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Male Identity in Sam Shepard's Eyes for Consuela

A B S T R A C T

The focus of this study is Sam Shepard's Eyes for Consuela, a play which scrutinizes the functions and dysfunctions of human relationships in terms of societal and family structures. In this paper we examine Eyes for Consuela as a play conveying men's struggle for identity. Moreover, it depicts how the struggle between the two leading male characters is resolved by the primary female character in the play. As such, the play dramatizes how male characters' struggle for identity is preoccupied by their relation to female characters. Shepard's play presents the journey of an American man in a Mexican remote jungle. Hence, it shows two parallel and opposing worlds, American and Mexican, which sheds the light on two different settings and identities. This also represents a struggle in the creation of male identity for the male characters. Relying on Connell's hegemonic masculinity theory, we argue that Eyes for Consuela portrays how the discrepancies in the two male identities are influenced by their different cultures. Further, we suggest that it follows Kimmel's Guyland model, by revealing how the fear of being dominated might initiate manly attitudes and encourage identity evolution.

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هوية الذكر في مسرحية عيون لكونسويلا لسام شيبيرد¹

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الخلاصة:

تركز هذه الدراسة على مسرحية عيون لكونسويلا للكاتب سام شيبيرد، وهي مسرحية تفحص وظائف واختلالات العلاقات الإنسانية من حيث الهياكل المجتمعية والأسرية. في هذا البحث نقوم بفحص "عيون لكونسويلا" كمسرحية تتغل نضال الرجل

¹ بحث مستقل من رسالة ماجستير (Male Struggle for Identity in Selected Plays of Sam Shepard)

من أجل الهوية. علاوة على ذلك ، تصور المسرحية كيفية حل الصراع بين الشخصيتين الذكورتين الرئيسيتين من خلال الشخصية الأنثوية الأساسية في المسرحية. على هذا النحو، تُظهر المسرحية بأن صراع الشخصيات الذكورية من أجل الهوية مرتبط بعلاقتها بالشخصيات الأنثوية. تقدم مسرحية شيبيرد هذه رحلة رجل أمريكي في غابة مكسيكية بعيدة. ومن ثم تظهر المسرحية العالم الأمريكي والعالم المكسيكي كعالمين متوازيين ومتعارضين، مما يسلط الضوء على محيطين وهويتين مختلفتين. وهذا يمثل أيضًا صراعًا في تكوين هوية ذكورية للشخصيات الذكورية. بالاعتماد على نظرية الرجولة المهيمنة لرايون كونييل، نجادل بأن مسرحية عيون لكونسويلا تصور كيفية تأثر التناقضات في الهويات الذكورية بثقافتها المختلفة. إضافة إلى ذلك، نقترح أن يتبع نموذج غاي لاند لعالم الاجتماع لمايكل كيميل من خلال الكشف عن الخوف من الهيمنة وإمكانية في إنشاء المواقف الرجولية والتشجيع على تطور الهوية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: عيون لكونسويلا ، هوية ، صراع ، رجولة ، سام شيبيرد

Introduction

Eyes for Consuela premiered on April 14, 1998, at the Manhattan Theatre Club in New York. It revolves around Henry's relation with his wife and Amado's intention to remove Henry's blue eyes and present them to his beloved, Consuela, to please her. Despite Henry's devotion to his fabled American male ego, he is unable to maintain his relationship with his wife. In this way, she abandons him because of his tyrannical and self-centered mentality. As such, he leaves Dallas to have a vacation at a remote place in Mexico. There, he is pursued by a villager who wants to gouge out Henry's eyes to appease his beloved. The conflict between the male characters is settled at the end of the play, when Consuela, the main female character in the play, rejects Henry's eyes, hinting that they are not blue.

Sam Shepard (Samuel Shepard Rodgers) was born in 1943 in Illinois and died in 2017. Before settling in Duarte, California, he spent his boyhood on military bases in Guam and across the United States. Shepard joined a group of tourist performers after finishing a year in college studying agriculture. He arrived to New York in 1963, resolved to follow his theatrical ambitions. Between 1971 to 1974, he lived in England, where some of his plays were staged. Shepard's contribution to American theater is widely acknowledged. In American theater, identity crisis is a common theme. According to Al-Rashedi and Nilofer (2018), American drama depicts people demonstrating their false and true identities, with many people attempting to figure out who they are. This is also true to gender identities with masculine identities depicted in two aspects that are at odds. The first is the masculine success philosophy, in which a man adopts modern American society's preferred methods and styles (Clum, 2002). The second dimension, on the other hand, is a portrayal of Old West males who are committed to freedom and adventure (Petracca, 2021). The latter upholds cowboy styles as well as macho man adherence. The macho man is a recurring motif in Shepard's plays. Despite this portrayal, the majority of the characters in Shepard's plays are characterized by a fight for identity formation and development. The protagonists, according to Al-Rashedi and Nilofer (2018), are attempting to build their identities while also balancing social, national, and individual ideals. The first component is that of masculine success, with ideas of the American frontier embodying adventure and self-discovery. Shepard's characters are shown to be frustrated because they are unable to identify their actual selves as macho men or representations of male

