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BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

**Sam Shepard's Drama *Fool for Love* (1983) and
its Film Adaptation by Robert Altman**

Divadelní Hra Sama Sheparda *Láskou Posedlí* (1983) a
její Filmová Adaptace od Roberta Altmana

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Studijní kombinace: Anglický jazyk / Geografie

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Matěj Herout

Poděkování

Rád bych tímto poděkoval PhDr. Christopher Koy, M. A., Ph.D. za odborné vedení, podporu a cenné rady při tvorbě této bakalářské práce. Dále bych chtěl poděkovat své rodině za podporu a motivaci nejen k psaní bakalářské práce, ale k samotnému studiu na vysoké škole.

Anotace

Cílem této bakalářské práce je provedení analýzy amerického dramatu *Láskou Posedlí* od Sama Sheparda a jeho moderní filmové adaptace. Práce porovnává jednotlivé scény a dialogy a zároveň poukazuje na specifické rozdíly a změny provedené ve filmové adaptaci.

Abstract

The goal of this bachelor thesis is to analyse the Sam Shepard's American drama *Fool for Love* and its modern film adaptation. The thesis compares individual scenes and dialogues and points out specific changes made in the film adaptation.

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1. Introduction

When you hit a wall, just kick it in.

Patti Smith, *Just Kids* (2010)

This advice was given to Patti Smith by her long-time friend and ex-partner Sam Shepard, when she complained about hitting a wall creatively.¹ She later wrote about the advice in her memoir *Just Kids*, inspiring artists and writers ever since. This indicates just how much Sam Shepard managed to encourage, motivate, and overall influence artists over the years, not only as a playwright, but also an advisor and a good friend.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze one of the brilliant minds of twentieth-century American literature, Sam Shepard, as well as his family drama from 1983, *Fool for Love*. Exploring play's characters and plot, it will explain its themes and motives. The other purpose is to also point out and compare the contrast between one of Shepard's most recognized plays and its film adaptation.

The reason I chose *Fool for Love* for this bachelor thesis was simply a great recommendation from my thesis supervisor. Frankly, I was not very familiar with any American playwrights before, let alone Sam Shepard himself. However, since I do not really have a favorite author nor book, I decided to give Shepard a shot. After doing a little research on Shepard, I ended up growing quite fond of him and his western, cowboy style.

¹ SMITH, Patti. *Just Kids*. New York City. Ecco, 2010. p. 110

2. Life of Sam Shepard

This part of the thesis aims to explore not only Sam Shepard's playwright career, but also his beginnings, relationships with his family members and most importantly what motivated him to write such plays like *Fool for Love*.

2.1. Introduction to Sam Shepard

The recently deceased dramatist Sam Shepard (1943 – 2017), was an American screen play writer, actor, director, guitarist, winner of three Pulitzer Prizes, and author of more than fifty-five theatre plays, of which several were even performed on Broadway. He was born on November 5, 1943, at Fort Sheridan, Illinois. Sam grew up on different military bases depending on where his father was serving at the time, eventually settling with his family on a ranch in Duarte, California, where he worked with his father.

His father's name was Samuel Shepard Rogers II, so naturally his son's birth name was Samuel Shepard Rogers III. During his early life, Shepard was given the nickname Steve, reportedly to not mistake him with other Samuels in his family, like his father and his grandfather. Later in 1964, as he was starting to make a name for himself and his career was starting to be successful, he officially changed his name to Sam Shepard. Reportedly he did so because Steve Rogers was the name of the original Captain America, which he was unaware of when growing up.² So, to avoid possibly being mistaken for the character, changing his name was in order.

2.2. Family Members and Their Influence on Sam Shepard

Sam Shepard came from a family of three children. His two younger sisters, Sandy and Roxanne Rogers eventually found their career in the entertainment industry, just like their brother. Roxanne became a stage director while Sandy became a music composer, her most iconic score being a song titled "Fool for Love" from Quentin Tarantino's first film *Reservoir Dogs* (1992).

² BAHR, Lindsey. (2017, August 1). *Appreciation: Sam Shepard embodied, examined American myth*. APNews.

Sam's, Sandy's, and Roxanne's father Samuel Shepard Rogers II was a beloved Spanish teacher at San Marino High School and later in his life a ranch-owner. During World War II he served in the United States Army Air Forces as a bomber pilot. Their mother Jane Rogers, who originally came from Chicago, worked as a teacher at the elite Polytechnic School in Pasadena. She was very proud and supporting of her son, who would later describe her as "a strong, solid woman, like a rock."³

Sam's relationship with his father on the other hand, could be described as conflicted by some. Sam definitely did have respect for his father, yet the relationship was also full of contempt.⁴ Sam's father was a ranch-owning, thus a hard-working man, and on top of that a courageous and brave one, thanks to his years served as a bomber pilot, for which Sam looked up to him. Yet despite all of those positive attributes, Sam's father had a problem with alcohol, which later deteriorated into heavy alcoholism. Due to this addition, his unpredictable moods, recklessness, and even acts of violence became more and more frequent, resulting in his son not only respecting him, but also despising him. Over the time, Sam began rebelling against his father's authority as Sam and his father got into numerous arguments and quarrels. Sam's hatred for his father is without a doubt present in many of his literary works, great example being the following quotes from *Fool for Love*.

I don't understand my feelings. I really don't. I don't understand how I could hate you so much after so much time. How, no matter how much I'd like to not hate you, I hate you even more. It grows.

You can't keep messing me around like this. It's been going on too long. I can't take it anymore. I get sick every time you come around. Then I get sick when you leave. You're like a disease to me.

Sam Shepard, *Fool for Love* (1983)

The reasons for Sam Rogers's alcoholism are numerous, and when one knows what he has been through, they can even seem understandable. Winters (2017) wrote an excellent backstory to Shepard's father in his biography. Sam Rogers began his years of service in 1942, after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, which influenced a great deal of young

³ WINTERS, John J. *Sam Shepard: A Life*. Berkeley. Counterpoint, 2017. p. 23

⁴ HACHLEROVÁ, Nela. *The Fragmented Identity in Selected Sam Shepard's Plays*. Brno, 2018. p. 9

patriots to join the Army or Navy and fight for their country, Sam Rogers among them. Upon completing his pilot training, he would fly the skies above Europe, helping to destroy Germany's war machines and killing thousands of faceless victims with his B-24 bomber in the process. This took a heavy toll on Rogers. One time he also watched the gunman on his plane being struck by the enemy and falling down to his death.⁵

Around his time in service, a tragedy struck the Rogers family, as Sam Rogers received word that his younger brother, Bill Rogers, along with his new wife, Naomi, had died in a hotel in Gorman, California. Due to an accident, Bill and Naomi were asphyxiated in their room while on their honeymoon.⁶ No one felt this tragedy more severely than Sam Roger. Despite Bill being younger, Sam always looked up to his brother, because he always excelled as a student and an athlete. Sam Shepard later paid respect to his fallen uncle in the form of an inspired character in *Buried Child* (1978).

Despite all of Shepard's and his father's disagreements, Sam Rogers is one way or another present in many of Shepard's books and plays. He had such a strong influence on him, that Sam's memories of his father became a frequent source of material for his writing. Winters (2017) dedicated a whole chapter to Sam's father, naming it after his influence on his son's writing, *The Dark Muse/Father*. Furthermore, not only his father's but also his mother's and sisters' relationship with Sam had shaped him into a person he grew up to be. It is without a doubt that Sam's family members excreted a very meaningful influence on Sam as a playwright and a screenwriter.

2.3. Sam Shepard's Path to Becoming a Playwright

As Shepard's father's service as a pilot came to an end, his family moved on from living on different military bases to living with his aunt Grace in her family house in South Pasadena. Here Shepard attended South Pasadena's Lincoln Elementary, where he did his first writing. Winters (2017) mentions it in his biography of Shepard, describing a simple story of a Coca-Cola bottle that travels the country, getting filled up in one town, drunk dry, and then sent on to the next. Upon Aunt Grace's passing and the birth of Shepard's sister Roxanne, the

⁵ WINTERS, John J. *Sam Shepard: A Life*. Berkeley. Counterpoint, 2017. p. 16

⁶ WINTERS, John J. *Sam Shepard: A Life*. Berkeley. Counterpoint, 2017. p. 17

family decided to move to a bigger house on a ranch in Duarte, California, a massive change in Shepard's life, as he was forced to trade his friends back in Pasadena for daily chores on his family's ranch.⁷

Life on the family ranch in Duarte was not easy. Its avocado orchard had to be tended to on a regular basis, there were chickens to take care of as well as a flock of 25 sheep, which Shepard was particularly fond of. As a member of two local farming clubs, Shepard raised sheep that he entered into local competitions. He maintained records of their health and all the vet work. Taking this background into account, becoming an artist was likely the furthest thing from Shepard's mind when growing up. His plans originally consisted of going to the University of California at Davis to study veterinary medicine.

Upon arriving in Duarte, Shepard began attending Royal Oaks Grammar school, later continuing his studies at Duarte High School, where he gained his first exposure to theater. He was cast in two school plays, *Finian's Rainbow* and *Eighteen Summer*. He spent time at both the Pasadena Playhouse and San Gabriel Playhouse, either learning acting or actually performing onstage. Winters (2017) describes how intensely Shepard wanted to be involved with theater. Reportedly he had to hitchhike home at night from these venues, as his father would not allow him to take the car, each being ten miles from the family home.⁸

Around 1959, Shepard even got a taste of higher culture, when an art house cinema opened about a half hour drive away from the ranch. Here he was exposed not only to films that did not turn up at the local theater, but also ones that included nudity. According to Winters (2017) the art house film that impressed Shepard the most was Truffaut's classic, *The 400 Blows* (1959), about a troubled fourteen-year-old boy from an unhappy home who eventually winds up in juvenile hall. Shepard was stunned how similar his situation was with the boy's situation in the film.

