

THE FRAGILE MASCULINE: GENDER, SEXUALITY, RACE AND RELIGION AS A COMPLEXITY OF ELISCHA'S CHARACTER IN "LOVE ME HARDER" BY CHICKS* (2020)

Umi Maisaroh
Freie Universität Berlin, Germany
umi.maisaroh@fu-berlin.de

Abstrak: Performance elements such as stage properties, actors, text, music, lighting, and other elements appear when the performance represents symbols and meanings. This study tries to deconstruct ideas about gender and sex through an exploration of reading the meaning of the elements of the 'Love Me Harder' performance by the theatre group CHICKS*. The performance was held at the LOFFT Leipzig Theater in February 2020. The data collected was from watching the performance booklet and the theatre group's website. As a theoretical framework, this research will use literature studies, for example, theorists Susan Bordo (2000), Judith Butler (1999), Daniel Boyarin (2003), and Ann Stoler (1996). This study presents the discourse on the meaning of the body and the type or form of sex, especially the phallus, as something that carries feminine or masculine traits naturally or culturally. From the analysis, it can also be explained that the show tries to dismantle the stereotypes attached to masculine traits and criticizes masculine domination and patriarchy concerning power and colonialism, and discrimination against race and religion.

Keywords: *performance, Love Me Harder, CHICKS*, stereotype*

Introduction

Performance art can be grasped like reading a text. The reading process through looks somehow ordinary, apparently not always simple. With all the tools it has, performance art has the potential to be read in various ways. Each reading results in a distinctive understanding. It becomes more complicated when a performance develops its techniques, styles, and explores diverse symbols in such a way that it requires the audience to rethinking. This short essay is an alternative reading of a play, which wants to reveal the idea of the show based on the symbols displayed on the stage. The study case is a performance by CHICKS*, *Love Me Harder* (Kaminer, 2020).

Love Me Harder staged for the first time in 2018. It reperformed on February 20th-23rd, 2020 at the LOFFT Das Theater Leipzig. This essay analyzes the play staged on February 20th, 2020. The play lasts for about 90 minutes, uses both English and German, and takes place in a small and closed room in which only accommodating about 30 audiences. Elischa Kaminer is the only actor of the play. The play featured monolog, dancing, singing, and interaction with the audience. The audience clusters around Elischa so that they can watch him closely and allows them towards respond Elischa. The audience is willingly engaging as Elischa asks them several times for help or to do something for him. The stage props are located in the middle of the room. The other

one is set on the backside. The stage props which are located in the middle of the room represent the scenery of a town. There are trees, railways, trains, police cars, and buildings. That scenery is in the form of a miniature town. Besides that, there are also some other attributes like tanks, guns, makeup, pictures, and Barbie dolls lying around the miniature town scenery. The other prop is a set of musical instruments such as a keyboard and a guitar on the backside. The lighting patterns on the play mostly focus on Elischa's movements. There is no blackout in a transition scene. In the play, Elischa changed his costumes several times. His fashion is a mixture of casual and glamorous style. His costumes are varying, for instance from a red dress to a black and frilly body, a t-shirt, blue jeans, pants, shorts, a pink bomber jacket, sneakers. It also features other conspicuous accessories like a small transparent backpack, glitters, sparkling necklace, and a mini fan. A scene becomes interesting as he plays with his male Barbie dolls at the same time a song from a band Aqua called Barbie Girl played. The play has a particular plot. It is shaped from numerous fragments. Those fragments seem not interrelated to each other but somehow are intertwined and establish an entity plot. It is embedded in a modern style and is played interactively through an intimate ambiance that enables this performance, not only aesthetically enjoyable but also as an attractive object of analysis.

"Love Me Harder" is one of the works presenting by CHICKS*, a group that is founded by Gianna Pargätzi, Marientheres Jesse, and a dramaturg, Laura Kallenbach in 2015. They name themselves as a Freies Performancekollektiv, a unity of diverse experts and interdisciplinary artists of a queer feminist network. They concern particularly on gender issues as they mentioned themselves as feminists. More than to speak up gender criticism, their works attempt to

bring change. Most of the works are a combination of interaction, installation, and objects theatre.

