

CHAPTER V
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After having analysed the select plays of David Williamson, in the context of power politics and interpersonal relationships, one can draw certain conclusions. The terms power politics and interpersonal relationships are interrelated, interdependent and are reciprocally affecting each other. Without power, there is no development in the relationship and without relations power has no value, meaning and relevance. Everyone in the society strives for power and is eager to exert it on the other. The history of human civilization is nothing but the everlasting struggle for power. Everyone in this world aspires and struggles to occupy a position in the society and holds the power over the human and non-human beings around. The concept of power has multiple facets, subtle nuances and diverse ways of expression.

The notions of Power politics and types of interpersonal relationships are used to analyze and interpret the select plays of David Williamson. He is one of the prolific playwrights in Australian dramatic tradition. For the convenience of the study, the dissertation is divided into five chapters prefixed with the introduction of the study.

Introduction deals with a brief survey of Australian Drama that helps the researcher to place the select playwright in the literary tradition he belongs to and makes one acquainted with the literary tendencies that motivates playwright and plays a significant role in his creativity. The introduction of the dissertation includes a brief review of the life and career of the select playwright, the hypothesis of the study, the aim and objectives of the study, the scope and limitations of the study along with a

brief review of relevant literature and the chapter scheme of the dissertation.

The introduction of the dissertation is followed by the chapter first, entitled 'Power Politics and Interpersonal Relationships: A Theoretical Frame' prepares a theoretical frame by considering the definitions, opinions and discourses written in this direction. The theory logically puts forth the notions of power discussed by the scholars of different disciplines that helps to prepare an eclectic model which suits to analyze the select plays. Theory includes Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1532), Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859), and Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* (1978) that helps to understand the multiple facets of the term and its actual effect on the interpersonal relations. The theory also discusses the types of relationships and puts forth the personal and social relations are shaped by the notion of the 'power'.

Chapter second, third, and fourth present the analysis of the select plays *The Removalists*, *Jugglers Three*, and *The Club* respectively, in the context of theory prepared in the first chapter. It is revealed that the characters delineated in these plays are governed by the notion of power. These plays demonstrate how the power shapes the human relations. The plays are analyzed on the basis of political power, authority power, biological power, gender power and social power. It also explains the texture of relationships like friendship, love, marital relationships, family relations and professional relationships in the context of power politics.

Chapter two, '*The Removalists: Power, Authority and Punishment*', analyzes the authority power as well as biological power reflected in the play. Dan Simmonds exerts his power as the Sergeant of

the suburban police station. He uses his authority to control other characters in the play. Kenny Carter exerts his power on his wife Fiona. She is being exploited sexually and physically. Her sister, Kate Mason, supports her in difficult situations and uses the power on her as an elder sister. Kate uses gender power on Sergeant Simmonds and her husband, Ralph. Simmonds orders Ross to beat Kenny for his rudeness. Kenny has been beaten in such a bad manner that he succumbs to death. When Ross gets the power in his hand, he uses it coercively. To get relieved from his tensions and frustrations in life, he beats Kenny. Fiona wants separation from Kenny because he beats as well as bashes her. The Removalist is a very minor character but plays a significant role in the play. He comes to Kenny's flat only to shift the furniture from old flat to new one. The plan gets collapsed and results into violence through situations and actions. The play depicts verbal as well as physical violence.

Thus, in the play *The Removalists*, power represents as a form of a system which depicts through authority and punishment. It is exercised through the relationships between characters that possess the authority and ordinary people from society are punished. It is a system of power which presents the relation between oppressors and oppressed.

Chapter three, '*Jugglers Three: Economic Power Relations and Social Status*' interprets the play in terms of power politics and interpersonal relationships. The title indicates the three jugglers from different fields of society. They are Graham, a soldier; Neville, the Professor of Economics and Dennis who works for the public in the Government. As all these people are corrupt, they are harmful to society. Though, there are three married couples in the play, unfortunately, no one has a good and healthy relationship with the life-partners. They exert

power over each other and try to dominate in personal relationships in order to maintain power. Graham is Keren's husband and Neville has a wife named Elizabeth. The male characters exert power on their wives and treat them to be the objects of sexual pleasure. They never think or treat their wives as fellow human beings. The play depicts the Judeo-Christian society which is fundamentally anti-woman. Graham has completed his training at Canungra, a Jungle Training School. In the Vietnam War, he had killed a Colonel. He uses his biological power that is muscle power to threaten Neville that he would break his neck if he didn't answer him properly and forces him to agree to play table tennis. Neville is a friend of Keren and they have been living together since the last six months. Keren is not happy with her husband because of his physical and mental harassment. However, Neville and Keren feel happy in company of each other. After Elizabeth's delivery, they want to go to New York and live there a happy life. He works as a Professor of Economics at Syracuse and Keren wishes to take the further lessons in piano at the university. Elizabeth knows about the relation between Neville and Keren, but she does not complain. On the other hand, she deliberately tries to harm the baby in her womb by smoking excessively. Elizabeth exerts the gender power and thinks the baby as a tool to harass Neville. It is her way and idea of using certain power to control her husband.