Shepard also saw his life reflected in *Long Day's Journey into Night* (1956) by Eugene O'Neill. Shepard had previously read the play, but the Sidney Lumet's film adaptation from 1962 really captured his imagination. Winters (2017) says that it provided Shepard with the first inkling that maybe he might have a story of his own to tell in a dramatic

⁷ WINTERS, John J. *Sam Shepard: A Life*. Berkeley. Counterpoint, 2017. p. 33

⁸ WINTERS, John J. *Sam Shepard: A Life*. Berkeley. Counterpoint, 2017. p. 36

form. However, it was not the first time Shepard came across Eugene O'Neill, as he read a few of his one-act plays in the past. Nevertheless, the influence of the Nobel prize-winning dramatist on Shepard is unmistakable, especially his progression from enjoying one-act plays to much more complex family dramas in three or full five-act plays.

While attending Duarte High, Shepard began writing poetry. He had been taken by the excitement of the Beat Generation like many others of his age group. The two literary works that woke up the sense of freedom in Shepard, were the poem *Howl* (1955) by Allen Ginsberg, and the novel *On the Road* (1957) by Jack Kerouac, in which Shepard saw the possibilities they represented.

After graduating from Duarte High, Shepard was torn over which path he should follow, animal husbandry or something more creative. Winters (2017) wrote that at some point, an idea began to take shape in Shepard's mind: perhaps being a writer or artist of some kind would be his ticket out of town. However, he spent that summer attending to the animals once again. Winters (2017) also wrote that it could have easily become his career, if not for his father's alcohol-fueled rages, eventually driving Shepard cross-country, meaning there was a chance that a happy life of a local veterinarian may have won out.

Shepard accordingly registered for classes at nearby Mt. San Antonio College, where Shepard showed the influence of his parents' chosen careers, as he planned to major in education. However, once Shepard settled at the college, he found his way to the theater department once again. Shepard wrote his first play ever, titled *The Mildew* (1961), a one-act comedy taking up only ten pages. Shepard maintained that this first attempt at dramatic writing was a Tennessee Williams rip-off about a girl who is raped and then mocked by her stepfather. Winters (2017) wrote that *The Mildew* is by no means the rival of *Buried Child* (1978) or *The Tooth of Crime* (1972). Nevertheless, for a community college freshman it shows a remarkable eagerness to experiment and a transgressive sense of humor. The play itself was never performed, but the seeds of Shepard's future work were definitely evident there.

In the early 1963, Shepard had a final falling-out with his father. The final confrontation, which included Shepard's father smashing windows, tearing the front door off its hinges, and even setting the backyard ablaze, was the initiative needed for Shepard to finally leave. He packed everything he needed to hit the road and left in his '51 Chevy.

I feel like I've never had a home, you know? I feel related to the country, to this country, and yet I don't know exactly where I fit in... There's always this kind of nostalgia for a place, a place where you can reckon with yourself.

Sam Shepard, Don Shewey's *Sam Shepard* (1997)

At first, he didn't go far, taking a job at a ranch in Chino, California, located only twenty-five miles east from his parents' house. After a short while, Shepard found his way back to Pasadena, taking a job delivering newspapers, which proved to be lucky for him. One day, while delivering newspapers, he would read it and come across a Bishop's Company advertisement that read "actors wanted." Thinking this might be the way to really enter professional theater, Shepard gave it a shot.

After winning a spot at the audition, Shepard traveled across country with the touring theater group, visiting numerous cities, where he would act in Shakespeare plays. Bishop's Company was a big step up for Shepard, as he had roughly a half-dozen school plays under his belt before he joined the group. In the fall of 1963, after eight months on the road, Shepard finally visited New York City for the first time, performing with Bishop's Company in Brooklyn. New York left such a heavy impact on Shepard, he decided to leave the group and stay there. He quickly found his way to Greenwich Village, which was full of people like him – people who knew that they did not really belong where they came from. Shepard would soon find a home in New York City, spending most of his life here, and writing most of his plays.

2.4. Sam Shepard's Playwright and Movie Career

Working as a helping hand in Greenwich Village, Shepard lived in a small hut with a former high school classmate. Later, he said that he did not find "The Big Apple" very accommodating at first.⁹ He was using illegal substances during this time and also played as a drummer in the rock bands *Lothar and the Hand People* and *Holy Modal Rounders*, which

⁹ WINTERS, John J. *Sam Shepard: A Life*. Berkeley. Counterpoint, 2017. p. 55

performed in a movie *Easy Rider* (1969). He had known how to play drums from his childhood, when his father bought him his first drum set.

At the age of nineteen, Sam became involved with the New York theatre scene, working closely with the Genesis Theatre in the East Village. At the beginning of his successful career as a writer, Sam did not direct his plays; the first of Shepard's plays were directed mostly by Ralph Cook, the founder of the theatre. It was not until the 1970s that Shepard concluded that his creative vision required him to direct the plays himself. He has directed a number of his own plays since then, with a few exceptions not plays by other authors.

Shepard has directed two films. However, this sort of work was clearly not in the center of his interests. By the age of thirty, he already had around thirty theatre plays to his account. After three years in England (1971 – 1973), Sam moved to San Francisco in 1976, where he became the “court” author of the Magic Theatre, where many of his plays also premiered. Noteworthy are the award-winning *Buried Child*, *The Suffering of the Distressed Class*, (both 1978), *The True West* (1980), or *Cheating the Mind* (1985), for which he later won the Drama Desk Award. His early sci-fi *Invisible Hand* affected Richard O'Brien so much that he wrote the iconic musical *Rocky Horror Show* (1973). In San Francisco, Shepard formed a successful directorial-author duo with Robert Woodruff, who, among other plays, directed the premiere of Shepard's *Buried Child*.¹⁰

Although Shepard acted occasionally, he spent most of his time writing. He has also written screenplays for films such as *Me and My Brother* (1968) starring Christopher Walken, and Michelangelo Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point* (1970). His screenplay for Wim Wenders' famous film *Paris, Texas* (1984) helped Shepard to be nominated for a BAFTA (British Film Academy) Award for “Best Adapted Screenplay”. He continued his collaboration with the Nobel Prize winner Bob Dylan, which began with the surrealist film *Renaldo and Clara* (1978). For this film, Shepard and Dylan wrote an epic 11-minute song called *Brownsville Girl*, which was released on Dylan's *Knocked Out Loaded* album in 1986. He collaborated with Patti Smith in 1971 when writing a rock opera, *The Mouth of a Cowboy*, in which they both took on the lead roles when it premiered. However, this experience on stage allegedly

¹⁰ TIKKANEN, Amy. (11/1/22). *Sam Shepard, American playwright and actor*. Britannica.

threw him off to the point that before the second performance took place, he left the city without a word.¹¹

He started his film acting career as a handsome farmer in Terrence Malick's drama *Heaven Days* (1978) with Richard Gere and Brooke Adams. Despite Shepard's well-known fear of flying, another of his notable roles includes the legendary test pilot Chuck Yeager in the adventure drama *The Right Stuff* (1983), for which he was nominated for an Academy Award for "Best Supporting Actor". Other of his major nominations were for an Emmy Award and also a Golden Globe for "Best Actor" for his role as Dashiell Hammett in the television film *Dash and Lilly* (1999).

Over the years, Shepard has taught a lot too. He has lectured on writing and other aspects of theater at various workshops, festivals, and universities. In 1983 he was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for his play *True West* and a year later for *Fool for Love*, which took a film form directed by Robert Altman in 1985, with Kim Basinger and Sam Shepard himself playing the lead roles. In 1986, Shepard was elected to The American Academy of Arts and Letters, from which he received a Gold Medal over the next six years. He was inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame in 1994; eleven of his more than forty-five plays at the time have received Obie Award.

In 1996, Shepard was nominated for the Tony Award for *Buried Child* (1978), and for the same award in 2000 for *True West* (1980). In the same year, he decided to "pay off the debt" to Magic Theater by debuting the play *The Late Henry Moss*. Nick Nolte, Sean Penn, Woody Harrelson, and Cheech Marin were cast. The play was on the program for three months and all the performances were sold out. Shepard also got on the cover of the weekly *Newsweek* magazine, which in the 1960s he said he "never wanted to get on".¹²

Sam Shepard lived with actress Joyce Aaron, later he married O-Lan Jones, and from this relationship, which began in 1969 and lasted 13 years, came his eldest son Jesse Mojo Shepard, born in 1970. In 2005, Jesse wrote a short story book titled *Jubilee King*, and his father took part in the author's reading after it was published in San Francisco.

While Shepard was in London filming the biographical drama *Frances* in 1982, he met Oscar-winning actress Jessica Lange, with whom he immediately fell in love and left his

¹¹ TIKKANEN, Amy. (11/1/22). *Sam Shepard, American playwright and actor*. Britannica.

