in every social interaction. The current study aims to investigate the power relations in David Mamet's *Faustus* in a Foucauldian framework. Faustus's model of the periodic power offers a rigid paradigm to explain the mechanism of the world. Human will and resistance have no place in Faustus's ideology. However, the study shows how Faustus gets disillusioned as he becomes aware of the hidden power relations functioning around him. It concludes that the significant role of truth and knowledge in power relations leads to the emergence of confession, re-

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ward, and punishment: discourses which entangle the individual in a complex web of power and resistance.

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Introduction

Philosophy, since its birth in ancient times, has always aimed to discover the underlying mechanism of the world and the universal laws. In this respect, philosophical viewpoints change over time with the development of sciences and human knowledge. On the other hand, a scientific approach seeks to define the world with the constraints of fixed formulas and empirical judgments. However, there might be a tendency to extend this approach to other areas of study like human nature. But, human beings, as creatures with will power, transgress the limits of scientific expectations because their behaviors and attitudes are not predictable. In fact, that is the main reason which gives rise to historical changes and developments in human societies. The conflict over power and dominance determines the formation of social structures and human relations in every era. Moreover, it leads to wars, massacres, and genocide—the undeniable facts of human history.

Recent philosophers and sociologists, especially since the 19th century, have addressed the issue of power and its association with human nature and political and social structures. Karl Marx defines power within economic terms, especially money matters and he goes so far as saying “my power is as great as the power of money” (McLellan, 1977, p.118). Friedrich Nietzsche relates power to personal will in a sense that the “sovereign individual” (Nietzsche, 2007, p.37) can break himself free of the established principles and values and take the control of his own life and destiny. Max Weber regards power as “the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance” (Parsons, 1947, p.152). Thus, the range of definitions and perspectives on power denotes its multiple dimensions and expanse of functionality.

Media and literature are among the sites where philosophical and sociological viewpoints on human relations, including power, ethics, and politics, are reflected. David Mamet is the American playwright and movie director who mainly draws upon these issues in his works. Most of the researches upon David Mamet have highlighted these subjects. Some scholars consider Mamet as a playwright who is concerned with ethics. For instance, Kevin Alexander Boon, in “Ethics and Capitalism in the Screenplays of David Mamet,” studies the relationship between ethics and capitalism and posits that Mamet’s plays are concerned with ethics, although they avoid direct “didacticism” (Boon & Mamet, 2011, p.174). Milena Kostic, too, in the chapter “Conclusion: Modern Versions of the Faustus Myth” studies the ethics in *Faustus*. She states that Faustus’s periodic paradigm of power due to excluding the soul is basically unethical (Kostic, 2013, p.121). Kostic concludes that the play is condemning “science” for its being devoid of “conscience” (p.124).

While ethical themes might be the main concern of Mamet's plays, the underlying mechanisms of power relations, which also influence moral matters, should not be disregarded. The relationship between discourse and power has been the center of focus in some studies on David Mamet's plays. Brenda Murphy in "*Oleanna: Language and Power*" studies the power relations in the context of an educational place and in student-teacher interactions. She analyses the "linguistic communities" of the play and how "specialized language or jargon" influences the relations of power between the individuals (Murphy, 2004, p.126). Moreover, Henry I. Schvey in "The Plays of David Mamet: Games of Manipulation and Power" investigates the issue of power in relation to the politics of the world with regard to the blank spaces within statements which can be "as part of a game involving manipulation or power" (Schvey, 1988, pp.88-89). Furthermore, in the analysis of the relationship between discourse and social structures, Jonathan S. Cullick, in the article "'Always Be Closing': Competition and the Discourse of Closure in David Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross*," examines the institutions and the domain of discourses which are produced and authorized within them. Based on Foucault's theory of language, Cullick argues that Mamet by "using the division of discourse into communal and competitive as a paradigm" shows how different interactional patterns ensue among the characters (Cullick, 1994, p.24).

Close to Foucault's terminology, some studies have explored the subject of 'truth' in Mamet's plays. Christopher Bigsby, in a part of his article "David Mamet: All True Stories," investigates the characters in Mamet's different plays and relates them to the general themes which are to be "the myths of capitalism, the loss of that spiritual confidence" (Bigsby, 2004, p.164). He posits the idea that the characters are generally tricky and the relations shape on ruse and fraudulence in order to gain benefit from others (p.164). Therefore, Mamet's plays interweave matters of "truth, authenticity and reality" with power and exploitation (p.164).