In our society nowadays, gender issues seem rarely to be discussed, as if we had already believed in gender equality in society. However, we are still classifying a person through its appearances, which includes gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, etc. Its diversification is apparently linked to gender issues, particularly a dominant masculine structure. It leads to a public opinion that has steadily embedded as if it has become a consensus that gender is determined by certain categories. As a result, a distinct separation of gender tends to judge and inequity, in other words: binary opposition. In this concern, some social movements attempt to deconstruct this public opinion in several ways, theatre is one of these social movements. The play "Love Me Harder" is employed as an object of analysis. This essay attempts to disentangle and decipher the play to acquire its messages about gender issues. The play is an entanglement of signs and symbols thus, to disentangle means to "disassemble" these signs and symbols. To decipher means to analyze the ideas of these signs or symbols and to grasp the significance of the play as a whole.

Theoretical Review

In this essay, the theatres' elements will be classified, described, and analysed through a theoretical approach. The theatres' elements are including the stage props, actor, text or language, music, and all that is appeared on the stage. These elements will be classified according to similar contexts of meaning into four classes. Each class will be discussed in one chapter, thus there will be four chapters in this essay and each chapter draws at least one theoretical approach. As a theoretical framework of this analyses, this essay draws on the work of numbers of

theorists including Susan Bordo (2000), Judith Butler (1999), Daniel Boyarin (2003), and Ann Stoler (1996).

Susan Bordo focuses on the differences between men and women through the lack of a penis. In Bordo's view, the penis links to the phallus. The phallus is anchoring masculine traits. Thus, masculine is related to males. She affirms her notion by indicating some advertisements, in which the male body as a point of attraction. The body eternally emerges in most of the scenes in the play. This body, however, relays different meanings from the masculine body in a Bordo's view. This contradiction of a male body's meaning will be discussed intensely in the next chapter by involving the counter premise from a feminist, Judith Butler. In Butler's view, the gender concept does not come by interpreting a body, but our culture forms the gender. The Jewish attribute emerges in the play. The gender issue also links to race and religion. In this regard, Daniel Boyarin and Willard Swartley's works are used as a theoretical approach. Finally, the last chapter draws Ann Stoler's notions about the race, sexuality and its implication in power, in this context: colonialism

Result and Discussion

1. Reading the masculine body

In the opening, Elischa and two other females greet the audience. Elischa wears a light pink jacket, light blue jeans, a pair of sneakers. He also carries a small plastic transparent back- pack. A bunch of male barbie dolls is visible through this backpack. His female companion wears a dark shirt, pants, and puts on a moustache on her face. The other wears a slight long dress with a pair of artificial breasts hang on her chest. As the audiences enter the room, these two females move aside, and Elischa guides the audiences to observe the room and the stage props,

which lie on the floor. Elischa then walks to the middle and announces just right before everything begins, that the voices, movements, and all that would be showed later in the play represent masculinity. At this point, Elischa's statement persuades the audiences first to figure out, what comes in their mind if they think about masculinity, thus at once outlines to the main topic of the play: masculinity.

Elischa then walks around the room and spontaneously approaches a member of the audience and asks for something. He then guides this viewer to follow him and ride on a pony toy, which is placed right in the middle of the room. Elischa then stands right in front of him. Music and lights turn on. The room immediately turns into the club. Elischa starts to dance passionately. His body moves smoothly. He emphasizes his moves on his hip and chest. He then takes his jacket and t-shirt off and continues to dance. His chest is full of glitter and sparkling ornaments cover his nipples. He expresses freedom through his nudity. Those sparkling accessories steal the audience's attention. At this point, Elischa attempts to introduce his body. He opens, shows, and celebrates it (Turner, 2000, p. 109).

The body is also present in the transition scene. The transition scenes are mostly used by Elischa to change his costume. As he switches his outfit, he occasionally asks the audiences for help by wearing a necklace, to put some glitter on his chest, and to close the zipper on her dress. Through the touching and physical closeness, Elischa builds intimacy with the audiences. In another scene, Elischa stands half-naked on the stage. He walks first towards the stage and reminds the spectators that they should close their eyes if his nudity makes them uncomfortable. He then takes all of his cloth off and only left is his lacy black panty. These acts open up a discourse of body in a masculine-gender context.