Jamie and Dennis are friends of Graham. Jamie is a Government doctor and Dennis is working in the public office for the Government. In order to have the control over Graham, Jamie offers an administrative job for him. Jamie uses his economic power on Keren by giving her money to go to New York. Dennis is a friend at Vietnam War. Dennis robs a service station for the bright future of his daughter. As his wife is not

faithful to him, he leaves his home with a daughter. He plans to go to Echuca at his aunt's house. Policeman exposes that Dennis has robbed the service station. The Policeman uses his positional power to dominate Dennis and his friends. He suggests Dennis of give \$500 each to his friends for closing the matter. He also demands half of the amount for himself. He threatens Dennis that if he does not agree with the proposal, he would be imprisoned and sent to jail for ten years. Through this event, it becomes clear that policeman is a corrupt person and uses his power for his own profit and convenience. The play presents the domestic politics and domestic violence, as well. In this way, every character exerts power at his/her way and tries to maintain the power relationship. In the play *Jugglers Three*, individuals are known as vehicles of power. The play comments on how economic and social relations influence the personal and familial relations.

Chapter four entitled '*The Club: Positional Power and Professional Relations*', deals with the theme of power politics. Each person has certain reservations about the other that affects their personal and professional life in the football Club. Club President Ted, Club Vice-president Jock, the administrator Gerry, the Coach Laurie, the captain Danny and one player from the team named Geoff Hayward possess positional power in the Club. Ted usually states that he is the Club president and has the authority to take every decision about the team and the Club. He is the owner of the pie factory, so he uses his economic power to buy players at the time of selection of the team. Jock is an ex-football player and the coach of the team, and now he holds the position in the Club as a Vice-president. He knows well how to manipulate the other members of the committee. He wants to be the president of the Club, so with the help of Gerry he makes the plan against Ted and creates

such a situation that he has to resign the Club immediately. Gerry Cooper holds the power in the Club as an administrator. He has never played any game in his life, but wants to be the best administrator among the Football Clubs in Australia. Danny is a captain of the team and uses his power for the sake of the coach of the committee, Laurie. Laurie has resigned the Club because of the degradation of the team's performance. Danny declares that if the committee accepts Laurie's resignation, the team will not play the next day match. He knows that Geoff denied playing under the pressure of Ted Parker. Ted gives \$10,000 more to Geoff at the time of selection of the players, so he plays in the team from Ted's suggestions. But at the end of the play when he comes to know the real situations of the Club, he supports Laurie and decides to play for him in the team. The play reveals various relationships such as family relations, marital relations and professional relationships. All the characters try to make a balance between power and relations. A person who is ready to accept both the responsibilities and handle them well at the same time has been considered to be a successful power holder. Gerry and Laurie have proved their leadership qualities. They maintain the power in the Club as well as in the family. All members of the Club maintain professional relations within the Club. They are unwilling to work together but have no other option. In this way, everyone in the play exerts his power to handle other members of the Club.

In the play *The Club*, power is a system of relations between the characters who possess different positions in the Club. It is observed that in order to gain power they struggle within themselves and with the help of power they maintain personal as well as professional relations.

The analysis of the select plays reveals David Williamson's concern with the notion of 'power' and interpersonal relations, as his plays investigate the roots of exploitation, violence and corruption in the context of Australian society. It also becomes apparent that his plays are 'Institutional plays' as the actions of the plays are centered on the social institutions like family, police department and sport club that help to balance the power equilibrium.

Williamson in *The Removalists* uses police department; in *Jugglers Three* family institution; and in *The Club* sports club, in order to mirror how people use their positional, gender, physical, economic and authority power to exploit others. These plays focus the problems faced by the characters on the personal, familial and social levels due to the misuse of power. It is also observed that the institutions created by the society to balance the power, are misused by individuals to exploit others for personal interests. For instance – *The Club* presents a Football Club in Australia in which the rules and regulations of the Club are used to dominate fellow players. The same thing is also observed in *The Removalists* and *Jugglers Three* where the policeman, instead of using the system for the security of the society, uses it for the personal interest and dominates others, for instance – the Policeman uses physical violence against Kenny and eventually kill him. In *Jugglers Three*, corrupt policeman makes compromise with criminals for money and neglects his official duties. Thus, characters misuse power in order to create position among others and maintain such social, familial and personal relations that suits this motif. Though, he is choosing the specific institutions and their system to explore the theme of power, at large his plays connote the meaning of power that has universal signification.