Faustus (2004), one of Mamet's plays is an adaptation from the Elizabethan tragedy, Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* (1604). However, the history of Faustus's story goes back to antiquity, its origin is unknown (Fisher, 2010, p.8). In the modern version of this classical text, Faustus, as a scientist and philosopher, becomes entangled in social and family matters and his metaphysical relations with Magus take on new perspectives and are not solely Biblical, like those in the old model.

While the themes which have been touched upon in the previous researches on Mamet's other plays are present in *Faustus*, this play is also open to an analysis of the 'episteme' which gave rise to the modern Faustus in the 21st century. Dr. Faustus in Marlow's play was the literary product of the 'episteme' which had overwhelmed Europe during the medieval era. The Catholic Church was the main discourse which functioned under the umbrella effect of this episteme. Although Marlow's play manifests a bridge between the medieval era and the Renaissance, Faustus, the ambitious man who, on behalf of all thinkers of his time, desired for unlimited 'knowledge' and searched for 'the truth' beyond the

limits of the church was entrapped in the loop of power of the church. Faustus gave up to the hierarchical and linear power which operated from top to bottom. Even his intentional 'resistance' to the dominant discourse of his status quo was broken. The question here is, with a drastic change in religious, social, and economic conditions after five centuries, where this new Faustus stands in David Mamet's play. Now that the church has been pushed to the margins in the West, what decides the range of 'truth' and 'knowledge,' in the contemporary society? This new Faustus—the embodiment of the twenty-first century man—does he have any role in power distribution? In other words, is he still an effect of the upper discourses or he can affect the generation of them? There are some other issues which are significant to be investigated here; one is the model of power in Mamet's play: is it a linear or network operation? Furthermore, who resists and who is resisted in this play?

In fact, David Mamet's *Faustus* suits an investigation of 'the contemporary discourse' which has led into the emergence of 'the discourses' that an individual, such as Faustus, in his status quo has to experience and handle. Taking these potentials into consideration, the present paper studies the relations of power in *Faustus* which revolve around truth and knowledge with regard to human beings and society as a whole. It draws upon Michel Foucault's theory of "power distribution" and "resistance." Foucault believes that power relations do not function hierarchically, but circulate in every direction in the social structures, "in family relations, or within an institution, or an administration" (Foucault, 1988, p.38). This paper investigates the way Faustus's idea about the predictability and periodicity of the mechanism of the world is invalidated; moreover, how Faustus is influenced by the dominant discourses and how he gets out of the power network in the end is analyzed.

Foucauldian Framework of Power, Knowledge, and Truth

Michel Foucault (1926-1984) is one of the prominent figures in post-structuralism and postmodernism whose fame rests on his revolutionary ideas on power and discourse. Foucault's basic assumption of power is fundamentally different from his predecessors. Foucault compares power relations to a network in which "not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power" (Foucault, 1980, p.98). In the preface to *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*, Foucault expresses his doubts on the idea of power as a mode of "repression" and suggests that "critical discourses" along with the power to which they resist, belong to the same "historical network" (Foucault, 1978, p.10). He does not consider the effects of power solely negative and uses the term "polymorphous techniques of power" to refer to the various operations of power including "those of refusal, blockage, and invalidation, but also incitement and intensification" (p.11). In this sense, power is not defined as "general system of domination exerted by one group over another" but as "the

multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization" (p.92). Therefore, power relations are "productive" and not "superstructural" and coexist and function within a system with all sorts of "relationships" (p.94). However, while power is not exerted from top to bottom, the final dominating form of power results from the minor force relations within the local levels such as "families, limited groups, and institutions" (p.94). Foucault believes that there is no recognizable administrator in a system of power relations and all the points are interconnected (p.95).

On the other hand, when Foucault emphasizes the productive nature of power, he points to the new manners and actions which result from resistance within the power relations. Foucault believes that resistance is the inseparable and vital element which maintains a network of power relations alive and states: "Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (p.95). Moreover, points of resistance in the power relations are spread asymmetrically in every direction, taking various forms and functioning in different ways, which may finally lead to great revolutions (p.96).

