

Mamet's Oleanna in a Hazing Clash for Becoming Self-Actualized

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ABSTRACT

What humans can be, they must be. They must be true to their own nature. Abraham Maslow Oleanna is a 1992 play by the American playwright and author, David Mamet. This three-act, two-character play is about a tricky clash between a professor, John, and his student, Carol, who has a prejudice towards him and duels against him to defeat him. This play has mostly been analyzed through the thematic concepts of sexual harassment and power play between two opposite sexes. However, this essay is a try to do something innovative. In this study, with the help of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, as the methodology, it is going to be approved that the whole story is shaped around shortage and lack because human beings are motivated by their unsatisfied needs. Five levels of the hierarchy are used for looking deep into the characters' behavior. Physiological needs and the needs for safety, belongingness and love, esteem and self-actualization are the different steps of Maslow's pyramid. As it is going to be discussed, the need for knowledge, skill improvement, making the world a better place by theorizing about the dystopian aspects of life, dealing with problems by writing books and even financial betterment are all the surface plotline of the story; these are all some portraits of the Oleannaian utopia that is going to be built through the academic system. The results show that John and Carol's real intention is their desire for regaining power over one another, take revenge, win the duel, and reach their brutal basic needs.

Keywords: Abraham Maslow, the hierarchy of needs, basic needs, self-actualization, Oleanna, David Mamet, dystopia, academic system, motivation.

INTRODUCTION

Oleanna is a two-character three-act play the writer of which is David Alan Mamet, an American playwright, filmmaker, and author. This drama is considered 'a combination of absurd theatre and traditional realism' (Karabulut, 2020, p. 2). David Mamet is known for his critical viewpoint and his ironic satirical examination of American life. Mamet won the Pulitzer prize for drama

in 1984 for *Glengarry Glen Ross*. To date, he has written 36 plays, 29 screenplays and 17 books, and directed 11 films. Concerning the play, 'Who or what is "*Oleanna*?" This two-person, three-scene play gets its title from a nineteenth-century Norwegian folk song about New Norway, a community established in the northern mountains of Pennsylvania in 1852...' (Chiaramonte, 2014, p. 40).

The struggle in the story starts when Carol is failed in John's course and plays tricks to regain her grade and power over her professor in the academic atmosphere

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of educational fairness, 'Mamet uses the education system as a vehicle for his perennial subject, what he calls "human interactions," in this case the ironic desire for both power and understanding in human relationships'(Murphy, 2004, p. 124). Yet the most interesting point about this drama is that the readers can decide to grant the right of being true to each character, 'That's the fun of this drama; it all about the perspective of each audience member' (Bradford, 2020). They fight in a duel and it depends on the reader to love or hate which side:

Though we are nudged to see his point of view - that she is mistaking avuncularity for sleaziness, taking words out of context, turning metaphorical into the literal-it is this very reasonableness that contains the modus operandi of a stealth predator (Akbar, 2020).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Abraham Maslow, the American psychologist, who is best known for his theory of the hierarchy of needs claims that the five categories of human needs shape an individual's behavior. Moving in this hierarchy is from the most basic to the last level. As mentioned, there are five stages: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization and they must be followed in order of appearance,

Maslow argued that each person is born with instinctoid needs that lead to growth, development, and actualization; the hierarchy of needs includes physiological needs (for food, water, air, sleep, and sex) and the needs for safety, belongingness and love, esteem, and self-actualization (Schultz and Schultz, 2016, p. 269).

Physiological needs are Id-driven: air, water, food, shelter, clothing, sex and reproduction. These are the most basic needs of every human and he is mostly in search of satisfying them, which are also the needs of most species of the universe. When these needs are in danger of being fulfilled, the person only thinks about reaching them.

The safety needs: from environmental forces, war, personal security, safety in one's job and employment and also health, property, and resources, money, economic safety, and financial security, protection from violence, morality and emotional stability.

Love and belonging: loving others and being loved by them. People seek to overcome feelings of loneliness and alienation. Belonging means being a part of a group, a social group and feeling a sense of connection, i.e., making

friends, feeling intimate with them, finding a partner, and experiencing sexual intimacy, creating a family for oneself. A sense of connection and companionship with others is also a member of this level.

