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The Spectacles of Violence in David Mamet's *Oleanna*

Lect. Ahmed Khudhur Fadhil*

Department of English College of Education for Humanities

University of Mosul

ahmedalabid899@uomosul.edu.iq

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ABSTRACT

Violence is the highest point reached by tensions as a consequence of clashing advantages. For the literary writings, it shows the essential framework of human feelings. Although critics a little bit drill down on violence, it is still a principal attribute of social communication among people. It is also typified by the physical practices of force on people. Its meaning includes not only its corporal aspect but also its psychological experiences. This paper aims to investigate the impacts of violence on characters' feelings and emotions in David Mamet's *Oleanna*. It also examines violence in its multifaceted shape: gender violence, class violence, and cultural violence. It takes into account the psychoanalytical approach to bring out the psychological influences of violence and exploitation in Western society, especially in the American establishments. Having related to violence, the paper tries to show the influence of variant outcomes of alienation, rape, searching for power and emotional turmoil. The significance of the research lies in throwing light on the issue of violence in the domain of campus theatre.

Keywords: alienation, campus theatre, David Mamet, psychological experiences, violence.

* **Corresponding Author:** Lect. Ahmed Khudhur, **Email:** ahmedalabid899@uomosul.edu.iq

Affiliation: Mosul University - Iraq

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مشاهد العنف في مسرحية ديفيد مامت (أوليانا)

م. أحمد خضر فاضل

قسم اللغة الإنكليزية كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية
جامعة الموصل

المستخلص

يعد العنف أعلى نقطة تصل إليها التوترات نتيجة لتصادم المنافع. بالنسبة للكتابات الأدبية، فهو يُظهر الإطار الأساسي للمشاعر الإنسانية. على الرغم من قلة تركيز النقاد على العنف، إلا أنه لا يزال يمثل السمة الرئيسية للتواصل الاجتماعي بين الناس. ويتجسد العنف أيضًا من خلال ممارسات القوة الجسدية على الناس. ولا يشمل معناها جانبها الجسدي فحسب، بل يشمل أيضًا تجاربها النفسية. يهدف هذا البحث إلى التعرف على آثار العنف على مشاعر وانفعالات الشخصيات في مسرحية "أوليانا" لديفيد مامت. كما يتناول البحث أيضًا موضوع العنف بأشكاله المتعددة: العنف الجنسي، والعنف الطبقي، والعنف الثقافي. ويأخذ بعين الاعتبار منهج التحليل النفسي لإبراز التأثيرات النفسية للعنف والاستغلال في المجتمع الغربي، ولاسيما في المؤسسات الأمريكية. وفيما يتعلق بالعنف، تحاول الدراسة إظهار تأثير النتائج المختلفة للاغتراب والاعتصاب والبحث عن السلطة والاضطراب العاطفي. وتكمن أهمية البحث في تسليط الضوء على قضية العنف في مجال المسرح الجامعي.

الكلمات الدالة: الغرابة، المسرح الجامعي، ديفيد مامت، التجارب النفسية، العنف.

1. INTRODUCTION

Oleanna (1992) is a play that revolves around only two male and female characters who strive for psychological overriding in different ways. It is noteworthy that Mamet is talented in presenting a violent oral encounter in such kinds of plays whose settings are governed by men, and that is what makes them susceptible to discussions. The play addresses the unrest of immortality in one of the institutions of American society, the university. Mamet elaborates on this subject by using obscene utterances as they were prevailing in the United States of America in the late 20th century. All events are set in Professor John's office, who is 42 years old. The play opens when Carol, a female student who is in her twenties, comes to John's office requesting him to get a higher mark in his course. While they are talking to each other, their discussion turns into an argument ending with physical violence. As it is common with Mamet, phone calls interrupt most of the conversation between John and Carol, reflecting a bad psychological impression on the latter. The discussion between Carol and John in the play deteriorates