Consider in these masculine-body discourses Susan Bordo argues that the body can explain genders to identify them. She points out that, “[i]t also suggests that we need to think about the body not only as a physical entity – which it assuredly is – but also as a cultural form that carries meaning with it (Bordo, 2000, p. 26). She begins her notion with the penis in the male body. It links to the concept of the phallus. On Bordo’s view, the phallus is a representative of power. A penis, then, stands for the phallus, as she points out,

“The phallus is the penis that takes one’s breath away—not merely because the length or thickness (qualities that might be sexually exciting but not necessarily command respect, as we’ve seen) but because of its majesty.” (Bordo, 2000, p. 87)

The reason phallus is associated with the penis, as she explains, is through its metaphor, namely “bio-metaphor”. Simply put the bio-metaphor accounts its meaning and is related to the “bio-logical” function, as she puts it, “the bio-metaphors symbolize qualities (such as sexual or reproductive potency, superior aggressiveness, the capacity to give pleasure)” (Bordo, 2000, p. 89) while the phallus proclaims social value, which is connected to human relationships, as Bordo (2000) points out,

I have spent some time on explaining the concept of a ‘bio-metaphor’ because one way of understanding the symbolism of the phallus is by way of its continuities and its differences from these bio-metaphors. Like them, the phallus stands for a superiority, that is in connected with maleness. But unlike them, the phallus stands, not for the superior fitness of an individual male over other men, but for generic male superiority — not only over females but also over other species (Bordo, 2000, p. 89).

According to the discussion above, it seems that the body and gender relation is fixed through a reproductive organ, namely the penis. In the play, Elisha, on the one hand, accentuates his body, but on the other hand, rather than to reveal the penis, he prefers to dress up, wears jewellery, and puts on some makeup, simply put, he refuses the existence of the penis. He, however, punctuates at the very beginning that the play is about masculinity, his body and voice represent masculinity. This scene reveals that masculinity in the play does not relate as a condition of having a penis. Thus, rather being biologically depend, gender is formed through the social state. The analyses of other theatrical aspects in the following chapter might help to answer this question.

2. Alternatives of the masculine body

Another theatrical aspect that will be discussed in this chapter is language. Language represents spoken language or speech such as monolog, dialog, recitations, and verse. It can also appear on the stage in written form. In this play, for instance, Elischa also sings. That lyric is one of the language forms. A language alone might able to generate its meaning. However, an interlocking of language and other elements such as facial expression and gestures has to be considered as supplementation to determine its meaning. In this analysis, it is necessary to mention other theatrical aspects. These aspects enable us to figure out the nuance, emotion, or the character and worldview of the actor.

Storytelling is one of the language forms that appear on the stage in this play. Before Elischa starts his story, he asks the audience to hold and fondle a red cloth which stretches along the audience bench. At this moment, Elischa also holds a red cloth and stands in the middle of the room, right above

the stage props. The story begins with two guys as the main characters, Jonathan and David. Jonathan and David are involved in a romantic affair through an accidental encounter. One day, as they were together in a park, Jonathan unwittingly touched David. It has become a memorable moment for David as he had never experienced before. The days after, David was sick, and the doctor said that he was pregnant. The pregnancy of David remains that his relation to Jonathan is more than just a friend. His pregnancy also exemplifies that, though the same sex, their relationship is not seen as something that unnatural. They both enjoy being touched, to share, and show their feelings and desires. This story links Elischa to homosexuality.

Some homosexuals reveal particular behaviours. Unlike men who never wear a dress, skirt, or makeup, homosexuals dress them up. Their character becomes obvious for the example in their gesture or voice. Their natures remind of women. There are some theatrical aspects of the play that recall this homosexuality complexion, for instance through Elischa's voice as he sings. In this scene, he sits next to the stage props. He then begins to sing calmly. The audience can hear him even he uses low voice and falling intonation. His voice reminds of "a seductive voice", a silky, arousing, and captivating. His voice is astonishing. The other theatrical aspects are his facial expression, gesture, and costume. He was wearing a dress, mascara, flourish his chest with the sparkling glitter and a glowing necklace. Elischa's homosexuality becomes obvious as he acts in the "playing house" scene or "mother-father games". A member of the audience feeds him an apple. Elischa also asks them to hold his barbie dolls like a baby, to wash his hand (and to be washed), and to play barbie dolls. Elischa attempts to recall his childhood in this scene. The development of sexual identity apparently can be observed through

these childhood circumstances as it is explained in Richard Green's (1987) research, "The Sissy boy Syndrome". He mentions that feminine boy or a "sissy boy" is likely to play with dolls, house- family games and do not to like a rough-and-tumble play (Green, 1987, pp. 6–27). This kind of boy is 'suffered' under the sissy syndrome and tends to grow into a homosexual. In his book, he did research on children in the US from various races with the age range of 4-10 years. In the ongoing study of the years, he observed the selection of games with interviews and psychological tests. This research aims to observe the development of homosexual or potential "irregularities" in sexuality since childhood. The sissy boys are the children who are biologically men but prefer to play like girls in general. At this point, it becomes obvious that the intention of gender in the play is dissociated to sexual identity. This notion is affirmed by Kenneth Plummer (1990) as follows,