Esteem (from this level on, the needs are ego-driven): respect, self-respect, self-esteem and recognition from the outside world and others are all the categories of the fourth level. Respect from the inside and outside. Recognition of the outside world and having the feeling of strength and freedom is the outcome of self-esteem. When these needs are met, the person feels self-confident and valuable; when not met, people feel inferior, weak, helpless and worthless: 'Satisfaction of the self-esteem need leads to feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability and adequacy of being useful and necessary in the world' (Maslow, 1943, p. 10).

Self-actualization (growth need): self-fulfillment needs, the desire to become the most one can become. This need is a part of the aesthetic needs group, the need to know and understand more. Self-actualized people are free from basic needs, so none of these two characters in the story have reached real self-actualization. They like to be creative and have a sense of humor. They like to be viewed as complete personas. Appreciation of life, lack of prejudice, spontaneity, solving problems and giving solutions, acceptance of facts, being concerned about personal growth and being able to have peak experiences: finding new things, learning a second language, traveling to new places, winning awards, discovering and inventing are all the categories of this level. Continuing education and skill development are also self-actualized personal zest. Furthermore, self-actualized people seek truth, justice, wisdom and meaning. It is important to consider that the fifth level is a growth need. All four levels before are in the group of deficiency needs because they arise from shortage, need and lack. And they must be fulfilled but becoming a self-actualized person is an improvement in one's character and there is no obligation to reach this level for continuing life. Self-actualization needs only become a priority when the other four foundational basic needs are met.

Transcendence: once someone reached self-actualization, there appears a zest for him to help others reach the fifth level and become what they can become, to self-fulfillment and realizing their potential:

These are, first, the desire for strength, for achievement, for adequacy, for mastery and competence, for confidence in the face of the world, and for independence and freedom. Second, we have what we may call the

desire for reputation or prestige (defining it as respect or esteem from other people), status, fame and glory, dominance, recognition, attention, importance, dignity, or appreciation. (Maslow, 1954, p. 45)

These levels for reaching self-actualization are the main steps that the two main characters of the story are going to be analyzed psychologically and sociologically in this essay. In addition, in the end, it is going to be proved that their main concern is about reaching power rather than personality improvement.

RESULTS

David Mamet is one of the rare dramatists of the 20th century who can show the conflict and harassment between genders realistically. Mamet's plays are paramount in the portrayal of modern social and psychological issues (Arjmandi, 2015, p. 2350).

John's Character Analysis

At the beginning of the story, John is okay with his physiological needs: food, shelter, sleep, sex, air and water. At the level of safety needs, his security, job, employment security, his health and property are at an acceptable level for a university professor. He has got a promotion because of being a good teacher and even has written a book that is taught by him. He is also in the process of gaining tenure. About love and belonging, he belongs to his university and family. He is the center of his class and belongs to an accepted social group. He is loved by his wife so much and she does care about him shown in the course of the story as she calls him too many times to know about his mood and also cares about where he spent his time the night before. A sense of friendship and connection with the outside world is so obvious in the calls that his wife and friends want him to join a party for his promotion and for buying a new house.

Regarding the fourth level, he feels both inside esteem and outside. He has self-esteem about having some inspirations and new ideas to be a revolutionary thinker in the educational system, gives some brilliant ideas about the whole process of testing and teaching and calls them ridiculous ways of learning. His status, as a brand-new professor, and his recognition of himself are shown in the first act. Due to his position as a teacher and getting his promotion, the outside world, in the guise of his family, are so happy with him, pays attention to him, and praises him. He feels good about himself as a writer. In addition, he feels that he is in a safe position and is

discovering his potential. In the first act, the reader faces a self-actualized, civilized person who even wants to help his student reach transcendence. But all his acts can be seen this way too: 'CAROL: ...You love the Power. To deviate. To invent, to transgress ... to transgress whatever norms have been established for us' (Mamet, 1992, p. 27).

When the professor talks about his experiences of being stupid: his father has always been telling him that he is a genius and must not act stupidly, must know everything and make no mistakes; therefore, as a child, he thinks that the hardest thing to do is to learn (Mamet, 1992, p. 9). Now as a grown-up, he has discovered how to learn and is teaching others this impossible task for him as a child. Therefore, he has got something unique and now is so proud of himself as an agent of learning. Now as a teacher, he even goes beyond the process of learning to deconstruct and criticize the whole system. Furthermore, the book that he has written is his identity and he sees his vocation to take care of it and defend his pessimistic taking side against the policies of education.