into oral and finally corporal fierceness because it is a play which involves mainly the subject of violence. Mamet adopts in his writing the concept of incapability of communication among people who are morally corrupted. The highest point of the play mixes bodily and wordy violence and it clearly shows their equality (Malkin, 1992, pp. 146-53). Roger Bechtel sees that Carol also suffers from a certain kind of violence by her class group. She has some feelings of compassion for her professor but she is unable to reveal these feelings because her group does not accept. On that basis, she is regarded as a mean of revenge and she oppresses her feelings toward John. She turns from being a character into a real woman who has natural human wishes (Sauer and Sauer, 2003, p. 245). In spite of being hidden, the concept of revenge is noteworthy by Mamet's characters in his plays. Mamet confirms that John's use of violence is the only way of revenge.

In an interview, Mamet criticizes the American system of higher education, describing it as a skillful project that prevents students from the independence of thought. He believes that the college years are nothing but lab tests in which learners only recount the concepts they received without verifying their truth (Nadel, 2008, p. 253). The play deals with certain setbacks in the American teaching order and how people are affected by the impacts of these relapses for a long time. Mamet employs the teaching system as a means of interaction among people. *Oleanna* is deemed a subject of sexual violence in addition to physical violence. However, Mamet refuses this description, and he insists that it has a tragic structure. The play aims to participate in a rising set of other plays that show the dynamic power of the connection between the student and the professor as well as how this link is susceptible to violence (Murphy, 2004, pp. 124-125). In an essay entitled "Oleanna, Or, The Play of Pedagogy," Robert Skloot argues that *Oleanna* mainly includes the idea of violent fighting to attain special frugal, academic and sexual advantages. All acts portray the way of John's descent and Carol's ascent. Both characters suffer from persecution, which is felt by their conduct and the environment in which they live. Skloot also adds that Mamet produces such a kind of play that revolves around a brutal and exciting conflict in search of power. Because Mamet is concerned with this subject, he wrote *Oleanna*, which sheds light on the practice and misuse of this power through academia (Skloot, 2001, pp. 96-97).

In an interview in the late 1990s with the *New York Times*, Mamet states that his childhood was full of violence, but the most magnificent one was the sentimental violence¹. Reading the play deeply can guide one to the reflection of Mamet's violent childhood on the character of John. This view supports some critics' opinions, like Ira Nadel, who observe that *Oleanna* is an autobiographical work.

2. THE SPECTACLES OF VIOLENCE IN MAMET'S *OLEANNA*

As the events of *Oleanna* take place on campus and precisely in a professor's office, they prepare a suitable milieu for violence as there exists a governor and being governed. Joseph Carroll sees that literature tackles the issue of violence widely because literary writers tend to reach the centre of human nature. He also points out that fierceness represents the level at which the stresses come to the climax due to competing interests. In any literary work, violence explores the basic construction of people's senses and motives (Carroll, 2014, p. 33). The core of violence in the play starts from an arranged gathering to talk about a female student's poor doing in her teacher's class. The meeting rises into a fight that foreshadows the ruin of the teacher's life. Mamet portrays the

violence in *Oleanna* as a battlefield on which professors and students fight to dominate an integrated course of academic studies. The cruelty in John's expressions and behaviors at the end of the play suggests that he is an oppressor, a patriarch and a man who believes in the inferiority of women. He holds all these features in spite of his claim that he does not (Utz, 2010, pp. 247- 48). Carol feels that she is objectified and she has no value "... you think I'm nothing..." (I. 254)ⁱⁱ.

Michel Foucault points out that psychoanalysis is a speech of power that introduces an acquaintance with public and private nature (Foucault, 1974, p. 374). It uncovers the essential significance of sexuality in a certain period for Western culture. It paves the way for saying that sexuality is the path that leads to the fact of human self. The fact is related to power, which exists in the psyche. Foucault decides to survey the reasons that stand behind how sexuality governs the foundations and the speeches. He sees that sex is regarded as the source of power and the tool of education (Wright, 1984, pp. 160-62). In *Oleanna*, sexuality permeates the university and diffuses through it. It forms the strategy of authority as it is connected to knowledge and education.

