



The Degeneracy of Postmodern Family: The Survey of Shepard's *Fool for Love*

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Abstract

This survey is to pry the notion of Postmodern family disintegration in Sam Shepard's *Fool for Love* (1983). Based on Jean Baudrillard's theory Loss of Real based on simulation and hyperreality, and Jean François Lyotard's Fall of Grand Narratives are surveyed in this research. Some grand narratives or myths are subverted in the play. These myths are American family, the American dream, American identity, masculinity and masculine violent power of cowboys are some of the American grand myths. The American family is in decline in the play through abandonment, alcoholism, having dual relations outside the frame of family and following the propagandist American dream by male characters. In the play, against Shepard other plays in which the women were traditionally silent and obedient to the male protagonist's and masculine's violence, the image of the woman began to break down. Therefore, gender identity is a significant concern of the play. The play consists of plays or stories within the play or story with different versions or signified of the same past-retold by different characters- denote the death of the real reality. A simulated postmodern world is depicted in the play in which reproductions of the real take its place. Baudrillard's mobius strip, a metaphor for the rapid increase of models and simulation process which is an entangled spiraled structure, is vivid in the pattern of relationships of men to women in the play .

Key Words: Postmodernism, Loss of Real, Simulation, Fall of Grand Narrative, family disintegration, Gender Identity, Fool for Love

Introduction

Sam Shepard's the family play, *Fool for Love* (1983), is the story of two lovers, May and Eddie, who are half siblings. Their father fell in love twice; once with Eddie's mother and once with May's mother. He had two totally separate lives. He repeatedly abandons them and he causes not the only disintegration of his own family but also the families of his own children. In a motel room, they are re-telling their stories about the past for Martin, May's boyfriend. But The Old Man, their father who only exists in May and Eddie's imaginations, cannot withstand with May's version of the story of the past and asks his son, Eddie, as a male figure, to shut her mouth. But it is depicted at the end of the play that Eddie shows his willingness to accept the female's version. There are some hints that somehow May and the other woman in the play, Countess, can subvert the masculine violence of male figures, Eddie and The Old Man .

Plays-within-the-Play or Stories- within-the-Story

The critic Bonnie Marranca (1981) points out that 'Shepard's characters are accomplished storytellers because they'd rather talk than act' (p.29). For instance, in this play, we find the truth about the characters' past lives through their stories and speeches .

The play in made up of stories within the story. The Shepard's story named *Fool for Love* (1983) consists of three stories within the main story. These little stories are The Old Man's, Eddie's and



May's. It is an instance of what Lyotard remarks about the breaking of grand narrative into small narratives. Shepard's story can be considered as a grand narrative which is broken into the main characters' own stories .

Shepard (1983) writes that:

The Old Man begins to tell his story as MAY moves slowly along the wall. He tells it directly to her as though she's a child. The Old Man tells a story about MAY'S childhood. When he, MAY and her mother were driving in the old Plymouth. Suddenly MAY started crying and nothing could settle her down (pp.36-7) .

Eddie starts his story about how his family disintegrated. He simply recounts about his father's betrayal and abandoning his family that:

Our Daddy fell in love twice. That's basically how it happened. Once with my mother and once with her mother. He had two separate lives. Two completely separate lives. He's lived with me and my mother for a while and then he'd disappear and go live with her and her mother for a while (p.63) .

May starts telling the story from her point of view which was different from what Eddie tells as the real story. In May's version, it is her mother who seeks her husband, both the father's of May and Eddie. It was May who with her mother discovers the town with all its peculiarities. In her story, it is she and her mother who are the seekers and finders. They find Eddie, his mother and his father at the table eating supper indifferently (p.71) .

May continues her version of the story in this way: 'My mother begged Eddie not to see me but he wouldn't listen. Then she went to Eddie's mother and begged her. And Eddie's mother blew her brains right out (p.73) .

The old man rejects this version of the story and acknowledges that this one is not convincing. It shows that there are many micronarratives and also repetition of different sorts of reality or different referents or signifieds that the audience is skeptical which version is the real one. The Old Man says to Eddie that: 'This story doesn't hold water. You're not gonna' let her off the hook with that one are ya'? That's the dumbest version I ever heard in my whole life. I wanna' hear the male side a' this thing' (p.73).