achievement in current American society (Al-Rashedi & Nilofer, 2018). In Shepard's *Eyes for Consuela* the protagonist, Henry, is left by his wife and, thus, he heads south where he experiences a great challenge for his life, individuality and identity in the Mexican wilderness.

Theoretical Conceptualization of Masculinity

The growth of masculine identity in contemporary American plays is seen as providing a space for investigating the contested crises of masculinity. The current paper examines masculine identities in Sam Shepard's *Eyes for Consuela*, which has received little scholarly attention. The play states that it is possible to recognize oppressive and discriminatory power systems that are fueled by hegemonic masculinity by studying many ways in which male and female genders create masculinity (Al-Rashedi & Nilofer, 2018). This will entail a study of various kinds of masculinity in the play, as well as an understanding of the individual characters' roles within the environment in which their identities are formed. It is possible to identify culturally developed perspectives of masculinity to explore their development and impacts within the theatrical representation by analyzing contemporary dramatic literature, such as the works of Sam Shepard. Connell's hegemonic masculinity and Kimmel's Guyland model can both be used to understand male identity in *Eyes for Consuela*.

Connell's Hegemonic Masculinity

Masculinity, according to Connell, is defined as the activities and actions that men and women engage in to illustrate social gender roles, with its applicability manifesting in their bodies, culture, or personality (Connell, 2005a). The feminist movement in the 1970s provided inspiration for the conception of masculinities, which highlighted the myriad socioeconomic injustices that existed at the time (Wedgwood, 2009). It began as a critique of Talcott Parsons' (1942) sex-role theory, which claimed that boys and girls socialized in fulfilling complementary roles such as the career and provider-oriented role and the domestic feminine role. According to Connell (1987), internalization and gendered roles hide power and foster structural inequities in society. Connell criticized sex-role theory, which assumed that masculine duties are for boys and feminine roles are for girls, resulting in societal isolation. Connell (2005a) looked at masculinity, claiming that it is primarily relational and only existing in feminine. Carrigan et al. (1985) argued that the relational nature of masculinity is not adversarial in nature on the homogeneous categories, but rather between the many feminine and masculinities that occur. Connell (2005b) further emphasized that it is critical to understand and appreciate the diversity of masculinities, as well as the relationships that exist between them. This means that there is no one-size-fits-all masculinity, with male identity evolving depending on culture and personal characteristics.

Connell (2005a) stated that the dominant masculinity is the hegemonic masculinity and offers a foundation for patriarchy to gain legitimacy in society, based on Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony. Hegemonic masculinities, on the other hand, are responsive to patriarchy's determinants and dimensions (Wedgwood, 2009). Connell (2005b) recognizes that not all men fit into the hegemonic masculinity model, but they nevertheless benefit from the patriarchal model, which favors men in general by establishing women's subjugation. Their masculinity is regarded culpable in this regard. Hegemonic masculinity, as opposed to other categories of men in society, are in a position of authority and can rule other groups of men,

including gay men, racial minorities, political and class minorities, and domination by power or violence (Yang, 2020). Connell (2005b) also discovers that males who fall into the category of subordinate masculinities blur the lines between masculinity and femininity, and are frequently accused of not being manly. In addition to the dominance gained through the categorizing of masculinities, there are also masculinities in which dominant group images are portrayed in society, such as the notion that Mexican men are illegal migrants, poor, or rapists, which elevates white middle class masculinity. According to Connell (2005a), hegemonic masculinity obtains power authorization through marginalization, putting more in a more dominant.

Connell's idea of hegemonic masculinities has been endorsed by a number of academics who have used it to illustrate gender sociology in society (Yang, 2020). However, it has been questioned by a number of academics. For example, it has been criticized for producing a static typology in the creation of masculinities (Hearn & Collinson, 1994). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) replied to the critique by claiming that arguing for the theory's static typology nature is not the same as abandoning it; rather, it supports the relational approach it offers in comprehending diverse masculinities. Whitehead (2002) also criticizes the theory, claiming that it does not focus on specific themes or notions, instead offering a broad perspective of masculinities. In response, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) note that hegemonic masculinity theory provides a psycho-analytical approach to subjectiveness in its conceptualization, and that the attention it pays to power and gender roles in labor allows for a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of masculinity than would be possible if it followed and focused on a single discourse. Despite its flaws, the theory provides a necessary context for comprehending masculinity identity and how it develops in society.