John tells Carol that there is no rule and limitations for attending the class because the class is nothing other than the teacher and the student (Mamet, 1992, pp. 14–15). He ignores the system of grading and the schedule of the university. He does all these in favor of feeling likelihood with Carol but all his actions cause Carol to feel unsafe and to use all her potential to get everything back to safety. John, via a transcendental action, wants to show Carol that the rules and ideologies are made holy for her and she is not forced to obey them but this is not what she desires (Mamet, 1992, p. 18). She enjoys facts, laws and orders, takes advantage of the system in which she is grown up, cannot tolerate a world beyond it and feels frightened and threatened by his professor who mocks her holy safe zone. She limits the process of learning to only reading, taking notes, and memorizing the books. The reason for her actions can be the fact that Carol is endangered in the second level of safety needs.

On the other side, although John has already reached the fifth level, when his basic needs are threatened, he acts like an animal and beats Carol. This shows that he is not completely mature yet. In addition, he does care about his basic needs very seriously. Yet another reason is that once the person reaches the fifth level, he does not like to go back to the basic needs; this is why John gets angry when he faces losing his future as a respected person, his home, his job, his wife, his fame as a teacher and writer, even also having a criminal record of intended rape. He

hates the ones who are more powerful than him: 'JOHN: ... I hated everyone who was in the position of a "boss" because I *knew* – I didn't *think*, mind you, I *knew* I was going to fail' (Mamet, 1992, p. 12).

In addition, there exists an opposition between John's behavior and principles of thinking, 'JOHN: As I said. When the possibility of tenure opened, and, of course, I'd long pursued it, I was, of course happy, and covetous of it. I asked myself if I was wrong to covet it...' (Mamet, 1992, p. 23). He tells Carol that she must accept the rules of the system that she is in and must not be angry about her grade due to the reason that she is accepted to be a part of the educational system. Then he mocks, criticizes and even hates the educational committee (Mamet, 1992, p. 13). He tells Carol that he is not her father to be obeyed in every aspect (Mamet, 1992, p. 5) and then tells her that he talks to her as he talks to his son (Mamet, 1992, p. 11). John also says that he believes in democracy and freedom of thought but then hurts Carol and hates the committee who expresses their opinions freely and fires him (Mamet, 1992, p. 35). All these prove that John did not reach the last stage of the hierarchy fully.

John is only in a hallucinated way of looking at himself as a person who reached level five and Carol wants to show him that he is wrong. After their discussion in the first act, John goes to a hotel to think and revise his way of teaching if needed. What self-actualized people do. On the other side of the story, Carol lurks in her room and is planning for her professor's destruction; 'Self-actualizing people maintain their feelings of self-esteem even when scorned, rejected, and dismissed by other people' (Feist and Feist, 2008, p. 284). So, both of them are only mad about gaining power, not self-actualization.

Carol's Character Analysis

On the other side of this duel stands Carol. Analysis of Carol's position in the hierarchy shows that she ill-functionally reached and experienced it, is concerned about the deficiency needs, and is an immature person that wants to show off herself as a person who reached the fifth level and even intends to instruct John as a sinner who desires to gain power. She feels unsafe when another, a revolutionary thinker, reaches the position of power. Therefore, she intends to destroy him due to the reason that the system and its survival are so dear to her. In Carol's opinion, destroying a person and his life is not a problem to make the position of Power and ideologies safe.

Carol reached all her needs but was not the same as a girl of her age. This causes her to translate John's actions the opposite way a mentally healthy person makes meanings for his actions in her mind, 'Most recently, Thomas Goggans attempts to exculpate the Carol persona by pointing to textual suggestions of child abuse in her past' (Porter, 2000). She reached the first level, which is her physiological needs as air, food, water, sleep not sex and a shelter that is on the university's campus. Her sexual needs have not been met yet, so this can be a cause to take her professor's actions as being sexually flirting. As she asks John, why did he not go home and stayed with her? (Mamet, 1992, p. 11). This shows that she is already making up some romantic relationships with John in her mind.

In addition, at one point in the story, she wants to share a secret about her life that she never told anyone before (Mamet, 1992, p. 21). This means that she also feels closely belonged and is comfortable with John. Carol limits John in her basic physiological need for sex and sees John as a man and sexual organ. On the other side, John may see her as a student who needs help and sympathizes with her regarding the fact that she is the same as him in the process of being confused and making sense of the world around her. That feeling of the mutual experience of being stupid and an unwanted creature provokes John to try to help her (Mamet, 1992, p. 9).