The Fall of American Dream as a Grand Narrative

Fredric Jamson (1984) remarks that for Lyotard 'myths or narrative archetypes (recites)' are instances of metanarratives that produces legitimation (p.ix). Metanarratives, total philosophies of history, set out 'ethical and political rules' for the society (Hooti, 2011, p.80) .

Shepard in his plays, especially Fool for Love (1983) aims to reveal that 'contemporary culture has come to the end of what Lyotard called as grand narratives' (Hooti, 2011, p.87)

The male characters in the play, Eddie and The Old Man, present the American dream and American identity. These are some instances of Lyotard meta-narratives that propagandize human beings into a better future. But these master narratives are declined though the play. For instance, The Old Man says to Eddie, his son that :

The Old Man: I thought you were supposed to be a fantasist, right? Isn't that basically the deal with you? You dream things up. Isn't that true? (p.27)

The word 'fantasist' and 'dream' are some hints of application of grand narrative of the American Dream in the play .

Ian Ousby (1993) demonstrates that Fool for Love deals with 'myth of the West' and the decline of 'American dream' (p.863). Shepard considers West, especially Wyoming where is repeated in Fool for Love (1983), as an ancient West :

I just feel like the West is much more ancient than the East. There are areas like Wyoming, Texas,



Montana and places like that, where you really feel this ancient thing about the land. Ancient. That it's primordial. [...] It has to do with the relationship between the land and the people—between the human being and the ground. (Lippman, 1984, p.10)

Shepard's plays Fool for Love especially 'mine the grand narratives of American pop culture' (Wetzsteon p.109). Besides, Madachy (2003) remarks that there is a deep connection between an American and his land. He depicts a trailblazer who came to the land and conquered it. He changes the landscape into a useful place for his purposes (p.33). This idealized image of the 'frontiersman' becomes a recurring figure in American literature (Lemay, 1979, p.197) .

Besides, Eddie addresses May that "You know we're connected, May. We'll always be connected. That was decided a long time ago" (p.31). This claim represents his ideal vision of American Dream. But finally, May shatters this dream by making Eddie approve her version of the story about the past and not following his idealized dream .

Family Disintegration

The American family is a myth. Family disintegration equals to the "subversion of the myth of the family" (Putzel, 1989, p.114). The scholar Noorbakhsh Hotti (2011) regarding disintegration of American Family remarks that :

The family's relational disintegration is fed by both distrustfulness and loneliness and the mood of detached, brutal and emotionless interaction between the characters is maintained from the beginning toward the end of the play. (p.87)

Shepard's family play, Fool for Love (1983) depicts the American family disintegration in the family of The Old Man and also consequently in the lives of his children, May and Eddie. Shepard intentionally designs the protagonists, May and Eddie, as half siblings. Being sibling hints a universal American family but this being half indicates that the bond of family is shattered and is in decline . The Old Man's family- like Shepard's family himself- shatters for some reason. For instance, his first family is disintegrated because he falls in love another time with another woman, May's mother. He seeks more love but he cannot be happy after that .

Therefore, the man abandons his first family as the sentence of Eddie to The Old Man indicates: "You were gone" (p.73-4). Besides, The old man confesses that: "That's right. I was gone. I was gone" (p.74). Thus a reason for family disintegration is the husband's leaving the house and seeking love a place out of the frame of his family. Family disintegration is an outstanding theme of Shepard's Fool for Love (1983). It limits family members just to have mechanical relationships. This mechanical behavior can be seen in the father of the May and Eddie. And family members are physically and spiritually apart from each other .

Thus, the image of the drunken and absent father is vivid in the play. Furthermore, alcoholism and feeling a fake kind of freedom and lack of responsibility toward one's family can be considered as the other reason of disintegration of this American family .

Abandonment

The problems of "parental influence" and "abandonment" concern Shepard's mind (Swan, 1999, p.4). His father abandoned his family and lived as a recluse in a world of alcohol until his death. Shepard acknowledges about his relation with his father that :

It's a relationship of absolute unknowing. I never knew him, although he was around all the time. There's no point in dwelling on it. I mean, my relationship with him now is exactly the same as when he was alive. It's just as mysterious' (Schvey, 1993, p.15) .

Eddie is not only May's lover but also her half-brother, the only member of the family that is left alive for him. But he mirrors his father's "constant abandonment" of May (Swan, 1999, p.6) .