In America, different labels are used to define masculinity, particularly by sociologists attempting to categorize and define various aspects of masculine identity (Petracca, 2021). The self-made man, the defender, and the breadwinner are some of the categorizations that have been employed in portraying masculinity in American culture, according to King (2002). While feminist sociologists often describe masculinity as the quest of power, control, and dominance, Kimmel perceives it as being more about the fear of another individual dominating and having power over the men. It is suggested that the fear of being dominated is what keeps hegemonic masculinity and male dominance in place.

Kimmel's Guyland Model

Guyland is a notion proposed by Kimmel that encompasses a space of male masculine identity between maturity and teenage stages. He considers it as an example of masculinity that is developed based on fear (Kimmel, 2008). Guyland starts when people are in college and lasts for roughly a decade as they try to build relationships, start families, and develop professionally (Kimmel, 2008). Guylanders engage in habits such as living in fraternities, drinking heavily, refusing commitment, adhering to the guy code, and engaging in many relationships (Kimmel, 2006). Within this context, Kimmel claims that Guy Code refers to "the set of attitudes, values, and traits that collectively form what it means to be a male" (Kimmel, 2008, p. 45). It is crucial to note, though, that the guy code is not limited to college campuses; it also exists in religious institutions and the workplace. The Guyland notion is said to have evolved from a fear of being

dominated and rejected, leading to a desire to humiliate, dominate, and subjugate others in order to maintain manly identity. Individuals who try to break out from the cycle risk of becoming separated from the group, which can lead to a further identity crisis. However, as Mansfield (2006) points out, it can have beneficial consequences such as getting a stable employment and maintaining a family life. According to Browne (2006), the fear of being dominated is the driving force behind the evolution of masculinity and the growth and reproduction of conventional masculine characteristics. The characters in Shepard's *Eyes for Consuela* exhibit fear of dominance and commitment to conventionally male attributes as they pursue the development of their identities. After his wife abandons him, Henry, for example, abandons his customary job and wanders into the Mexican wilderness searching for an understanding of himself.

Female masculinity, in conjunction to Kimmel's conception of masculinity, provides a foundation for understanding the creation of masculine identity. Female masculinity considers masculinity from the feminist and heterosexist perspectives, as moving beyond the individual's sex and the connotation of the masculine body (Kimmel, 2008). "Far from being a replica of maleness, female masculinity actually provides us a glimpse of how masculinity is produced as masculinity," writes Halberstam (1998) in her book *Female Masculinity* (p. 1). Browne (2006) agrees that the majority of masculinity's power originates from its relationship with the male body, with concepts like strengths and dominance. In nature, where it is naturalized and has significant linkages with power, dominant masculinity has been characterized as white, male, and heterosexual over the years (Westgate, 2005). As a result, male dominance in society has primarily been explained by the qualities derived from their masculine bodies, while other components of their identities have been overlooked.

A lot of researchers have attempted to define masculinity in various cultures, as well as to give it legitimacy and relevance (King, 2002). Halberstam (1987) agrees that female masculinity exists and is a powerful element of male identity, just as male masculinity is. The appreciation of masculinity within the female body contributes to the masculine crisis, in which women identify masculinity outside of the male body. The dilemma has arisen as a result of the rigorous separation of male and female bodies, as well as cultural expectations for what each gender should perform. The problem of separating male and female bodies based on cultural and biological factors, according to Fausto-Sterling (2000), generates a dilemma when females and males strive to build their identities. Despite this, the presence of masculinity outside of the male body allows for a critique of what constitutes masculinity and femininity. In the past, masculinity was thought of and defined through the lens of domination. As a result, conceptions of female masculinity and gender fluidity might aid in the exploration of masculine characters, whether male or fallen, who lack the typical authority and dominance that has usually been associated with masculine identities. The constructs of masculine identity in *Eyes for Consuela* can be formed based on theories and notions.