The second level of the hierarchy in her case can be threatened so easily maybe due to the bitter experiences of her childhood as being sexually abused the same as what she mentions about the terrible things she tolerated, the horrible costs she paid to be able to come to school: 'CAROL: ...Of hardworking students, who come here, who slave to come here – you have no idea what it cost me to come to this school – you mock us...' (Mamet, 1992, p. 27). Her abnormal reactions and fears are completely obvious whenever John reaches close to her. She feels a kind of insecurity and takes her professor's actions as containing pornographic content. John does not care about Carol's lack of security and wants her to jump up and acknowledge the fourth and fifth levels, i.e., self-esteem and self-actualization. Reacting towards John's carelessness, Carol takes him off the fifth stage and forces him to come to acknowledge Carol's unstable easy-to-be-threatened position.

The reason for Carol's reactions can be understood in Jess Feist's book as 'basic anxiety': the need for law, order, and structure are safety needs because some threatened young people who were hurt in the course of their childhood feel unsafe more than normal people.

They suffer from some irrational fears and they feel more secure by following laws and orders and staying within limits and structures (Feist and Feist, 2008, p. 287).

Love and belonging in the case of Carol are only limited to being devoted to her group. She never talks about her family, her friends or any other social group but her mysterious group. Moreover, maybe she never experienced any sense of love and affection yet, so she takes John's behavior this bizarre and serious. Maybe because Carol never met the third level, she cannot understand her professor's sympathy towards her and also is always caring about the first and second levels of her needs. Individuals in these levels cannot make sense of the third level. The sense of belongingness to her group is so precious to Carol that she ignores her professor's attention towards her and his zest for helping her.

Even in her belongingness to her group, she does not talk about her feelings towards them but only feels responsible for them, thinks of herself as an agent that must follow orders and be in charge of the laws whatever it costs, as destroying her professor's life. She talks about John's family with so much interest. This may mean that she lacks that sense of attention: a family who surprises her at a party. She also talks about John's condition as a safe one in the academic area, and his elitist position (Mamet, 1992, p. 27). This can show that her status in her group is not safe and she always must feel worried about losing her position. She feels stressed out when John is taking notes and asks John about what he is writing (Mamet, 1992, p. 18).

In addition, her group may be a dangerous one like a mafia because she is not allowed to explain anything about them. The way her group treats Carol and educates her to destroy lives and also the policies that they follow to take advantage of the rules of language in the case of creating different meanings other than what John meant, shows that this group, whatever it is named, is not a healthy, fair one.

The fourth level, which is esteem, is not well received by Carol. She thinks of herself as stupid and in the outside world, her group is more of a threat to her than a safe zone for granting her esteem and confidence. The opposite way can be considered too; maybe Carol's cautiousness about her group is the sense of respect that they grant her, the outside respect that she needs. In the case of being a student, she has failed one of the courses and all these causes her to lack self-confidence. Even John does not respect her at the beginning of the story. Therefore,

maybe she is not an eye-catching top student in his class. Also, at one point in the story when she intends to talk about her never-told secret, she tells John that she is a bad person (Mamet, 1992, p. 21). This proves that what she thinks of herself is not a precious well-formed person in a good position. Her image of herself in her mind is not something lovely and acceptable.

In the case of self-recognition, there is no evidence in Carol's behavior to prove that she reached the fifth level. Carol thinks of herself as a stupid person; a little young creature who is full of hatred and needs to take revenge (Mamet, 1992, p. 36). This can represent that at least she knows how demon she is and the highest level she can reach is being evil. Although Maslow never mentioned badness in its extremes as self-recognition, Carol reached the top of the hierarchy in an animalistic brutal manner due to the system she had grown up in. If the reader analyzes these characters regarding the fifth level, Carol would be the most powerful, and John the most deconstructionist.

As mentioned, at the end of the story, John also turns into an animal when his properties, family, security, job and fame are threatened, beats Carol and calls her a part of a women's sexual organ, 'You little cunt' (Mamet, 1992, p. 41). This shows that both of these animals in the guise of humans reached the peak of this hierarchy but there is no guarantee to always be human and act civilized in a transcendental way. They reached the top of the hierarchy negatively due to the system and society that educated them. Now with malfunctioned basic needs, their position in the fifth level is not stable and this causes them to destroy one another to make their status safer.