Williamson depicts verbal as well as physical violence in the select plays as his characters use filthy and slang language to communicate and make comments on others. They frequently use taboo words like ‘bastard, fuck, shit, etc.’ and do not hesitate to beat their partners. For example, in *The Removalists* Kenny beats Fiona; Simmonds and Ross beat Kenny; Simmonds comments that his wife is a Mick and calls his son-in-law as a bastard. Graham harasses Keren; Neville troubles his wife, Elizabeth; and Graham considers Keren to be an intellectual super-whore in the play *Jugglers Three*. In *The Club*, Ted, Jock, and Danny exploit their wives physically and mentally. Thus, in his plays it is observed that the violence is frequently used to dominate others. This misuse of physical power creates the emotional crises in the interpersonal relations.

Thus, through these plays Williamson comments on the socio-political conditions of Australia in which the institutional, positional and political powers are generally misused. Williamson presents the microcosm of 1970s Australia and unfolds the disturbing truths about the social and familial relations. The plays present the Australian culture and tradition, along with the scenario of Australian Society where the social systems, instead of public welfare, appear as the power centers that are manipulated by few individuals to exploit and dominate others. In the margin of the play, Williamson also explores other related issues like gender relations, institutional corruption and widespread social violence. It is observed in all his plays that the male characters are superior to female characters. It is also observed that the women characters are always under the pressure of her husband, family and the society.

In the select plays Williamson presents the marital disharmony as a result of misbehaviour and gender inequality. It is observed that most of

the married couples reflected in these plays are not happy with their partners. In *The Removalists*, Fiona wants a separation from Kenny. In *Jugglers Three*, Keren wants a separation from Graham and Neville wants to leave his wife Elizabeth. In the play *The Club* only Laurie and Gerry have the successful marital relationship, whereas Danny, Jock, and Ted beat their wives. All the protagonists are addicted to drink to wipe out the overburden of family responsibilities, tensions and frustration. For instance – in *The Removalists*, Kenny, in *The Club*, all committee members; and in *Jugglers Three* male characters have a habit to drink as a relief from tensions. Most of the women characters have extra-marital relations due to the gender inequality, unfair dominance and cruel violence. Due to all these reasons, the female characters of these plays feel physically insecure and emotionally detached.

The literary tradition of David Williamson is prominently concerned with the theme of power. Similar to him, his contemporary writers, Hal Porter, Jack Hibberd, Peter Kenna, Patrick White, John Romeril and Alex Buzo are interested in depicting the themes related to power and as a result it is observed that their fictions generally undertake a close scrutiny of interpersonal relations. Hibberd, one of his prominent contemporary playwrights explores how power is misused in the society, especially in his play *Peggy Sue*, he presents how three romantic young women are exploited economically and sexually. John Romeril's *The Floating World* discusses the relationship between the oppressors and oppressed. The play *Chicago Chicago* is about the political situations and violence in Chicago. Peter Kenna uses violence as a weapon to achieve power in *The Slaughter of St. Teresa's Day*. Though, these playwrights are concerned with the theme of power, their plays are restricted within a specific limitations whereas Williamson goes ahead and reflects the

notion of power that signifies universally. Though, his plays are using the Australian Socio-cultural scenario as a background, they can be read and interpreted in any socio-cultural contexts.

In this way, Williamson's contemporary writers present the power struggles and human relations through their works. Williamson's characters most of the times seem adopting the Machiavellian philosophy who break the rules of morality to gain power and become dominate in their social and familial relations. Thus, David Williamson in these select plays depict how power struggle influences human life and how an individual exerts his physical, authoritative, social, political, economic power in order to control his interpersonal relations. According to him any relationships in life essentially shaped on the basis of the power and it can be exerted through race, sex, class, and even through the social institutions like marriage and family.

Thus, after analyzing the select plays of David Williamson, it becomes apparent that human relations are shaped by the notion of power. Theses plays appear as a philosophical articulation of the term power as playwright by using different social situations demonstrates the role played by power in human relations. All the select plays are the slices of modern life in which the power is used for the corrupt interests. These black comedies throw light on the dark side of modern life which apparently seems happy and liberal but in reality it is under the clutches of exploitation, dominance and violence. The traditional notions of human relations are thus subverted for the cruel game of power politics. The conventional notions of ethics and morality are substituted for material pleasure. The select plays depict that the modern man is confused, frustrated and on the larger scale mentally depressed.

The issue of power and human relations can be further illustrated with other contemporary plays in order to have better understanding of them and their different models in the different socio-cultural contexts. As the term itself has multiple features nobody can claim to explore all its major and minor facets in the select literary enterprises. But the present dissertation is a significant study in this direction as it attempts to bring the major theorists from different disciplines to prepare an eclectic model and make a comprehensive statement on David Williamson's select plays. The dissertation also has a pedagogical significance as it is hoped that it will prove helpful to the researchers, scholars, teachers and students in understanding of the notion of power and human relations in proper literary context.

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