gender identity is clearly distinct from sexual identity; a sense of being a boy or a girl is not directly linked to a sense of being heterosexual, homosexual, sadomasochistic or paedophilic, which usually comes later. Nevertheless, given the centrality of gender identity as an organizing feature of social life it is very likely to shape sexual identity (West, 2000, p. 208).

The childhood story of Elischa amplifies that his sexual identity is a social construction rather than a biological condition.

The story of Jonathan and David in the play invites to criticize the heteronormativity. The category of male, female, masculine and feminine are constituted in a heterosexual order. Wittig mentions as cited in Butlers (1999) as follows,

to which we now turn, "masculine" and "feminine", "male" and "female"

exist only within the heterosexual matrix; indeed, they are naturalized terms that keep that matrix concealed and, hence, protected from a radical critique (Butler, 2011, p. 141).⁸

In a heterosexual relationship, gender desires only the opposite gender. It impacts the division of gender in which homosexuality excludes. It begins with the symbol of the phallus. The use of the term phallus reminds to this division of gender. As it is described in the previous chapter, the term of the phallus is not a symbol of an organ or subject but stands for power. The phallus only stands for power until it is linked to the term of desire that impacts to the division of gender. In the relationship, the One attaches the Other as they are driven by desire. “Desire for Lacan results from the relationship between biological needs and the linguistic structures of the symbolic.” (Rae, 2020, pp. 12–26), in this regard, the term desire stands for the expression of desire in the relationship. The term desire operates to secure the relationship, for instance, between the One and the Other. The One attaches to the Other as the One needs the Other. The Other comes then to “fill-up” this desire. It affirms that the Other is the “fulfilment” of the Ones’ desire. This desire notion is linked to the idea of the phallus. The term of phallus stands for power. The power can enforce if it has ceded. It is for an instant, similar to an election in which a group of people chooses a certain person to be their leader. As this person admits the power, it removes then the others’ power. The symbol of phallus, furthermore, generates these “transfer” of power as “to have” and “to be”. Regarding the description above, it becomes obvious that the One can be positioned as “to have” the phallus and the Other as “to be” the phallus. As the Other fill the Ones’ desire up, it removes the others’ phallus—power whereas the Other to be the phallus. The terms of “to have” and “to be” the phallus in heterosexuality gender order

reveal a conspicuous division of gender in which femininity is mostly positioned “to be” the phallus. This “division” generates the duality, as Butler emphasizes as follows,

Lacanian discourse centres on the notion of “a divide”, a primary or fundamental split that renders the subject internally divided and that establishes the duality of the sexes. But why this exclusive focus on the fall into twoness? Within Lacanian terms, it appears that division is always the effect of the law, and not a pre-existing condition on which the law acts (Butler, 2011, p. 70).

Connell also affirms that within homosexuality, this “division” is quite complex,

the male, in identifying as masculine, learns to desire what he is not, on some level at least; Namely, the female and the feminine. Yet, within the frame of the homosexual, this relationship is far more complex: The male in possibly still identifying as masculine, but strongly undermined by stereotypes and attitudes to the contrary, desires what he perhaps still or wants to be, which also masculine. Or, to put it more simply, in relation to homosexuality, desire and identification become, if not the same, the certainly less distinct (Connell et al., 2005, p. 51).

The term of phallus and its link to desire is restrictively heteronormative, as is defined the duality of male-female division. Thus, it is displaced the homosexuality.