¹² TIKKANEN, Amy. (11/1/22). *Sam Shepard, American playwright and actor*. Britannica.

previous wife to start a life with her. Shepard had another two children with Jessica Lange - Hannah Jane Shepard, born in 1985, and Samuel Walker Shepard, born in 1987. In 2007, Shepard appeared as a banjo player in Patti Smith's cover version of Nirvana's song *Smells Like Teen Spirit*, from Patti's album titled *Twelve*. Shepard and Smith were involved in a short extramarital affair in 1970.

Shepard has passed on July 27, 2017, at his home in Midway, Kentucky. He was aged 73, and died from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS for short. His death took most people by surprise since neither Shepard, nor his family had made his illness public. His friend and fellow actor Matthew McConaughey found out about Shepard's passing while being interviewed on TV. Shocked by the news, he ended the interview saying, "See you in the next one, Sam".¹³

¹³ TIKKANEN, Amy. (11/1/22). *Sam Shepard, American playwright and actor*. Britannica.

3. Fool for Love – The Drama

Fool for Love (1983), easily one of Shepard's most recognized plays along with *Buried Child* (1978) and *True West* (1980), can be considered Shepard's magnum opus. As an installment of his series of family plays, *Fool for Love* opened on February 8, 1983 at the Magic Theater in San Francisco. The play was a finalist for the 1984 Pulitzer Prize and won the 1984 Obie Awards for Best New American Play, its Direction by Sam Shepard, and the performances by Ed Harris as Eddie, Kathy Baker as May, and Will Patton as the Old Man.

The drama's plot, taking place in a single room, revolves around two troubled lovers holed up in a low-rent motel room somewhere on the edge of the Mojave Desert in the Southwest of the United States.¹⁴ Throughout the plot, Eddie and May balance on the edge of making love and tearing each other to pieces, representing the cycle of their years spent together in both love and hatred. The interactions and dialogue between the protagonists, as well as presence of the character Old Man, suggest that these two are not only connected by being feverish lovers, but also may be related by blood. This fact is later revealed and confirmed to the reader, setting one of the play's themes – an incestuous relationship.

3.1. Characters

Four characters are present in *Fool for Love*. They are Eddie, a rodeo cowboy in his late thirties, May, a woman in her early thirties whom Eddie left in a trailer last time they had seen each other, the Old Man, a mysterious figure to whom only Eddie and May seem to be able to talk, and finally Martin, May's date for the evening who finds himself walking into a hornet's nest when he comes to the motel to pick her up. There is also a fifth character that plays a role in the plot, the Countess, who however does not physically appear on stage.

3.2. The Title

The title of the play is very clever, as it hints towards a delightful romantic comedy, but in reality, it portrays a fiery and dependent relationship between two half siblings. Nevertheless, the title still holds relevance, for Eddie, May and the Old Man are all "fools for

¹⁴ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 6

love” in their own unique ways. Love leads them to make irrational decisions, which is a clear indication of their foolishness.

3.3. The Scene

The story of *Fool for Love* begins with a description of the scene. We are also reminded that the play is to be performed relentlessly, without a break. The setting is in a low-rent motel room on the edge of the Mojave Desert. The room is very thoroughly described. The faded green walls are made out of plaster and the dark brown floor out of linoleum, without a single rug covering it. A metal bed is set slightly off center covered with faded blue terry cloth bedspread and a metal table on the right covered in yellow tablecloth along with two metal chairs and two doors on each side of the room. The left one, painted in yellow, leads to the porch outside while the right one, painted in red, leads to the bathroom. Next to the table and chairs is a small platform with an old maple rocking chair.¹⁵

In the beginning of the play, no one is present on set. Only as the play commences, lights fade to black and “Wake Up” by Merle Haggard starts playing. Lights then begin to slowly rise, when three actors are revealed on set. The rocking chair is occupied by the Old Man with a bottle of whisky in a brown paper bag sitting next to him, which he proceeds to pour into a styrofoam cup and drink. The Old Man has a scraggly red beard, wears a straw gardener’s hat, a sun-bleached dark quilted jacket, black and white checked slacks and no socks, Mexican sandals and an old vest with a pale green shirt. However, the most important information about this character is that he exists only in the minds of May and Eddie. Throughout the play he treats them as though they all existed in the same place and time and Eddie with May even acknowledge his physical presence by talking to him directly. However, the Old Man is not really there.¹⁶

Sitting on the edge of the bed with her elbows on knees and her hands hanging limp and crossed between her knees is May, maintaining this attitude, sitting absolutely still until she responds to Eddie. Her character wears a blue Mexican full skirt with baggy white T-shirt and bare feet. Eddie sits on one of the chairs by the table facing May. His clothing gives the impression of someone who traveled a lot recently. He wears muddy broken-down cowboy

¹⁵ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 7

¹⁶ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 8

boots, well-worn faded dirty jeans and a brown western shirt with snaps. Also, when Eddie walks over to May, his movement suggests that he is often mounted on a horse. As the song fades at the end of the first verse, Eddie breaks the silence by finally talking to May.¹⁷

3.4. The Plot

The first dialogue happens between Eddie and May, although it is more of a monologue at first. As Eddie keeps reassuring May that he is really there and is not going anywhere, May keeps still and quiet on the bed, not even looking at Eddie. It is when he walks over to May that she suddenly grabs his leg with both of her arms and buries her head in his knee, showing wild of affection for Eddie. That immediately changes when she out of a sudden erupts furiously and starts hitting Eddie, which indicates that this relationship is far more complicated than it seems. Eddie then asks May whether she wants him to go, to which she replies negatively. This theme of leaving and returning appears very frequently throughout the play.¹⁸

After May return to her original position, she confronts Eddie about his smell of female genitalia, only for Eddie to change the subject by telling her he came a long way just to see if she was alright. She responds to this by calling him guilty and gutless and after a short pause starts a monologue about how she is going to torture and kill his mistress and then kill him. Eddie, not knowing how to process this, begins to sweet talk May. He tells about how he went two thousand four hundred and eighty miles just to see her and how he kept seeing her and crying for her the whole way. May, not buying Eddie's words, asks him whether this happened before or after his fling with the Countess. This is the first time we hear the script name of Eddie's mistress and May probably called her that because she described the smell on Eddie as rich and very clean. Starting to be a bit furious, Eddie denies this, only to immediately confess he took her out to dinner once or twice.¹⁹

Eddie then proceeds to try to talk May into going to Wyoming with him, where he apparently owns a piece of land and would move their trailer there. May, however, cannot go because of her job as a cook in the Mojave area. Surprised about this, Eddie sarcastically points out that she cannot even flip an egg, followed by one of many Mays' furious retreats

¹⁷ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 8

¹⁸ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 9

¹⁹ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 10-11

into the bathroom. Through the bathroom door, Eddie tries to sell May on the idea of living together in Wyoming, owning a small ranch with horses and chickens, which May immediately shoots down, saying she hates his lame country dream life and that he would just abandon her again anyway.²⁰

It is at this point when the audience starts to get a little bit of context to May's and Eddie's mutual past. Eddie interrogates May, why she left the trailer in the first place, assuring her he was going to come back for her. May suddenly erupts into a furious monologue about how she had been waiting for him in the trailer for weeks and had to regularly hike down to the laundromat in the rain. Eddie tries to put out the fire by mentioning the fashion magazines he bought and left for her in the trailer. However, May again turns this against him and says she especially liked the one with the Countess on the cover, sarcastically calling it real cute. Eddie responds by leaving outside to get his things out of the truck to spend the night. May jokingly asks whether he is moving in or something, but as soon as Eddie brings out the idea of leaving for good after all, she swiftly stops him, and the two lovers embrace in a long tender kiss. However, this passionate moment does not last for long, as May immediately knees Eddie in the groin with tremendous force and leaves for the bathroom once again. The play is full of moments like this, where it seems that the two protagonists have finally found a common ground, only to fall out again.²¹

This is when the Old Man, who has been sitting in his rocking chair the whole time, drinking whiskey and observing the scene, interacts with one of the characters. As Eddie remains on the floor holding his stomach in pain, the Old Man speaks directly to him. They have a short exchange of words, where the Old Man talks about how he is in his mind actually married to a popular country singer Barbara Mandrell. Eddie, still in pain on the ground, responds only in short phrases, such as "I don't know", "Yeah" or "Sure", and the Old Man ends the conversation, saying he is glad they have an understanding.²² An explanation to this exchange of words might be that both the Old Man and Eddie have a strong desire to live in their own unique alternate worlds, which they can mold and determine as they please. The Old Man seems to excel in this, as he takes his fantasies to a remarkable extent and claims he is married to Barbara Mandrell. Eddie, on the other hand, fantasizes about living with May on a ranch in Wyoming, indicating that he and the Old Man might just have a lot in common.