Other than resistance, truth is also another element which has an essential role in the distribution and arrangement of power relations. Beforehand, it is necessary to shed light on the Foucauldian understanding of discourse and statement. Foucault has defined the concept of discourse in three ways:

Instead of gradually reducing the rather fluctuating meaning of the word 'discourse,' I believe that I have, in fact, added to its meanings: treating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements (Foucault, 1972, p.90).

Bearing on this definition, Foucault suggests the production of discourses is rule-governed or happens within "regimes," which consequently explain the "discontinuity" in the recorded lines of various fields of sciences (Foucault, 1980, p.112). Therefore, power relations are interconnected with the production of statements as the accepted truth (p.131). Foucault clarifies the relations between truth and power in the sense that "truth is linked in a circular relation with systems of power that produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it—a "regime of truth" (p.133). He argues that the "regime of truth" is specific to every society with regard to the discourses which it allows to be circulated as the established truth (p.131). Based on the assumption that truth is localized rather than universal, Foucault distinguishes between "universal intellectuals" who are seeking the universal values and "specific intellectuals" who are concerned and involved with present issues at the local level; they are not the "writers of genius" (pp.126-129).

Finally, confession and punishment are introduced as two elements which operate within power relations. Foucault argues that confession is a "ritual of discourse" which happens "within a power relationship" because there always needs to be a confessor and an adjudicator who finally decides the truthfulness

of the statements and their corresponding consequences such as absolution or retribution (Foucault, 1978, p.61). In the case of punishment, Foucault in his analysis of the history of punishment in the last centuries reveals that the system of jurisdiction intends to make punishment “the most hidden part of the penal process” so that punishment becomes a part of “abstract consciousness”, not imposed externally, but the direct consequence of the guilt (Foucault, 1995, p.1).

***Faustus* and its Power Network**

Power struggles are at the heart of *Faustus* in a way that they resemble Foucauldian concept of power relations. The play is a network consisting of a group of members which try to impose power on the others in order to gain the dominating, controlling position in the system. The members are representatives of the building blocks of the social structure such as family and institutions like journals. Nevertheless, the members of the network do not possess equal power on the onset, but strive for more and aim to occupy the center of the network. Moreover, the structure of the network of power which Mamet constructs in his play is, while decentralized, inherently disciplined. In fact, Foucault's concept of “regimes of truth” which exert their influence through systems of reward and punishment play a defining role in disciplining and maintaining the relations of power between the members. Nevertheless, nobody seems to have a plan to exit the network or question its very existence.

Foucauldian idea of productivity of power and its effect on producing new discourses as modes of resistance determine the power relations in the play. Faustus, a “physician, philosopher, savant-scientist” (Mamet, 2004, 1.212), is a member in the power network who seeks to exert his dominating power by proposing his knowledge as a new discourse to diminish other preexisting discourses. However, as he enters in the game of power, he gets involved in a struggle among the previously established discourses which have strong roots in society and tradition. Moreover, the social roles which he holds other than an academic scholar require him to abide by some rules within some other discourses related to ethics and morality. Therefore, He is entangled in a system of power and resistance because the more he strives to gain power, the more resistance he meets from the other members.

Faustus' book reveals his viewpoint on the issue of power and its functionality. He has discovered a mathematic formula which denotes the periodic power operating in the world. In a sense, Faustus believes, “that all is reducible to periodicity, to cipher, to a formula, expressed in number” (1.292-293). His ideology about power relations in one way is not Foucauldian since he has a very fixed view on the nature of an authoritative power dominating the structures in the world; therefore, he can be considered a structuralist. Moreover, he can be viewed as a “universal intellectual” (Foucault, 1980, p.126) or the “great writer” (p.129), in Foucault's terminology, who is after the ultimate truth. According to Foucault, universal intellectuals who belong to the past “used to be the writer:

as a universal consciousness, a free subject, he was counterposed to those intellectuals who were merely competent instances in the service of the State or Capital" (p.127). Furthermore, Faustus represents classical philosophy whose aim is to find out the universal laws of nature. In his view, all events happen in a "periodic" circle, the result of a "superior power", and there is no place for human "will" as a determining force (1.311-318). Faustus compares human endeavors to that of "Sisyphus", futile and repetitive (1.117). Therefore, he considers the supreme power, which is nature, to be not productive but oppressive.