Masculinity Construction in *Eyes for Consuela*

The study of masculinity in American plays has produced a large body of work. McDonough (1997) claims that staging masculinity in modern society necessitates the deconstruction of traditional masculinity and an understanding of how masculinity develops in current culture. This means that, in addition to the traditional guy, there has been the emergence of new types of men who should be investigated and deconstructed. In agreement, Vorlicky (1995) states that there is subjectivity in the deconstruction of masculinities, in which men are empowered to forge new identities separate from established roles and expectations. Henry, in the play, has forsaken his customary role as a provider and a family man in and embarked on a journey to negotiate identity. Henry is able to establish his own personality away from the expectations of American society as well as his family by moving away from the community with its expectations on what he should or should not be.

Traditional masculine features can be noticed in the play's opening scene, in which the focus is on Viejo and Henry, with Consuela receiving only a brief mention. Viejo and Henry, on the other hand, are introduced in great detail, including what they are doing, what surrounds them, and how they interact with the surroundings. Viejo, for example, refuses to acknowledge Consuela's presence and continues to stare out at the audience while Henry is asleep. Not responding to and reacting to Consuela's presence, implies that she is of little significance to the play. Masculinities are also generated from a fear of being dominated, as indicated by the concept of Guyland. Consuela's lack of recognition is part of a larger campaign to humiliate her and deny her a position of authority that would allow her to dominate them.

Eyes for Consuela reveals that male identity has moved beyond traditional masculinity, the hardships faced, and the reconstruction of the masculine identity. As Henry walks through the Mexican jungle, he has evolved from a traditional male identity to a reconstructed one. Shepard's play is a compelling depiction of men's identity crises as they attempt to live out their actual selves in opposition to what society expects from them. For example, in the beginning of the play, Henry is seen waking up terrified from a nightmare and attempting to act unconcerned. Viejo tries to talk to Henry about his nightmare, but he refuses to admit that he was terrified thinking that this is not what he has to disclose: 'I was having-uh-Woke up in a sweat'.

Male struggle for identity appears, as Rashedi and Nilofer (2018) show, when males fluctuate between their false and actual selves, with male characters in American drama seeking to express their identity. Henry would have acknowledged being terrified but refrains from disclosing his genuine self by confessing his feelings and emotions to another person; instead, he shows his false self by pretending that he is self-sufficient and does not require emotional or social support. According to Petracca (2021), the conventional masculine identity includes males who are macho, strong, and dominant. Furthermore, as Kimmel (2008) explains, conventional masculinity's male dominance stems from a fear of being dominated, and hence does not represent or denote any form of weakness.

Henry says that he had awakened up from a nightmare after Viejo insisted on knowing why he was sweating. However, once acknowledging this, he walks away in an attempt to terminate what he believes to be a point of weakness. It's worth noting, however, that Henry's

disclosure of having a nightmare originates from his belief that admitting to having a nightmare is preferable to admitting that his cause of concern is the unusual sounds in the Mexican forest:

Viejo: Must be a woman.

Henry: A woman? No, uh-I don't know what it was. Just woke up ringing wet.....It wasn't that. I'm used to that by now. I don't know what it was. Some nightmare. (Shepard, 1998. P. 122)

Men, according to Connell (1987), must adhere to hegemonic masculinity in the development of their masculine identity and take activities that are consistent with it. In accord, Waling (2019) claims that it is via these behaviors that men gain access to power, prestige, and status in society. Henry's actions in *Eyes for Consuela* demonstrate hegemonic masculinity, as Henry draws on the expectations of men in his society, who are not expected to show fear. Hegemonic masculinity, purports Hall (2014), must be expressed in the creation of their masculine identity. Fear, weakness, and worry are not seen as manly attributes as compared to strength, boldness, and courage in the face of adversity (Haywood et al., 2017).

Men who have effectively developed an identity based on hegemonic masculinity have enhanced access to power and status (Waling, 2019). Henry believes that displaying fear in front of Viejo will put him at a disadvantage and causes him to lose his position of power. As a result, he maintains hegemonic masculinity by refusing to accept his flaws, allowing him to keep the upper hand over Viejo and enjoy the privilege that comes with the identity. In *Eyes for Consuela*, male characters, particularly Henry, hold the viewpoint that they must eliminate any form of feminine attributes in order to assert the 'macho' man identity, which is the frontier mythos of what it truly means to be a manly, especially an American man. Shepard's male protagonists in most of his plays, as McDonough (1995) points out, focus on building ideal male identity, or at least what they perceive to be ideal male identity, which is defined by masculine traits such as courage and strength.