²⁰ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 11

²¹ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 12

²² SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 13

In the following part of the play, May returns from the bathroom and delivers one of her most emotional monologues in the play, in which she talks about how she does not understand her feelings for Eddie nor how she could hate him so much after so much time. This monologue is very likely replicating Sam Shepard thinking about his relationship with his father. Throughout May's monologue, she puts on a sleek red dress, a pair of black high heels, a black purse and starts combing her hair with a hairbrush. This transformation into an attractive woman happens almost unnoticeably in the course of her speech. Eddie, who was still on the ground the whole time, finally gets up and offers to leave, which May surprisingly agrees with. When questioned why she suddenly wants him to go, May responds that she has somebody coming to get her, explaining her sudden change of clothes. Irritated by this, Eddie keeps demanding answers to who she is seeing and how long she has been seeing them. Without getting any answers, Eddie angrily slams the door and leaves the scene with May calling out to him.²³

Eddie returns holding a ten-gauge shotgun and a bottle of Herradura tequila. When asked what he is going to do with it, he says he intends to clean it. Eddie then offers May the tequila, but she says she is "on the wagon", which is a slang term for abstinence from alcohol. Declaring it is about time, Eddie then asks where May keeps clean glasses. She tells him she keeps them in a medical cabinet in the bathroom because of germs. With a small chuckle, Eddie enters the bathroom looking for a clean glass. May, worried about Eddie's intentions with the shotgun, tells him it is a very friendly man who is coming over there and not malicious in any way. Eddie, pretending like he did not hear her, brings out a tall glass, pours tequila into it and takes a long gulp. He believes that May invented this "man" to discourage Eddie from being there, so he tries to catch May lying. He goes on about how it cannot be very serious because she called him a "man". If she called him a "guy", he would be worried but since she called him a "man", she gave herself away by putting herself below him, meaning he has to be a "twerp" in a two-dollar suit. May questions Eddie whether that makes him a "guy" or a "man" by this logic. Eddie, convinced he saw right through May's lies, suggests they just wait for this "man" together to come. Not very happy hearing this, May tries to convince Eddie he is not trying to compete with Eddie and does not even know Eddie exists, alerting the audience that May might have invented this "man" after all.²⁴

²³ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 14

²⁴ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 15 - 16

What follows after is Eddie convincing May they belong together, that they are connected and always will be, and that they have made a pact long time ago. Almost depressed by Eddie's words, May once again asks Eddie to leave, only she seems to mean it this time. However, enraged Eddie states that he does not care who May is seeing because she will never replace Eddie and she knows it. May furiously tells Eddie to get out of there, so he slowly drinks his glass of tequila dry, picks up the shotgun, takes a long look at May, calls her a traitor and slams the door behind him as he walks outside. May seems almost broken by Eddie's actions, holding her stomach with crossed arms as though holding the one who has gone, wailing mournfully, making her way around the room hugging the walls, her knees finally giving away as she hits the floor in a kneeling position. Still sitting in his rocking chair, the Old Man has been telling her a story as she goes through this entire gesture, weeping relentlessly and not saying a word to the Old Man. ²⁵

He tells her a story about how May, her mother and the Old Man himself were driving through Utah in a Plymouth when May was just a baby. It was a pitch-black night, and both May and her mother were sound asleep when suddenly May woke up crying. Not being able to calm her down, the Old Man stopped the car to take May into a field, so the cold air could quiet her down. Then, all of a sudden, he saw something move out there as it started to slowly move towards them. Joined by other creatures just like it, they started to move in on the Old Man and May from all directions in a big circle. Finally, as the Old Man called out to May's mother still in the car, the creatures around them started to "moo". It turns out, they were standing in the middle of a cattle herd. The Old Man then tells May he never heard a baby "pipe down" so fast in his life and that she never made a sound for the rest of the trip. ²⁶

As the Old Man observes May wailing overcome with the sadness of her emotions for Eddie, he seems to adapt the idea of crying by telling her a story about the time when she cried relentlessly as a baby. The point of the story was the moment when May abruptly calmed down, foreshadowing her sudden change of mood in the next scene, when Eddie returns from outside. The Old Man's story reveals some empathy he once had and still has for May. It was likely the most paternal he had ever acted towards her. This narrative establishes a connection between May and the Old Man in the minds of the audience, even though they may not yet be aware of the exact nature of their relationship at this point in the play.

²⁵ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 17

²⁶ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 18

When May hears Eddie coming back, she leaps of her feet, dropping her grief completely, as she rushes to the chair. She quickly sits down, takes a drink of tequila straight from the bottle, slams the bottle down, and leans back in the chair staring at the bottle as though she has been like this the whole time Eddie was gone. He enters the room carrying a bag of ropes, completely ignoring May. He opens the bag and takes out a nylon rope, which he continues to turn into a lasso by creating a loop in the rope. Still working on the lasso, Eddie notices the bottle of tequila and tells May: “Decided to jump off the wagon, huh?” He then proceeds to spin the lasso above his head and ropes one of the bedposts. He continues to rope all of the bedposts without missing any. As May takes another drink, she asks Eddie what he is doing, still without looking at him. He responds that he is doing a little practice to stay in shape these days, pointing out that there are kids out there roping calves in under six seconds. May then reminds Eddie he was leaving, but he starts confronting May about the “man” coming over. He says she made him up just to get even with Eddie. He also mentions he was behaving himself and have not been with a woman in quite a while, which may be true, but then again, it may not.²⁷

May then proceeds to interrogate Eddie, asking him why he is doing this, meaning Eddie’s effort to impress May like they just met. She even mentions he tried the same thing when they went to high school together. Still roping bedposts, Eddie answers May that this is a testimony of his love for May, and that if he stopped trying to impress her that would mean it was all over between them. May states it indeed is all over, to which Eddie replies that she is definitely trying to impress him by mentioning this “man” coming over, that he finds it impressive. He then asks May whether she has had intercourse with him yet, to which she responds with a mean glare. Eddie, being pinned down by May’s eyes, then says she does not need to tell him, that he already knows. He is told that he acts just like a jealous little kid, which Eddie counters saying he really hopes this “man” comes and wishes to see him walk through the door. When asked by May what he intends to do, he replies he is going to pin him directly to the floor. Saying she is not sticking around for this, May tries to leave but is grabbed by Eddie. He begins to calm her down, promising May he will be nice, and convinces her to introduce him to the “man” as May’s cousin, because he just wants to meet him to see where May stands these days. He first suggests introducing him as a brother, but as if they both suddenly realized something, they both agree brother is not such a good idea. She then suggests that she will go to the pay phone across the street to call the “man” and call of the

²⁷ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 19

date, but in that moment, two intense beams of light shine across the room, revealing that he just parked outside.²⁸

Eddie encourages May to run outside and throw herself into his arms while laughing hysterically. He then proceeds to put spurs on his cowboy boots, saying he wants to look good for this “man”, because he is her cousin after all. Worried about Eddie’s intensions, May reassures him that it is just an ordinary date and asks not to hurt him, to which Eddie jokingly replies that he is going to turn him into a fig. He starts laughing at his own joke so much, he falls of the bed and starts pounding his fist into the floor while in a fit of hysterical laughter. Unable to calm him down, May opens the door and looks outside, only to realize that it is not May’s date who parked outside. In front of May’s motel room was standing a black Mercedes Benz, which is highly unusual, as May points out that they are not at a black Mercedes Benz type of motel. She also notices a woman sitting behind the steering wheel, staring directly at May. As soon as Eddie hears this, he warns May to get away from the door. He slams the door shut and pushes May aside, when suddenly a sound of a large caliber magnum pistol explodes, followed immediately by the sound of shattering glass and then a car horn blaring in one relentless note.²⁹

While May demands to know who the woman outside is, Eddie flips the light switch off and tells May to get down, grabbing her and trying to pin her down. They struggle in the dark, May still demanding to know who is shooting at them, yelling over the sound of car horn. When she realizes it might be the Countess, she accuses Eddie of bringing her there or telling her where he was going for her to follow, which Eddie denies. Still engaged in a fight, Eddie finally manages to pull May down and roll over her so she cannot get up. Looking at each other, May slowly gives up the struggle as they listen to the car horn finally stop. May accuses Eddie again of knowing the person, saying the black Mercedes is the kind of car a Countess drives, the kind of car she always pictured her in. She commences to struggle again, Eddie still holding her down, telling her to stay put. Out of a sudden, a sound of tires burning rubber screeches outside as the car drives off and its sound fades in the distance.³⁰

As Eddie builds up the courage to peek outside, he looks around and notices that a windshield of his truck has been blown. Cursing at the situation, Eddie is asked whether the

²⁸ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 20 - 21

²⁹ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 21 - 22

³⁰ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 23

woman is gone or not. As he does not see any headlights anymore, Eddie tells May they are safe. When May points out Eddie should have thought of the consequences before starting anything with the Countess, she switches the light on, which makes Eddie immediately turn it back off. May, who is quite angry at this point, turns the light back on again, demanding that this is her place. Trying to reason with her, Eddie speculates the woman is probably going to come back, so they have to keep the lights off or leave the place. May notices Eddie's contradiction, as he previously said he does not know who the woman is. She calls him out on it but Eddie is busy trying to get May to pack her things so they can leave. He tries to convince her that he came there for her because he loves her and the Countess does not mean anything to him, but May does not buy Eddie's words and refuses to depart. Suddenly, there is a long pause as May and Eddie stare at each other speechless and the Old Man speaks once again.³¹

He talks about how neither May or Eddie look a bit familiar to him and does not recognize himself in either one of them. Never did. On the other hand, their mothers did leave their mark on them, but the Old Man's side of the issue is in his opinion completely absent. He continues talking about how they could be anybody's and probably are, because he cannot remember the original circumstances anymore. He then says one final line, which is that he finds it a good thing he got out when he did, and that it is the best thing he ever did.³² This monologue serves as a very strong hint for the audience, that the Old Man is both May's and Eddie's father. In addition, the last part about how he is glad he left is something he comes to regret towards the end of the play, as he learns an important piece of information.