Thomas H. Goggans thinks that Carol faced such violence when she was a child, and she intended to admit it to John in the final part of Act I, but she was interrupted by the phone ringing (Sauer and Sauer, 2003, p. 248). John, too, sounds like he suffered from a kind of verbal violence when he was a child. It is clear when Carol asks him about the fact of his being accused of stupidity through the dialogue between them:

CAROL. People said that you were stupid?

JOHN. Yes.

CAROL. When?

JOHN. I'll tell you when. Through my life. In my childhood; and, perhaps, they stopped.

But I heard them continue.

CAROL. And what did they say?

JOHN. They said I was incompetent... (I. 256).

In the foreword of Abby Stein's book *Prologue to Violence: Child Abuse, Dissociation, and Crime*, Donnel B. Stern argues that brutal and early inhuman treatment against a person results in violence later (Stein, 2010, p. XII). This is an implication of John's cruelly maltreating Carol as he received such lousy treatment as a child student. In another situation, John threatens Carol that if he reveals that she is lying to him by claiming that she has read his book, then it will cost her being dishonored and her life will be destroyed:

JOHN. ... We shove this book at you, we say read it. Now, you say you've read it? I think

that you're lying. I'll grill you, and when I find you've lied, you'll be disgraced, and your

life will be ruined. (I. 261).

Mamet pretends that even though John and Carol exchange a type of affection, they insist on destroying each other at the end of the play. They do that because they want to defend their own social status. This sort of ruin is not a mistake of any character in the play, but it is the order's wrongdoing that Mamet criticizes as it grants John and Carol the right to prioritize their position for their good (Sauer, 2008, p. 34).

Jeanette R. Malkin views that Mamet wrote this play as a reference to the brutal life described as morally corrupted. Mamet shows the mutual relation between the speech and obvious violence that begins with reckless and extreme cruelty (Malkin, 1992, p.103). Kimball King argues that in Mamet's plays, *Oleanna* among them, violence is raised when language cannot express meaning (Kane, 2004, p. 101). The characters in the play are forced and demolished by language. The violence of words and the despotism of expressions play a central role in *Oleanna*. Mamet depicts the power of parlance over people's social lives.

Gender problems are increased by the violence between males and females in *Oleanna*. Similarly, the language of corporal abuse is affected by gender as well. The masculine principles depict females as always sacrifices of males' violent practices (Bean in Hudgins and Kane, 2001, pp. 111-112). Christopher Bigsby sees that some critics guess that Mamet jeers the female's opinion and protects the male's. Bigsby also thinks that some critics add the title of misogynist to Mamet as his recent plays either eliminate women or create a great gap between genders. He suggests that the rival languages procured the outbreak of conflict at the universities of the United States. The fact of power and its possession is disputable in the play through gender's changing behaviors. *Oleanna* gets itself involved in the indentation among the genders (Bigsby, 2004, p. 2). Robert Skloot believes that critics see that *Oleanna* presents a subversive idea of the strained ties between males and females. He adds that Mamet, in *Oleanna*, submits the issues of gender for Carol as "the type of women who cry rape when they feel aggrieved by men and/or powerless in their presence" (qtd. in Hudgins and Kane, 2001, p. 10). Karen Blansfield argues that when a female appears in Mamet's work, she succeeds in subverting the men's tremulous and swelling ego (Hudgins and Kane, 2001, p. 11).

Mamet's plays are written in an autobiographical style (Nadel, 2008, p. 1). He has an atmosphere of violence in his own life. He once hit his sister wrathfully but he immediately rued. Therefore, this violence is reflected in his plays as it is obvious with that chasm among his figures that lack intimacy and cannot get it at all. It is a reference to Mamet's conviction that people are wild creatures, and he realizes that they can overpower. In *Oleanna*, John feels that his use of cruelty grants him a fresh sense of his distinct personality of being authorized to practice it. He represents Mamet's recognition of the past violence he indicates in this play for the time being (Bigsby in Bigsby, 2004, pp. 15-19). Mamet elaborates on the issue of alienation, which has an evident echo in his writings. What evokes the sense of alienation in *Oleanna* is Sigmund Freud's idea, i.e. the return of repressed, which is depicted in the play when John remembers his childhood while he was a student *Now: I see I have angered you. I understand your anger at teachers. I was angry with mine. I felt hurt and humiliated by them (II. 268)*. Furthermore, Carol comes from another community, which raises the obsession of being alienated and promotes her fear of something is about to happen, her failure in John's course:

CAROL. ... I come from different social ...

