THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
ANKARA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES
(ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE)

SUBJECTIFICATION OF THE LIMINAL OTHER IN CONTEMPORARY BRITISH DRAMA: SARAH KANE'S *CLEANSED*, ANTHONY NEILSON'S *THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DISSOCIA* AND MARINA CARR'S *PORTIA COUGHLAN*

M.A. THESIS

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Examination Date: 20.07.2020

TO THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
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I hereby declare that in the dissertation "Subjectification Of The Liminal Other In Contemporary British Drama: Sarah Kane's *Cleansed*, Anthony Neilson's *The Wonderful World Of Dissocia* And Marina Carr's *Portia Coughlan* (Ankara – 2020)", prepared under the supervision of Assist. Prof.Dr. Nisa Harika Güzel Köşker, all information has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced a1l material and results that are not original to this work. (…. /…. /2020)

Onur KARAKÖSE

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INTRODUCTION

Post-1990 Contemporary British Drama marks the emergence of plays that deal with brutal aggression, extreme forms of violence, rape, repressed emotions, sex, gender reality and taboos; all of which providing source of analysis for inquiring the subversive techniques of dominant ideologies targeting the subject. As Aleks Sierz observes, the nasty nineties witnessed a theatre that "broke all taboos, chipping away at the binary oppositions that structure our sense of reality" (*In-Yer-Face* 30), a social reality in regards to gender and identity that is questioned through portrayals of extremity of violence and sharp-tongued criticism that cuts deep. Breaking the taboos and imbibing the extremity of experiences as its focal point, several dramatists of post-1990 Contemporary British drama have written plays deconstructing the impositions of social reality on liminal female characters. These liminal characters are betwixt and between what is envisioned for them as proper subjects, i.e. being a dutiful wife and nurturing mother and what their already fragmented self aims to achieve in the form of a discovery of a self that is free from such impositions. This subversively liminal attribution of the theatre culminated in plays that question gender normativity, subjectification of the body and soul engraved in the biopolitics of the heteronormative patriarchal order. For the purpose of analysing the contemporary issues of female subjectivity, subjectification of the body, liminality and violence through staging of corporeal and psychological punishment as part of the post-1990s Contemporary British Drama, this thesis argues that Sarah Kane's *Cleansed* (1998) Anthony Neilson's *The Wonderful World of Dissocia* (2004) and Marina Carr's *Portia Coughlan* (1996) stand out as offering distinctive representations for the mutual goal of the formation of identity that is free from subjectivity, gender bias and phallogocentric discourse. In arguing this, this thesis initiates discussion first with the Foucauldian

conception of subjectification followed by Judith Butler's renegotiation of the concept, merging the analyses of the plays with the theory of subjectification. Even though all of the three plays differ from each other in terms of the ways in which the question subjectification is inscribed on the bodies and souls of its heroines, the plays posit essentially as the dramatic representations renegotiating the issue of the subjectification of identity, mainly derived from the Foucauldian theory on biopower and subjectification. This thesis focuses then on the liminal aspect of the female heroines of these plays who are subjugated to corporeal and psychological subjectification. It attempts to merge the theory of subjectification with the theory of liminality developed by the British anthropologist Victor Turner to point essentially to the stark representation of the characters that are betwixt and between the enforced subjectification and a search for a self that is free from ideology. Furthermore, through a close reading of the plays in relation to the female body and the female experience, this thesis attempts to delineate how the subjectification process is inherently patriarchal and heteronormative. It argues that the deconstruction of the plays points specifically to representations that renegotiate the female and queer experience through theatre that provokes thought and action with reference to the ongoing discussion on gender normativity and identity politics.

This thesis consists of four main chapters analysing the subjectification process that each liminal heroine undergoes and what their defiance entails for the discussion of gender, identity and subjectivity. In this regard, the first chapter of this study attempts to provide a theoretical base of analysis on the question of subjectification and liminality from which the related psychoanalytic ties in regards to identity formation will be sprung and examined. To form such an analysis, the first chapter explores the three modes of the Foucauldian objectification of the subject. It will then explore how the process of subjectification is essential to the biopolitics of modern nation states, exploring the techniques of domination employed for producing proper female subjects to ensure

reproduction of new bodies as well as controlling them, which proves to be essential part of its schema. Focusing on Michel Foucault's genealogy of sex, power and discipline, the discussion on biopolitics gives birth to the discussion of sexual politics from which analyses on familial ties, kinship and gender are formed. The discussion then will continue with the liminal theory and its implications in regards of identity formation. Since the heroines show liminal characteristics in three of the plays, the liminal ties to their subjugated subjectification will also be studied through Victor Turner's theory of liminality along with his formula of social dramas. This is done towards explaining social frictions in the established social order, investigating whether they lead to irreparable schism or re-integration of the subject back to its status quo. This thesis attempts to examine the often-unexplored territory between the psychoanalytical theory and the liminal theory through the representation of female heroines in each play and it also explores the applicability of Turner's theory to textual analyses of theatrical works. Lastly, this chapter briefly touches on the liminal aspects of dreams, focusing on the aspects of the archetypal characters that are recurrent in dreams for the purpose of unearthing the repressed desires and traumas which are embedded in the unconscious but reflected in the dream excursion.

The second chapter focuses on Sarah Kane's in-yer-face drama *Cleansed* (1998) and discusses the play's treatment of the subjectification process the female heroine Grace undergoes by the medium of Tinker who terrorizes the campus, corporeally correcting its inhabitants yearning for a subjectification by his hand. Comprised of twenty scenes that revolve around four main storylines, the episodic structure of *Cleansed* adds to the fragmentation of self, plaguing the subjects on the campus: Tinker plays the sadistic corporeal corrector who does not hesitate to show severe acts of brutality but gives in to love; Grace yearns for a merge with Graham to achieve the perfect body by Tinker who tinkers her body to form the abject hermaphrodite that defy gender norms; Robin re-enacts

the Oedipal complex only to pay the heavy price of cracking the code of language whereby the impositions overwhelm him to the point of inescapable death, and lastly Carl and Rod as the same-sex couple develop a rhetoric of love that resists the subversive subjectification by Tinker's hands by representing a physical transformation from a subject to a non-subject on stage in deconstructing what it means to be a gendered subject. Tinker's transformation from a mere brute at the deployment of heteronormative gender economy to a man of passionate love is further explored by connecting his panoptic deployment to the Foucauldian biopolitics of the heteronormative social order and his self-development of a new moral compass outside of the interests of the heteronormative gender economy. Grace's liminal self is explored through Turnerian formula of social dramas and his liminal theory. As Robin suffers from an unresolved Oedipal complex, this chapter looks at the psychoanalytical ties between his inability to project the unresolved complex onto a substitution for the lack, which is maternal love first sought in Grace but rejected by the Father figure Graham. The rituals of dismemberment Carl is subjected to is discussed through the deployment of Tinker at the behest of heteronormative order who attempts to remove the discursive power of the abject love through physical sparagmos. Tracing the Foucauldian writing on abnormal and specifically focusing on the figure of hermaphrodite as an "other", Butlerian gender politics is further explored in unearthing the implications of Grace/Graham merging and in challenging gender norms and identity formation. Lastly, this thesis ties what the coalescence of "gender" achieved in Grace/Grace as well as Carl and Rod's homosexual love signifies to Kristevan notion of the abject and then to Harawayan cyborg in understanding the necessity of a vision of gender that defies the subversive biopolitics through depicting a symbiotic "monster" in an attempt to kill the monster that is the gender reality.

The focal point of the third chapter is to study the passive and controlled form of subjectification the liminal heroine Lisa Montgomery Jones undergoes in Anthony Neilson's *The Wonderful World of Dissocia*[1] (2004) in a psychiatric institution. Lisa's mindscape to the world of Dissocia for an attempt of the self-formation of identity that is free from patriarchal imposition of the roles on women shares essentially the same confusion of a self that is observed in little Alice in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865). A comparative look at two works thus provides an insight to the loss of a self which is harder to maintain in the modern context. While Alice in a way completes her journey in Wonderland and comes back home matured, Lisa, as Neilson reveals in the beginning of the second act in the psychiatric prison room with a stark contrast to the colourful first one, is constrained and disallowed to form a self that is free from ideology. The audience witnesses that she is being corrected and appropriated by medicinal authority, which is reminiscent of the dividing principles in the Foucauldian process of the objectification of the subject. A further exploration of an identity in crisis is observed in the inhabitants of Dissocia where Guards suffer from an insecurity of their body and demeanour, Ticket and Laughter lose their respective titular characteristics that define the core of their existence, the goat suffers from not being a scapegoat anymore, all of which proves the fragmentation of Lisa's identity as they would only exist as long as Lisa imagines them.