Eddie begins a monologue, saying he is not leaving May and that he does not care if she hates his guts, because he will always track her down to find her. May tells him he needs to give this up, but Eddie stubbornly replies he is not going to. Thinking about his words thoroughly, May asks Eddie why she should believe him this time, to which he says: "Because it's true." The audience does not know exactly how many times Eddie abandoned May, but she reveals it must have been many times, as she goes on about how it should have been true every time before and how he keeps doing this to her for fifteen years now. Throughout these fifteen years she either loved him or not loved him, but it has come to a point when she plain does not love him. While May tries to make Eddie understand how she feels about him, another set of headlights come slashing across the room as a car parks outside

³¹ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 24

³² SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 24 - 25

again. Rushing to the light switch to turn it off, Eddie tells May to hide in the bathroom. However, May does not intend to retreat to the bathroom this time, yelling that this is her house and that she is going to go out there and tear the Countess's head off. Out of a sudden, the door bursts open and Martin crashes into the dark room.³³

Martin is in his mid-thirties, solidly built and wears a green plaid shirt, baggy work pants with suspenders and heavy work boots. When he comes crashing in, May and Eddie pull apart and Martin tackles Eddie, both of them falling to the ground. May rushes to the light switch and as she flips it on, Martin is revealed standing over crumpled up Eddie, ready to smash him in the face with his fist. May stops him, saying that they were just having a kind of an argument. Martin moves away from Eddie, explaining he wanted to help because he heard screaming and saw the lights go off. May tells him everything is fine and introduces Eddie as her cousin. Eddie grins at Martin and tells him that May is lying.³⁴

Martin is offered a drink by May, who then goes to the bathroom to retrieve the clean glasses. Eddie points this out to Martin that it is weird she keeps the glasses in the bathroom. Pouring two drinks from the bottle, May tells Martin she was starting to think he was not going to show up. He excuses himself, explaining he had to water the High School football field and forgot all about it. Thinking he meant the date with May, Eddie asks Martin what exactly he forgot about. He clears this up and mentions he was halfway there when he remembered the football field. That catches Eddie's attention, thus he asks Martin how far halfway was. Finding out it was just a couple of miles, furious Eddie yells if Martin wants to know how many miles he came to get there. May explains they were drinking a little bit and offers Martin the drink. Eddie points out to Martin that it is his tequila he is drinking but does not care if he drinks it as he just wants Martin to know where it comes from.³⁵ So far, Martin often responds in short phrases such as "Oh", "Ok" or "Thanks" and seems relatively calm and friendly, innocent even.

Eddie goes on about how Martin should in fact thank the entire Mexican nation for the tequila and that they are actually sitting on Mexican ground at the moment. Pointing out it is only by chance that they are not Mexicans themselves, Eddie asks Martin where he comes from anyway. However, Martin does not know as he was adopted. He then apologizes for

³³ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 25

³⁴ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 26

³⁵ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 27

knocking Eddie down because he thought May was in trouble, to which Eddie says she in fact is in big trouble. Martin asks May what the matter is and how come she had the lights off. May comes up with an excuse that they were just about to go out but were going to come back soon. However, Eddie immediately tells Martin it is a lie and that they were actually in the middle of a big argument about him. Having asked what it was about, Martin is told that they were arguing whether he is actually a man or not. Eddie also adds that May calls Martin a man and asks if he knew that but May cuts him off telling Martin not to worry about it. She then suggests they go to the movies like they planned and goes to the bathroom to get ready.

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After a long pause, Eddie asks Martin what they are going to go see. Asking him a lot of questions, it almost seems as if Eddie wants to tease Martin or even pick on him. As Martin says that he cannot decide because he is not sure what May likes, Eddie criticizes him, saying that the guy is always supposed to pick the movie. Martin explains he does not want to take her to something she has already seen before, but Eddie cuts him off, explaining that the reason he is taking her out to the movies is to be with her, thus he could take her just about anywhere. He adds that after a while they probably would not have to go anywhere, as they could just hang around May's place. When Martin asks what they would do there, Eddie tells him they could tell each other stories, and if he does not know any, he could make them up. Martin points out that it would be lying, but Eddie states that lying is when he believes it is true. If he already knows it is a lie, then it is not lying.³⁷

After a pause, Martin offers Eddie, who remains on the floor the entire time, a hand up off the floor. Eddie denies, explaining he likes it on the floor because of less tension. Martin agrees and describes how he gets much more relaxed when he is down on his hands and knees at work. Eddie then teases Martin that he could get down on his hands and knees right now to release the tension, but Martin declines with a grin. After another pause, Martin asks Eddie if he is May's cousin, but Eddie points out that asking that question is a clear result of tension, because he already knows he is not her cousin. Martin recalls May calling Eddie her cousin, but Eddie once again says that she is lying. Therefore, Martin questions Eddie what he is to May then, but laughing Eddie teases him that he is really getting tense now. Martin suggests he should maybe go, however he is cut off at the door by Eddie, telling him not to go, as he

³⁶ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 27 - 28

³⁷ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 29

would just get lonely out there in the black night. He then puts his arm around Martin's shoulder, leads him to the table and suggests they should have a drink. ³⁸

They sit together at the table with the Old Man, but Martin does not acknowledge his presence. Eddie pours both of them a drink and all three drink at once, Eddie straight from the bottle. Martin then asks what exactly the matter is with May, to which Eddie says that she is in a state of shock. He then explains they have not seen each other in a long time, and that they go all the way back to High School. Martin queries if they are not really cousins. Having received a negative answer, he then asks if Eddie is her husband. Eddie now reveals an important piece of information, that has been hinted towards and foreshadowed throughout the play, which is that May is actually Eddie's half-sister. He then explains that he did not even know he had a sister until it was too late, as they already fooled around. Not knowing how to process this, Martin points out that it is illegal, which Eddie confirms. At this point, the Old Man starts joining the conversation, telling Eddie short lines at first, such as "Who is this guy?" As Martin tries to understand how such a thing could happen, Eddie explains to him that his and May's father fell in love twice, once with Eddie's mother and once with May's mother. The Old Man tries to explain himself, arguing that it was the same love, but it just got split in two. ³⁹

Martin keeps interrogating, how come Eddie and May did not know each other until High School. Eddie explains that their father had two completely separate lives, that he would live with Eddie and his mother for a while and then would disappear to go live with May and her mother for a while. The Old Man asks Eddie not to be too hard on him, that it can happen to the best of us. Martin then questions Eddie's mother not knowing what was going on, and Eddie tries to shed some light on the situation. Speculating that maybe she was afraid of finding out or maybe she just loved him, Eddie describes how his father would disappear for months at a time and his mother never once asked him where he went, as she was always glad to see him coming back. Then he mentions how they used to go running out the house to meet him as soon as they saw his Studebaker coming to their house, only for the Old Man to interrupt him, saying he never owned a Studebaker, but rather a Plymouth. Invested in the story, Martin asks how Eddie would finally find out that May was his sister. ⁴⁰

³⁸ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 30

³⁹ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 31 - 32

⁴⁰ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 32 - 33

Eddie then tells the story of how his father kept disappearing and re-appearing until one day it stopped. He just stayed in the house and never went outside, sitting in his chair, just staring. Then one day he started to go on these long walks, Eddie watching him disappear in the dark with his overcoat on. The Old Man then comments that he was making a decision. Eddie continues telling the story, talking about how one night he asked his father to go with him and he complied. They would walk in the dark for miles without ever saying a word to each other, until they got to a town. They stopped at a liquor store and Eddie's father went inside to buy a bottle, while Eddie waited outside. He mentions how he saw the old man through the glass door as he paid for the bottle, which is the first time the audience hears Eddie's and May's father being talked about as the old man, finally making the connection between his script name and his origin, as "old man" is a slang term for father. ⁴¹

Eddie continues his story, describing how they walked through town, until his father opened the bottle up and offered it to Eddie, before taking a drink himself. Then they just walked through the town, never having said a word to each other the whole time, and they kept passing the bottle back and forth until they drank it dry. Then, finally, they reached a little white house on the far side of the town, which they walked right up to and rang the bell. A woman with red hair comes to the door and throws herself into Eddie's father's arms, kissing him all over the face and holding him tight, while he breaks down into tears and cries like a baby. And then through the doorway, behind both of them, Eddie sees this girl just standing there. They were staring, not being able to take their eyes of each other, as if they knew each other from somewhere but could not place where. But the second they saw each other, they knew they would never stop being in love. ⁴²

May then comes bursting out of the bathroom door, slamming it behind her and yelling at Eddie how unbelievable he is. She scolds him for telling Martin a story like that and apologizes to Martin, saying that none of it is true and that Eddie completely made it up. Eddie leans to Martin and tells him that May is embarrassed about the whole deal, and that he cannot really blame her. Martin apologizes to May, having not known she could hear them the entire time. May confirms, she indeed heard every word, and accuses Eddie of telling her that story a thousand times and it always changes. Eddie declares that he never repeats himself, to which May says that he does nothing but repeat himself. Trying to leave, Martin is sat down by Eddie and asked whether he thinks Eddie made the story up. Not sure what to say, Martin

⁴¹ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 33 - 34

⁴² SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 34

sort of sides with both of them, which puts Eddie in a rage state and scolds Martin of changing his mind as soon as May suggested it is a lie. May tries to leave with Martin to go to the movies, but they are stopped by Eddie, telling them that there is not a movie in this town that can match the story he is about to tell. May begs Martin, but he sides with Eddie, saying he does not mind hearing the rest of the story, to which the Old Man grunts that he is dying to hear it himself. Fueled by rage, May demands to know what the point of telling the story is, when neither Martin nor she wants to hear it. Eddie stirs up a hornet's nest, saying he knows May does not want to hear it, which enrages May even more. Declaring that she knows the whole story exactly how it happened without any little tricks added on to it, she begins to tell it herself.⁴³