JOHN. ... ev ...

CAROL. a different economic ... (I. 252).

In an essay entitled "Oleanna: Language and Power," Brenda Murphy suggests that Carol dares to accuse John of making illegal payments and obliging her to withdraw the complaint. When John refuses her indictment, she responds with: *I have my notes (II.*

268). Psychologically, John regards this charge as an indication of subjection, which was subsequently turned into a tool of ascendancy upon him. Carol deprives John of authority “*You. Do. Not. Have. The. Power*” (II. 270). She insists that John loves power in order to “*deviate*”, “*invent*”, and to “*transgress*” all principles that have served human beings. In fact, she does not express her disapproval of power, but she desires to achieve it. Her protest is about John’s negation of practicing power, which made her angry (Murphy, 2004, pp. 130-131). She rebukes John severely and accuses him of only looking forward to obtaining power: *Do you know what you’ve worked for? Power. For power. Do you understand?* (III. 276). Mamet also touches on the problem of rape, as it is a ruinous strength for the American dream. Carol charges John that he intended to rape her: *For two semesters sit there, stand there and exploit our, as you thought, paternal prerogative, and what is that but rape; I swear to God* (III. 277).

At the end of the play, John feels that his speech supremacy lets him down, so he turns into corporal violence by rapping Carol, raising a chair above his head and advancing on her. Harry Elam, Jr. views that John’s violence rebuilds the sway of the ancient patriarchal order. As a result, John resumes his control through his physical attack on Carol (Murphy in Bigsby, 2004, pp. 133-134). He believes that using violence will enable him to make Carol return to the right way of obedience (Rasheed and Jassim, 2021, p. 72). In addition to violence, the play shows the activity of predominance in the relationship between the professor and his student. It presents the latent risks in the educational system hegemony of the 20th century.

Carol’s reaction to John’s violent action at the end of the play is equivocal. Richard Badenhausen sees that it is a severe confession of John’s misogynistic action (Murphy in Bigsby, 2004, p. 134). Mamet tries to gloss over the fact of misogyny behind the false claim of standing against political correctness. Through violent acts against Carol, John controls her in a male manner at the end of the play, which emphasizes the masculine hegemony on the stage. He bucks her to the ground, she confesses her smash, and she says: “... *Yes, That is right.*” In Mamet’s drama, it is familiar that females face violence resulting from males’ pursuit of dominance (Bean in Hudgins and Kane, 2001, p. 123). Ira Nadel, in turn, mentions that the misogynist was a descriptive word thrown at Mamet and all who subsidized his *Oleanna*. From its very beginning, the play seems fulminatory and liable to sudden violence. It urged the feminists to object and to yell at the actors during its performance (Nadel, 2008, p. 183). Although the charges of being misogynist, Mamet completely confutes all of them in more than one meeting, the most famous one is the interview with the *New York Times* in 1997 in which he disproved all these claims. Leslie Kane, the president of the David Mamet Society of the Modern Language Association, sees that the play is a galling study of the vehement issues of violent sexual harassment. Mamet uncovers the predominant evil of mind control. Kane, therefore, considers the play antifeminist and misogynist (Sauer and Sauer, 2003, p. 228).