This chapter argues that Lisa is an inbetweener stuck between the role of a normalized female that is cast and imposed on her by patriarchy as well as her sister Dot and boyfriend Vince and the phantasmagorical role she designated herself only available in Dissocia in the form of a queen. In the Lacanian vein, the lost hour that brings unbalance to Lisa's life is studied as her *objet petit a* which inherently connotes to the

[1] From this point onwards will be referred to as "*Dissocia*."

fact that the attainment of the lost hour is ideally thought to be bringing balance to her life as Victor Hesse leads her to believe in the play. His Freud-like intrusion on the stage marks an imminent journey to the unconscious embodied through Dissocia and propels an analysis on Lisa's dream excursion to the magical land. This phantasmagorical journey is studied through Carl Gustav Jung's analysis of dreams specifically focusing on the archetypal characters that recur in the dreams, a notion which is ascribed to Dissocians since, this thesis argues, they embody certain archetypes that further reveal Lisa's troubled psyche and the need for the journey. Benefitting from the Jungian analysis of symbols that are observed in the archetypal characters in the play, this chapter discusses that the formation of Dissocia in Lisa's troubled psyche echoes symbolic representations of a childhood trauma, presumably the trauma of childhood rape that caused the fragmentation of Lisa's self and thus she needs to journey into the phantasy world as it is the only way for her to be escape from the social impositions on her female self and form a self of her own.

The fourth chapter investigates Marina Carr's *Portia Coughlan* (1996) whose tragic defiance of the vital formation of proper kinship ties for biopolitics in having an incestuous love for her brother Gabriel as well as complete rejection of maternal roles in a catholic Irish setting forms a close link to Sophocles' *Antigone* and her rejection of patriarchal authority in giving the irreplaceable brother a proper burial. A comparative study on two plays is pursued in this chapter that focuses on these two heroines from different cultural and temporal settings. This is helpful in terms of understanding how they both develop a discourse on kinship ties, gender normativity and patriarchal impositions on the role of women as dutiful wife and nurturing mother. As Portia completely rejects such familial ties, her liminality is structurally discernible as Marina Carr breaks the normative plot line and places her death in between the first and third act. As the liminal aura of the play is intensified with the intrusion of Gabriel's ghost that calls

for a reunification in death with Portia, her post-Gabriel self shows uncontainable characteristic of a female self embodied in the watery-womb imagery of Belmont River. The river forms a liminal terrain between two patriarchal figures she is stuck in, his father Sly Scully's farm and his husband Raphael Coughlan's lands, but it also provides a gateway to self-redemption only achievable through death. Using the Turnerian formula of social dramas and his liminal theory, this chapter studies Portia's defiance of motherhood and wifehood along with the liminal implications of Gabriel's spectral existence that haunts the stage. As Marina Carr's play Portia Coughlan represents a family enmeshed in the incest taboo, re-negotiates the subversive familial subjectification enforced on Portia and explores the theme of a broken self condensed by a loss of brother irreplaceable, this chapter analyses the play according to the argument on gender normativity, taboos, kinship and familial ties and interior objectification of the subject through Judith Butler's *Antigone's Claim* (2000). Asking the question of why gender is so crucial to our understanding to be a human and why Portia and Antigone as tragic characters are left with no option but to die, this chapter explores the strength of ambiguity and uncontainable nature found in the heroines in regards to their treatment in plays as well as their premise in their respective cultural setting. *Portia Coughlan* and *Cleansed* develop a non-normative discourse that challenges the attribution of gender as a reality enforced by patriarchal forces at work by subverting the subjectification processes imposed on the heroines. On the other hand, *Dissocia* reveals the disciplinary deployment of psychiatric control and correction with regards to the subjectification of the soul and body, which is denied by an imaginatively rich psyche that resorts to fantasy to form a self that is free from trauma and real-life impositions. The three plays discussed in this thesis, however, provoke a subversive rethinking and re-evaluation of the notions of gender reality, formation of proper kinship and familial ties, and identity formation by providing striking instances on stage that potently reveal the violent techniques of

domination deployed by the heteronormative patriarchal order to embed the targeting subject with normativity.

CHAPTER I:

SUBJECTIFICATION OF THE LIMINAL OTHER IN POST-1990 CONTEMPORARY BRITISH DRAMA

1. The Three Modes of Objectification of the Subject: Scientific Categorization, Dividing Principles and Subjectification

Inquiring the question of the subject propels unearthing the techniques of domination in modern history, a process by which a discursive truth is begun to be associated with the problem of the subject. This attribution of a discursive moment of truth in regards to the subject stems from a gradual development in the constitution of the subject, i.e. that it is the product of a cumulative interest by the Western culture that placed great emphasis on the formation of the subject phenomenon. In regards of this growing interest, Foucault's genealogy of the modern subject attempted to "discover the point at which these practices [of tracing the question of the subject in philosophical as well as scientific inquires] became coherent reflective techniques with definite goals, the point at which a particular discourse emerged from these techniques and came to be seen as true, the point at which they are linked with the obligation of searching for the truth and telling the truth" (*The Foucault Reader* 7) Foucault dedicated a lifetime of work comprising of genealogies that trace the question of subject-power relations. The three modes of objectification of the subject observed in history essentially sums up the general themes of Foucauldian genealogies. Of these three, Foucault writes, "the first is the modes of inquiry which try to give themselves the status of sciences; for example, the objectivizing of the speaking subject in grammaire generale, philology, and linguistics. Or again, in this first mode, the objectivizing of the productive subject" (*The Subject and Power* 777). The

scientific attribution of this classification connotes the relation between discourse and power, culminating in the idea that discourse creates power/knowledge, which in turn plays the pivotal role in the creation of the identity. In regards of this inquiry on the first mode, Rabinow observes:

> Foucault shows how the discourses of life, labor, and language were structured into disciplines; how in this manner they achieved a high degree of internal autonomy and coherence; and how these disciplines of life, labor, and language-which we tend to view as dealing with universals of human social life and as therefore progressing logically and refining themselves in the course of history (as in the natural sciences)-changed abruptly at several junctures, displaying a conceptual discontinuity from the disciplines that had immediately preceded them. (*The Subject and Power* 9).

The second mode of the objectification of the phenomenon of the subject is related to dividing principles whereby the subject in question is constrained in prisons and psychiatric correction facilities. As Foucault writes, “the subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others. This process objectivizes him. Examples are the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, the criminals and the "good boys" (*The Subject and Power* 778). Foucault observed how the gradual emphasis on the corporeality of the subject is initiated to an encompassing control by psychiatric means in the beginning of the eighteenth century. As Butler observes from the treatment of the body in association with the repetitive subjectification inscribed on the constrained subject’s body in Foucauldian sense, “the prisoner's body not only appears as a ***sign*** of guilt and transgression, as the embodiment of prohibition and the sanction for rituals of normalization, but is framed and formed through the discursive matrix of a juridical subject.” (*The Psychic Life of Power* 83-84). For Foucault, it is not the external power enforcing techniques of domination on the formation of the subject constrained under

panoptical control but it is the discursive power attributed to the subject as constrained that forms the subject.

The last mode of objectification of the subject marks Foucault's most valuable contribution known as "subjectification" whereby "a human being turns himself into a subject" (*The Subject and Power* 778). Foucault observes a significant interest in sex and how regulation of the sex brought sexuality into the picture whereby the "subjects of sexuality" that placed men and women on their gendered roles are established. The subjectification through which the human being undergo is essentially the creation of the subject by the subject itself but it is also mediated by a figure of external authority that facilitates the process. Foucault's particular interest was in tracing the obsession of sex that plagued the subject since the beginning of an overwhelming discourse on sex stemming from scientific advancement on biology. As a result, sex was seen as an essential phenomenon in the identification of a human being and it thereby facilitated a subjectification formed by self-understanding through both discourse and scientific authority.

Foucault gives two meanings of subject in "The Subject and Power"; the first one revolves around understanding it as being subject to someone else by authority as in being a subject to a kingly power, whereas the second "tied to [subject's] own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to" (*The Subject and Power* 781). As the Foucauldian thought teaches us, the law that enforces the subjects by its regulative and legislative power also incorporates within itself the means of resistance. The struggle against domination of power often involves resistance against "forms of exploitation which separate individuals from what they produce; or against that which ties the individual to himself and submits him to others in this way (struggles against subjection, against forms of subjectivity and submission)" (*The Subject and Power* 781). As the struggle against the enforced

subjectification on the subject's body and soul intensifies, one significant function of theatre and thereby plays that provoke thought by challenging the normative ways of understanding the problem of the subject, is to facilitate resistances against exploitation and domination of the subject. As Sierz indicates, theatre has this function of shaking off the subject, as it "can be a place that conveys a strong sense of territorial threat and of the vulnerability of the audience's personal space. Live performance [...] can make the representation of private pain on a public stage almost unendurable" *(In-Yer-Face* 7), thereby providing instances of questioning the enforced techniques of domination on its self.