The old man justifies his second marriage by the impassionate love of May's mother:

The Old Man: She drew me to her. She went out of her way to draw men in. she was a force. I told her I'd never come across for her. I told her that right from the very start. But she wouldn't listen. She kept opening up her heart to me. How could I turn her down when she loved me like that? How could I turn away from her? We were completely whole (p.74) .

Not only Eddie mirrors his father but also May reflects her mother's "history." Although May knows that Eddie will leave her again and again but she "repeats" her mother by staying with the man who is notorious for constant abandonment. It is as if a circle and the characters repeat themselves in that (Swan, 1999, p.6). May and Eddie are images of their parents. They are icons .

One of the most interesting things about Fool for Love (1983) is the autobiographical nature of the play. Shepard's father 'estranged himself, sometimes through alcohol, other times through actual abandonment' (Wade, 1997, p.10) .

Shepard depicts this 'abandonment by his father' through the characters of The Old Man and Eddie (Swan, 1999, p.4) .

The critic David DeRose (1992) remarks that :

Central to the dreamlike and disturbing quality of Fool for Love is the presence of the old man, a father figure who seems to exist simultaneous to, but in a dimension removed from, the action of the play. He is both a surreal specter and a reinforcement of Shepard's continuing obsession with his own personal heritage and his father. (p.114)

Alcoholism

Alcoholism is the problem that leads Shepard's father to death. It also penetrates into his play, Fool for Love (1983). Czerepinski (1991) indicates that Shepard repeatedly examines the "multigenerational alcoholic family system from which he came." For instance "alcohol" is "integral" to the family in Fool for Love (1983) (p.iii). Repeatedly in the play, the word tequila is used and all the characters, Eddie, May, The Old Man and Martin, drink. For example when Eddie was a child his father shares the bottle with him. Even while Eddie is drinking with Martin, he repeatedly emphasizes that the tequila is his and he himself has brought it from Mexico .

Besides, Alcohol is seen as ways of that Eddie and May, the children, can relate or make a bond with the Old Man, their father .

Dual Relations

The critic Leslie Wade (1997) claims that a kind of dual relationships exists in Shepard's own life :

Shepard's marriage was collapsing. The writer's longtime womanizing was no secret, yet his wife O-lan had tolerated his behavior. However, while working on the film Frances, Shepard met the actress Jessica Lange, and the two became romantically involved. O-lan reconciled with her husband for a brief time, but legal proceedings soon followed. Shepard moved in with Lange on a ranch near Santa Fe. In 1984 Shepard's divorce was finalized, and his marriage of fourteen years came to an end. (p.8)

The duality existed in Shepard's own life is also depicted in his play, Fool for Love (1983). Eddie and May's father married twice; once with Eddie's mother and the other time with May's mother .



Furthermore, he claims that in his imagination he has married with the lady in the picture called Barbara. Eddie both love May, his half-sister and has a secret relationship with the Countess. Besides, May deeply loves Eddie, her half-brother and is in relation with Martin .

Similar events were at work in Shepard's own life and the play. Both Shepard's marriage and the relationship of Eddie and May are nearly the 'same length' and "slowly unraveling." Shepard like Eddie was a "womanizer." Both Shepard and Eddie met an "exotic woman" that leads their relationships with their first beloved unstable (Swan, 1999, p.5-6) .

Subversion of Mythic Codes

Amy Lippman (1984) in *Rhythm and Truths: An Interview with Shepard* remarks Shepard's idea about myth :

Myth is an ancient formula that is expressed as a means of handing down a very specific knowledge. The thing that's powerful about a myth is that it's the communication of emotions, at the same time ancient and for all time. They will always be true. (p.9)

Harold Bloom (2003) claims that Shepard is well-known for his "skillful use of archetypal myths" (p.44) .

In *Fool for Love* (1983) the mythic codes such as the myth of masculinity, masculine Cowboys, American Dream, American Identity and religion regarding the matter of forbidden incest are subverted in this play .

Myth of American Identity

Paul Madachy (2003) states that in *Fool for Love* (1983), Shepard aims to present that the "American identity" is just an 'illusion of the reality of American life' (p.127). Shepard in this play portrays the shattering of the values of American West in the postmodern world. And his male characters play again mythic roles in order to recreate the mythic values .