DISCUSSION

'We will be judged by that least involved of' (Magistrates: history, *Oleanna*).

In *Oleanna*, the rules and laws and most importantly Power, as the motor motivation for trying to reach the different needs of human beings, shape the hierarchy of needs and give its slaves, individuals, priority for reaching them:

CAROL: What has *led* you to this place? Not your sex. Not your race. Not your class. YOUR OWN ACTIONS. ... You are going to say that you have a career and that you've worked for twenty years for this. Do you know what you've *worked* for? Power. (Mamet, 1992, p. 33).

Moreover, the most Power wants to gain is to limit and keep the individuals on the first level of this ladder to misuse them; the same as the animals in the circus and the same as John and Carol in this jungle of academia, 'David Mamet, in a modern version of the old legend, presents a new perspective on the issues of power and truth' (Hajigholam and Mohammadi, 2018, p. 53). Many people are always concerned about their basic needs and this is due to their governmental system and society. Therefore, they do not reach level five because Power does not allow them to reach so. There exists a beautiful humanistic hierarchy of needs that seems everyone can reach the peak of which by effort, but Power never does let them do so. Power destroys Maslow's humanistic-just ladder of needs. As Augusto Boal in the *Theatre of the Oppressed* claims,

All theatre is necessarily political; because all the activities of man are political and theatre is one of them ... the theatre is a weapon. A very efficient weapon ... it is, in effect, a powerful system of intimidation. (Chiaramonte, 2014, p. 39).

Apart from the power relations, there also exists an atmosphere of the impossibility of mutual understanding between Carol and John. The reason that causes John and Carol to be not able to communicate effectively is that they came from different social and economic backgrounds. It seems that many of John's words are terms of arts in his elitist-secured position as a professor and Carol cannot enter that holy land. She is disturbed by John's way of using hard words that forbid Carol to understand what John intends to talk about, which makes her madly angry. Both of them ignore one another because they are those vicious animals who only want to reach the hierarchy's peak.

On the other side of the story, in the duel with John stands Carol as a responsible member of her group, as a strict follower of all the rules, biases and ideologies that are set by a big Power, the higher-educational system, that limits people's actions. In her worldview, the one who wants to get out of the system and rules is sinful, guilty and dangerous for the second level of her needs, which is her safety and security both as a girl, the other of men, and also as a student, an out-casted creature in the world of cruel professors. Her position is vulnerable in both regards so if the professor wants to help Carol, he is dangerous because she cannot imagine a different position for a not-caring cruel professor; due to the reason that the professors never act this way in the dictionary of the professor-student relationship of Carol's mindset.

In Carol's viewpoint, if someone criticizes the system in which he works, he must be thrown off that system because he acts as a parasite of that system and the Power: 'JOHN: It [education] has become a ritual, it has become an article of faith. That all must be subjected to, or to put it differently, that all are entitled to Higher Education' (Mamet, 1992, p. 16). John does not obey the rules and mocks the system and does not act with a positive favor towards the system he takes benefits of.

In addition, Carol's failure in John's course is so abnormal for her because, in the limited world of her mind, her intelligence is like a machine. There is an input for it, the book of the professor and obeying his rules, and the output must be understanding that book and gaining good grades within the norms, which she surprisingly faced John's book as a new thing that moves outside the rules and cannot be understood by her. She must not fail the course because she had read the book completely, memorized it and taken notes of all the parts. In addition, she obeyed John's principles as her father (Mamet, 1992, p. 5).

This means for Carol, as a representative of her group when she cannot make sense of deconstructionist John's book, no one in her group and her society would not like this book, so it must be omitted from the university books and class schedule. John is an out-casted person who the Carols, and the likes, e.g., Power, and the government hate. John tells her that this is only a book and a course and it is nonsense to be worried about failure in it but it is like a holy precious vocation for Carol to pass the courses (Mamet, 1992, p. 7). Because her standard for coming to understand that she knows something is the educational system's grading. She came here to know something that she did not know before and wants to find a light in the world of darkness (Mamet, 1992, p.7).