Foucault observes a new technology of power that relies on the survival of bodies and thereby enforcing techniques of domination on the control of corporeality of the subject and its soul as opposed to the traditional punitive power that eliminates the subject when threatened. This new technology of power is named biopolitical power as it heavily relies on the reproduction of bodies and in doing so, it regulates and adjusts the techniques of domination through the power of science, medicinal development and demographical advancements. In regards of the modern implications of this new technology of power, Foucault observes that

> Unlike discipline, which is addressed to bodies, the new non-disciplinary power is applied not to man as-body but to the living man, to man -as-living-being; ultimately, if you like, to man-as-species. To be more specific, I would say that discipline tries to rule a multiplicity of men to the extent that their multiplicity can and must be dissolved into individual bodies that can be kept under surveillance, trained, used, and, if need be, punished. And that the new technology that is being established is addressed to … a global mass that affected by overall processes characteristic of birth, death, production, illness, and so on. … we have, at the end of that century, the emergence of something

> that is no longer an anatomo-politics of the human body, but what I would call a "biopolitics" of the human race (*Society Must Be Defended* 242-243).

The deployment of sexuality is essential to the biopolitics of the modern state as the sex had to be regulated, the incest taboo strictly forbidden so that the power could be exercised over the subjects' body ensured by the reproduction of proper bodies. For Foucault, the power and knowledge share an intrinsic characteristic in terms of co-existing together. Knowledge can be regarded as an exercise of power relations and power always functions as an off-shoot of knowledge. This power-knowledge have begun to assert its effect as a functioning schema of the biopolitics of the modern state upon the formation of what Foucault called the Malthusian couple. Along with the hysterical women, masturbating child and the perverse adult; the Malthusian couple formed the four human types that was the target of the power-knowledge. The Malthusian couple, the reproductive couple, essentially meant the formation of strict familial ties to ensure reproduction that has been essential for the biopolitics. Thus, the sex was confined to familial space and the non-normative ways of conceiving sex was strictly prohibited. A technology of sex is deployed at the behest of biopolitics which, "[s]pread out from one pole to the other of this technology of sex was a whole series of different tactics that combined in varying proportions the objective of disciplining the body and that of regulating populations" (Foucault, "History of Sexuality" 146). As sex became highly regulated by biopolitics, the familial interiority was targeted as well. The biopolitics of Victorian morality provides a significant point of analysis for Foucault as the Victorian era encompasses the emerging feature of biopolitics: the regulation of sex, confining the man and woman to their gendered space to ensure reproduction and projecting the repressed desires of non-normative sex to brothel to maximize profit which is closely aligned with the rise of capitalism. In relation to the familial subjectification, Foucault

traces significant changes in the domain of the relations between power/knowledge and sexuality:

> Sexuality was carefully confined; it moved into the home. The conjugal family took custody of it and absorbed it into the serious function of reproduction. On the subject of sex, silence became the rule. The legitimate and procreative couple laid down the law. The couple imposed itself as model, enforced the norm, safeguarded the truth, and reserved the right to speak while retaining the principle of secrecy. A single locus of sexuality was acknowledged in social space as well as at the heart of every household, but it was a utilitarian and fertile one: the parents' bedroom. The rest had only to remain vague; proper demeanor avoided contact with other bodies, and verbal decency sanitized one's speech (*History of Sexuality* 3).

A link can be formed that ties the biopower to the modern state of which Foucault asserts in his article "The Subject and Power" that "[the modern state] as an entity which was developed above individuals, ignoring what they are and even their very existence, but, on the contrary, as a very sophisticated structure, in which individuals can be integrated, under one condition: that this individuality would be shaped in a new form and submitted to a set of very specific patterns" (783). Seeing this modern affiliation stemming from a "modern matrix of individualization or a new form of pastoral power" (783), Foucault re-visits the argument on the shift from the punitive power to biopolitical power, stating that the newly emerged state ensures "health, well-being (that is, sufficient wealth, standard of living), security, protection against accidents" (784) for the subjects. As the power/knowledge over family is "exercised by complex structures such as medicine, which included private initiatives with the sale of services on market economy principles, but which also included public institutions such as hospitals**"** (784), a tactic on a series of forms of power over "those of the family, medicine, psychiatry, education, and

employers" (784) is deployed that attempted to ensure the formation of the normalized subject. The non-conformist subject that poses a threat against the biopolitics of the modern state is however classified as abnormal exemplified in the figure of the hermaphrodite, the masturbator, and the individual to be corrected.

The abnormal is classified as standing outside the intelligibility of normative ways of looking at the subject as Foucault affirms, "it is the principle of intelligibility of all the forms that circulate as the small change of abnormality" (*Abnormal* 56). The monster, for Foucault, marks "a breach of the law that automatically stands outside the law ... the monster is the spontaneous, brutal, but consequently natural form of the unnatural. It is the magnifying model, the form of every possible little irregularity" (*Abnormal* 56). The abnormal falls outside normativity as the regulative techniques of domination failed to correct it. Furthermore, the familial corrections are either rejected or was not internalized to the extent of gendering it to a place of intelligibility in its interiority. These inadequacies of the abnormal evidently signal another failure in terms of not being able to re-assert the abnormal subject back to the status quo. As the programme of familial subjectification in gendering the subject falls short and the notion that "the figure of the incorrigible will be defined, take shape, and be transformed and developed along with the reorganization of the functions of the family and the development of disciplinary techniques" (Foucault, "Abnormal" 87) ultimately fails, an unintelligible self in the form of everyday monster is created. This individual to be corrected does not fully stand outside the schema of power/knowledge but it also does not occupy within the intelligibility of norms, thus occupying a liminal space.

2. Liminal Theory

The limen, or threshold, connotes a phase of being in no-man's-land as the French anthropologist and ethnographer Arnold Van Gennep envisaged it as part of his theory of the rites of passage. Van Gennep focused on separation, threshold and integration rites in one's life that marks a shift of identity that is ritualistic in nature, which propelled him to examine rites of passage such as birth, death, marriage, pregnancy, betrothal, circumcision and the like. Gennep proposed "to call the rites of separation from a previous world, preliminal rites, those executed during the transitional stage liminal (or threshold) rites, and the ceremonies of incorporation into the new world postliminal rites" (11). Developing on Arnold Van Gennep's theory on rites of passage, the British anthropologist Victor Turner developed his own theory that surpassed Gennep in the sense of adjusting it to the modern context to explain the social frictions and disharmony in the established cultural order. Victor Turner defined the liminal as a phase of being betwixt and between that "mark changes in an individual's or a group's social status and/or cultural or psychological state in many societies past and present" (*Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* 273). Turner proposes his formula of social dramas to structurally understand, firstly, certain breaches within the social order that points to antagonism and discrepancies between groups of individuals in a community, followed secondly by crisis as an extension of the heightening of the breach, leading, thirdly, to a mechanism called redress of action whereby certain adjustive measures are taken by patriarchal forces, mainly by the elderly to heal the breach and re-assert the subject in question to its control, culminating lastly in either re-integration of the subject or the acceptance of the irreparable schism caused by breach. As this thesis argues, Turnerian formula on social dramas provides a structural base of analyses from which the liminal characteristics of the abnormal heroines who stand outside of normativity of gendered and familial roles in

defying and challenging them are formed. What the representation of such portrayals does is closely aligned with the function of the theatre, as Turner observes, the abnormal or the abject depictions "whose combination of familiar and unfamiliar features or unfamiliar combination of familiar features provokes us into thought, provides us with new perspectives, one can be excited by them; the implications, suggestions, and supporting values entwined with their literal use enable us to see a new subject matter in a new way" (*Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* 31).

Dramas often portray a zone of transition for characters and they are ascribed ritualistic processes by which the heroes, heroines as well as dramatic personae undergo and emerge as having transformed. As theatre is inherently a ritualistic performance, David Edgar draws attention to the liminal attribution of performances and theatrical productions:

> Drama is about ceremonies and liminal zones; it *is* such a ceremony and such a zone. As religion turns the literally enacted rites of sacrifice into symbolic rituals, so the playwright takes the most agonizing, painful, inspiring and deadly moments of human life and turns them into drama. Drama is a zone in which we can experiment with our dreams and our dreads, our ambitions and our impulses – murderous as well as virtuous – in conditions of safety. If the point of figurative painting is that it represents three dimensions on a flat plane, then the point of drama is that it's all pretend (186).