Shepard's play explores the "unreality of American identity." It concentrates on his characters' "confrontations of past events" which essential for the "formation of individual and national identity." The play focuses on the "past's intrusion into the present" and the characters are dealt with the "truth of history" (Madachy, 2003, p.120) .

Madachy (2003) claim that the play represents the "reality of American identity" duo to the fact that he strives to embrace the rules of a "national character," who acquires some land to grow for a living. Besides, May's "on-again off-again lover," Eddie, tries to win the approval of her to join him, he depicts the picture of "American character" (p.120) .

Eddie is described as a 'stunt man and rodeo cowboy with the usual wanderlust and dreams of the male protagonist of a Shepard play' (Mottram, 1984, p.154). He claims that :

Eddie: I got a piece of ground up in Wyoming. [...] May, I
Everything worked out. I been thinkin' about this for weeks. I'm gonna' move
the trailer. Build a little pipe corral to keep the horses. Have a big vegetable
garden. Some chickens maybe. (p.24)

Eddie also depicts the "dark and threatening underside of American Identity" Mottram, 1984, p.154). For instance, Shepard describes his clothes as :

Muddy, broken-down cowboy boots with silver gaffer's tape wrapped around them at the toe and instep, well-worn, faded, dirty jeans that smell like horse sweat. Brown western shirt with snaps. A pair of spurs dangles from his belt .



When he walks, he limps lightly and gives the impression he's rarely off a horse. There's a peculiar broken-down quality about his body in general, as though he's aged long before his time. He's in his late thirties. (p.20)

Eddie embodies the "inherent violence," which is a "weaknesses of American character" (Madachy, 2003, p.121) that for whom the myth of the old west is in decline. This masculine violence is seen in most of his actions. For instance, Shepard writes Eddie "moves violently toward her" (p.28) . Eddie's depiction of national character also reveals the "American escapist impulse." A "constant escape artist," Eddie has left May repeatedly in the past, forcing her to feel sorrow by his returning and escaping ((Madachy, 2003, p.122). This constant abandonment is outstanding in May's speech :

May: It'll be the same thing over and over again .

We'll be together for a little while and then you'll be gone. (p.31)

Eddie's insisting on his staying this time testifies his escapist identity. He says :

Eddie: May, look. May? I'm not goin' anywhere. See? I'm right here .

I'm not gone. Look (p.21) .

May realizes the 'defective nature of American identity' that Eddie is a symbol. She aims to challenge the "authority" of that identity in order to present its "unreality" (Madachy, 2003, p.123). She tries to resist his masculine power to control her .

May: You never had a hold of me to begin with. (pause) How many times have you done this to me ?

Eddie: What .

May: Suckered me into some dumb little fantasy and then dropped me like a hot rock. How many times has that happened ?

Eddie: It's no fantasy .

May: It's all fantasy. (p.25)

Therefore, American identity is a grand narrative that falls by Shepard in the voice of a female figure called May. The American Identity is just an illusion, an image not a reality .

May aims to shatter the 'illusory construction of American character' represented by Eddie. For instance, she reacts against Eddie's "professed desire to run a far" (Madachy, 2003, p.123) .

May: She shouts 'I hate chickens! I hate horses! I hate all that shit! You know that. You get me confused with somebody else. You keep comin' up here with this lame country dream life with chickens and vegetables and I can't stand any of it. It makes me puke to even think about it' (p.25) . Therefore, she rejects Eddie's idealized vision of American life .

In an interview in 2000, Shepard mentions about the construction of American identity and American Dream that :

I think we've always fallen victim to advertising from the get go. From advertising campaigns. The move westward was promoted by advertising. You know, "Come West!" "Free land!" "Manifest Destiny." So we've always been seduced by advertising [...] We've fallen into that thing, you know. So the American Dream is always this fantasy that's promoted through advertising. We always prefer the fantasy over the reality. (Roudané, 2002, p.70)

Shepard's comments denote his belief in "America's culpability" in 'promoting and perpetuating a false myth.' He means something that cannot ever be reached but is held as an "American ideal" (Madachy, 2003, p.27) .



Shepard's play presents the "constant attempts, and failures" to achieve a "predominately constructed of illusion and myth rather than any grounding in reality," that is the "vision of the hardy, pioneering American" (Madachy, 2003, p.28) .

