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Normalizing the Family: Power, Discipline, and Queer Resistance in

James Ijames's *Fat Ham*

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تطبيع الأسرة: السلطة، الانضباط، والمقاومة الكويرية في مسرحية

'فات هام' لجيمس إيدجيمز

م . حسين مزهر جاسم

كلية الامام الكاظم (ع) للعلوم الإسلامية الجامعة

المخلص

تستخدم هذه الورقة نظريات ميشيل فوكو حول القوة لتحليل مسرحية جيمس إيدجيمز "فات هام". يظهر كيف ينظر إلى العائلة كموقع يؤثر بشكل خفي على سلوك الناس، وما يريدون، ومن هم. مستفيداً من أفكار فوكو حول الانضباط والتطبيع، سأثبت أن ممارسات الأسرة والقيم والنظرات تدرب الأجساد والرغبات لتتوافق مع المعايير المعترف بها بدلاً من السماح للناس بأن يكونوا على طبيعتهم. وبالمثل، أبحث في مفهوم القوة الحيوية كطريقة تعامل المؤسسات والقوى المجتمعية مع الحياة والأجساد والجنس، وأتبع كيف تظهر هذه الطرق في المسرحية من خلال الكلام والقواعد والسلوك العادي لأفراد الأسرة. تكشف الفحوصات التفصيلية للحوار والعرض والحبكة كيف أن الذاتية الغريبة في فات هام تصنع وتعيد من خلال الحديث الجماعي والعائلي بدلاً من أن تكون حقيقة طبيعية بسيطة. وفي الوقت نفسه، تظهر المسرحية بعض اللحظات من المقاومة. الشخصية الرئيسية ترفض العنف الفطري ووجهات نظر العائلة بطرق يسميها فوكو السلوك المضاد بأنها أفعال محسوبة لعدم الامتثال للقواعد. أقول إن هذه الرفضات قرارات أخلاقية تكشف طرقاً جديدة للعيش بدلاً من مجرد استبدال مجموعة من القواعد بأخرى. في النهاية، يشير فات هام إلى الحرية على أنها إنكار أخلاقي بدلاً من الامتثال، ويظهر كيف تعمل السلطة داخل الأسرة وكيف يمكن للناس أن يقاوموا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القوة الحيوية، الانضباط، الخطاب، الأسرة، القوة، مقاومة الكوير.

Abstract

This paper utilizes Michel Foucault's theories about power to analyze James Ijames's play *Fat Ham*. It displays how the family is regarded as a site that subtly affects how people behave, what they want, and who they are. Benefitting from Foucault's ideas of discipline and normalization, I am going to prove that family practices, values, and outlooks train bodies and wishes in order to fit acknowledged standards rather than letting people be themselves. Likewise, I probe the concept of biopower as the ways institutions and societal forces deal with life, bodies, and sexuality, and also trace how these methods appear in the play through speech, rules, and ordinary conduct of family members. Detailed examinations of dialogue, staging, and plot disclose how queer subjectivity in *Fat Ham* is made and restricted by communal and family talk rather than acting as a simple natural fact. Simultaneously, the play shows some moments of resistance. The chief character rejects inborn violence and the family's viewpoints in ways Foucault calls counter-conduct as measured acts of not obeying the rules. I argue these rebuffs are moral decisions that expose novel ways of living rather than purely

exchanging one set of rules for another. Ultimately, *Fat Ham* refers to freedom as ethical denial instead of compliance, and shows both how power works inside the family and how people can push back.

Key Terms: *Biopower, Discipline, Discourse, Family, Power, Queer Resistance.*

1. Introduction

Fat Ham (2021) is a play which happens in real time over the course of a predominantly tense wedding party. The chief character is named Juicy, whose mother has newly married his uncle after the unexpected, fierce death of his father. The setting is the backyard of the family home, and the play starts as Juicy arranges decorations for the party. The show rapidly displays the similarities with *Hamlet*, mainly in terms of plot, character, and drive. For instance, we see the arrival of the father's ghost, who asks Juicy to revenge on the uncle for his murder.