Turner shares the same close alignment Edgar observes between the ritual and theatre, indicating, "both ritual and theater crucially involve liminal events and processes and have an important aspect of social metacommentary" (*On the Edge of the Bush* 291). This metacommentary that theatre can accomplish echoes the creation of what Turner called

communitas whose function is thought to be a representation of bondage, union between those undergoing the liminal phase in the social dramas:

> In liminality, communitas tends to characterize relationships between those jointly undergoing ritual transition. The bonds of communitas are anti-structural in the sense that they are undifferentiated, equalitarian, direct, extant, nonrational, existential, I-Thou (in Feuerbach's and Buber's sense) relationships. Communitas is spontaneous, immediate, concrete—it is not shaped by norms, it is not institutionalized, it is not abstract (*Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* 274).

One crucial function of theatre is to create "communitas" given the fact that theatre is a liminal zone of transition whereby the audience's awareness is heightened. However, Turner's structural analysis does not point a utopian vision of non-conformity of the subjects undergoing the liminal phase as he believes that "[c]ommunitas does not merge identities; it liberates them from conformity to general norms, though this is necessarily a transient condition if society is to continue to operate in an orderly fashion" (*Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* 274). Furthermore, for Turner, the liminal phase is the domain of theatrical genres where the theatre "derive[s] … specifically from … redress, especially from redress as ritual process, rather than judicial, political, or military process, important as these are for the study of political or revolutionary action" (*On the Edge of the Bush* 294). Of the applicability of the liminal theory on dramas, Fischer-Lichte compares what the liminal achieves in the anthropological context as compared to its theatrical implications, asserting:

> In ritual, liminal experience is characterized by the criteria irreversibility and social acceptance. That is to say, that here, through/in liminal experience a transformation from status/identity A into status/identity B is accomplished

> which is accepted by the other members of that community later on. In theatre, however, the transformation brought about by liminal experience does not come to a definite end. What happens in the course of the transformative process is, in principle, reversible and does not need public acclaim. In distinguishing this kind of liminal experience from ritual experience I call it aesthetic experience – thereby redefining the concept of aesthetic experience in a specific way (254).

Theatrical works propel a liminal stance for the audience viewing the performance and transformation of identity, thereby provoking action towards change. In this respect, this thesis evaluates the three plays discussed as reflecting liminal instances and characteristics following the formation of a discourse on identity-formation, subjectification of the body and soul and normativity of gender and familial ties. What the liminal attribution of theatre analyzed in the plays discussed in this thesis attempts to achieve is to stage liminal representations of defiance whereby the audience reflects on the stark representation of the fluidity of identity in different characters. The audience is thereby provoked to think and act against normativity and conformity imposed on the modern subject that is enmeshed in a tunnel-vision of viewing life through the googles of ideology.

The liminal always appears in plays as a zone that is betwixt and between contrasting phenomena. In Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611), the play is ascribed to have a structurally liminal characteristic in the form of a tragicomedy, betwixt and between the genres of tragedy and comedy, but also the island Prospero snatched from Sycorax can be argued to occupy the liminal zone between civilization and nature, which is the land of the supernatural. The party involving Alonso and Antonio arrives on the liminal island governed by Prospero who deals with magic and has fairies under his command. They stand betwixt reality and fantasy as the connection gets blurred as they

further progress into the island. Furthermore, the deposition of Prospero as a result of Antonio's betrayal ushering Alonso's invasion of Milan marks the breach. If one would follow the Turnerian formula, the crisis escalates as Prospero takes Miranda with him and flee the dukedom. This is followed by the redress of action which is often associated with the liminal, which is exemplified by the intrusion of the liminal island as well as the events schemed by Prospero to lead the party that wronged him to the island governed by himself. However, all is concluded when Ferdinand and Miranda falls in love and decide to marry as Prospero devised, whereby the breach is healed with the union that in a way ties Milan to Naples, resulting in the re-integration. In Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (1611), time is personified and occupies the liminal stage, and ties the sixteen years absence between Leontes' exile of his daughter and his agony and torment stemming from his greed. In the play, the breach signifies the moment where the intrusion of the green-eyed-monster plagues an already-suspicious Leontes, king of Sicily, who sees Hermione and Polixenes having an intimate relationship. This greed propels him to a frenzy of cuckoldry, which is followed by a crisis as a result of a wrongful accusation of his wife Hermione of being unfaithful. Leontes exiles the bastard daughter. However, his child next-in-line to the throne of Sicily dies; but Leontes' grief is condensed by his wife's reactionary death after hearing the death of her son. Time is personified and has the liminal attribution in tying the long period of absence, which consumes Leontes who realized that he wronged his wife and defied Apollo's verdict even though the prophecy deemed her faithful and him a tyrant. The conclusion, the healing of the breach, is realized in the form of what Turner called re-integration: Perdita, Leontes' daughter marries Polixenes son, Florizel the prince of Bohemia and Hermione is resurrected and re-united with Leontes. It is true that the liminal implications of dramas not only assert themselves in Shakespearean drama but also in contemporary drama as well. In David Greig's *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart* (2011), which deals with border-crossings and have

mystical creatures that heighten the liminal standing of the play, the titular heroine travels to the border town of Kelso that stands between Scotland and England to attend a conference on border ballads. Prudencia is captured by Nick the Devil in his liminal domain where the devil shares his knowledge with Prudencia but this does not appease the hunger of the ambitious academic Prudencia Hart, she is later able to escape from his clutches and be re-united, and restored to the real world. The town serves as the epitome of a liminal terrain that symbolizes the ongoing liminal debate the Scottish people are having in terms of either staying as part of the United Kingdom or declare independence as a separate Scottish nation state. In similar vein, Zinnie Harris' *Meet Me At Dawn* (2017) introduces two heroines Robin and Helen as entrapped in the liminal terrain that is the uninhabited island on which they crash where a secret most grievous revealed: Robin is granted a short-term temporal re-enactment of a union with Helen who had died in an accident. Even some of the spoken lines are in the form of incomplete utterances that are cut shortly, sentences and thoughts fragmented, as was their union ultimately and unjustly. As they occupy the liminal temporality granted by a mysterious old woman in repaying the kindness of Robin who is tormented by Helen's loss in real life, the audience witnesses the stinging memory of loss, grief and torment through their liminal existence echoing a dream. Indeed, it can be argued that Robin dreams Helen alive who died tragically and she is hit really hard, suffering miserably from the loss. Towards the end of play, Helen's words soothe Robin, functioning towards a re-integration of Robin's fragmented self restored to real world, suggesting that she should move on.

This thesis attempts to link the subject-formation of the liminal self that is observed in the three plays discussed in light of psychoanalytical identity-formation, Lacanian arguments on the mirror-stage, jouissance and *objet petit a*, as well as Jungian dream interpretation involving archetypal characters. This reading claims that the subjectification of the liminal self observed in the dramatic persona of the plays can be

traced back to traumatic experiences and unresolved complexes that cause a friction in the subject's individuation process. Jacques Lacan's great contribution of the mirror phase in the identity-formation of the subject therefore shows that the phase in question is critical for the creation of ego in the development of infant's selfhood. When the infant sees its reflection in the mirror, an Ideal-I is created as an underdeveloped image separate from the mother. It is not an I that is developed free from the mother but rather underdeveloped in the sense that the infant still views itself in symbiosis with the maternal figure. This Ideal-I in a way haunts the subject's life in later stages of life as a phenomenon that is unattainable. This ideal imago, as Lacan envisaged, will forever remain fragmented as the subject strives to find substitutes in an attempt to re-capture the long-lost symbiotic union with the mother. The substitution for the lack of fulfillment of the image is a notion called *objet petit a,* which should not be regarded as a real object, but rather a substitution one pursues in life that always defers. A popular example is an observation in men's mating choices in regards to selecting a female mate that resembles most to the mother figure, which is arguably an attempt of substituting the lack of maternal affection found in the symbiotic relationship in the infancy that is lost after being subjected to the linguistic order. This entry into the law of the Father and its linguistic order comes at the expense of the intrusion of *jouissance,* roughly translated as pleasure in pain, since the pre-linguistic phase for the child in terms of desire was met by Pleasure Principle whereby the child's desire is always met without any paternal interruption. For example, Robin's excessive eating of chocolates to the point of discomfort and pain marks an instance of jouissance in the sense that the excessive enjoyment ends up causing the pain as well as discomfort. Another example is the character Mr. Creosote in Monty Python's *The Meaning of Life* (1983) who is the epitome of abject jouissance in terms of eating excessively to the point of pain and recurrent expulsion, constantly eating and throwing up, in the end literally exploding in the restaurant. A re-enactment of such

excessive and repulsive eating is also observed in the continuous servings of hot dogs in ketchup drenched plates in the Lost Property sequence in Anthony Neilson's *The Wonderful World of Dissocia*. As the argumentative characters munch never-ending servings of hot dogs, they also empty their stomach in revulsion as they keep retching and spitting the hot dogs, only to make room for new ones. In this vein, the drive of death is appeased or controlled to a certain extend by desire that always defers. As Lacan saw it "*jouissance* appears not purely and simply as the satisfaction of a need but as the satisfaction of a drive" (*Ethics of Psychoanalysis* 209), thus, without desire, the human being could consume itself to the point of death, as evident in the comical portrayal of Mr. Creosote. Furthermore, the intrusion of the "no" by the father connotes to giving up the unmediated jouissance, which is the entry fee of submission to the law of the social order. The child undergoes such processes and is formed as a subject after entering into the law. To form the subject thus requires undergoing what Lacan envisaged for the formation of the fragmented self that begins with losing the image of Ideal I after the mirror phase. The subject then looks to substitute it in the forms of *objet petit a* throughout the life in the hope that attainment of the object that is lost would bring an ontological completeness.