Nevertheless, Faustus believes that all discourses are man-made, whose authenticity are not proved. For example, he states that church obtains its power from people and not from a divine source. For him "blasphemy and prayer are one. Both assert the existence of a superior power. The first, however, with conviction" (1.317-318). This way, he invalidates the inherent genuineness of the religious discourse. Faustus in his endeavor to gain the utmost power seeks to break free of the religious discourse and its oppressive power. Nevertheless, he acknowledges the controlling force of religion, but he questions its functionality and truthfulness for bringing happiness in human lives. Faustus finds out that the solution is to eliminate religious discourses such as "salvation" and "worship" (1.379-380): "A candle gains in power as we still warring illumination. Were we to flood the room with light, the object of our interest, of our longing, of our worship is forgot. For it is nothing" (1.377-379).

However, aside from religion, Faustus denies the validity of all sorts of discourses which have up to the present time established their place in human society. He devalues "tradition, reason, custom, common sense, an intelligent submission" as valid discourses which hold the truth and believes that human being is only subject to natural forces (1.408-409). He dismisses the truthfulness of discourses produced by newspapers: "Give me sufficient ink and paper, I'll make a dog's bone beloved of the world" (1.190-191). In his view, their main goal is to control people's minds. Moreover, he discredits the discourses of education, state, and jurisdiction for being counterfeit constructions. Faustus goes so far as saying that even philosophy is a trick and not the source of truth. According to him, a philosopher "utters a meaningless phrase to allow the mass to ascribe to them a power not their own" (1.493-494). Additionally, Faustus questions the right of a family to "claim upon" a man for "comfort" and "safety" (1.640).

Nevertheless, the play shows that power and resistance function simultaneously at the heart of the social structures and human relations. Power relations in the play take local and universal forms. The play begins at Faustus' house where his wife is preparing a birthday party for their son. Therefore, the family as a social structure where special power relations are at play is introduced. The power relations in the context of a family are interconnected with emotional interactions, and related responsibilities and disciplines. The traditional conception of a family is a hierarchical structure in which power is brought into effect from top to bottom. In this respect, Faustus as the father presumably has the traditional place of the head of his family with all the connotations which

that role brings into mind. However, the other members of the family are not passively taken over by his traditional dominating role; his actions bring about counter actions from his wife and son.

In fact, early forms of anti-authority struggles begin at the local level in Faustus' home. Faustus' son shapes one of the resisting points in the network of the power relations within the family and the whole play. He is unnamed, only known as the boy or the child, and is not dedicated a significant dialogue in the first act. The very fact that he is ignored on his birthday reveals that he is being marginalized as a trivial object. However, Faustus' disregard of his son and ignoring his needs produces an opposing force in their relationship. Faustus' work as an academic figure becomes a powerful obstacle and he cannot reach to his son. Therefore, the early seeds for the birth of a new resisting discourse are cultivated.

Faustus considers himself to have the center of power in his family. He believes that he has done his part perfectly and has already bestowed his "soul" to his family (1.37-39). In this regard, when he reads his son's letter, interpret it as "the Son's love ... that hopeless love of the omnipotent" (1.88-89). As it appears, Faustus is ignorant of the revolutionary movement which is shaping on behalf of his son. Moreover, he sympathizes with his son because he sees him subject to the gods' power which has inspired him to write the poem: "The artist weathercock now ratifying north, now northwest, and we serially nod delight at each fresh revelation" (1.115-116). His view of his son's power is in accordance with his alleged discovery of the periodic power operating in the world:

Children, like the Mass, act in the responsive state, they quaver to the air, the moon, a drop in the glass, the helictic motion of the spheres. How could he otherwise than resonate at my discovery? See, now the very humors in the sway of periodic power (1.285-288).

Still, Faustus assumes that his knowledge brings him fame and makes him superior to others in the network of power relations. However, he is delusional about his powerful position since, as the play proceeds, other parts of the network are also brought into the light.