She continues where Eddie left of, telling them about how her mother – the red-haired woman in the little white house, was desperately in love with the Old Man, obsessed even. As she could not stand being without him, she kept hunting for him from town to town, following little clues he left behind, like a postcard or a motel on the back of a matchbook. He never left anything simple like a phone number or an address, because May's mother was his secret. She kept trying to track him down for years and he kept trying to keep her at a distance, because the closer these two separate lives drew together, the more nervous he got. Until one day, May's mother finally caught up with the Old Man, having discovered the town he would disappear to. Her whole body was trembling as she walked the streets with May, looking for the house where he lived. She was terrified she would come across him by accident on the street because she knew she was crossing this forbidden zone, but could not help herself. May describes how they walked all day through that town, going through every neighborhood and peeking through every window, until they finally found him. It was just supper time and the family was eating fried chicken while conversating, but the Old Man never said a word, eating his chicken in silence.⁴⁴

The Old Man leans to Eddie and tells him she is really off the wall with this one and that Eddie needs to do something about it. May continues the story, saying that as soon as they found him, the Old Man disappeared for good. He was with them for only two weeks before he vanished, and nobody ever saw him after that. May watched her mother grieve every day, as though somebody had died, which May could not understand because she was feeling the exact opposite feeling. She was in love with Eddie at the time, whereas her mother

⁴³ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 35 - 36

⁴⁴ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 36 - 37

would stand in the kitchen staring at the sink, her eyes looking like a funeral. May did not know how to comfort her because all she could think about was Eddie. The Old Man grunts that May is getting way out of line telling the story. May then describes how deeply they were in love. How they could not sleep and got violently sick when apart. How even the doctors had no idea what was wrong with May, but her mother knew. She knew it down to her bones because she recognized every symptom. And she begged May not to see Eddie, but she would not listen. Then she begged Eddie not to see May, but he would not listen. Then she went to Eddie's mother and begged her. "But Eddie's mother..." narrates May, looking straight at Eddie: "Eddie's mother blew her brains out. Didn't she Eddie?"⁴⁵

The Old Man quickly stands up, declaring that the story does not hold water. He turns to Eddie, asking him whether he is really going to let May off the hook with that one. He then states that it is the dumbest version of the story he heard in his whole life because she never committed suicide, at least nobody ever told him that. He turns to Eddie again, telling him to stand up and speak on his behalf, for there is nobody to speak for him now. Eddie stands slowly as the Old Man dictates to tell her the way it happened and reminds Eddie that they have got a pact. But instead of talking to May, he slowly turns to the Old Man and calmly says: "It was your shotgun. Same one we used to duck hunt with. Browning. She never fired a gun before in her life. That was her first time." Shocked by the news, the Old Man says that nobody told him any of that, to which Eddie comments that he was gone. The Old Man agrees that he was gone, but not disconnected. He was not that impossible to find or track down. There was nothing cut off in him and everything went on just the same as though he had never left. He then speaks to May, who keeps her eyes fixed on Eddie. The Old Man narrates how May's mother was a force and went out of her way to draw the Old Man in. He told her from the very start he would never come across for her, but she opened up her heart to him anyway. He then turns to Eddie, whose eyes also fixed on May, never leaving each other's gaze. The Old Man tells him to bring May around to their side and make her see this thing in clear light.

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Suddenly, Eddie and May start very slowly moving towards each other, while the Old Man tries to keep them away, demanding that the two of them cannot come together. He yells at Eddie that he has to speak for him and cannot betray him now. However, it is too late as Eddie and May finally come to each other and embrace. Suddenly, headlights shine across the

⁴⁵ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 37 - 38

⁴⁶ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 38

room again and a sound of collision is heard, followed by a sound of shattering glass and a sudden explosion. Bright orange and blue light of a gasoline fire illuminates the room while horses scream wildly and their hooves gallop on the pavement, fading in the distance. It was most likely the Countess, who came back to try to finish what she started. Martin looks out the window and asks Eddie, if it is his truck with the horse trailer outside. He then informs him that it is on fire and all the horses are loose, while Eddie still embraces May. He then lets go of her and informs her that he is just going to go out and take a look, May asking him not to go. However, Eddie promises her it is only going to take a second and that he will be right back. He then walks outside while May stares at the door close behind him, staying where she is.⁴⁷

After a pause, May moves to bed, pulls suitcase out from underneath, throws it on the bed and starts packing her clothes. Martin watches her for a while and then offers to drive her where she needs to go, but she just keeps packing without a word. He then asks her if she is going to go with him but May replies that he is gone. Martin argues that Eddie said he would be back in a second, but May takes a long look at Martin and then says once more, that he is gone. She closes her suitcase and leaves the room. Martin just stands there staring at the open door for a while, and then moves slowly to the window to look out at the fire with his back to audience. The Old Man crosses to his rocking chair, points into space and delivers the last words of the play: “Ya’ see that picture over there? Ya’ see that? Ya’ know who that is? That’s the woman of my dreams. That’s who that is. And she’s mine. She’s all mine. Forever.”⁴⁸

With Eddie and May gone, the Old Man can finally retreat into his own imaginary world where he is happily married to Barbara Mandrell. Given the play’s theme of self-deception and blurring of reality, the Old Man’s repetition of his Mandrell story is a fitting conclusion for the play. It is also notable that he not only imagines being married to a celebrity but also that she belongs to him, reflecting his need for control, which is quite hypocritical of him, considering the fact he was not even able to be faithful to one woman.

⁴⁷ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 39

⁴⁸ SHEPARD, Sam. *Fool for Love*. San Francisco, 1983. p. 40

3.5. Themes

Fool for Love, as any other play, is based on several frequently used themes that help shape the story of Eddie and May, the most noticeable being the cycle of abandonment and return. At the outset of the play, May protests against Eddie's sudden, ill-timed, and unfair return to her life, seeing it as an interference in her efforts to move on from their mutual past. Eddie's return reopens old wounds in May and prevents her from allowing Eddie to get close to her again. Her resentment towards Eddie stems from the fact that he abandoned her in a trailer to have an affair with the Countess. Yet promised her to return soon. Despite her anger towards Eddie for leaving her all by herself, May is proud that she can live independently under the new circumstances without Eddie. His return only deepens May's hatred for him, as it brings to the surface all the pain he caused her and reminds May of her former love for him.

May's love for Eddie is bittersweet, as she knows it can never exist in peace for long. Due to their blood connection and fiery personalities, Eddie and May are plagued by their shared past. They engage in bitter challenges and know just how to push each other's buttons. Their love is a competition to see who can be the least vulnerable, the least dependent, and the most strong-willed, yet it also exposes their weakness for each other. Eddie's return troubles May because just when she believed she could live without him, he reassures her belief in their mutual dependence. Ironically, that dependence is so painful for May that she desires Eddie to leave. Throughout the play, May goes back and forth between asking Eddie to leave and asking him to stay, while Eddie alternately threatens to depart but also refuses to go. Their relationship is a seesaw of abandonment and return that plays out repeatedly, with May constantly retreating to the bathroom and Eddie leaving the motel only to immediately return. This pattern can be seen throughout the whole play, making it one of the most reappearing themes of the play.

Another noticeable theme of the story is Eddie's and May's interdependency on one another. The troubled lovers are connected in a way that is both irresistible and destructive. Their shared history and love create a sense of destiny, but the specifics of their past are what prevents them from having a functional and healthy relationship. Their bond is rooted in common experiences, yet their personalities and awareness of their blood relationship threaten to pull them apart. Eddie's and May's incestuous relationship with the cycle of love, hatred, abandonment and return only bring misery, whether they are together or apart. They recognize

that they have found their soul mate in each other but are constantly realizing that an emotionally powerful match does not necessarily make for a good life partner.

As teenagers, they clung to each other due to a magnetic attraction and shared experiences of growing up in unstable households. Eddie and May both grew up with mothers who relied on an unstable, alcoholic, and frequently absent man – coincidentally, the same man known as the Old Man, who happens to be their shared father and played a limited parental role in both of their lives. Their mutual experiences of witnessing troubled adults and enduring suffering brought them together, but the knowledge of their incestuous relationship only added complexity and foretold an uncertainty and thus doomed the future for their relationship.

4. Fool for Love – The Film Adaptation

Carrying the same name, the film adaptation of Shepard's family drama *Fool for Love* premiered on December 6, 1985, only two years after the release of its original predecessor. The film's director, Robert Altman, suggested the idea of a film adaptation of the original play to Sam Shepard, who thereby adapted the play's script for the big screen. At first, he had no intention of appearing in the film himself, but he was persuaded by Altman to portray one of the lead roles. The actors cast in the film were Sam Shepard as Eddie, Kim Basinger as May, Harry Dean Stanton as the Old Man and Randy Quaid as Martin. The filming took place in Santa Fe and Las Vegas, New Mexico, in the spring of 1985. However, the film was highly unsuccessful in box-office during its theatrical run and received very mixed reviews from critics.