Dreams also could be considered as instances that possess traces of the search for objet petit a, but also reflective of traumatic experiences that lie in the unconscious through the depictions of archetypal characters. As this thesis argues in regard of the dream symbolism attempted to be unearthed in Anthony Neilson's *The Wonderful World of Dissocia,* an analysis of dream language through archetypal characters reveal the real reason for the subject's abnormal behaviour and fragmented self. The dreams often point to symbolic depictions of traumatic experiences and loss as Hanna Segal believes that "it is only with the advent of the depressive position, the experience of separateness, separation and loss, that symbolic representation comes into play" (29). The material

repressed to the unconscious are reflected in their most potent form in dreams as Segal furthers the fact that "one might say that when a desire has to be given up because of conflict and repressed, it may express itself in a symbolical way, and the object of the desire which had to be given up can be replaced by a symbol" (25). The symbolisms in dreams are reminiscent of images stemming from our collective unconscious in the form of archetypal phenomenon. As Jung discovers, "archetypal images are among the highest values of the human psyche; they have peopled the heavens of all races from time immemorial" (4024) and these archetypes that is observed recurrently in dream symbolism form the collective unconscious which is ascribed as Jung's greatest contribution to psychoanalysis:

> In addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature and which we believe to be the only empirical psyche (even if we tack on the personal unconscious as an appendix), there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents (Jung 3983).

The archetypal character of goat, for example, is attributed a sexual connotation in historical accounts, myths as well as dreams. As the dreams reflect repressed elements reversed, the fact that Lisa escapes from rape by the goat in *Dissocia* can be interpreted as pointing towards an actual trauma caused by childhood rape. Furthermore, the liminal imagery found in dream symbolism, for example, evident in the self-association of Lisa with a Siren, a half bird and half woman, provides further discussion on Lisa's fragmentation of the self. As Turner affirms, "theranthropic figures combining animal with human characteristics abound in liminal situations; similarly, human beings imitate the

behavior of different species of animals" (*Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* 253). Furthermore, Lisa encounters a polar bear in her excursion to Dissocia which symbolically points to another affirmation why she forms this magical world in her mind: Lisa escapes to Dissocia to protect a creative and imaginatively unique psyche that is being corrected into a normalized brain by psychiatric control. As Budd affirms "People who dream of small smashed fragments of animals, multitudes of insects, invertebrates who have a hard shell and a soft inside like snails, seem to be telling us about their sense of a fragmented self, or one with a tough armour to protect its lack of internal structure" (265). The polar bear is therefore indicative of Lisa's attempts of protecting a self that is free from impositions. As the ending of the play as well as its feminist premise affirms, Lisa is very protective of her untainted imaginatively rich self.

In the Post-1990s Contemporary British Drama, the liminal is often embodied through the extreme portrayals of subjectification in Sarah Kane's in-yer-face oeuvre. In-yer-face theatre of 1990s elevated the theatre to a status of extreme and visceral implications of horror and violence, depicting the troubled and traumatized psyche as a result of genocides, unspeakable atrocities, human cruelty attributed to 1990s most starkly represented in the Gulf War, Bosnian genocide and civil wars throughout the world. As the spearheading figure of the in-yer-face movement, the theatrical works of Sarah Kane attempted to reflect the unspoken unconscious fears and taboos that are often repressed and left unstaged. Kane's first play *Blasted* (1995) caused an eruption of hate and disregard among the critics as well as the audience as many walked out the theatre owing to witnessing several taboo depictions including infanticide, anal rape and cannibalism. Her second play, the adapted classic tragedy *Phaedra's Love* (1996), is not regarded as the strongest in her oeuvre albeit subversively playing with the incest taboo, depression, rape and unconscious desire since it is deemed as "a lack of discrimination between what works onstage and what is maddeningly banal" (Sierz, "In-Yer-Face" 112). Her next play

Cleansed that was staged in 1998 takes the audience to a journey of an emotional roller coaster of love, pain, glimmer of hope, suffering, extremely brutal violence and dissolution of identity. This overload of emotions is enhanced by almost unstageable yet visceral depictions of corporeal corrections of severed limbs testing the physical as well as psychological limits the love can endure. The play is labelled as belonging to the theatre of provocation by Sierz who observed the audience loving the gender ambiguity as well as less people walking out (*In-Yer-Face* 114). Kane's next play *Crave* (1998) is met with critics seeing it as a metaphorically superior to her earlier plays. The play delves into a more personal state of mind on the brink of mental collapse, loss of self and desire. Employing the theme of a mental patient under heavy medication that revolves around an ontological crisis in questioning the existence of being, her last play *Psychosis 4.48* (2000) presents a psyche troubled with loss of a self that cannot be found. The play is often considered autobiographical in terms of reflecting her mental state already deteriorating before her suicide in 1999.

Cleansed further depicts abjection of brutality in the deployment of sparagmos, the rituals of dismemberment, as the play, Sierz points out, "flirts with quasi-religious notions of purification and redemption … the precise meaning of Kane's play is deliberately elusive" (*In-Yer-Face* 114). A provocative catharsis is imposed on the viewer as "people are cleansed by pain and terror; [while] Grace is burnt clean by torture" (*In-Yer-Face* 115). One is always imposed on an overwhelming form of catharsis when witnessing Kane's psychosomatic in-yer-face plays, as the taboo representations of her non-normative stories are not for the fain-hearted so much so that the initial production of *Blasted* condensed with scenes of rape, torture and cannibalism overwhelmed the audience as they walked out for it was too hard to take it all in. Kane's theatre, thus, enforces a deeper cathartic experience for the audience, since it goes beyond the Aristotelian catharsis that causes a "thrill with horror and melt to pity at what takes place"

(18). Kane's in-yer-face plays instigates a provocative form of catharsis that shakes the subject viewing the performance to the very core of its being in revealing the violent deployment of ideology subjectivating the subject with normativity. Kane's in-yer-face oeuvre aligns well with what Freud calls the psychopathological drama whereby "the source of the suffering which we are to share and from which we are to derive pleasure is no longer a conflict between two almost equally conscious motivations, but one between conscious and repressed ones" (*Psychopathic Characters On Stage* 147). Freud believes that the audience must be filled with the neurotic since the psychopathological drama proves only beneficial to the neurotic as opposed to the non-neurotic (*Psychopathic Characters On Stage* 147) who simply will walk out as a result of the overwhelming intrusion of the repressed staged in front of him on the visceral level. The modern man tends to succumb to neurosis and can easily submerge in such state by the ubiquitous schema of subjectification deployed for the purpose of normalizing him. Thus, it can be said that Kane's theatre has a therapeutic value for the modern neurotic as it is only for the neurotic that "repression is by way of failing; it is unstable, and requires ever renewed effort, an effort which is spared by recognition. It is only in the neurotic that such a struggle exists as can become the subject of drama; but in him also the dramatist will create not only the pleasure derived from release but resistance as well" (Freud, "Psychopathic Characters On Stage" 147).