Faustus cannot escape the regimes of truth which the dominant discourses impose on him and he becomes involved in the power relations despite his rejection of their reality as a man-made construction. As Foucault states "resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault, 1978, p.95), thus, Faustus' ideology of a superimposing power is deconstructed when he confronts resistance and gets involved in the power relations based on knowledge and truth and is forced to act in accordance with conventional patterns of behavior. In addition, while all forms of authority result from dominating discourses, Faustus' fatalist approach in interpreting the world's happenings and ignoring human will, does not allow him to see the resisting powers which occur around him.

Furthermore, the Foucauldian idea that "refusal, blockage, and invalidation" happen in parallel with "incitement and intensification" (p.11) produces the

point of deconstructions in the play. In fact, Faustus' actions do not conform to his discrediting view upon social institutions and at times, he acts in support of their credibility. For instance, Faustus claims that he disregards "censure and applause" of newspapers (1.188). However, from the very beginning in the play, Faustus is impatiently waiting for an article in a journal about himself. Moreover, when the journal disappears by Magus' sleight of hand, Faustus desperately pleads for it to be returned. As a matter of fact, Faustus is seeking the truth in the newspaper and deems their judgmental comments on his work credential. His anxiety displays his thirst for gaining appraisal from the people in the authority. Therefore, he values their discourse as truth and becomes a subject to their institutional power.

Reward, 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 (Foucault, 1995). Accordingly, systems of reward and payment in exchange for truth play a dominant part in the arrangement of power relations in *Faustus*. His interaction with Magus takes the very form of business dealing in which the matter of exchange is truth. Faustus makes a contract with Magus to pay him in return for observing his magic trick. He, as the one who pays the money or rewards Magus for showing his art, takes the position of power and addresses him in a commanding manner: "Have you not been paid? Why do you hesitate?" (1.569-570). Therefore, Magus is the one who is obliged to prove the truth of his claims of magic. On the other hand, the power is not the ultimate possession in Faustus' hand because their positions later get changed and Magus is the one who addresses Faustus in an inferior status and requires him to establish the genuineness of his paper.

Confession and swearing are the other determining power techniques within the play. Magus is neither a devil nor a true magician with supernatural powers. He is not a representative of any definite discourse, but he acquires a position in the power relations solely by attaining a secret knowledge through overhearing and surveillance. Faustus previously had repudiated the jurisdictional discourse and its authority as: "Many remark justice is blind; pity those in her sway, shocked to discover she is also deaf" (1.432-433). However, when Magus accuses him of plagiarism, Faustus is required to take an oath to prove his truthfulness. Despite the fact that Magus calls the whole affair a "wager" (2.183-192), the scene resembles more of a court with all the regularities. Faustus by confessing and swearing before Magus, places him in a position of authority to decide about Faustus' exoneration or punishment. However, Faustus seems unconscious of the fact that not only Magus' judicial power, but also taking an oath as a speech act to substantiate a statement is a constructed convention.

Foucault believes that in the current world, "punishment, ..., will tend to become the most hidden part of the penal process" in a way that it is considered to be the direct effect of the criminal's acts rather than being externally imposed (Foucault, 1995, p.1). Accordingly, punishment is exerted over Faustus because of his wrong oath about the genuineness of his work. While at the sur-

face, the catastrophic repercussions over Faustus' family is a direct effect of his false swearing, a deeper look reveals that the death of Faustus' son and wife is a direct consequence of his own actions and not the result of an external disaster as an atonement for the false oath. While Magus decides the death of Faustus' son and wife as a punishment for his false swearing, no one takes notice of him and everybody blames Faustus for his absence and ignorance of his family. Therefore, this way of a disguised punishment absolves Magus of committing a criminal act of killing a mother and his son. However, he still takes the powerful position of a judge, since Faustus, in his confusion over the conventionality of judicial discourse, still turns to Magus and pleads for forgiveness in order to take his family back.

Besides jurisdiction, tradition and religion are the other discourses which despite being rejected by Faustus, still influence their dominating power for they are deemed to be the sources of truth. For instance, Faustus' wife for having committed suicide does not have a grave as Fabian tells Faustus: "One may not know, sir, the grave of a suicide, who are damned to Hell. Do you feign ignorance of that gentle law?" (2.93-94). On the other hand, Faustus whose belief is that the periodic power of nature is the "secret engine of the world" (1.313) and aims to overpower religion, ironically confronts the fact that the discipline and punishment within religious discourse dominate their souls even in the other world: His wife is damned to reside eternally in hell and his son at the price of forgetfulness is bestowed the grace of the heaven while he is obliged to attend "hour[s] of intercession" (2.475).