4.1. Differences Between The Film Adaptation and The Play

The story begins much earlier in the film adaptation, starting with a landscape shot that slowly turns towards the motel. The audience is then introduced to the Old Man, which is the first major difference. In the play, the Old Man sits in a rocking chair inside the motel room, but in the film adaptation, he has his own little area outside the motel, with a small trailer and a bunch of scrap items lying around, that he probably hoarded over time.⁴⁹ The Old Man sits outside and plays a harmonica with his mouth. The audience is then introduced to Eddie, who drives down a highway in his truck. He has a picture of May standing in front of a trailer, which is probably the one they used to live in together before Eddie abandoned May the last time.⁵⁰ Finally, the film introduces May, who is washing the dishes inside the motel bar, which is another location that has been added to the film and serves as a place, where the end of the film happens.⁵¹

Eddie slowly passes the motel and May probably recognizes his truck, because she runs into her motel room, locks the door and hides in the bathroom. However, Eddie pulls his truck over, as he recognizes May's old rusty Chevy standing by the motel. He walks around the motel yard, peeking through windows and looking for May. He recognizes one of her shoes and decides to literally jump through the motel door, as if it was made out of cardboard.

⁴⁹ ALTMAN, Robert (director). *Fool for Love*. DVD. Cannon, 1985. 1:40

⁵⁰ ALTMAN, Robert (director). *Fool for Love*. DVD. Cannon, 1985. 2:15

⁵¹ ALTMAN, Robert (director). *Fool for Love*. DVD. Cannon, 1985. 1:16:10

He walks around the room a bit, until he sits on the bed and waits for May to come out. She comes out the bathroom and starts making the bed, telling Eddie to move. He offers to do her laundry, when she suddenly lashes out onto Eddie, hitting him with her hands while yelling. She then sits on the bed looking at the floor, her head in her hands. It is at this exact point, where the play commences.⁵² There are not many major differences from this point, with the exception of some dialogues taking place outside the motel room.

The next difference is that after a while of talking to May, Eddie runs outside to intimidate the Old Man, who has been going through Eddie's things in his truck. It was probably director's choice of setting Eddie's acknowledgment of the Old Man's presence, who has been kind of lurking around the motel the whole time. May then runs out to Eddie to continue their dialogue, while he begins to unload his horses from the horse trailer. The kissing scene also takes place outside, with a long build-up of Eddie and May slowly moving towards each other while a romantic song plays. Then the scene with the Old Man telling Eddie about his marriage with Barbara Mandrell happens, and the only difference is that it takes place in front of the Old Man's trailer.⁵³

Eddie then returns to May's room, where she began her changing of clothes while Eddie was with the Old Man. He watches her for a while and then returns her sweater that she took off before their kiss. However, May informs Eddie of somebody coming there to pick her up and he gets angry, leaving for his truck to take a few sips of tequila. Throughout the film, Eddie is shown to drink a whole lot more alcohol, starting to get really intoxicated towards the end of the film. He was most likely intoxicated in the play too, but the film makes it much more apparent.

At this point in the film, a black car is shown pulling over with a man stepping out to greet a woman and a young girl in front of one of the motel rooms. It is not established, who exactly they are, but they play a major role towards the end. Happy to see the man, the woman immediately pulls him inside the motel room, having not noticed that the young girl remained outside, who then proceeds to swing on the little playground all by herself. Meanwhile, May and Eddie have the dialogue outside about May calling her date a "man". After this, Eddie takes off in his truck with May running after him, yelling. She then notices the little girl all by herself and gives her a hug without saying a single word. Little girl's mother comes outside

⁵² ALTMAN, Robert (director). *Fool for Love*. DVD. Cannon, 1985. 14:15

⁵³ ALTMAN, Robert (director). *Fool for Love*. DVD. Cannon, 1985. 30:17

calling for her, and she runs to her mother, as May lays on the ground in tears in the middle of the playground. The Old Man then comes to her, telling her the cattle herd story.

As he begins the story, the man, the woman and the little girl are shown taking off in the black car and the camera follows their trip, while the Old Man narrates his story. The three people are supposed to represent the Old Man, May and her mother many years ago, because something needs to be happening on the screen, instead of just the Old Man telling the story. However, it is clearly established, that they are not in a flashback, but rather three completely different people, as they are shown doing something different than what the Old Man narrates. Overall, they are in the same situation as in the Old Man's cattle herd story. They are shown driving through the night and then stopping so the man can take the little girl into a field, where they are surrounded by a cattle herd.⁵⁴ But what differs are the details. For instance, the little girl does not wake up crying, her mother is not asleep, and the little girl does not calm down inside the herd, as she was not crying to begin with. Another difference in the film, is that May bursts out laughing when the Old Man reveals they were surrounded by cows. Also, as the camera zooms out, it is revealed that May was laying on the ground all by herself the whole time, thus questioning the Old Man's physical presence.

Eddie is then shown coming back to the motel, mounting his horse and lassoing a garbage bin, which he drags behind him like some cattle, while May sits at the bar. Eddie walks inside and proceeds to lasso the jukebox, changing the song every time he successfully catches it. This scene is supposed to be an alternative to Eddie lassoing bedposts in the play. The black Mercedes Benz then pull over outside with the Countess actually stepping outside and revealing herself to aim the gun, which is a slight change. She also takes multiple shots instead of just one. After she takes off, Eddie carries May back to her room to pack her things, so they can leave. While they are in a heat of another argument, Martin pulls over and breaks the already broken door completely in order to get inside.

Throughout Eddie's and Martin's dialogue, Martin begins assembling the bed that Eddie previously broke by throwing May onto, while their dialogue does not change a bit. What changes is that after a while they relocate into the motel bar to have a drink. Here, Eddie begins telling Martin the origin of May being his half-sister. As he begins explaining, the camera switches to the previously mentioned family, that acts out what Eddie narrates, again with details not matching. The man is shown pulling to a house with another woman and a

⁵⁴ ALTMAN, Robert (director). *Fool for Love*. DVD. Cannon, 1985. 48:55

son instead of a daughter and they are not rushing into his arms like in the play.⁵⁵ After he starts going on the long walks, he is shown taking the boy with him one day. However, instead of walking without saying a word, they are shown conversating the whole time. As the man purchases a bottle in the liquor store, he does not offer it to the boy at all. And as the man rings the doorbell, he does not break down in tears when greeted by the red-haired woman. Eddie narrates the story from the play the whole time, describing the details in the exact moment they happen on screen differently.

When May starts finishing the story talking about how her mother searched for the Old Man, the screen shows exactly what May describes. There are no differences on screen in this part of Eddie's and May's story or the Old Man's rage fueled monologue when he finds out about Eddie's mother's suicide. After May and Eddie embrace, the Old Man retreats angrily to his trailer, while the black Mercedes pulls up outside again. The Countess shoots Eddie's truck's gas tank and it goes up in flames. Here, the final difference happens. Instead of remaining to hold May, Eddie without saying a word immediately runs outside to tend to his burning truck and loose horses.⁵⁶ May then goes back to her room with Martin following her. She quickly packs a suitcase, and we abruptly see Eddie taking off on one of his horses. The last shot is of the Old Man's trailer area burning, while he sits outside playing his harmonica, surrounded by flames.

⁵⁵ ALTMAN, Robert (director). *Fool for Love*. DVD. Cannon, 1985. 1:21:05

⁵⁶ ALTMAN, Robert (director). *Fool for Love*. DVD. Cannon, 1985. 1:43:03

5. Conclusion

The film adaptation of *Fool for Love* cannot be said to be an exact copy of the original drama. There was something new almost all the time, whether it was the dialogue or visualization. Nevertheless, the film adaptation undoubtedly remained faithful to its original source and the story has not been altered in any way, except for the added 10-minute-long beginning.

The film adaptation of the original drama consists of many added scenes, such as beautiful landscape shots of the Mojave desert, which only makes sense, given the fact that the producers had to turn a one-act drama into a full feature film. The film is full of these “fillers”, in order to extend the runtime of what would have otherwise been a 45-minute-long film. They vary from previously mentioned landscape wide shots to footage of everyday life happening around the motel, where the film takes place.

The film shows other people living at the motel, instead of just revolving around the protagonists, which makes the motel look much more alive, instead of just being an empty lifeless husk. For instance, there are people doing laundry, people walking around the motel yard, tending to their cars, and also other cars passing the motel. Some of these cars even pull up in front of the motel and people step out to greet their loved ones for example. The film also shows people reacting to the protagonists at times. When Eddie and May are in the middle of a heated argument outside, the camera sometimes zooms onto people staring at them from windows. When Eddie and May are being loud inside May’s motel room, camera shows people passing by, startled about what is going on inside.

These “fillers” are often accompanied by perfectly fitting country songs, of which there are ten in the film. Two of them were performed by Waylon Jennings, a popular singer, who had a total of 16 No. 1 country singles throughout his career. The remaining eight were written and performed by Shepard’s sister Sandy Rogers, thus collaborating with his brother on making the film. They are very memorable and fitting for the setting of the film.

The most noticeable change from the original drama is that a great deal of scenes from the play have been transformed to take place outside the motel room. The producers went with this approach, so that the whole film would not be set in a single room and thus would be far more interesting to watch.

The dialogue is almost completely identical, with only a small amount of lines added or removed. However, these changes were made only for the purpose of the film, as some of the lines would not make sense in the outside environment. Additionally, some lines have been added in order to prolong individual scenes, that needed to get the author's message across better, for instance.

After the release of *Fool for Love* (1985), Shepard stated that he felt the play was not appropriate for a film adaptation. He expressed his feelings in an interview after the film's release.