This research paper seeks to place the play within modern discussions on power, identity, and family structures. To do so, Michel Foucault's theory as the key critical framework is selected. For Foucault, power signifies a series of relations that run through ordinary life. It acts by inspiring some behaviors and ending others. Power is ubiquitous, and can be noticed in chats, rules, and habits. It forms what people think is right, usual, or conceivable.

Discipline is also a type of power that affects bodies and minds through conducts, rules, and close inspecting. Schools, prisons, hospitals along with families utilize discipline. Discipline thus teaches people to behave in specific manners. It works slowly by reiterating practices and by praising or punishing small acts. Besides, normalization is how particular behaviors and wishes get discernible as normal while others are classified as incorrect or strange. Over time, people accept the normal way as natural. Normalization thus makes some lives perceptible and satisfactory and pushes other lives to the sidelines.

This paper regards the family as a site where discipline and normalization are sturdy. Families instruct their children demeanors, gender roles, religion, and sexual standards. Families watch, correct, and reward. Since families are warm and close, their power can be expressly robust and hard to resist. Now, choosing James Ijames's *Fat Ham*, this study examines how queer characters push back against family rules. Queer resistance here implies actions that defy gender and sexual standards, and ethical refusal means saying no to destructive family rules and rejecting to hurt others in response.

Rather than responding to violence with violence, the play offers other ways to reject being made into the wrong sort of person. This paper expresses that *Fat Ham* shows how family power disciplines and normalizes desire, and it shows queer resistance and ethical refusal as alternative responses. The play asks whether refusing the family's violent rules can open tracks to security, self-possession, and new ways of living that do not echo mischief.

2. Statement of the Problem

There are not many studies that link Foucault's notions with the themes in the play, chiefly concerning how the family works as a system of discipline and normalization. This gap is substantial since it implies that the importance of the family in forming identities and behaviors is not completely inspected. Additionally, the current analyses often emphasize power as something that represses queer identities, instead of distinguishing that power can also help produce and form these identities.

As well, the notion of biopower as the way in which society controls bodies, desires, and violence, is underexplored with regard to the play. This restricts our comprehension of how these dynamics influence the characters and the larger themes at play. Consequently, it is indispensable to concentrate on how resistance and alternative ways of living, or "counter-conduct," are shown as chief facets of the ethical messages in *Fat Ham*.

3. Significance of the Study

This paper means to analyze James Ijames's play *Fat Ham* by employing Foucauldian theory. By indicating how Michel Foucault's notions relate to contemporary drama, this examination shows the power of his ideas in understanding modern narratives. One important point discussed in this study is the family, which is seen as a vital place for scrutinizing power, discipline, and normalization. Additionally, this study refers to the implication of resistance and moral negation as systems of agency, discussing the supernumerary ways through which the characters deal with their identities.

4. Literature Review

4.1. On Theory

In "The Subject and Power" (1982), Foucault refers to the association between power and subjectivity, concentrating on how power works through different apparatuses to outline and regulate people. Foucault challenges the usual comprehension of power as something that is controlled by people or organizations. Instead, he maintains that power is not exclusively suppressive but functions in a more delicate style. Power, on the word of Foucault, is not fixed, but disseminated throughout society (pp. 777-780). Foucault presents the model of "disciplinary power," which denotes the systems used by organizations in order to govern people. Discipline works through practices like scrutiny, normalization, and examination. It adjusts behavior, molds individuals into passive bodies, and encourages restraint. Moreover,

Foucault explores how power operates through discourse, or the language and knowledge systems that form our perception of reality (pp. 782-788). In addition, Foucault contends that power does not exclusively dominate people but also generates subjectivities. Power makes subjectivities that follow its standards and outlooks. Individuals become autonomous subjects, adopting and eagerly obeying the instructions, often without comprehending they are doing so (pp. 790-794).

As uttered by Turkel (1990), Michel Foucault is well known for his important studies in different fields like philosophy, sociology, and cultural studies. Foucault's work often centers on the link between power, knowledge, and discourses of truth (pp. 170-178). He says that power is not merely employed by a particular person or group but is disseminated throughout society and entrenched in different organizations and societal associations. Foucault's investigation of power is intensely entwined with his consideration of knowledge and its construction. He challenges the relation between power and knowledge, signifying that power not only empowers particular methods of knowledge but also limits others (pp. 182-193).