According to Foucault, "power is co-extensive with the social body; there are no spaces of primal liberty between the meshes of its network" (Foucault, 1980, p.142). Therefore, Faustus' knowledge does not enable him to get out of the power relations or occupy the center of the network since he ignores the resisting points. Faustus believed that he had introduced a new discourse; however, his discourse is not original because it draws upon previous discourses as Magus accuses him: "You conflate: number, speech, thought, the mental and physical, and call your work complete ... it lacks the mechanism" (2.278). Faustus eliminates factors of resistance and human will from his power paradigm and interprets the world events as a rigid periodic system. However, he as a subject shaped by the dominant discourses, cannot get out of the network of power relations so that whatever discourse he offers cannot be absolutely genuine and unaffected by the preexisting discourses. Moreover, his son's poem appearing at the last page of his monumental work denotes that he is defeated by his son's resisting movement in the power relation. His son, still unnamed till the end, proceeds to import his discourse into Faustus' book. Therefore, contrary to Faustus' theory of periodic power dominating personal will, Faustus' neglect of his son produces a counter action in the power relation so that Faustus is compelled to confess: "I confess, the two productions are one, my manuscript, and the child's poem. Yes. I am taught. His is superior" (2.310-311).

Finally, as Foucault states, "One must observe also that there cannot be relations of power unless the subject is free" (Fornet-Betancourt, 1987, p.123).

Faustus manages to overcome and exit the network of power relations by discarding and liberating from the system of reward and punishment. It is revealed to him that the hidden mechanism of power is hell and heaven. Faustus manages “to see heav’n and hell and walk free”; he triumphs over Magus because he “has Probed the Center” (2.506-507). Therefore, it can be concluded that according to Mamet, the very essential part of power relations and what gives dominance to special discourses is the system of reward and punishment which in turn is contingent on the game of truth and knowledge. As a result, as far as one does not get rid of it, one cannot get out of the complex network of power and resistance.

Conclusion

The current study delved into analyzing the power relations in the play *Faustus* by David Mamet. It argued that Faustus, by presenting a superimposing model of power and reducing the mechanisms of the world and human relations to periodic natural events, ignores the elements of power and resistance in shaping human relations and producing new discourses in human societies. In addition, although he discredits all discourses such as religion, jurisdiction, state, and tradition as constructed entities which are not the centers of truth, he gets involved in the power relations within their scopes. Faustus performs according to the routines of a judicial court in his interactions with Magus. In this respect, in a game of truth and power with Magus, Faustus gets entangled in the systems of confession and punishment. Moreover, the influential power of dominant discourses such as religion and tradition in his life becomes clear. In fact, his vision of the afterlife world agrees to the religious discourses which prewise hell and heaven as the final destinations for human beings. On the other hand, his wife upon committing suicide is deprived of a grave because the tradition holds such a law as truth. Therefore, all these discourses still exert their power even though Faustus considers them to be unauthentic.

Additionally, the element of resistance contributes to changing the direction of practices of power, so that new discourses find their way into the dominant discourse. In this respect, Faustus’s son, an obedient and conventionally considered ignorant child who is deemed to be an inferior member in the family with regard to his parents, resists his father’s superior power by producing a new discourse, a poem. In fact, his poem’s content lacks any harsh opposition and angry statements, but it is still a reaction, a confirmation of his existence which finally changes his positions with his father’s in the power relations. The whole Faustus’s disaster begins with the production of the poem which finally obliges conceited Faustus to plead with his son for help out of his hopeless situation.

In the end, it is concluded that Faustus by only disregarding the power of reward and punishment can overcome the dominant discourses and exit the network of power relations. However, such an idealist assumption is not presented in a realist play. It only happens after Faustus’s death when there is no

further risk of annihilation. Therefore, while the play shows the escape route out of the network of power relations, it also points to the improbability of such a solution in reality.

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