Depending on Jacques Lacan’s view, Ann Hall thinks that Mamet’s feminine characters are not steady, and that gives them the privilege of turning their subjectivity into destructive energy. Hall claims that these characters are able to have a revolting style which violates their persecutors’ polemic projects. Mamet’s women personify the revolting femininity (Habib in Hudgins and Kane, 2001, p. 78). The play was written to keep the extreme feminists away from achieving their aims. John Lahr believes that Carol’s violence emerges from her insecurity. Her rigidity is deemed as a tool of

controlling her concern of staying ignorant (Sauer and Sauer, 2003, p. 229). Carol shows her revolutionary potential to enhance females' roles in society and overcome the suppressive activities against them (Abdullah and Rasheed, 2024, p. 331). Consequently, she believes that erudition can emancipate her from being a slave:

JOHN. ... wait, wait, wait ... All right, let's go back to ...

CAROL. YOU FOOL. Who do you think I am? To come here and be taken in by smile.

You little yapping. You think I want revenge. I don't want revenge. I WANT UNDERSTANDING. (III. 279).

Among the main concepts of *Oleanna* is that John treated Carol brutally to control her sexual conduct. Some psychologists, such as David Buss and Joshua Duntley, attribute the close partner mistreatment to an evolutionary psychological view (Shackelford and Hansen, 2014, p. vii). In an essay entitled "Intimate Partner Violence in Evolutionary Perspective," Buss and Duntley show that the growth of violence is often caused by the extreme psychological strain which is created by economic lack (Buss and Duntley, 2014, p. 8). This leads one to a notable thought that John may have suffered from a psychological situation that made him behave violently. John is unable to buy a new house, which in turn promotes his psychological exertion. On the other hand, the play suggests that John is afflicted with emotional deficiency: "... but, and this is not to say that I cannot change, in those things in which I am deficient ... But, the ..." (III. 279). He was apathetic when he was talking to his wife on the phone in the play. Sigmund Freud believes that a person who is affected by emotional disorders uses them as tools for achieving suppressed desires (Jackson, 2014, p. 36). Noting the psychological elements that urge violence between males and females, jealousy is regarded as the greatest among those elements. Carol was jealous when she asked John not to fondle her wife, a matter that motivated her to be violent with John "...and don't call your wife baby" (III. 282). Moreover, exercising violence costs severe losses. The violators may harm their social status (Buss and Duntley, 2014, pp. 14 -15). John encounters the problem when The Tenure Committee deprives him of promotion due to Carol's accusations.

Leonard Jackson asserts that recent psychologists see that previously saved hints form many kinds of recollections. In reference to *Oleanna*, John remembers his childhood as a student and how he received bad treatment from his teacher as he was at school. Jackson concludes that all hysterical actions are consequences of sexual disorders (Jackson, 2014, pp. 34-37). He also claims that the impulsive potency of many human behaviors is the sexual sense (Jackson, 2014, p. 46). Although he is married, John may suffer from an emotional vacuum that makes him harass Carol sexually.

In an interview, journalist Markland Taylor interrogates Mamet, saying that the focus of *Oleanna* is the following question: How could we reach this situation? A professor loves his schoolgirl intensely and feels proud to be a great instructor. How did he beat a schoolgirl violently? Mamet answers that language is neither a means of communication nor a device of shifting the feelings from one person to another (Sauer and Sauer, 2003, pp. 5-6). Psychologically, Taylor indicates that John was alexithymic because he was unable to express his hidden love feelings toward Carol.

From the 1970s, Mamet makes us feel and watch the disintegration of the novel world through his plays. He succeeds in showing sexism clearly and its impact on fragmenting vulnerable social ties. Mamet obligates spectators to encounter ethical

questions when people violate the social rules through sexism, racism, rape, and physical attacks because these issues can construct or destroy civilization (King in Kane, 2004, p. 94). Some critics, like Katherine H. Burkman, believe that Mamet's sexist style lurks in female's menacing the world of masculinity. The style shows its hatred of women. Mamet, on his part, seems sympathetic to John's actions in the play (Sauer and Sauer, 2003, p. 246). John's naming Carol a "cunt" and "little bitch" as well as attacking her brutally describes him a sexist and a misogynist as Carol named him "It is a sexist remark" (II. 271). Mamet is considered a maker of what is named "Mametspeak" in drama. It refers to the speech that mirrors what Mamet believes in that discussion is a fight. Characters use conversation to control other characters in dramatic work (Murphy, 2004, p. 16). Mamet believes that the value of society is tightly linked to his employment of violence and felonious action. He uses filthy speech as verbal violence in *Oleanna* in order to express the inner discomfort that was prevailing in American society. He wails about the fall of these nations, which are maltreating their people and depriving them of esteem and honor (Kane, 2004, p. 101). Mamet's use of ribaldry, in *Oleanna* and in his many plays, has been raised to an art level. Alain Piette mentions that Mamet's filthy expressions create a feeling of realism (Murphy, 2004, p. 38). It enhances the play's repletion with verbal violence, which is also common in Mamet's professional life. So, John practices two kinds of violence: verbal and physical.