Giraldo Díaz (2006) also discusses the concepts of power and resistance through the viewpoint of Foucault. As specified previously, Foucault was recognized for his views regarding power, knowledge, and social control, which have had a substantial effect on numerous fields. Díaz probes Foucault's ideas on power, including his criticism of traditional power structures and his focus on understanding power as a dynamic that is disseminated throughout society and entrenched within communal relations (pp. 103- 111).

Moreover, the article investigates the notion of resistance in relation to power. Foucault argued that power is not just something that is imposed on individuals but is also something that individuals and groups can contest and resist. Resistance can also take various forms, ranging from small acts of individual resistance to large-scale social movements. In this article, Giraldo Díaz has actually discussed these concepts, providing an analysis of Foucault's theories, and exploring how they have been applied or can be applied to understand power subtleties and resistance in different contexts (pp. 115-117).

4.2. On the Play

"Abandoning Tragedy in James Ijames's *Fat Ham*" (2023) revolves around how Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is modified and revised by James Ijames in his play *Fat Ham*. Ijames's acclaimed play, which also won the 2022 Pulitzer Prize for drama, plays with and moves away from the plot of *Hamlet* with the intention of examining Black manhood, the family, and cycles of violence that are shattered by affection. Rebuffing general restrictions typical of tragedy such as male violence and misogyny, along with obedient and sacrificial women, the play performs a celebration of love, friendship, tolerance, sympathy, and queer pride (p. 97). As stated in this paper,

In *Fat Ham*, the weakness of which Hamlet chastises himself as he hesitates to act on his father's command for vengeance becomes Juicy's (the play's Hamlet) strength. By rejecting violent forms of manhood at work in so many of Shakespeare's plays from *Much Ado about Nothing* and *Romeo and Juliet* to *The Winter's Tale* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (the last play coauthored with John Fletcher), *Fat Ham* gives its hero space to become his own man, independent from and undefined by his father or his uncle. Here that violence is complicated by race and sexuality, but also by love, the desire to give and receive it. A Black and queer young man facing his father's contempt for his "soft" son, Juicy, a brilliant Marcel Spears, must choose between vengeance and desire, between violence and love. The play clearly posits and embraces a manhood that celebrates softness over cruelty. (p. 99)

In fact, revises adapts Hamlet's story of vengeance, ferocity, and misogyny into one of self-realization and affection. This playwright brings Juicy to a moment of probable ferocity only to have nature look after Rev without any help from his nephew. In other words, Juicy means to protect Rev, but he is prohibited by

Rev himself. This demise frightens all the characters, who look at one another in dismay only to have Juicy proclaim that now they all must die. Whereas there is at first a sort of comic moment of circumspection as characters eye one another and pick up impractical weapons taken from the dinner table (set with plastic tackles), Tedra's eventual response is a complete denial of this idea (p. 100).

In "A Kind of Hamlet: Rescripting Shakespeare and the Refusal of Racial Scripts in James Ijames's *Fat Ham*" (2025), it is argued that *Fat Ham* challenges the historical and racial issues forced on Black people and, via a variety of adaptive moves, unveils and resists them, presenting counterscripts that demand the individual and relational intricacy and thriving of Black subjectivity (p. 188). Corredera claims that Ijames's play is a very loose revision of *Hamlet*. Both stories revolve around a young man whose uncle has killed his father and afterwards taken up with his mother. But in *Fat Ham*, Shakespeare's Denmark changes to an indefinite place in the 20th-century American South, focusing not on a white royal family but instead on a Black family known for running a local barbeque joint (p. 190). The most important point stated in this paper is, In the face of these forces, what can and does resistance look like for Black artists within predominantly white theatrical spaces? Here, I tackle this question, thereby continuing the scholarly interrogation of the relationship between contemporary Shakespeare performance, race, and social justice. (p. 188)