What didn't work? The physicality of it. Onstage it was huge. It had a frightening physical reality to it, because of the actors, because of the intensity and the presence of the actors. On film it comes across as kind of a quaint little Western tale of two people lost in a motel room. Know what I mean? It doesn't have the power. In the theatre it was right in front of your face, it was so intense, and it was kind of scary.

Sam Shepard, *Robert Altman: The Oral Biography* (2010)

To sum it all up, the director Robert Altman and the screenwriter Sam Shepard came together and turned an already existing drama into a feature film. They did a great job adapting the play, as they made a beautiful film in terms of its visuals and message. Although some would argue that Robert Altman could have chosen a play that would have been far more interesting when given the form of a feature film. However, *Fool for Love* remains one of Altman's all-time classics.

I hate endings. Just detest them. Beginnings are definitely the most exciting, middles are perplexing, and endings are a disaster. ... The temptation towards resolution, towards wrapping up the package, seems to me a terrible trap. Why not be more honest with the moment? The most authentic endings are the ones which are already revolving towards another beginning. That's genius.

Sam Shepard, *The Paris Review* (1997)

6. Summary

This bachelor thesis was created for the purpose of an introduction to American playwright, Sam Shepard, an analysis of his family drama *Fool for Love*, as well as a comparison with its modern film adaptation.

The first chapter of the thesis introduces its goal and presents the analyzed drama and the drama's author. It also aims to explain the reason for choosing the topic of a film adaptation comparison.

The second chapter is dedicated solely to the analyzed drama's author, Sam Shepard. This chapter aims to explore Shepard's relationship with his family members and how they motivated him to becoming a playwright, his life accomplishments and his childhood. The chapter also mentions which renowned playwrights at the time motivated Shepard to pursuing a career as a playwright, and how he ended up in New York City, where he spent most of his life and wrote a great deal of his plays.

The third chapter revolves around the drama *Fool for Love*. This chapter introduces the play's characters as well as their motives and actors. The stage's scene is depicted here very thoroughly, describing the character clothing in detail, as well as the room, where the play takes place. The thesis also aims to explore the meaning behind the title of the play and tries to explain it. The play's main themes, which are the cycle of abandonment and return accompanied by interdependency, are also introduced and explained in this chapter. Finally, there is a retelling of the entire plot of the drama here. The thesis also explains some of the scenes important to fully understanding the play's story, or what drives its characters to act in a certain way in various situations throughout the play.

The fourth chapter introduces the modern film adaptation of its original predecessor. A background to making of the film is provided here, as well as the film's cast. The chapter also gives the idea of the adaptation's success at the time, as it explores the reviews from critics and its box-office.

After that, the chapter moves on to the differences between the original play and the film adaptation. However, most of these differences are visual, rather than dialogical. For instance, a great deal of wide landscape shots has been added to the film for two reasons. The first reason was to visualize the play's setting of the Mojave Desert for the big screen, so that

the film would be more interesting. The other reason was to extend the runtime of the film adaptation, of what would have otherwise been only a 45-minute-long film. There are also other scenes that extend the film's runtime. For instance, the film begins much earlier than its original source. In the film, there are about 10 minutes of wordless introduction of the setting and the characters. Also, when one of the characters delivers a story, it is always paired with a visualization of their story, making the film much more interesting to watch and far longer.

The film adaptation overall seems like it takes place in a real location, truly somewhere in the Mojave Desert. It makes the setting much more alive, instead of being just an empty husk of a motel. To achieve this, the film does not revolve only around the protagonists, but also other people living at the motel. In the film, there are people shown living their lives at the motel, doing everyday chores or activities.

To make the film even more alive, it is accompanied by a soundtrack full of country songs, fitting perfectly in the setting of the film. Most of these songs were written and performed by Sam Shepard's sister, Sandy Rogers, who thus collaborated with his brother and Altman on making this film adaptation.

The final chapter, conclusion, summarizes all of the previously mentioned differences. It also explains some of the director's and screenwriter's choices when making the film. Most importantly, the chapter expresses how the author of the play, Sam Shepard, felt about the film adaptation. In his opinion, *Fool for Love* was not appropriate for a film adaptation. However, he was persuaded by Altman into adapting the script for the big screen for unknown reasons. Later he described in an interview, how the play was scary for its physical reality, its power and presence of all of the actors, as they were cramped in a tiny motel room in front of the audience's faces, whereas the film adaptation seemed like a kind of a quaint little Western tale of two people lost in a motel room.

The conclusion of the comparison is then made. It states that the adaptation has not made any major changes and has not altered the story in any way. The characters, the themes and the play's message remain the same in the film adaptation. The only thing that differs, is a small amount of dialogue that has been either added or removed. However, the choices behind these additions or reductions were purely for the sake of adapting a play into a feature film.

7. Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce vznikla za účelem představení amerického dramatika Sama Sheparda, analýzy jeho rodinného dramatu *Láskou Posedlí* a srovnání s jeho moderním filmovým zpracováním.

První kapitola práce představuje její cíl, samotné analyzované drama a autora dramatu. Klade si také za cíl vysvětlit důvod výběru tématu, a to porovnání filmové adaptace s divadelní hrou.

Druhá kapitola je věnována pouze autorovi analyzovaného dramatu, Samu Shepardovi. Cílem kapitoly je prozkoumat Shepardův vztah se členy jeho rodiny a jak ho motivovali k tomu, aby se stal dramatikem. Dále zkoumá jeho životní úspěchy a dětství. Kapitola se také zmiňuje o tom, kteří slavní dramatici té doby Sheparda inspirovali k dráze dramatika a jak se dostal do New Yorku, kde strávil většinu svého života a napsal většinu svých her.

Třetí kapitola se zabývá dramatem *Láskou Posedlí*. Tato kapitola představuje postavy ve hře, jejich motivy a jejich herce. Scéna na jevišti je zde vykreslena velmi důkladně. Do detailu popisuje kostýmy postav i kulisy. Práce také prozkoumá význam názvu hry a pokusí se jej následně vysvětlit. V této kapitole jsou zároveň představena a vysvětlena hlavní témata hry, kterými jsou cyklus opouštění a návratu, spolu se vzájemnou závislostí. Nakonec je zde převyprávěn celý děj dramatu a blíže rozepsány scény důležité pro plné pochopení příběhu hry.

Čtvrtá kapitola představuje moderní filmovou adaptaci svého dramatického předchůdce. Je zde uvedeno pozadí vzniku filmu a také herecké obsazení. Kapitola také poskytuje představu o tehdejší úspěchu této filmové adaptace, zkoumajíce recenze od kritiků a její zisk.

Poté se kapitola přesune k samotné komparaci mezi původní hrou a filmovou adaptací. Většina těchto rozdílů je však spíše vizuálních než dialogických. Do filmu bylo například přidáno velké množství dlouhých záběrů krajiny, a to ze dvou důvodů. Prvním důvodem byla vizualizace prostředí Mohavské pouště na velké plátno, aby byl film zajímavější. Dalším důvodem bylo prodloužení doby trvání adaptace, která by jinak byla jen 45 minut dlouhým filmem. Jsou zde však i další scény, které prodlužují běh filmu. Například film dějově začíná

mnohem dříve než divadelní hra. Ve filmu je asi 10 minut bezeslovného představení prostředí a postav. Dalším příkladem je situace, kdy jedna z postav vypráví příběh, načež následuje vizualizace jejího příběhu, díky čemuž je film mnohem zajímavější a delší.

Filmová adaptace celkově působí, jako kdyby se odehrávala na skutečném místě, skutečně někde v Mohavské poušti. Díky tomu je prostředí mnohem živější, než aby to byl jen prázdný motel. Aby tohoto bylo dosaženo, film se netočí jen kolem protagonistů, ale i dalších lidí žijících v motelu. Film obsahuje záběry lidí, žijících své životy, vykonávající každodenní práce nebo činnosti.

Pro větší oživení je film doprovázen zvukovou stopou plnou country písní dokonale zapadajících do prostředí filmu. Většinu těchto písní napsala a nazpívala sestra Sama Sheparda, Sandy Rogers, která takto spolupracovala se svým bratrem a Altmanem na tvorbě této filmové adaptace.

Pátá kapitola shrnuje všechny dříve vytyčené rozdíly. Nejdůležitější částí je vyjádření se autora hry, Sama Sheparda, k samotné filmové adaptaci. Podle jeho názoru se *Láskou Posedlí* pro filmové zpracování zkrátka nehodí. Altman ho však z neznámých důvodů přesvědčil, aby scénář upravil pro natočení filmu. Shepard později v rozhovoru popsal, jak byla hra děsivá svou fyzickou realitou, silou a přítomností všech herců, kteří se tísnili v malém motelu před tvářemi diváků, zatímco filmová adaptace působila jako takový zvláštní malý západní příběh o dvou lidech ztracených v motelovém pokoji.

Závěrem této kapitoly je porovnání, jehož výsledkem je, že adaptace nepřinesla žádné zásadní změny a žádným způsobem nezměnila příběh. Postavy, témata a poselství hry zůstávají stejné. Jediný rozdíl mezi filmovým zpracováním a hrou je spatřován v dialozích, které film oproti hře obsahuje, a které naopak vynechal. Nicméně, důvodem těchto úprav byla samotná přeměna dramatu na celovečerní film, bez nichž by příběh nedával smysl.

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