The “desire” within a homosexual relationship operates in a particular way. The “Love Me Harder” demonstrates it through their theme song. The function of “desire” in their view is not as “division” agent, but rather to represent a flowing and reciprocal relationship. It can be seen more closely through their songs’ lyric as follows,

Liquid dreams are made/of how we
desire

Ask for my consent/and touch me
carefully

Pull that shirt up/and love me harder

Pull those curtains down/and drown
me deeper

Elischa stands on the stage as he sings this song. He also plays the keyboard. He starts to sing with a low and slow pitch. In this scene, the audiences are invited to participate. They then sing along with him. The song narrates a romantic relationship. Some phrases in form of commands such as; “touch me”, “love me”, “drown me”, “pull that” and “pull those” reveal that the singer situates himself as a subject as well as an object. He asks the opponent to do something, on the one hand, he surrenders himself on the other hand. Those phrases represent the singer’s commands, so it positions the singer as a subject. On the other hand, the singer situates himself to be the object of action as the opponent commits those commands. This song illustrates that in their relationship, nobody becomes dominant over the other, but rather a flowing, reciprocal relationship. The singer does not only want to have but also is owned by the opponent. Elischa illustrates through this song his own utopian relationship, wherein the one “to have” and “to be” the phallus for the other is all at once. Thus, the gender identity is obscured and inessential.

The song accounts that masculinity seems to apply only within heterosexuality. Butler criticizes Foucault as follows, “[i]f Foucault contends that sexual non-identity is promoted in homosexual contexts, he would seem to identify heterosexual contexts as precisely those in which identity is constituted (Butler, 2011, p. 129).” It is quite arbitrary and peculiar as if Elischa’s homosexuality in a heterosexual frame designates him as a non-identity person, or simply put, a non-gender person. Masculinity

in Elischa version aspires to, if possible, eliminates the gender division. To this point, the play attempts to criticize the masculine stereotype in our social culture, which became normative, as gender is simply identified by reflecting the biological reproductive function in a consequently impacted male-dominant construction.

Elischa’s body in the play is on the one hand intended to demonstrate a masculine body, but on the other hand, despite masculine stereotypes, he offers an alternative concept of masculinity, namely the ‘opposite’ version. It is ‘opposite’ because the symbols that have been employed remind the counter-concept of masculinity within a heteronormative perspective. The ‘opposite’ gender is more often related to females so that the symbols he used are most of the time linked with female attitudes. Moreover, the homosexual context is also showed on the stage by employing the language, which does not only affirm Elischa’s gender desire but also reverse the masculine role in the heterosexual gender structure. It is analogous with Butler’s opinion as follows,

she argued that, in our Culture’s hegemonic account, gender roles simply reflect in culture the biological presentation, bodies with one anatomical configuration desire bodies with the ‘opposite’ anatomical configuration; Social and linguistic implications follow from this ostensibly irreducible ‘fact’ (Turner, 2000, p. 109).

Masculinity in Elischa’s view is a homosexual male with female tendency—soft, weak, melancholic. In the following chapter will be discussed how Elischa reveals more about his masculinity by adding religion as well as race issues.

3. The fragility

Another scene that is quite significant to note is as Elischa ties his arms with a belt. He straps his arm with a belt and tightens it by biting it. This scene reminds of the religious ritual of Jewish. The Jewishness then becomes a religion and race attributes of homosexuality in Elischa character. The first notion regarding Jewish as a race and homosexuality is the idea of the circumcision which is occurred to Jewish males. Circumcision is a condition of “lack of penis” which analogous as a loss of the phallus thus it lost its power. Thus, this condition is juxtaposed to female as explained by Daniel Boyarin as follows,

the most compelling sign of Jewish racial difference is, for Freud, the circumcised penis of the male Jew. Since for him, however, circumcision is psychically analogous to castration, the sign of racial difference becomes virtually identical to the sign of sexual difference. A look at the circumcised penis is the same as a look at the castrated penis of female, and race and gender converge in the subjectivity of the Christian (heterosexual), masculine subject, putative possessor of phallus (Boyarin, 2003, p. 17).

That notion is perpetually affiliated to the position of homosexuality within gender structure as Connell mentions,

oppression positions homosexual masculinities at the bottom of gender hierarchy among men, Gayness, in patriarchal ideology, is the repository of whatever is symbolically expelled from hegemonic masculinity, the items ranging from fastidious taste in home decoration to receptive anal pleasure. Hence, from the point of view of hegemonic masculinity, gayness is easily assimilated to femininity (Connell et al., 2005, p. 78).

Those notions draw a continuity of the disposition of homosexuality and being Jewish. Being Jewish is associated with females since their lack of phallus. Thus, both Jewish and female is devalued, Jewish with their discrimination namely the antisemitism whereas female is placed in the bottom of gender hierarchy, in which homosexuality is also devalued. The merging of Jewish in the play accentuates its critique of both gender and racial discrimination. It is important to note that both emerge within the same structure analyses namely the phallus as a power symbol. They who do not “have” the phallus are positioned as “being” the phallus, so it removes the “power” of the phallus. It is then perpetuating them through this removal. In his play, Elischa reverses the value of the phallus as he has never revealed the phallus in the play. His motive is certain, to account that masculinity is not necessarily linked to the power of phallus.