Moreover, "Fat Ham: Choosing Pleasure over Harm in Fat Positive Representation" (2026) argues that by creating a character like Juicy, *Fat Ham* wants the spectators to envisage what life could be like if we selected pleasure over harm. It states that representing this desired futurity in a fat, or "thicc," body makes *Fat Ham* as a foundation of positive fat demonstration and fat pleasure. This study is critical as it counters the existing cultural forces of violence, inspection, and medicalization toward the fat body. In an interview with reporter Jason Frank, Ijames referred to his journey to make *Hamlet* his own, "Through a pleasurable future, being seen as desirable, and having roles written to celebrate the fat body, *Fat Ham* invites audiences to discover how *Hamlet* is theirs" (p. 145).

5. Theoretical Framework

This article benefits from a qualitative research approach to examine the themes of power, discipline, and queer resistance in James Ijames's *Fat Ham* while drawing on Michel Foucault's theory of power. The qualitative method offers a broad investigation of the textual material, and leads to a comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand. The chosen play serves as the primary source for the examination of these themes, offering rich perspectives on the subject matter.

Michel Foucault (1926-1984) was a highly eminent French theoretician and social philosopher recognized for his imperative studies concerning power, knowledge, and discourse. One of his most chief theories is about the idea of power and how it is utilized in society. Foucault's theory of power serves as the theoretical framework for the analysis. Key concepts, such as power as a pervasive and productive force, power relations, and disciplinary mechanisms, are applied to the selected play in order to understand the family as of site of power and discipline. The analysis process involves close and careful reading of James Ijames's *Fat Ham*. The goal is to recognize examples and outlines of power relations, along with the ways in which power works within this text.

As alleged by Lynch (2014), Foucault presented the notions of sovereign power, disciplinary power, and biopower as part of his analysis of power structures and mechanisms of control within society. Sovereign power denotes the traditional form of power wielded by rulers, monarchs, or other political leaders who exercise authority over a territory or population. This type of power is characterized by its centralized nature and is often linked with the idea of the sovereign as the decisive foundation of law and order, with the ability to dictate the rights and duties of subjects within the realm (pp. 13-26).

Disciplinary power, on the other hand, is about the more decentralized and universal formulas of power that function within institutions such as prisons, schools, hospitals, and factories. Disciplinary power works through scrutiny, examination, and training that mean to control and shape the behavior of individuals to follow social standards and anticipations. This sort of power is often more delicate than sovereign power, working through discipline and surveillance that generate compliant and submissive subjects (Foucault, 1982, pp. 777-785).

In addition, Foucault presented the notion of biopower to discuss the ways in which modern states and organizations control not only individual bodies but also populaces as a whole. Biopower is about the administration of life processes, health, reproduction, and overall comfort of populations through policies and practices that aim to enhance efficiency, adeptness, and control. It contains the intersection of political power

and biological life, with attention to the instruction and normalization of bodies and populations for the benefit of the state or reigning power (Foucault, 1982, pp. 787-795).

Foucault's theory of power and resistance means that power is not just a top-down force practiced by those in command but is dispersed in society in numerous techniques. He thought that power influences human beings' behavior and dealings within diverse social systems. Similarly, Foucault's concept of sexuality challenges conservative notions of sexuality as an inert and natural identity. He claimed that sexuality is a communally created and historically accountable organization that has been utilized as a device to exercise power. Furthermore, on the subject of identity, Foucault's perspective is affected by his view that identity is not inherent but shaped through discourses, practices, and power links in society (Foucault, 2020, pp. 73-79).

6. Discussion

6.1. Family as a Site of Power and Discipline

James Ijames is a distinguished American dramatist, appreciated for his ingenious storytelling and deliberation of themes like identity, family, and the difficulties of the African-American experience. This play's main focus is Juicy's uneasy relations within his family, predominantly with his father, Pap. We see that Pap makes a dark yet unusually hilarious allusion to their family heritage and the problems that accompany it. He inspires Juicy to detest his uncle, who he discloses is in charge for a violent act against him.