John's behavior threatens Carol's safe zone and holy position of rules, ideologies and systems: '[John:] Somebody told you [Carol], and you hold it as an article of faith, that higher education is an unassailable good. This notion is so dear to you that when I question it you become angry' (Mamet, 1992, p. 18). In the process of John's friendly talks, Carol finds out how she can destroy him with the system that hates John. She becomes a spy on his life and finds no immoral point in hurting him. She tells John that as a human in opposition to being an animal, she has feelings but her responsibilities are more important to her (Mamet, 1992, p. 33). The system she is a slave of makes senseless heartless animals who only take care of their duties.

At the end of the story, she even decides how John must talk to his wife, about the most personal things of John's life, 'Don't call your wife baby...' (Mamet, 1992, p. 41). She wants to deal with John's way of behaving by not talking to girls, not criticizing rules and even talking with his wife, the way Carol, as a feminist, prefers. She wants to correct him and change him into a timid animal that is slaved in the system of education and his social group, the same as Carol herself.

In the first act, John, so proud of his elitist position as a professor, does not care about Carol and her concerns but his house and promotion. He also talks in a way with Carol to show off his knowledge and his self-supposed big achievement in the process of learning. Then, he tries to mock the whole system as a free thinker who is so advanced and criticizes the rules Carol cares so much about. He feels that he can act freely and talk democratically in his private office with his student but there is a Power, like that phone and interrupting ringing, in his very private life that controls everything and limits him and his freedom. If Johns talk more than they should, think more than they are allowed and guide people more generously than they are limited to, they are already destroyed.

He does not concentrate on Carol's way of talking and behaving because he is worried about his financial security at the moment. People, who are at different levels of the hierarchy of needs, cannot make sense of one another urges; to reach each other's needs and understand each other's priorities. For gaining an equal and mutual point of view towards the events and people's reactions, there is a need to come to know at which level they are. In addition, if he is on a different level, communicating effectively is somehow impossible. She has a limited point of view. Carol's needs are more focused on basic needs and she translates John's actions following the stages of her needs. His acts are pornographic because Carol cannot make sense of loving others and sympathizing with them. She takes John downer in his status to let him understand her and moves to the next level of gaining more security and esteem by destroying her professor's life.

Even in the second act, John, so proud of himself as a self-actualized person, wants to take up Carol to the fifth level and show her some light. He is self-centered and sure that the committee would not accept Carol's complaint and wants to save her by persuading her to retract: 'It's ludicrous. Don't you know that? It's not necessary. It's going to humiliate you, and it's going to cost me my house, and...' (Mamet, 1992, p. 25). However, the system

prefers the ones who are like Carol, who obey the rules and do follow orders and restrictions. In addition, he supposes that the way he acts towards his students is his right and they must not complain about his actions.

He, as a self-actualized person, wants to solve their problems peacefully, but Carol prefers the law to decide because she believes in truthful trustworthy rules of Power. She does not have this much confidence to face the problem and solve it by herself. John intends to make everything all right by himself and does not like the committee and government to nose into his private life, career and even his behavior. Moreover, maybe he enjoys staying as a superpower in his safe elitist position. When John feels insecure, returning to safety would be the only thing he cares about, not being a transcending individual.

In the third act, the story turns vice versa and Carol has the upper hand in the duel. Carol, until now, was only a student and from the beginning of the story only learned John's weak points (Mamet, 1992, pp. 12–13). She is a good listener and recorder in the two first acts and can use John's way of thinking against himself. However, in the third act, she appears as an instructor, wants to instruct John about his behavior and proves to him that he is not a god. He must not give meaning to his actions: 'CAROL: You think you can deny that these things happened; or, if they did, if they did, that they meant what you said they meant' (Mamet, 1992, p. 26). He has no power to inject connotative meanings into his words. This is the job of a much bigger Power in Carol's opinion and she prefers holy things to be done by holy committees that always are one hundred percent true in each way.

This is like a threat to Carol's safe zone that somebody, like John, gives meanings to words. What is done by Power is that it uses the language and the meanings of words in the way it serves its purposes. Therefore, language and ideologies are used for changing reality and giving wrong meanings to words out of their context; for example, raping. The sufficient meaning is what benefits more, 'Reading of *Oleanna* will resist consensus because the drama investigates how language and gesture signify differently for all involved in the performance. The drama is necessarily provocative because its events take place within a landscape of indeterminacy' (Badenhausen, 1998, p. 3).