David Sauer sees that in Act II and III of the play, Carol becomes a cruel dictator after she dominates John to the extent of interfering in his private life. She behaves the same way as in Act I when he controlled her. She instructs him how to talk to his wife: ... *and don't call your wife "baby."* Sauer adds that scenes of violence also could be depicted through the reader's observation of ellipses in the characters' speech in *Oleanna*. These gaps lead to the idea that the characters think fast and wrathfully and cannot articulate rapidly. Over and above, the play explains these scenes when John's academic reputation is destroyed when Carol's complaint is put before the Tenure Committee (Sauer, 2008, p. 28).

Although violence is performed at the end of Mamet's plays, it usually goes unpunished. In *Oleanna* John practices physical violence against Carol when he beats her and holds the chair up to hit her, but he places it down at the end of the play. While Carol receives no punishment, John faces only managerial and doubtful retribution (Nadel in Kane, 2004, pp. 82-83). The crime in the play is the moral infringement of the gregarious system and not of the corporal violation (Nadel in Kane, 2004, p. 91). In an essay entitled "Gradations of Criminality in the Plays of David Mamet," Kimball King mentions that many of Mamet's plays contain violent actions by their protagonists as they are harsh and opportunistic. He views that protagonist's conducts are sometimes an assault on values that support human societies. *Oleanna* includes many violations of privacy and moral values. Therefore, the audiences feel uneasy when the professor, physically, attacks his female student at the end of the play. They feel that they share, inadvertently, the scenery of violence that is socially rejected. They are occasionally surprised when they know that the characters can reveal their ugly faces and enjoy the corporal revenge which is emerged from verbal disputes. King also inserts that the bodily violence is always seen as a regrettable fact in Mamet's works especially the plays that are interested in moral cases such as *Oleanna*. Freudians come to an agreement that Mamet managed to invent a hopeless and an integrated setting to his characters (Kane, 2004, pp. 94-96). In this play,

Mamet tries his best to explain that violence is not only an ignorance of the lawful order of society but also a violation of its essential principles related to reciprocal esteem and defense of the vulnerable.

In her book *Understanding David Mamet*, Brenda Murphy believes that Mamet's psychic requirement for home and belonging resulted from his early deprivation of residence when he was a child. Mamet enriched his writings with this necessity as he lost it when his parents were separated during his childhood (Murphy, 2004, p. 33). Violence can be created, basically, by a previous violent experience or by past sufferance. It forms a significant motif for those people who obtain material attainment from their applying severe acts (Schmidt and Schroder, 2001, p. 8). While violence is often explained as a reasonable plan of haggling for power, in *Oleanna*, one cannot recognize who the winner and the loser are. Both Carol and John understand that the legitimacy of violence is a personal right granted to each of them. This legitimacy served as a pretext to reach a desired aim. It is apparent that the concept of legitimacy of using violence is one of the themes which Mamet tries his best to deal with in the play.

Schmidt and Schroder view that violence is able to form a united component of a group's orientation toward self-expression. They also suggest that Jon Abbink depends on certain ideas taken from evolutionary psychology to illustrate the way in which violence is considered a stable systematic plan. The emergence of such plan can boost the opportunity for group existence (Schmidt and Schroder, 2001, pp. 13-15). On that ground, Carol's group actively urges her to be tough against John. She is subject to their will and cannot get out of their opinion, thinking that she can define herself and herself. For this reason, Carol practices defensive violence by which she thinks she can reconstruct her identity and bring back her rights:

CAROL. What gives you the right. Yes. To speak to a woman in your private ...
Yes.