Kane's theatre is based on taking the audience through an intense journey filled with extremity of violence since violence is an integral part of real life and chaotic violence defines the order of the world. As Sierz indicates, after Kane saw Jeremy Weller's *Mad* in 1992 in Edinburgh that took her to an extreme journey through stark depictions of mental illness, she decided to make her theatre an experiential one (*In-Yer-Face* 92). The purpose of such theatre is to provoke thought and action as she believed that if you "put people through an intense experience maybe in a small way from that you

can change things" (Sierz, "In-Yer-Face" 121). La France observes the crucial role evident in productions of the experiential theatre: "the audience member is no longer a relatively passive observer as would be typical in conventional theatre. Instead, he or she becomes a participant." (515), which shocks the audience in provoking it to act out and question. As another dramatist who is often regarded as a playwright within the in-yer-face movement, Anthony Neilson prefers to name his theatre as "experiential", claiming that his plays should not be considered as "an attempt to repel an audience" (*Dissocia* 6), an intrinsic attribution to the in-yer-face movement. Neilson's allegedly in-yer-face roots are observed in *Penetrator* (1993) that deals with a ticking bomb on stage in the character called Tadge, a mentally unsound soldier escaped from military who is obsessed with an imminent danger of getting anally raped by a gang of Penetrators as he terrorizes his childhood friends Alan and Max. In 1997, Neilson wrote *The Censor* that deals with pornography, censorship and taboo depictions of sex. In the play, a sexually impotent character called Censor who deals with porn materials meets Miss Fontaine, a filmmaker who tries to make Censor unban her pornographic movie by curing his impotency: it is discovered that Censor is sexually aroused by gazing on the defecation of women. Neilson later strayed from his allegedly in-yer-face roots and focused more on the visceral performance and experience. As Trish Reid observes, the experientiality of Neilson's drama has post-dramatic associations:

> [Neilson's experiential plays] embody the postdramatic demand for an 'open and fragmenting perception' in the theatre to replace 'the unifying and closed perception' that marks the traditions of the dramatic theatre. Neilson is a Scottish playwright and director able to draw, in his work, on the richly varied, populist and eclectic traditions of the Scottish stage. In the event, his work for the stage consistently affirms the 'experiential' dimension of theatre in an increasingly mediatised culture (498).

Neilson is considered a powerful representative of experiential theatre and *Dissocia* is a perfect example of the formation of a common place between actors and audience that develops a discourse on mental illness, drawing the audience to identify with the character's vivid story as Sierz notes:

> In Act One Neilson is not showing what a psychotic breakdown is literally like – most people don't have delusions featuring cuddly bears or argumentative hotdog eaters. Instead he conveys a feeling of the manic exhilaration often experienced by patients, some of their fears and the heightened sensations they experience. He is, after all, a master of experiential theatre. His metaphor for psychosis is the idea of another world, called Dissocia, with its own borders, rituals and mores. It's a kind of *Alice in Wonderland* on acid (*Rewriting the Nation* 198).

Dissocia is a visceral play that takes the audience through a shocking journey with a colorful and vivid first act, which poses a stark difference to the bleak second act that reveals the confinement of Lisa in psychiatric institution. Although Neilson is careful not to develop a political discourse by a careful design of the second act in not taking a stance against the prisoning effects of the medical and mental control of patients, the play is enriched with archetypal characters, unique imagination of a phantasmagoric psyche. *Dissocia* excels at developing a powerful discourse on the subjectification of the body and soul which this thesis attempts to explore in the liminal character of Lisa Montgomery Jones.

Marina Carr's fame as a renowned contemporary Irish playwright starts with his Midlands trilogy comprised of *The Mai* (1994), *Portia Coughlan* (1996) and *By The Bog of Cats* (1998). As a contemporary playwright, Marina Carr's powerful writing feeds on ancient Greek mythology as she subversively employs female characters from Greek

tragedies such as Antigone, Medea, Phaedra and Hecuba by placing them in their modern context with the violence, pain and suffering multiplied and deepened. The presence of violence and women's rage against it are what Marina Carr ponders over in her plays. In an interview, Carr explains why her plays are dark imaginations, echoing Sarah Kane:

> You know it may seem ridiculous to say it is but when I wrote Portia Coughlan and By The Bog of Cats the rage never occurred to me. I just thought this was normal and then people come along afterwards and tell you what it means: God! it is so dark. God! it is so angry. Not enough, it isn't. That would be like normal, well maybe not normal but that that's you know… Life can be very dark why are we pretending it's an episode of Barney it's not and women's rage … yeah well women's rage exists ("RTÉ," 00:00:01-00:00:40).

Marina Carr's plays and therefore The Midlands trilogy is a departure from traditional Irish plays in the sense that it does not take a nationalistic approach to cause awareness for the Irish independence. They rather employ themes such as the gendered roles of motherhood and wifehood that locate the Irish woman enmeshed in familial interiority in a traditionally catholic setting by dark stories that break taboos, defy paternal authority and challenge one's normative understanding of what constitutes female selfhood. Carr's powerful feminist writing also associates femininity with rivers, bogs and lakes. This association casts an uncanny shadow over the plays, which symbolize the imminent danger of death looming on the background. Carr's female characters defy gendered roles imposed by the heteronormative social order, as Vural Özbey affirms, [t]he "holy" icon of Mother Ireland represented in the mainstream of Irish theatre is subverted in Carr's plays not only with the presentation of intricacies of women's lives, but also, more remarkably, with the explicit use of violence in the portrayal of her "unmotherly" mother characters on the Irish stage" (233). In this respect, *The Mai* tells the story of an unhappy

marriage of Mai, a forty years old woman with four children whose husband Robert often leaves her for other women. Mai cannot cope with real-world impositions as she tries to cheat on his husband like Portia Coughlan does, eventually killing herself. The feminist premise of the play revolves around Mai's tragic non-conformity and a female energy by familial ties involving a hundred years old granny, two sisters, two aunts and a daughter, Millie, who tells the story of every character in the play like a fable to the audience, performing the bridge between the past, the current and the future (Sayın 9, translation my own). In *By The Bog of Cats,* Carr revisits Medea in modern Midlands setting through the character of Hester Swane who is left by her mother when she was very young. As she is left again by her husband Carthage, she cannot bear the abandonment twice as "inside Hester's self, an emptiness is created and her identity is always left broken trilaterally as child/woman/mother, she always had to fight such fragmentation of self" (Sayın 11, translation my own). In a tragically modern re-enactment of Medea's filicide, she kills her child so that the child does not become her. Lastly, in *Portia Coughlan,* Carr revisits Antigone's defiance of paternal authority, which is embodied through Portia's complete rejection of motherhood and wifehood. Portia has an uncontainable rage against patriarchal impositions that attempt to entomb her alive in a familial interiority, just like Antigone was by the orders of Creon. As they both challenge patriarchal impositions on women by marginally walking on the borders of kinship, family, and gender normativity, this thesis argues, they threaten the intelligibility of our normative understanding of what constitutes a subject.

CHAPTER II:

FROM TINKERED BODIES TO TRANSCENDENTAL SYMBIOSIS: CORPOREAL SUBJECTIFICATION OF THE ABNORMAL LIMINAL OTHER IN SARAH KANE'S *CLEANSED* (1998)

> If the inner truth of gender is a fabrication and if a true gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies, then it seems that genders can be neither true nor false, but are only produced as the truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity (Butler, "Gender Trouble" 174).

Premiered at the Royal Court on 30 April 1998, Sarah Kane's psychosomatic in-yer-face drama *Cleansed* is structurally inspired from the German playwright Georg Büchner's uncompleted dramatic piece *Woyzeck* in terms of the episodic narrations of what befalls the characters. The episodic stories are linked through the excessive use of visceral stage directions in *Cleansed*, culminating in an emotionally dense journey into a madhouse. Büchner's portrayal of a delirious soldier, a ticking bomb in *Woyzeck* who gives in to the "voices" by stabbing his lover to death can be interpreted as the in-yer-face moment of the play, as Büchner's depiction of *Woyzeck* makes the audience feel that the soldier is progressively made ill by the social hierarchy. A similar line of criticism is picked up in *Cleansed* in which Kane employs the theme of a ubiquitous corporeal punishment and subjectification that are forced upon subjects. Sarah Kane envisioned *Cleansed* as a theatrical work only, but also as an experiment renegotiating the heteronormative boundaries of gender. The experientiality of the play derives from her

claim that "Performance is visceral. It puts you in direct physical contact with thought and feeling" (Kane, "Drama With Balls"). To that end, *Cleansed* develops a rather controversial discourse on the Foucauldian concept of the objectification of the subject furthered by Judith Butler's renegotiation of the concept. The grotesque representation of a corporeal experimentation *par excellence* embodied through the merging of Grace with Graham, climaxing in the abject hermaphrodite, premises to depict the possibility of a transcendental unity beyond gender norms in a setting where violence and cruelty reigns. *Cleansed* plays with the Lacanian notion of jouissance by taking it to the extreme, testing the limits of a vision of love that transcends normativity of gender. *Cleansed* aims to achieve this through the symbiosis of almost a utopian vision of gender in the merging of Grace with Graham that propels a re-thinking of the pre-conceived notion imposed as "gender reality". This chapter treats *Cleansed* as a literary text providing a re-evaluation of gender norms embedded in and imposed by social "reality" in an attempt to deconstruct gender as well as going beyond it. To that end, this chapter inspects the aforementioned subjectification process of the liminal other embodied in Grace/Graham through the lens of theories on subjectification and identity formation.