In sum, the setting of the story is the vast desert on the edge of Mojave Desert. The location of this scene reminds the battle field of cowboys. But this myth is shattered because it is in a postmodern mood because it is a battle between a woman, the Countess, and Eddie. Shepard's description of Eddie wearing western clothes with saddle, rope and rattle reminds old cowboys of the Old West. By the character of Eddie that is an image of his father, Shepard shows the male American identity which is in decline in the postmodern world .

Myth of Masculinity or Masculine Cowboys

Eddie is called the "American cowboy" (Madachy, 2003, p.127). Shepard's cowboy includes a "pastiche of filmic images" that shows no resemblance to the reality of life in the "West," past or present (Madachy, 2003, p.26) .

May and Eddie make a battle field of cowboys by recounting their own versions of the story. May protests to Eddie about telling the story to Martin :

May: Boy, you really are incredible! You're unbelievable! Martin comes over here. He doesn't know you from Adam and you start telling him a story like that. Are you crazy? None of it is true, Martin. He's had this weird, sick idea for years now and it's totally made up. He's nuts. I don't know where he got it from. He's completely nuts. (p.66)

May reveals to Martin about Eddie's story that: "He's told me that story a thousand times and it always changes." Eddie protests that: "I never repeat myself." But May claims that: "You do nothing but repeat yourself. That's all you do. You just go in a big circle" (p.67). The big circle can refer to Baudrillard's strip that there is just an endless repetition .

In *Fool for Love* (1983), against Shepard other plays in which the women were traditionally absorbed to the protagonist's "rough-hewn vulnerability," the image of the "needy woman began to break down" (Schuler, 1990, p.222) .

Carla McDonough (2006) remarks that Shepard shows how male-centered ideas destroy his characters. She claims masculinity is just an "illusion, lie, and fantasy." She concludes that the "masculinity which they embrace is always (self-) destructive" (p.68) .

Eddie, the embodiment of the figure of the old West cowboy, is an image of his father. He constructed reality in order to make it believable. He tells lies, he likes his father drink alcohol to live in the world of illusion, the constructed world not the real world. By hostility and violence, he tries to impose his story and reality of his version .

Shepard's creating male characters with "violent behaviors" who embrace the "ideals of American identity," shows his association of "national character with violence and aggression" (Madachy, 2003, p.26) .

Bonnie Marranca (1981) claims that it is as if in Shepard's plays "The voice – of consciousness, of emotions, of reason, of triumph, and of failure, too – and finally of America – is a man's voice" (p.30) .

Ann Wilson (1987) remarks that :

May tries to establish a relationship with Martin as a means of breaking out of the orbit of attraction/repulsion which characterizes her relationship with Eddie . . . despite these attempts to break the cycle, she seems caught, a fool for love who cannot break away from this relationship which apparently gives her identity while at the same time destroying it (p.54) .

Therefore, from one point of view, May is entangled in a never-ending circle .

Although the privilege of male over the female is depicted in the play, this myth is gradually shattered through the play. May subverts the myth. Although Eddie's mother and May's mother were silent and obedient to male's oppression, May's voice is heard through the play. She shows her resistance by choosing another man, Martin, as her date, by packing her things to run away of the repeated circle of male's violence .

The story recited by Eddie shows the "male side a' this thing" (p.54). May's version of story forces both Eddie and The Old Man, the symbol of male authority of American dream and identity, confronted with that reality they had surpassed. The Old Man sees May's version and her resistance as a kind of threat for the myth of American male cowboy and his identity .

Therefore, he shouts to Eddie :

The Old Man: Stand up! Get on yer feet now goddammit! I wanna' hear the male side a' this thing. You gotta' represent me now. Speak on my behalf .
There's no one to speak for me now! Stand up! (p.54) .

McDonough (2006) claims that Eddie's concern is to take control of the women in his life :

Fool for Love offers us a look at the male identity, particularly as it is affected by the absence of the father. More precisely, it explores how a son's relationship with women is profoundly affected by his relationship with his father, from whom the son has derived a precarious and violent concept of identity . . . Eddie deserts and returns to the women in his life, acting out his confected desire for independence and his absolute need for contact with a woman to consolidate his self-images. Thus, even when he rejects the civilization of women, he turns to a fantasy version of the feminine-yet that fantasy version also eludes his control. (p.58)

Eddie seeks some "aspect of his father." In May, Eddie finds a "fractured version of his father" that he can wield control over, thus taking on the role of his father (Swan, 1999, p.9). Women in Shepard's plays, especially Fool for Love (1983), are just "stage properties," they are just to "uphold the privileged male performance and violence" (Hall, 1993, p.150) .