Female Characters and Male Identity Development

The majority of Shepard's plays downplay female characters, treating them as subordinate characters (Wade, 2000). For example, according to Westerlund (2015), in *Kicking a Dead Horse*, Shepard does not focus on developing the female character, who is physically and mentally subjugated. This is likewise true in *Eyes for Consuela*, where the focus is on the development of the male character's identity while the female character is largely overlooked. Moreover, femininity is also overlooked and treated as invisible; they are barely mentioned in the play. This is analogous to other American literature in which male characters' melodrama is key (Weiss, 2009). Henry's wife is rarely mentioned throughout the play, except from the fact that she left him which emphasized her absence. Despite the fact that Shepard does not give female characters significant roles in the plays, he recognizes their significance in shaping men's character. This is suggested through Henry's explanation of how women can persuade men to do things they never planned or expected:

Henry: Now look- I can-I can empathize with your situation. Women can be very persuasive in certain areas. Very-I mean a man can find himself doing things he never dreamed-things he never imagined. And-suddenly you see that you're in-pickle. (Shepard, 1998, p. 134)

Henry's wife, however, plays an important role in developing Henry's identity, as she is the reason he leaves Dallas and wanders through the Mexican jungle. This supports McDonough's (1995) argument that female characters in American plays are usually overlooked while playing a crucial role in the formation of masculine identity. As the focus of the play is the conflict between the two males, Consuela plays has a significant impact on Amado's actions and identity development throughout the play. As stated in the play, 'They do not acknowledge the presence of Consuela.

Viejo keeps rocking and smoking. Consuela flows towards the staircase with her head swept back, as through captured by the moon and stars. She hovers under the staircase, then reemerges and moves to the down center of the road. She looks up at the second floor room, then darts back upstage and disappears into the jungle again. Guitar fades. Viejo keeps slowly rocking'. (Shepard, 1998p. 122)

While the focus is on the formation and creation of male identity, it is crucial to emphasize that the female characters have an underappreciated and undervalued power. Given her control over Amado, Consuela, for example, has the authority to decide whether a man lives or dies. According to McGhee (1993), there is a need to recognize that no single subject exists in isolation, with other characters and elements in a play assisting the primary character's development. As a result, the importance of feminine characters like Consuela and Henry's wife in the development of male identity in the play should not be overlooked.

Role of Family in Masculine Identity Construction

Shepard's plays including *True West* (1980) and *Buried Child* (1978) and *The Late Henry Moss* (2000), display an interest in family. Everything, according to Dugdale (1989), is tied to the family, whether it's a crime or a love tale, with family serving as the foundation for all storylines. According to McDonough (1995), Shepard's concentration has been on the American family, and this is a viable foundation around which most of his plays have been built. Yet, it is worth noting that some of his plays have moved away from family connections to focus on other elements of social life (Wade, 2000). Ample examples are *Fool for Love* (1983) *States of Shock* (1992). Despite the decreased emphasis on family life, family remains the backdrop against which other issues are explored and built. While the focus in *Eyes for Consuela* (1998) is more on identity formation than on family, family is nevertheless a notion and construct in the story's development.

The family motif is used to demonstrate the departure from the usual, in which a boy grows up to be a man, marries, and has a family. While criticizing the setting of a conventional American family in which men marry and care for their families, in this play he deviates from this norm and advocates the concept of exploring life outside the ideal American family life. Henry moves to the Mexican wilderness after leaving his home. Shepard portrays the American family as a dysfunctional social unit in which each family member is estranged from the others and suffers from emotional traumas (Clum, 2002). As a result, Henry flees the family home to

escape the dysfunctionality, as indicated by his wife departure to her family's house, to seek solace from his physical and emotional scars. Henry's and Amado's male identities are portrayed as failing to make the sacrifices that love demands. 'You suppose that love comes cheaply?' Shepard writes in the play, and 'there is no love without this sacrifice' (p. 166). Henry's failure to make the necessary sacrifices for his family has resulted in loveless marriages. According to the play, Shepard believes that love necessitates and even demands a great sacrifice, and that if it is not made, a price is paid.

Literary Instruments Used in *Eyes for Consuela*

In *Eyes for Consuela*, Shepard uses the ghostly character to further build his piece. This is found in Consuela, a female figure who roamed the dark Mexican wilderness on a creaky bicycle in pursuit of blue eyeballs. While the ghosts are meant to be metaphorical rather than actual, they can be used by other characters in the play to explore their own growth (Wade, 2000). Consuela's role, for example, allows Shepard to demonstrate male identity's dominance and the need for female characters to submit so as to be developed. Consuela is a symbolic character in the play who alludes to society's expectations of the male characters. Amado may not have been haunted by the spirit of Consuela if he has not attempted to flee Mexico and seeks financial security by illegally moving to the United States and marrying a lady with whom he has no emotional feelings. Through the Ghost, Shepard explores political and social problems such as individual betrayal inside marriage and the sacrifice of family values in the pursuit of wealth.