The other notion of homosexuality and Jewish as a religion is its link to the Bible. Homosexuality in the Bible is seen as unnatural, against God’s or religions’ law as is disobeying the destiny, and thus it becomes immoral. Willard in his analysis mentions three main points related to homosexuality on the Bible’s view. First, the word homosexuality is not explicitly stated in the Bible, second, God condemns homosexual and inhospitality rape and the third is that neither in Old nor New Statements accept the same-sex intercourse practice (Swartley, 2003, p. 31). These notions account for the assumption that in society homosexuality is seen as a sin, and those who believe in this notion tend to prejudge and disadvantage the homosexual. Thus, homosexual is mightily suffering threats of violence. Elischa though does not refuse his Jewishness, on the contrary, he admits it. He confesses his position as a fragility. Elischa depicts his intensity of fragility on the stage. In this play, he walks around the room and repeatedly

enunciates sentences which always starts with the fragility. The word fragility literally means the quality of being easily broken or damaged, delicate, or vulnerable (Stevenson, 2015). It becomes obvious that Elischa's Jewishness and his emotion attempts to reverse the notion of masculinity that is perpetually associated with power.

4. Sex, power and colonialism

Besides the gestures, voices, and the languages, the other fundamental sign in the play is the stage properties. In this play, as Elischa is the only actor, his character is brought to life by responding to the stage properties, in other words, the stage properties enhance the intention of the symbol in the play. The stage properties are built rightly on the floor in the middle of the room. It is placed at the lower level of the audience's perspective. Elischa mostly moves in this area. This stage property displays the form of city architecture. There are railways, buildings, and trees. Apart from this architecture, there are also some other objects or toys like guns, tanks, weapons, trucks, and several kinds of makeup.

The stage properties are grouped into three different functions of meaning, the architecture, the toys, and the makeup. Architecture reminds of a place where people live, it supposes to illustrate a society, people, or us. The toys which feature masculinity are guns, missiles, and tanks, whereas the makeup presumes the femininity. Those toys representing masculinity follow the logic of the power phallus. The power is imminent to the army and war. Those toys represent the armament, whereas makeup is associated with femininity. The makeup, through its function, reveals beauty. In gender context, beauty is one of the features of a sexual desire, thus can be associated with sexuality. In summary, the stage properties composition represents society, power, and sexuality.

I attempt to approach the notion of sexuality and power in a colonial order. In this regard, a notion about sexuality and colonialism by Ann Laura Stoler may fit. Her work is mostly based on her reading of Foucault. Foucault argues (as cited in Stoler (1996)), "sexuality is not opposed to and subversive of power. On the contrary, sexuality is a 'dense of transfer point' of power, charged with 'instrumentality' (Stoler, 1996, p. 3)." Sexuality is not merely as an "expression of love" which commonly occurs in a relationship, but its purpose can be modified or manipulated to actuate a certain assignment. Stoler's work explains by revealing some examples of the role of sexuality in various states during the colonial period. Sexuality, in her concern, regulates the relationships between different races, which is certainly relevant to conserve colonial practice, she argues, "the discursive management of the sexual practices of colonizer and colonized was fundamental to the colonial order things (Stoler, 1996, p. 4)." The binary structure through the term "colonizer" and "colonized" is like a shadow for the authority on which the dominant power is maintained, thus keep the colonial body stable. As this binary term is race-specific it is then biological dependent, therefore can be maintained through sexual control, as Stoler points out as cited in Brooks, "the terms 'colonizer' and 'colonized' were secured through forms of sexual control that defined the domestic arrangement of Europeans (Brooks, 2017, p. 72)." A consciousness of "who I am" distinguishes one class of society from another. Thus, the dominance of the colonizer is to be actualized. Stoler found that there is also gender suppression in colonial practice, as she mentions, "a European man could live with or marry an Asian woman without necessarily losing rank, but this was never true for European woman who might

make a similar choice to live or marry a non-European (Stoler, 1996, p. 215).”