At the end of the play, Eddie shows a kind of "willingness" to admit the whole past .

He takes side with May's version of reciting stories (Madachy, 2003, p.126) despite The Old Man' cry :

The Old Man: You two can't come together! You gotta' hold up my end a' this deal. I got nobody now! Nobody! You can't betray me! You gotta' represent me now! You're my son! (p.55) .

Therefore, Eddie, a male figure, for the first time in the play breaks the cycle of origin and the masculine bond of father-son relationships of American Identity .

Not only May, a female character in the play, tries to subvert the patriarchal myth of violence but also the Countess, Eddie's girlfriend, does take a gun and shoots to the motel where May and Eddie take refuge in .

Incestuous Relationships

Regarding religion incest is forbidden. Religion is a metanarrative but this metanarrative is fallen in the play because Eddie and May, half siblings, are in love and they have sexual relationships with each other. The incestuous relationships between Eddie and May are against the standards of traditional, moral, American family .



Incest in the play denotes that the characters are morally indifferent to this matter .

Baudrillard's Mobius Strip

"All the referentials intermingle their discourses," as Baudrillard (1988) states in *Simulacra and Simulation*, "in a circular, Moebian compulsion" (p.176). Baudrillard implicates the "Moebius strip" as a metaphor for the rapid increase of models and simulation process which is an entangled "spiraled structure." This makes a complicated and "circular" system without any starting or ending points and any exact referents (Kellner, 1989, p.83) .

Shoshana Felman (2003) clearly explains in *Writing and Madness* how repeated circlings in a spiral work :

The spiral consists of a series of repeated circlings in which what turns is indeed bound to re-turn, but in which what circularly thus returns only returns so as to miss anew its point of departure, to miss the closing point, the completion (or perfection) of the circle. The successive turns and returns of the spiral never meet, never touch or cross one another; hence, what the spiral actually repeats is a missed meeting with itself, a missed encounter with what returns. (pp. 220-21)

Baudrillard's mobius strip is vivid in the pattern of relationships of men to women in the play. The Old Man, Eddie and May's father, abandoned Eddie's mother but came back to her once in a while. He also abandoned May's mother but sometimes came back to her. Even he claims that he married to the lady in the picture in his imagination. This cycle is repeated in the relationships of Eddie with other women. He annoys May by abandoning and returning to her. Eddie also abandons the Countess who came to get revenge of him by making fire his truck .

May reveals to Martin about Eddie's story that: "He's told me that story a thousand times and it always changes." Eddie protests that: "I never repeat myself." But May claims that: "You do nothing but repeat yourself. That's all you do. You just go in a big circle" (p.67). The big circle can refer to Baudrillard's strip that there is just an endless repetition .

Martin asks May: "Are you going to go with him?" (p.76), "He said he'd be back in a second" (p.77). May's repetition of the sentence "He's gone" (p.77) in response to Martin denotes that Eddie is notorious for leaving her .

Repetition and Recursion

Baudrillard (1983) claims that a third-order simulacrum produces a "hyperreal," or "the generation by models of a real without origin or reality" (p.2). It is based on the "reproducibility of objects" according to a "binary model." The objects are reproduced, consequently, they become indistinguishable from each other and from the "generated model" (Kellner, 1994, p.171) .

By the "meticulous reduplication of the real" through the "reproductive medium," Baudrillard (1988) states in *The Hyper-Realism of Simulation* that the 'reality itself founders in hyperrealism' and the real is "volatilized" (p.144). In the play, the cycle of returning and abandoning reiterate by the male cowboy figures of the play, Eddie and The Old Man, depicts Baudrillard's idea .

Shepard depicts his characters with an "unfixed center, *dramatis personae*" which permits the 'shift through a series of transformations' (Blatanis, 2003, p.178) .

Shepard's play focuses on the 'everyday experience by the visual; whether in the form of 'simulacra or through the monolithic picture framing as actual figures, concepts, beliefs and ideas attract particular attention' (Blatanis, 2003, p.172) .

EDDIE: You can believe whatever you want .