As John tells Carol that when she thinks of herself as a loser and failure she will fail and she must think the opposite way to win; '...The tests, you see, which you encounter, in school, in college, in life, were designed,

in the most part, for idiots, by idiots'. Moreover, the professor tells her that there is a need for Carol to fail at them because they are garbage (Mamet, 1992, pp. 12–13). She acts the same towards John and can take revenge from the patriarchal world of men. She also wins over a more powerful system, the teachers' group, in comparison with her status as a tiny girl student.

In the middle of the third act, John tells his wife that he lost his job and was confused for a while but now he is well and came to know that his job does not worth having (Mamet, 1992, p. 40). Then Carol moves one step further and tells John that his book is her aim of attack because of his attempted rape. At this moment, he suddenly comes to an epiphany and considers Carol as a danger because he sees his responsibility towards his job as a writer and his son as an agent of the next generation as sacred. He sees his book as a Bible. Moreover, at the end, when Carol orders him how to name his wife, he becomes an angry animal: 'JOHN: You vicious little bitch. You think you can come in here with your political correctness and destroy my life? ...' (Mamet, 1992, p. 41). When John loses his power, he becomes much angrier and crueller than Carol.

At the time, these two come into the same level of power relations by Carol's complaints, their mutual understanding and the possibility of free discussion increases. Now, John must listen to Carol carefully and pay attention to her tiniest reactions, and take notes because he is frightened of her. At this moment, he understands what democracy means because he is not in his safe upper-hand position anymore:

According to bell hooks, the first step towards any such 'transformational politic' is to deconstruct simplistic polarities of oppressor and oppressed and to recognize (as Mamet so clearly does) that 'our capacity as women and men to be either dominated or dominating is a point of connection, of commonality'. (MacLeod, 1995, p. 213).

From this point, it can be concluded that John must be threatened the same as Carol and have to be punished like an animal to acknowledge his real status in the hierarchy of needs. If his life is threatened, can he remain a self-actualized writer who acts in a free-thinking way and wishes to transcend his students to the top of the hierarchy?

CAROL: Why do you hate me? Because you think me wrong? No. Because I have, you think, power over you. Listen to me. Listen to me, Professor. (Pause) It is the power that you hate. So deeply that, that any atmosphere of free discussion is impossible. It's not 'unlikely.' It's impossible. Isn't it? (Mamet, 1992, p. 35).

As Carol acts as a symbol of irritating power in John's life, he reacts like a brutal animal rather than a civilized high-ranked teacher to throw her away from his life and regain his power over his career and family. Carol acts as a threat to all John's basic needs. Mamet proves that Carol is not hateful, the power is; and anyone even John, in the upper position, would be as disgusting as Carol. She reaches the peak of the hierarchy by taking John down. The proof of this statement that these characters have not reached self-actualization fully yet is the concept of 'meta-motivation' (Schultz and Schultz, 2016, p.255). According to this concept, self-actualized people are not motivated by their basic needs anymore. However, these two fights for their four levels of needs to gain power over one another.

CONCLUSION

This essay attempted to analyze Mamet's play with the help of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy. In the results part, both of the characters of the story are analyzed deeply and it is indicated at what level of need they are standing. Furthermore, in the discussion section, the writer tried to talk about the role of power and government in reaching or not gaining the top of the hierarchy by the members of society. Abraham Maslow makes a utopia out of the hierarchy for human beings' improvement but the actual outcome of this *Oleanna* is a dystopia in Mamet's opinion. The same as the *Oleanna* land itself that was going to be a perfect society in America but it turned out to be the opposite; the educational system appeared the same in Mamet's idea. Maybe if Maslow wanted to categorize this society, he would put this entire utopia in the fifth level and label them as self-actualized persons but *Oleanna* never can be lasted. These two are civilized academic people but power and the eagerness to reach it make them act like animals. Therefore, the utopia of the hierarchy of human needs and trying to reach that ideal is useless at least from David Mamet's point of view. John is on the fifth level of the hierarchy but Carol's danger makes him defend his basic needs against her boastful actions. His position decreases to the first level of biological needs due to Carol and the system of power. Power does not care about individuals' improvement to the top of the hierarchy but only itself and increasing its control over all of its members' lives.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors have read and approved the manuscript and take full responsibility for its contents. The authors declare that no conflicting interest exists.

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