Cleansed begins with an abject scene of a drug injection into the eyes of Graham by Tinker whose job is to correct the residents of the institution controlled and monitored by him. The institution under Tinker's control is a university as was described in the stage directions by Kane in the play. However, as the play unfolds, the audience witnesses the original setting gradually turning into a reminiscence of a horrific set of a concentration camp, echoing Auschwitz and Dachau. Graham's death by overdose of lethal injection by the hands of Tinker consolidates his position as the figure of authority as he terrorizes and corporeally corrects the inhabitants of the mental institution in which he serves as the doctor as their patients call him. Tinker literally "tinkers with" bodies, subjugating his residents yearning for a subjectification by his hand. Upon hearing her brother Graham's

death for whom she has incestuous desires, Grace willingly yearns for a process of subjectification by Tinker who is depicted as having feelings for Grace. This process makes her gradually merge with Graham, first by cross-dressing, then eventually by perhaps the most visceral scene at the end of the play whereby a corporeal symbiosis achieved by the medium of Tinker. Carl and Rod as homosexual lovers serve as the embodiment of the prevalent notion attributed to the premise of the play that the real love is painful and hard to come by. However, they are eventually subjected to Tinker's brutal punishment as depicted in clearly one of the most striking stage directions in the play: "*Carl's trousers are pulled down and a pole is pushed a few inches up his anus"* (Kane, "Cleansed" 11). Carl and Rod's punishment by Tinker and the rituals of *sparagmos* (dismemberment) they are subjected to continue till the end of the play. The staging difficulty of such controversial scenes notwithstanding, they serve as part of the discourse Kane attempts to form by shocking the audience to the core throughout the play. Through such discourse, the violent nature of the corporeal and psychological punishment of the heteronormative patriarchal order in imposing and enforcing gender norms as social reality is revealed. Robin in the play suffers from an Oedipal dilemma, yearning for the love and affection of the maternal figure Grace but eventually succumbing to death after cracking the code of counting numbers. As the play unfolds, the audience's perception of Tinker as merely a senseless and emotionless corrector changes as he craves for affection and love embodied and sought first in Grace then found in the nameless prostitute he often visits till she is eventually called "Grace". This propels the idea that Tinker himself is not only a part but also a subject of the ideology imposed on the campus. Occupying a liminal presence since the moment her brother Graham had died, Grace's merge with Graham is finally achieved through the removal of her breasts and attachment of Carl's castrated penis on her groin. Kane subverts a heteronormative ending as part of her in-yer-face oeuvre via the hermaphroditic transcendence with the sun coming out in terms of

envisaging a genderless world. This affirms that the subjectification process Grace is subjugated to is inherently patriarchal but her in-yer-face ending is subversive to the dominant ideology at work. The deconstruction of *Cleansed* in this respect points specifically to representations that renegotiate the female and queer experience through theatre, a medium which provides a form of 'nakedness' in urging as well as helping us "see the faces hidden behind the faces, these faces that Theatre unveils" (Cixous 341).

Sarah Kane envisaged *Cleansed* as a horror play set in a campus-like prison whose inmates are regularly surveyed, subjectivated and terrorized by Tinker. Tinker assumes the role of the "panopticon" in the Foucauldian sense; gazing on the inhabitants of his institution; amputating, castrating and corporeally correcting the subjects. The panopticon is originally thought to be an internal part of the Benthamite prison system as Foucault writes; "the theme of the panopticon- at once surveillance and observation, security and knowledge, individualization and totalization, isolation and transparency-found in the prison its privileged locus of realization" (*Discipline and Punish* 249). Drawing on the original conception of Benthamite panopticon which consisted of a large courtyard and at the centre of it a tower of surveillance, an all-seeing eye looking at sections of divided cells with two windows one of which looking directly at the tower, Foucault ponders over how the panopticon effectively incorporates within its system the control of the body and groups in a self-contained subjectification process. He points to the appropriation of the subject as part of the controlled panoptic process of the subjectification period through which what is to be accepted as "normal" and what is "abnormal" is inscribed on the subject through a forced self-containment and constant feeling of surveillance. Tinker in this respect is employed as the panoptic controller in *Cleansed*. With regards to Tinker's role as the panopticon, it is true to indicate that Sarah Kane, through the character of Tinker, "stages the ominous operation of an invisible surveillance and control mechanism

by presenting the audience with a central metaphor of power and asking them to observe this ultimate watching tower embodied by Tinker" (Biber Vangölü 283).

The structure of the panopticon offers such a ubiquitous sense of control is that even in the absence of a guardian, the inmate feels the perpetual gleam of surveillance beaming out from the tower. The controllers are also not free from the forces of the panopticon as Foucault was deeply interested in how the panoptic surveillance subjugates its controllers. Foucault asserts that the guardian at the surveillance tower is merely an instrument of the ideology at work, subjectified and normalized and not free from its control; since, "one doesn't have here a power which is wholly in the hands of one person who can exercise it alone and totally over the others" (*Power/Knowledge* 156*)*. Of panoptic control, Foucault further maintains that it is "a machine in which everyone is caught, those who exercise power just as much as those over whom it is exercised" (*Power/Knowledge* 156*)*. This perception of the panoptic power is discernible in Sarah Kane's *Cleansed* in the sense that as the controller and the embodiment of the panopticon in the play, Tinker himself is an instrument of the imposed ideology at work. He is subjected to control in a hierarchical system of power albeit craving for affection and love as he frequently visits the peep-show booths and masturbates to the woman inside the booth. It can thus be stated that Tinker is a character whose love "is a magnificent example of repression in contemporary drama" (De Vos 117). Tinker always represses his desires and is unable to show acts of love and compassion but solely cruelty simply because engaging in "more human contact might threaten his control and power" (De Vos 117). The control and power are the two crucial tool parts lying at the core of his mechanic identity imposed on as well as attributed to him by the heteronormative patriarchal order. Sarah Kane projects an in-yer-face version of the notion that the real love is hard to come by through representing a character so mechanized like Tinker on the stage who tortures lovers, severs their limbs but at the end gives in to his desires and is able to love. Tinker

finally expresses his long-repressed desires felt towards Grace, to his new "Grace", right after he completes the Graham/Grace merging:

Tinker What's your name?

Woman Grace.

Tinker No, I meant -

Woman I know. It's Grace.

Tinker *(Smiles.)* I love you, Grace (Kane, "Cleansed" 42).

That Tinker has found it in himself to love is perhaps one of the most epiphanic moment for the audience in the play, coupled with the fact that "[his] authority has disintegrated points strongly towards hope" (Biber Vangölü 287). From this point on, the character of Tinker can be attributed to develop a perverted conscience that not only seems to be straying from ideology of which he was a staunch instrument but also defying its impositional schema targeting the subject.

In an interview in which she responds the media bias against her plays, Kane discusses how *Cleansed* was inspired by the real events and she further gives the example of the character Robin who is based on an imprisoned young black boy sentenced to prison on the same Robben Island with Nelson Mandela. The unfortunate nature of such inspiration coincides with what befalls Robin in the play, which is of the fact that the illiterate black boy, after being introduced to linguistic order or the Law of the Father in the Lacanian sense, learns that he has been subjected to a forty-five years sentence on the island, upon grasping such horrible "truth", hanging himself ("Sarah Kane Interviewed" 14). Lacking maternal affection, Robin also seeks for an objectification of subjectification through Grace who performs the role of a mother and teaches him how to read and write.

However, Robin is a character who is unable to solve the Oedipal complex as he still lingers on the loss memory of that symbiotic bond with the mother:

Robin Be my girlfriend?

Grace You're a lovely boy -

Robin I won't strangle you.

Grace A good friend but -

Robin I'm in love with you.

Grace How can you be?

Robin I just am.

I know you – (Kane, "Cleansed" 21-22).

Robin seeks for a maternal love and for a brief time finds it through Grace who initiates him to the linguistic order of the "Father" by teaching him but his Oedipal desires are denied by Graham who assumes the role of the "Father" in denying the child any sexual pleasure attributed to the mother:

Robin Will you -

Grace
Graham } No

Robin Be my girlfriend? (Kane, "Cleansed" 22).