The continuity meaning of the stage properties above amplifies through Elischa acting. The first action he made is by kicking out the architecture. He attempts to ruin the building and all the other objects. He did it in purpose as if he has a deep hostility. He seems to express dissatisfaction, disappointment, and resentment. He then gives up that mess and moves to another scene, I name it the “closing party”. This scene is the last part of the play. In this play, Elischa greets the audiences to have some drink together. Elischa’s companions, two females who are described earlier, suddenly emerge with a trolley full of tulip glasses and some bottles of Champagne. They help Elischa by pouring and distributing the glasses of Champagne towards the audience. They ensure that everybody in the room is holding a glass of Champagne. Elischa afterwards invites the audience to toast, as he says in the name of “penetration freedom” so the “party” is over. He hereafter, with the help of his two female colleagues, rides back to the pony, waves his hand towards the audience, and rides back out of the stage (room). Elischa’s first reaction - destroying the stage properties - reveals his attitude towards the situation of the society; dissatisfaction and resentment. He, however, surprisingly ends up the play in a peaceful way, through the “closing party” he engages the reconciliation rather than reciprocal. Elischa does, tremendously disfavor power oppression over gender and race, but his reaction, consistently calm, as if he never lost his hope, a peace-loving-ideal place.

Conclusion

The gender notion within this essay framework acknowledges that there is a contradiction within the gender concept. It begins with the opinion which argues that gender depends on its biological condition. In

this regard, the body is perceived as a symbol. A reproductive organ, namely the penis is admitted as a feature of a male. To this approach, however, some scholars refuse to distinguish gender through the biological condition. Thus, they exchange their notion of the phallus concept. The phallus concept then arouses other pros and contras. As the phallus stands for power, though it does not merely associate with the penis, the phallus ingeminates the former notion, it affirms masculinity as the power possessor. Some scholars interrupt this notion since it seems to conduce a simplification of gender division, thus exclude homosexuals, trans- and queer-people. Besides, it considers that the masculine devalues the feminine. The discussion is expanded by involving a religion as well as race issues. The play accentuates an inequality within gender, which also impacts both race and religion. The actor, Elischa is depicted as a victim of that discrimination. Nevertheless, the play seems to “be on good terms”. Their critique is rather in forms of a satire than defiance.

The play tends to employ symbols that quite evident to reflect masculinity and gender issues. Through Elischa’s character, the play asserts that gender issues, or simply put, gender and racial discrimination, has a tremendous impact on the psychological condition. The classification of gender in the play becomes obvious as it employs the “stereotype” of gender symbols such as makeup, barbie dolls, and armament in the form of toys. Despite claiming to be masculine, Elischa character reverses the stereotype of masculinity. In contrary to the strong and dominant nature of masculinity within a heteronormative perspective, Elischa’s character reminds of gentleness, sensitivity, humility, and fragility. Furthermore, he introduces the story of David and Jonathan as a representation of his emotional experiences as homosexual. Besides, he also displays Jewish attributes to

emphasize that masculine domination has a huge impact on discrimination towards race and religion. Finally, he invites the audience to go where the oppression and discrimination do not exist, a utopia.

Bibliography

- Bordo, S. (2000). *The Male Body: A new look at men in public and in private*. (Paperback). Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Boyarin, D. (2003). *Queer Theory and The Jewish Question*. Columbia Univ. Press.
- Brooks, A. (2017). *Genealogies of Emotions, Intimacies, and Desire: Theories of changes in emotional regimes from medieval society to late modernity*. Routledge.
- Butler, J. (2011). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Taylor and Francis.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203824979>
- Connell, R., Hearn, J., & Kimmel, M. S. (2005). *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Green, R. (1987). *The "Sissy Boy Syndrome" and The Development of Homosexuality*. Yale Univ. Press.
- Kaminer, E. (2020). *CHICKS**.
<https://www.chicksperformance.de/projekte/>
- Rae, G. (2020). Questioning the Phallus: Jacques Lacan and Judith Butler. *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 21(1), 12–26.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15240657.2020.1721113>
- Stevenson, A. (Ed.). (2015). *Oxford Dictionary of English*. Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acref/9780199571123.001.0001>
- Stoler, A. L. (1996). *Race and the Education*

- of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (2nd ed.). Duke Univ. Press.
- Swartley, W. M. (2003). *Homosexuality: Biblical interpretation and moral discernment*. Herald Press.
- Turner, W. B. (2000). *A Genealogy of Queer Theory*. Temple Univ. Press.
- West, R. (2000). *Subverting Masculinity: Hegemonic and Alternative Versions of Masculinity in Contemporary Culture*. Rodopi.