Shepard uses the eyeballs to illustrate Henry's identity progression, in addition to the ghostly nature of Consuela's character. Henry's eyes appear blue to an outsider, Amado, while Henry insists that they are brown, and hence would be of no interest to Consuela. According to Donaldson (1993), a knowledge of masculinity and male identity can also be viewed from the outside, where society often makes a judgment on whether or not a person is manly. As a result, a person may consider himself as masculine, yet society sees and regards him as possessing feminine characteristics. The debate between Henry and Amado about whether Henry's eyes are brown or blue represents how masculinity is viewed in society, where some may consider an individual as manly while others may believe he is not. According to Edley and Wetherell (1995), masculinity can be seen as subjective, with its definition changing through time and depending on the society that defines it. In accord, Petracca (2021) points out that in American society, masculinity is often associated with the macho guy or cowboys, who are seen as powerful, rough, and manly. In *Eyes for Consuela*, Amado is certain that Henry simply wants to meet Consuela so that he may persuade her that his eyes are brown and not blue:

Amado: You would like to show her your eyes. Try to convince her, like me, that they are brown.

Henry: No. I would just like to see her. (Shepard, 1998, p. 147)

It also shows that when men try to create their identities, they may portray themselves in a false or real light depending on who they are interacting with. In order to save himself, Amado believes Henry will try to persuade Consuela that his eyes are brown. As a result, this shows that men can depict and portray their actual or fake identities, which is a part of the masculinity development process.

Shepard also uses blue eyes, in addition to the ghost, to offer a foundation for the story's growth of male identity in the play. Amado has been looking for blue eyes to give to his girlfriend Consuela since the beginning of the play. While it is unclear what the blue eyes in the play represent, they refer to women's influence over men and their attempts to placate them. Amado travels from place to place searching for blue eyes for Consuela, and it is during this journey that he meets Henry. Consuela has a tremendous position and authority over the male characters in the play, although not playing a very active role in it.

Consuela: They are not blue. They have never been blue (Shepard, 1998, p. 179).

Henry is saved by Consuela's judgment, in which she concludes that he is not a member of the race with blue eyes' patriarchal society. Blue eyes can also be symbolic of the American male, as blue eyes are regarded as attractive and hence superior, as well as a sign of male beauty. Consuela implies that Henry is part of her race and society, and thus should not be persecuted by Amado and Viejo.

The Problem of Power in the Construction of Male Identity

The development of the masculine identity is heavily influenced by power (Jewkes et al., 2015). The problem of power in hegemonic masculinity is predicated on the privilege it bestows on men at the expense of women and men who aren't considered macho enough. Hegemonic masculinity may be found throughout *Eyes for Consuela* whose primary focus is the development of male identity. Despite the existence of hegemonic masculinity, Jewkes et al. (2015) admit that not all men wield equal authority, with some men wielding greater power than others. A lot of factors influence this, including ethnicity's role and impact, social class, and status, to name a few. Henry is seen to be in a position of authority because of his standing as a middle-class white male. When compared to minority groups such as minority ethnic groups in American society, white males are connected with power. When compared to other male characters, such as Viejo and Amado, he appears superior due to his ethnic and racial. This argument echoes Hearn's (2004) assertion that, while men are powerful compared to other genders, their power is not distributed equally, with some men having a higher status than others. For example, because Amado is the one in charge, Henry appears to be more submissive:

Amado: Sit down. By the lamp. Sit! (Henry moves to chair by table; removes Amado's Sombrero; isn't quite sure where to put it, so he sits in chair and places sombrero on his lap). Turn your face to the light. (Henry does what he's told. Amado moves toward him with the knife). Open your eyes. (Henry follows instructions). (Shepard, 1998, p. 129)

Eyes for Consuela offers a unique viewpoint on American manhood's identity crisis, in which it has become a struggle to sustain traditional masculinity. According to Vorlicky (1995), modern American society has given males more freedom in terms of their identity, allowing them to break out from traditional masculine stereotypes. This may be seen in Henry's interactions with Amado as he recognizes the necessity to evolve his male identity in response to the difficulties he faces. Furthermore, the play allows the spectator to see the differences between Mexican and American cultures in terms of masculinity development. This is consistent with King's (2002) finding that an individual's masculine identity and values are

influenced by his or her culture and ethnic heritage. In *Eyes for Consuela*, Henry, for example, believes that a man should only have one wife and is startled to hear that Amado has two. Henry's identity is influenced by the interplay between the two cultures.