Yes. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. You feel yourself empowered ... you say so yourself.
To strut.

To posture. To perform. To Call me in here ... Eh?" (II. 271).

On the contrary, John performs transgressive violence, such as the physical attack, to impose his power over his student: *I wouldn't touch you with a ten-foot pole. You little cunt...* (III. 283).

In the introduction to their book *Gender and Genre: Essays on David Mamet*, Hudgins and Kane view that from the onset of Mamet's writings, he tries to criticize the learning system in modern American society. He highlights, too, the strife of males and females in reaching love, and they use various means to impose their dominance upon others. Christine MacLood sees that Mamet faces his spectators with violent fights which have no solutions. In *Oleanna*, Mamet deduces that there is a demand for change as a true alternative to the experience of hegemony. The concept which is rooted in the title of the play and is derived from a demotic song. Linda Dorff holds out that Mamet's writings recreate the paralyzed imaginations of male myths (Hudgins and Kane, 2001, pp. 5-7). An unfair judgement by the Tenure Committee confronted John. The committee refused to promote him when Carol's charges were taken into consideration, and John was not given a chance to defend himself. If John is right when he describes the committee as

bad, he will be complicit with the iniquity of the academic system. It leads to dangerous psychological troubles for his reputation in the academic milieu. Additionally, Carol's taking notes and using them later as indictments of rape against John, plays a great psychological role in the play. John's defense of his textbook also provides a sort of psychological justification for his behavior in *Oleanna* (Skloot, 2001, pp. 100-101).

The point at which John sets off with violence is Carol's demand that his book be banned from being a representative paradigm of the university. He believes that Carol's quest is a violation to his educational rights and his career. He felt Carol's danger and he resorted to violence in order to confront her and her Group. *Oleanna* embraces the enigmatic rhetoric of androcentrism, which enhances the power of male identity (Bean in Hudgins and Kane, 2001, pp. 117-120). Freedom of thought is one of the main components of Mamet's *Oleanna*. Having derived from the male violence, this freedom is used as a mental onslaught against a female learner before the physical attack in the play.

Mamet's realm is originally violent, and it has been reflected in the conduct of his characters. They fight each other to reach the supreme level, and they try to subvert one another to survive. Mamet's characters practice vicious demeanors such as violence and maltreatment, resulting in the fast switch from victory to rout (Nadel, 2008, p. 1).

3. CONCLUSION

In *Oleanna*, the scenes of violence confirms that they are connected to psychological aspects such as the requirement for establishing one's value and worth. The oral conflict between Carol and John hints toward the portrait of achieving the female identity only through females' power over males in the postmodern community. The play warns people strictly against legitimating the use of violence for the sake of getting what they wish. It obviously showed the modern critics' concern for violence, articulating its crucial status in contemporary writings. In *Oleanna*, Mamet insists on exposing the dilemma of exploitation in the American nation.

The play concludes that each character practices a sort of violence over the other. Both John and Carol played the role of oppressor and oppressed. They were both hurt by abusing each other. They were looking to understand and achieve authority over each other, but there was no winner at all. In spite of the fact that violence leads up to a temporary victory, it can never bring an everlasting peace. The play finds out that Mamet is absolutely certain that the worth of a society depends on the use of violence and profanities because he observes that people who speak bad words they tell truth. It refuses to give impunity as this privilege represents a vital point to the world's future. Finally, *Oleanna* criticized the United States' educational system in the late nineties, describing it as corrupt and as only a recitation of what students received from their teachers.

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ⁱ https://www.theatredatabase.com/20th_century/david_mamet_001.html. Accessed at 16-12-2023

ⁱⁱ All quotations from *Oleanna* are taken from David Mamet's play *Oleanna*, in *Contemporary Drama: Performing Identity*. Edited by James Utz. San Diego, CA: Cognella, 2010. Further references will be to the act and the page number.