MAY: I'll believe the truth! It's less confusing. (p.22)



Eddie confesses that there are different versions of the same thing called reality and you opt to believe each one that you like as the real reality .

There is one past or a single reality about the mutual history of Eddie, May and The Old Man. That is there is one signifier but it leads to several referents or signifieds. These several referents are different versions of stories told by May, Eddie and their father, The Old Man, of the same past .

Male characters in the play do not have fixed identities. Their identities are shifting, for instance, Eddie's identity, the image of his father, shifts between a lover and a father. As a lover, he abandons his beloved like his father. As a brother, the only left member of the family, he leaves his sister .

The word "story" is repeated in the play in "he tells the story" (p.64), "during the course of story the lights shine down" (p.66). "May just watches Eddie as he keeps telling story" (67). "There's not a movie in this town that can match the story I'm gonna tell. I'm gonna finish this story" (p.69). Eddie himself calls that a story although he insists on its reality .

Simulated Moments

Hyperreality or simulation is a postmodern Baudrillardian concept which is an 'order of representation' that has 'replaced reality' (Powell, p.58). The constructed reality which has just some fake signs of reality, and has 'no origin' or exact 'referent,' takes the place of reality (Baudrillard, 1983, p.2). It is as Baudrillard (1988a) claims, considers "more real than the real itself" (p.188) .

Baudrillard states that in the postmodern era, everything has been "replaced by models, code, simulacra, spectacles and hyperrealism or simulation" (Sarup p.164) .

For instance, in Fool for Love (1983), The Old Man exists in Eddie and May's imagination, not in the real world of the play. He is not a real character and while they are aware of his presence "Martin does not acknowledge his presence" (p.61). He is just an instance of illusion that lives in a hyperreal or simulated world in which just images, signs and models take the place of reality. Besides, The Old Man's dialogue with Eddie is significant here :

The Old Man: I wana show you somethin' real, okay? Somethin' actual. Take a look at that picture on the wall over there. (He points at wall stage right. There is no picture but EDDIE stares at the wall.) Ya' see that? Take a good look at that. Ya' see it? (p.27) .

Although there isn't any image on the wall but he approves that he sees the picture on the wall. A hyperreal world exists in Eddie's mind that something which has no sign of the real is taken as reality. He even testifies that he heard the name of Barbara Mandrell, the lady in the fake picture. Furthermore, The Old Man claims that: "That's realism. I am actually married to Barbara Mandrell in my mind" (p.27) .

Patricia Waugh (2006) mentions about the world of image and simulation that :

The image dominates, and the normal relationships are turned on their head. The age of production has given way to the age of simulation, an age, in which, products are no longer made and then sold; they are sold before they exist. In this simulated world, we can create our virtual selves, one that have no basis in reality; it means that every social role we adopt is already precoded to such an extent that there is no possibility of breaking free from the matrix of representations into a genuine, personal response (p.413)

May refers to the picture of May and the Countess that she's not sure about its reality or illusionary:



May: (to Eddie) All I see is a picture of you. You and her. I don't even know if the picture's real anymore. I don't even care. It's a made-up picture. It invades my head. The two of you. And this picture stings even more than if I'd actually seen you with he. It cuts me. It cuts me so deep I'll never get over it. And I can't get rid of this picture either. It just comes. Uninvited. Kinda' like a little torture. And I blame you more for this little torture than I do for what you did' (p.28) .

May's speech indicates that the image becomes more real than the real itself because the picture annoys her more than their real being together. This sentence reminds to the mind Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality and simulation. The existence of The Old Man in Eddie and May's imagination is hyperreal. There are just some signs of him that replace his real place. Some signs such as a shotgun, tequila, Polymos .

The world that Shepard creates in Fool for Love (1983) is a simulation or hyperreal world because it presents just some signs, icons or images of the real world, the old West. Cowboys, duels, special clothes, shotguns, seeking land, and vast deserts are some but prominent parameters of the old and real West. But the world in which Eddie and May lives, with The Old Man in their imagination, live is an instance of simulated worlds .

Making up Fake Realities

By re-telling stories about the past, they try to prove their own world as the real world. In other words, past events intrude into the present through story telling. There are some instances about "making up" and this statement is reiterated in the play. For instance, Eddie says to May that "I was gonna'. But then it suddenly occurred to me in the middle of the parking lot out there that there probably isn't any man comin' over at all. There probably isn't any 'guy' or any 'man' or anybody comin' over here. You just made all that up" (p.39) .