As such, the play demonstrates how a variety of elements, including culture and encounters with people from other cultures, influence the development of one's identity. It condemns and critiques American society's manly standards by exposing and illuminating Henry's suffering prior to his separation from his wife, as well as his attempts to establish a new and more idealized persona. However, rehabilitation does not equip the characters with a new male identity to embrace. Shepard has critiqued American society in his plays, but has not presented any ideas or answers to the problems that are being confronted, as Westerlund (2015) points out. Shepard's play shows how the failings of traditional and modern male identity in American culture necessitate the construction of a new male identity in which male characters like Henry can survive. The performance serves as a cautionary tale for other males who may be harboring a fake identity, demonstrating that men must be willing to reveal and be proud of their genuine identities.

Henry's Struggle for Identity

Henry's identity evolves throughout the play. As he converses with both Viejo and Amado, Henry is depicted as having a crisis in which he stutters and is unsure of his responses. According to Hall (2014), the male persona in American society is expected to be strong and fearless. In *Eyes for Consuela*, Henry is first introduced as a guy who is terrified of his own shadows after waking up terrified from a nightmare. This is in stark contrast to what is expected of men in his American society, where men are supposed to care for and protect others (Browne, 2006):

Henry: Please, ...

Amado: Stand Up! And stop pleading like a goat. Act like a man...Give me a cigarette.. Stop Shaking. You're not going to die. (Shepard, 1998, p. 127)

Henry has attempted to line his life with what society expects of him. For example, when asked if he has a wife, he says yes and appears astonished when Amado insists on knowing if he has only one wife. This supports Hall's (2014) argument that as people try to figure out who they are, they fit their identities with what society expects of them, such as marrying and keeping faithful to one woman. Furthermore, according to Kimmel (2006), modern American culture expects a guy to marry and have a family and be true to his wife.

Henry's conversation with Amado aids him in questioning his own character and identity as a man. When Amado learns that he and his wife have had an on-again, off-again relationship, he asks if he has any questions concerning the cause of his wife's grief. Henry says that Amado's suggestion that he has been suffering like a dog has never occurred to him:

Amado: Ah, so you just suffer like a dog? A whipped dog. (Shepard, 1998, p. 131)

When he explains that they mutually chose to separate, for example, Amado raises an eyebrow and informs Henry that he doesn't know his heart.

Amado: You don't know your heart.

Henry: No-I suppose that's true. I suppose you're right about that. I keep thinking-It funny, you know-. (Shepard, 1998, 136)

Henry reevaluates his ideas and beliefs about his life, his decisions, and his relationship with his wife after engaging with Amado. It makes him believe that he can lead a new life without his wife. Despite their terrible circumstances, Amado and Henry manage to put their differences aside and enjoy a bottle of vodka. It demonstrates how the two men's male identities are still evolving as they engage in a discussion about women and their societies.

There are four major kinds of masculinity, according to Connell's works (1995). The first is hegemonic, which entails ideal masculine characteristics such as heterosexuality, power, authority, toughness, and competitiveness. The marginal masculine is the second category, which includes men who do not fit the hegemonic notion but are not heavily challenged or accused of not being macho enough. The complicit masculine is the third type, which includes men who do not fit in the concept of hegemonic masculinity but do not have to fight hegemony's standing. Finally, subordinate males pose a threat to hegemonic masculinity. According to this classification, Henry is a marginal man because, while he does not fit the hegemonic concept, he cannot be questioned or prosecuted for not being manly. Despite the fact that he is not a hegemonic ideal, Henry has made an effort to appear tough, powerful, and competitive despite being in a stressful circumstance where he is threatened with violence. This is in line with Connell's (1998) assertion that many men strive to be classified as hegemonic concepts, and even if they are unable to do so, they endeavor to position themselves in relation to the hegemonic ideal. Henry, for example, does not want to be accused of thinking about a lady because it is not considered as manly or tough, and he rejects it when Viejo accuses him of it:

Henry: A woman? No uh- don't know what it was. Just woke up ringing wet. (Shepard, 1998, p. 122).

Shepard's usage of the name Henry for the main character relates to the patriarchal legacy of the name Henry, which is popular in white societies such as German, English, and French. Shepard portrays Henry as a patronizing American from a high patriarchy society, displaying and hinting to the superiority of the American over the other characters (Wade, 2000). However, based on Henry's acceptance of Amado's statements, there is a recognition of the defects in American culture.