Juicy wrestles with Pap's appeal to take revenge on his uncle due to his indecision and struggle about violent behaviors within their family. He shares his emotional confusion with Tio, who offers a more logical viewpoint regarding the cycle of violence that sounds to plague their family, connecting it to inbred trauma that started years ago. In *Fat Ham*, the family is regarded as a disciplinary institute where power plays an important role. This implies that in the family unit, there are rules and conducts that members are supposed to obey.

Families often have set ways of acting that can regulate or form the actions of individuals. In the play, we see characters struggling with their identities and the anticipations enforced on them by their family rules. This issue aligns with Foucault's statement (2018) that discipline may be understood as a way to regulate and control the behavior of individuals in institutions (p. 62).

Within the family, there are a number of imbedded and explicit ways that behavior is delimited. This comprises the expectations parents arrange for their children and how these expectations mirror superior societal standards. For example, in *Fat Ham*, Juicy feels distressed to follow conventional gender roles or family responsibilities. Such stresses can bring about interior conflict, mainly for the main character whose identities defy these standards. There is a moment in the play where Pap and Juicy are having a conversation, PAP. We supposed to be one beating heart. You and me. You my son! You my namesake!

JUICY. It's amazing what fathers think they own of their sons just cause we share a name. (pp. 18-19)

Pap looks for devotion from Juicy just because they are related by blood. Nevertheless, Juicy recommends that Pap is not worthy of this loyalty. He will spend much of the play inaugurating the ways in which he is different from his father. Pap is violent and harsh, while Juicy is subtle and thoughtful. However, Juicy is not afraid of Pap since, as a ghost, Pap can no longer bodily hurt him.

JUICY. He can't pound on me anymore. He locked up for eternity. He doesn't seem to be in Hell. Which makes me contemplate the afterlife and purgatory and angels and my own mortality and what have you. He too evil to be in Heaven. What do you do when God don't want you and the devil won't have you. (p. 23)

Also, parental authority is a substantial feature of how families function as sites of power and discipline. Parents often undertake roles of authority through applying rules and outlooks that form their children's lives. In *Fat Ham*, we see the influence of past generations on the present characters. This echoes Foucault's opinion that power is not just regulated by one person but passed down through structures and practices. Foucault (1982) claims that power is in all places; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere (p. 778).

6.2. Normalization and the Production of Queer Subjectivity: Resistance, Counter-Conduct, and Freedom

As stated before, *Fat Ham* tells the story of Juicy as a young queer man who is struggling with his identity, and challenged by the ghost of his father, Pap, at his mother's wedding party. Hampered by his father's request for retaliation following his killing, Juicy copes with trauma and toxic masculinity, all while looking for his own route to freedom. In fact, this play revolves around the intersection of family, heritage, and self-discovery.

The ghost is somehow a tool for Juicy to proclaim himself by defying Pap's frightening heritage. Their conversation discloses profound subjects like familial responsibility, the burden of legacy, and personal identity amid the pain of loss. In other words, Juicy struggles not only with his father's loss but also with the trails of his father's life decisions. Thus, Juicy contends with lots of familial and social responsibilities, which openly distress his sense of self and sexual identity.

The family in *Fat Ham* is as a result a small-scale version for the bigger social forces that seek to explain Juicy's identity. Via his dealings with his father, uncles, and other family members, Juicy has to deal with a multifaceted network of congenital standards and conducts. For instance, his father's hope that he become the "man of the house" (p. 11) and sustain traditional views regarding masculinity are clearly in contrast with Juicy's queerness. This struggle affects his desires, his movements, and his ultimate compromise of selfhood.

Moreover, Juicy's desires cannot be deftly placed within the structures developed by society or his family. The tautness between Juicy's personal desires and social standards fuel his resistance and form the basis for his queerness as a sort of uprising against heteronormative principles. Queer desire, in this situation, becomes an act of disobedience or a rejection to align with what is expected by both the family and society.

The family in *Fat Ham* is at the same time a site of affection and ferocity, approval and denunciation. Juicy's queerness is, occasionally, accredited with delicate humor and care, but it is also a foundation of stiffness. For instance, a character like Juicy's uncle sounds to comprehend his identity on some level, even if he does not completely agree with it. Another character like his father is more unconcealed in their refusal of Juicy's queerness, representing the more inflexible standards that demand conventionality. This means that Juicy is both included and excluded depending on the moment.