Another instance of making up stories is vivid in the dialogue between Eddie and Martin :

Martin: What would we do here ?

Eddie: Well, you could uh- tell each other stories .

Martin: I don't know any stories .

Eddie: Make 'em up .

Martin: That'd be lying wouldn't it ?

Eddike: No, no. Lying's when you believe it's true. If you already know it's a lie, then it's not lying. (p.45)

Therefore, making a lie is equal to making a story. May tells a lie for introducing Eddie to Martin: "This is my uh-cousin, Eddie" (p.52). Thus, she makes a story about her relationship with Eddie. But Eddie subverts her making up and says: "I'm not her cousin. She's lying" (p.59). And he continues "she's my sister. My half-sister" (p.61) .

There are some hints that The old man is their Daddy: Eddie while telling his story referred to his father's Studebaker but The old man said "That was no Studebaker, that was a Plymouth. I never owned a goddamn Studebaker" (P.64) or when Eddie talks about his father's walking at darkness aimlessly, The Old Man insists that "I was making a decision" (p.64) .

About making up the story, Eddie asks Martin: "Did you think that was a story, Martin? Did you think I made that whole thing up?" (p.68). Martin answers "At the time you were telling it, it seemed real" (p.68). Such an answer by Martin indicates that the fake reality which has the signs of the real takes the place of the real story that it is not distinguishable for Martin that which version is the real reality of the past .

By narrating their stories of the past they fabricate believable simulacra of events. For instance, Martin believes Eddie's story as a real story and perfectly believable. But after May's denial of Eddie's



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story, Martin is not sure about the originality of the stories being told to him. He becomes skeptical, as a postmodern man, about the realities presented to him .

May incisively states about Eddie's story that "You got it all turned around, Eddie. You got it all turned around. You don't even know which end is up anymore. I already know the rest of the story. I know the whole rest of the story. I know it just exactly the way it happened. Without any little tricks added on to it" (p.70) .

Conclusion

The present study examined Sam Shepard's family play, *Fool for Love* (1983) in the light of two postmodern theories. The first theory was Jean Baudrillard's theory of Loss of Real based on simulation and hyperreality. The second one was Jean François Lyotard's theory of Fall of Grand Narratives. These two outstanding theories were applied in the present research in order to highlight the matter of family disintegration in American family depicted by Shepard. To summarize what has been done in the research, the main points of discussion are once more emphasized .

The researcher of the present study concludes that *Fool for Love* (1983) is a construction of plays-within-the-play or stories- within-the-story. The Shepard's story consists of three stories within the main story. These little stories are The Old Man's, Eddie's and May's. It is an instance of what Lyotard remarks about the breaking of grand narrative into small narratives. Shepard's story can be considered as a grand narrative which is broken into the main characters' own stories. Eddie's story is about his past and the reason of the decline of his family is from a male kind of story telling in which violence and masculine power play their prominent roles. The Old Man's story presents a kind of constant escapism, lack of responsibility and alcoholism of American males that only justifies his wrong deeds through his masculine power. He even cannot tolerate May's story of the same event is completely different and it is more near to the real reality of their history. He rejects this version of the story and acknowledges that this one is not convincing. It shows that there are many micronarratives and also repetition of different sorts of reality or signifieds, as Baudrillard states, that the audience is skeptical which version is the real one. Besides, the subject of gender identity is considered as an outstanding subject in the play .

The myth of masculinity or masculine cowboys are subverted in the play. May and Eddie, "American cowboy" (Madachy, 2003, p.127) make a battle field of cowboys by recounting their own versions of the story. May protests to Eddie about telling the story to Martin. In *Fool for Love* (1983), against Shepard other plays in which the women were traditionally absorbed to the protagonist's "rough-hewn vulnerability," the image of the "needy woman began to break down" (Schuler, 1990, p.222). McDonough (2006) claims masculinity is just an "illusion, lie, and fantasy." (p.68) .

Although the privilege of male over the female is depicted in the play, this myth is gradually shattered through the play. May subverts the myth. Although Eddie's mother and May's mother were silent and obedient to male's oppression, May's voice is heard through the play. She shows her resistance by choosing another man, Martin, as her date, by packing her things to run away of the repeated circle of male's violence, and by telling the story of past against what Eddie said before.

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