There can be various masculinities, according to Connell's hegemonic masculinity theory, because there is no single masculinity that fits all males (Connell, 2005b). Henry undergoes exorcism in Act Two where he embarks on a journey of repentance and reconciliation with his identity. This is accomplished by letting go of what is considered manly and male and embracing a new life in which he acknowledges the truth about himself and his emotions. Consuela serves as a female guide for the two males (Henry and Amado). This act begins with Amado, who is in a position of power, commanding Henry to open his eyes so that he can gouge them. Through his encounter with Amado, Henry is able to reveal a fact he has been trying to suppress: he is the one who drives his wife away by attempting to impose his power over her. As Wade (2000) notes, Shepard depicts the struggle that masculine characters have

as they grow into their manhood and individuality. Henry loves his wife and uses this emotion to force her to submit to him. Men, according to Clum (2002), use their position of authority, as well as their interactions and social relationships, to achieve power. Henry uses love to exert control over her. Henry is chastised by Amado for emphasizing love as a tool for controlling their loved ones: 'Love needs a sacrifice... Without sacrifice there is no love'. (Shepard, 1998, p. 166)

This exemplifies the disparities between the two societies' notion of what love is and what it implies. Amado concedes that their encounter was set up so that he could deliver and influence Henry's outlook, and vice versa: 'But I am here to deliver you, continues Amado. I have been sent to you and you have been sent to me' (Shepard, 1998, p.168).

Shepard makes it apparent that he recognizes the diversity of masculinities that exist. While males want to fit in hegemonic masculinity, Connell (2005b) contends that there are different masculinities that exist and are relational in nature. This suggests that different male identities exist in society and interact with one another, allowing masculinities to form. As a result, a man's masculine identity is shaped by his interactions and participation with others. Shepard depicts Henry's maturation and negotiation of masculine identity in the Mexican jungle.

Fear is a theme that runs throughout the play, beginning with the first stage introduction and continuing through the rest of the performance. Henry's first appearance in front of the public is one of anxiety, as he wakes up sweating from a nightmare about being in a strange environment in Mexico. Fear is a crucial premise in Kimmel's (2008) guyland model for understanding masculinity and the formation of masculine identity. According to Kimmel (2008), masculinity is developed based on the concept of fear, in which men join in organizations that control their identities as they advance from youth to adulthood. In *Eyes for Consuela*, elements of Kimmel's guyland paradigm of masculinity can be examined. Amado and Henry, for example, find a common ground and begin swapping stories about love, marriage, and relationships, despite the fact that Amado wants to gouge out Henry's eyes. Amado questions Henry's thoughts and perspectives on what it means to be an American or to have a home. Henry is able to accept that he tried to confine his wife in the name of love after Amado criticizes his behavior, but he also concedes that unlike him, Henry's wife realizes who she is: 'She belonged to herself, and therefore she rebelled' (Shepard, 1988, p. 161).

As a result, Amado claims that Americans lack a fundamental grasp of what it means to love, claiming that love is about sacrifice and that love cannot exist without it. While guyland is more commonly associated with organizations like educational or religious institutions, Henry, Amado, and to a lesser extent Viejo form a guyland connection in which they discuss and argue on various issues that they face. They also show the two of them having a beer. Guyland activities include staying together, sharing stores, having various lovers, adhering to a guy code, and sharing alcohol (Kimmel, 2006). Henry and Amado drink tequila, tell stories, and argue over a variety of topics, including their relationships and prior experiences.

Guyland, according to Kimmel (2008), is a relationship that begins and develops an identity in which the males are in a position of authority and can dominate as well as humiliate others, based on a fear of being dominated and rejected. According to *Consuela*, Amado used

violence to instill fear in Henry, effectively putting him in a position of control. As Amado tries to appease his Consuela, he uses his authority to humiliate and subjugate Henry. According to Kimmel (2008), in guyland, the members of the organization construct a guy code that directs the values and behaviors that members should follow based on what they consider to be manly. This may be observed in the play as Viejo and Amado give Henry instructions and recommendations (guycode). They only agree to let him go once they're convinced he understands their man code. Amado reveals in their conversations that they are supposed to meet and that there are forces beyond explanation that have to lead to subsequent meetings: But I am here to deliver you, I have been sent to you and you to me.... there are forces beyond reason'. (Shepard, 1998, p. 166).

Conclusion

Shepard's *Eyes for Consuela* tackles manhood and the development of male identity. The play focuses primarily on two characters, Henry and Amado whose encounter triggers a process of identity formation and evolution. As portrayed in the play, Henry, the protagonist, leaves America following a dispute with his wife and resides in a Mexican jungle where he comes across people from another culture, a meeting which accelerates the formation of a new concept of manhood. male identity. There, he comes to terms with his true self and forms a male identity that is not imposed by society.

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