His rejection by his father and the society also reveals the societal apparatuses that form outcasts. Queer people, especially those who diverge from racial, gender, and sexual averages, are often relegated and excluded from normative family structures. Juicy's queerness, as both a spot of rejection and ability for confrontation, reveals the ways in which families can function as tools for both societal regulation and revolt.

All over the play, Juicy is in struggle with the tension between the self he knows himself to be and the self that is enforced upon him by social and familial beliefs. His queerness becomes a spot of both freedom and struggle, as he copes with the expectations of fatherhood, masculinity, and heterosexuality. These normative burdens are exemplified not only in the outlooks of other characters but also in the very building of the family structure itself, which emphasizes conformism.

6.3. Biopower and the Regulation of Bodies and Desire

As stated by Taylor (2014), biopower signifies the way in which power functions not only via instructions or violence, but through the control of bodies, desires, health, and regular life. This word was principally devised by Michel Foucault, and stresses the way people are trained to live correctly: to have the right type of body, sexuality, family, and future (pp. 41-42). *Fat Ham* shows how Black queer bodies are controlled by family, tradition, and beliefs, and how fighting against these controls becomes an act of survival.

Biopower works by forming what kinds of bodies are suitable. It tells people how to behave, who to cherish, and what sort of future they should desire. In *Fat Ham*, Juicy's body and sexuality are repetitively judged. He does not fit the image of real manhood that his family imagines. In other words, his queerness becomes something that others try to correct or quash. Juicy is pushed toward robustness, violence, and heterosexual desire. His gentleness and queerness are preserved as his flaws.

Hence, the father seeks to determine his future for him, particularly through retaliation, "You walk too gentle for this family," Rev utters, "like your body forgot what it's for" (p. 18). This line signifies how Juicy's body is perceived as wrong. His way of moving and living is acknowledged as a disaster. Foucault describes that modern power stresses life itself, and how people live, not just whether they follow laws, "Power now reaches into the body, training it, shaping its desires, and deciding which lives matter" (Foucault, 1990, p. 141). Juicy's scuffle is not only psychological but also physical. His body becomes a battlefield between who he is and who he is anticipated to be.

Biopower often runs via families as families become apparatuses that pass down laws about behavior, gender, and propriety. In the selected play, the family controls how Juicy dresses and talks; it also sees violent masculinity as healthy, and observes queerness as something precarious or disgraceful. Juicy's mother and relatives assume they are helping him endure in an unsafe world. However, their assistance means to control

him, "I'm just trying to keep you alive," his mother says, "and alive boys don't act like that" (p. 27). Here, love and control are combined together.

Juicy feels this burden intensely. He controls himself, corrects himself, and is afraid of chastisement, not from the state, but from family. Biopower is thoroughly associated with death, and affects who gets to live liberally and who has to live in terror. In *Fat Ham*, the ghost of the father shows how violence is spread down across generations. The father's request for payback is a plea to repeat contaminated masculinity, embrace violence as someone's fortune, and show manhood through death. Juicy is supposed to look for authority, supremacy, and retaliation, even though it is against who he is, "If you don't kill for me," the ghost expresses, "you'll die already" (p. 42). This proves how power utilizes fear of death in order to manage life decisions. Juicy is told that rejecting violence is identical to selecting death.

Additionally, biopower does not always kill straight. Instead, it makes particular lives feel unbearable, "Power does not only kill; it lets die by making some lives unlivable" (Foucault, 1990, p. 138). Juicy's queer resistance is influential since he declines this reasoning. By picking affection, quietness, and rejection, he deviates from the cycle. Moreover, Juicy's resistance is not loud or violent. It is silent, expressive, and queer. This type of resistance is hazardous to biopower since it declines its directions: he negates vengeance, and prefers love over supremacy. He also imagines a future not based on death by saying, "I don't want a crown made of bodies" (p. 55). This moment displays Juicy retrieving power over his own fate. His queerness becomes a way of living outside biopolitical control.

6.4. Discourse, Truth, and Ethical Formation

At the core of *Fat Ham*, Ijames indicates how family, societal regulations, and recurrent stories affect what is assumed as right, standard, and correct. These truths do not come from nature; they are actually formed through discourse, which implies the ways people talk, judge, confess, and correct each other. Foucault helps us comprehend this when he claims that truth is not neutral or worldwide. It is made through language and power, "Truth is a thing of this world," Foucault argues, "produced by many constraints and bound to systems of power" (Infinito, 2003, p. 155).

In *Fat Ham*, the family turns into one of the sturdiest systems for constructing truth as it continuously talks about what Juicy should be: a man, solid, violent, straight, and eager to retaliate the murder of his father. These talks do more than express views as they form the reality for Juicy. When Rev's ghost asks Juicy to kill Pap, it isn't just a demand; it's in fact an ethical command entrenched in family tradition, "A son does what a son's always done. That's how blood remembers itself" (p. 24). This sort of language makes violence feel unavoidable, not elective. The family's discourse thus views revenge as a truth, not an option. Foucault has referred to this as normalization or the procedure by which specific behaviors are repeated so often that they sound natural.

Beyond the family, *Fat Ham* echoes more outstanding societal expectations about: masculinity, Black male identity, queerness, and supremacy. Juicy is enclosed by messages telling him that his gentleness, queerness, and unwillingness are weaknesses, not alternatives, "The world ain't built for boys who don't bite back" (p. 26). Here, discourse instructs Juicy what type of life is measured agreeable. As stated by Foucault, this is how subjects are shaped: people start to observe themselves through the rules vocalized around them.

One of Foucault's important theories is that modern power acts via confession. People are invigorated or forced to speak about their longings, doubts, and failures. Through speaking, they become fathomable subjects, "Tell me who you are, and I will tell you how to govern yourself" (Infinito, 2003, p. 155). Juicy's moments of self-reflection act like confessions. When he speaks honestly about his terror and his denial to kill, he is not just revealing himself, and thus, he is determining who he becomes, "Every time you ask me to be him, I lose track of me" (p. 27). In contrast with conventional confessions, Juicy's rejection to confess culpability or violent plea becomes an act of confrontation.

Stories in *Fat Ham*, particularly the story of Pap's murder carry ethical authority. Rev's description of the story insists that justice is identical to retaliation. This narrative controls Juicy's destiny. Foucault argues that whoever regulates the story controls what is regarded as moral behavior, "Power speaks most clearly when it tells a story that no one is allowed to rewrite" (Infinito, 2003, p. 155). Also, Juicy's queerness enables him to envisage a different story, one where survival, care, and rejection are moral decisions. Ethical formation is about how a person learns to live*.

For Foucault, ethics is not about obeying instructions but about how one affects oneself. Juicy's decisive resistance is ethical since he differentiates the discourse demanding to form him, fails to implement its ferocity,

and chooses a dissimilar way of life, "I don't want to be good at your kind of living. I want to live" (p. 45). This moment exemplifies queer resistance that is not loud rebellion, but a quiet denial to let hereditary discourse disturb his life.

7. Conclusion

According to what was found, *Fat Ham* displays how power acts within a family to outline how people function, who they become, and what they want. Employing ideas from Michel Foucault such as discipline, normalization, and biopower, the play makes clear that family life and societal rules unobtrusively instruct and regulate bodies and lives. Queer subjectivity in the play is not merely natural or stable; it is actually made and restricted by family talk, outlooks, and communal stress.

At the same time, the play provides us with some scenes, which include resistance and what Foucault refers to as counter-conduct, simple but influential rejections of the rules and inborn violence. These acts of rebuttal offer moral replacements to reiterating harm and open up new ways of living together. Even under robust systems of regulation, *Fat Ham* shows the likelihood of freedom and self-definition. Eventually, analyzing the play via a Foucauldian perspective helps us see these issues visibly and expresses the value of using that theory to examine contemporary drama and social criticism.

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