Roughly translated as the pleasure in pain, jouissance in Lacanian psychoanalysis points to the excess of pleasure to the point of pain and death as the subject yearns for the wholeness it has been severed from upon entering into language. Graham deprives Robin of the unmediated jouissance from the maternal Thing, the source of the desire for the

child. His paternal presence threatens to castrate him. As Lacan points out, “Castration means that jouissance has to be refused in order to be attained on the inverse scale of the Law of desire” (*Ecrits* 700) since jouissance is the price of admission to entering into the rules and regulations of the symbolic order. One has to give it up and be assimilated into the linguistic order but as the subject attempts to substitute the lack stemming from being severed from the pre-linguistic symbiosis with the mother, jouissance threatens the subject to the point of death as the subject desires excessively to compensate the lack. This idea of the excess of physical pleasure to the point of death is enacted in scenes where Robin is forced to eat chocolates that he bought for Grace:

Tinker *lets go of* **Robin**.

He opens the chocolates.

He takes one and tosses it at **Robin**.

Tinker Eat.

Robin *(Looks at the chocolates. He starts to cry.)*

They're for Gracie.

Tinker Eat it.

Robin *eats the chocolate, choking on his tears.*

When he has eaten it, **Tinker** *tosses him another.*

Robin *eats it, sobbing.*

Tinker *throws him another.*

Robin *eats it.*

…

Tinker *tosses him the last chocolate.*

Robin *retches. Then eats the chocolate.*

Tinker *takes the empty tray out of the box - there is*

another layer of chocolates underneath.

Tinker *throws Robin a chocolate.*

Robin eats it.

Tinker *throws him another.*

….

Tinker *throws the empty box at him, then notices that*

Robin *has wet himself* (Kane, "Cleansed" 33-34).

As Lacan refers to jouissance "begin[ning] with tickle and end[ing] with blaze of petrol" (qtd. in Klepec 120), one sees a reflection of such potent description enacted in the play where Tinker forces Robin to burn all the books around him after he has wet himself; "**Robin** *burns as many books as he can and stands watching them go up in flames*" (Kane, "Cleansed" 34). The burning of the books foretells Robin's looming death. Since Robin gets more and more immersed in the law and rules of Father embodied through the books, he is unable to cope and solve the Oedipal dilemma condensed by Graham's rejection of his need for maternal love for Grace, eventually giving way to death. It is no surprise that this Oedipal clash, the rejection by the law of the Father, his symbolic castration, leads Robin to hang himself through Grace's pants as he is unable to cope with the reality of such law punishing his infantile desires emanating from the Oedipal complex:

Graham He's dying, **Grace**.

Grace (*Doesn't respond.)*

Graham *looks at* **Robin**.

Robin *looks at* **Graham** - *he sees him.*

Still choking, **Robin** *holds out a hand to* **Graham**. **Graham** *takes it.*

Then wraps his arms around **Robin***'s legs and pulls.*

Robin *dies.*

Graham *sits under* **Robin***'s swinging feet.*

Tinker *goes to* **Grace** *and takes her hand* (Kane, "Cleansed" 38).

The lack created by a separation from maternal Thing, the mother enacted by Grace, is a void that cannot be filled by Robin and the only way out is death since the lack or the void can never be filled. All human desires in accordance with Lacanian psychoanalysis revolve around such lack as well as all actions pursued have the unconscious goal of attainment of that lost primal symbiotic relationship with the mother. Lacan here asserts that:

> The objet a is something from which the subject, in order to constitute itself; has separated itself off as organ. This serves as a symbol of the lack, that is to say, of the phallus, not as such, but in so far as it is lacking. It must, therefore, be an object that is, firstly, separable and, secondly, that has some relation to the lack (*The Seminar* 103).

The primal unmediated jouissance pertaining to the symbiotic union with the mother that is hindered after the initiation to the Law of the Father is sought in social life in the form of *objet petit a*. This is a void one pursues in the hope that the fulfilment of such void would bring about an ontological completeness. However, Robin is unable to find his *objet petit a* to substitute for such lack, not to mention resolve his Oedipal complex at all, all of which leading to his tragic end.

Foucauldian notion of biopower as a new technology of power relies on the survival of the bodies rather than punishment and death by punitive power as population has become harder to be controlled. With the immense growth in population, advances in technology and abolishment of feudalism; there emerged a new technology of power, biopower, that demanded the survival of the bodies. Hence, the fact that bodies had to be regulated and population had to be controlled, resulted in the formation of hospitals, psychiatry clinics, meteorology, and weather reports. This new biopower necessitated the regulation and control of sex, sexuality and most importantly the body. Foucault makes a distinction between this ancient form of punitive power, the power of the sovereign in taking lives and a new technology of power, that is biopower which relies on fostering the bodies. Of this distinction between the disciplinary power and biopower, Foucault suggests that this new non-disciplinary power incorporates its predecessor, not completely rejecting its premises:

> From the eighteenth century onward (or at least the end of the eighteenth century onward) we have, then, two technologies of power which were established at different times and which were superimposed. One technique is disciplinary; it centers on the body, produces individualizing effects, and manipulates the body as a source of forces that have to be rendered both useful and docile. And we also have a second technology which is centered not upon the body but upon life: a technology which brings together the mass effects characteristic of a population, which tries to control the series of random events that can occur in a living mass, a technology which tries to predict the probability of those events (by modifying it, if necessary), or at least to compensate for their effects" (*Society Must Be Defended* 249).

This new technology of power, biopower, necessitates the regulation of “sex” to foster bodies and thereby enforcing a heteronormative binary of the gender matrix for the purpose of reproduction since “broadly speaking, at the juncture of the "body" and the "population," sex became a crucial target of a power organized around the management of life rather than the menace of death” (Foucault, “History of Sexuality” 147). “Sexuality” comes with regulations and appropriated gender norms, a heteronormative mode of reproduction since as Foucault emphasizes: “We … are in a society of "sex," or rather, a society "with a sexuality": the mechanisms of power are addressed to the body, to life, to what causes it to proliferate, to what reinforces the species, its stamina, its ability to dominate, or its capacity for being used” (*History of Sexuality* 147). In tracing a genealogy of sexuality, Foucault makes a distinction between the deployment of alliance, which refers to the ties of kinship and forming marriages and the deployment of sexuality which supersedes the deployment of alliance in an attempt to rid of its the restrictive mechanisms. As Foucault suggests, “the deployment of sexuality has its reason for being, not in reproducing itself, but in proliferating, innovating, annexing, creating, and penetrating bodies in an increasingly detailed way, and in controlling populations in an increasingly comprehensive way” (*History of Sexuality* 107). Appropriation of “sex” is crucial for the biopower and this form of appropriating inherently is indicative of an existing heteronormative binary gender matrix engraved in social reality. This calls for a feminist criticism; however, Foucault is “against such emancipatory or liberationist models of sexuality in *The History of Sexuality* because they subscribe to a juridical model that does not acknowledge the historical production of “sex” as a category, that is, as a mystifying “effect” of power relations” (Butler, “Gender Trouble” 122). Focusing on the category of sex as an indispensable part of the historical process of sexuality, Foucault is interested in how the sexed body is created within the discourse in imposing an inscription on the body and soul, a process of subjectification in its various forms. Foucault

emphasizes that human beings are made into subjects in three ways. The first and second modes point to the fact that human beings are divided and segregated as the others such as lepers, criminals or mental patients which are rendered as having no function in society so they were to be locked up. This division is orchestrated by an institution or a scientific clinic. During these two stages the person is in a constrained position, not allowed for a self-formation of identity. The process is inscribed on his body by a medium, be it is the state ideology or a scientific institution. The third mode, however, is of how a human being turns himself or herself into a subject, a self- "subjectification", where Foucault focuses on "processes of self-formation in which the person is active" (*The Foucault Reader* 11). This self-subjectification relies on "operations on [people's] own bodies, on their own souls, on their own thoughts, on their own conduct" (Foucault, "The Foucault Reader" 11). The subjectification Foucault speaks of is achieved through an external figure like Tinker who literally "tinkers with" bodies in *Cleansed*. Tinker terrorizes each one of its subjects and "everyone who does not fit into what society subsumes under normality, whether it be homosexuality, incest, illiteracy, or drug addiction, is subjected to severe treatments/punishments" (De Vos 112) at the hands of Tinker. In this vein, Tinker is an essential part of the regime of a coercive biopower imposed on the campus since it is such;

> a power whose task is to take charge of life needs continuous regulatory and corrective mechanisms. It is no longer a matter of bringing death into play in the field of sovereignty, but of distributing the living in the domain of value and utility. Such a power has to qualify, measure, appraise, and hierarchize, rather than display itself in its murderous splendor; it does not have to draw the line that separates the enemies of the sovereign from his obedient subjects; it effects distributions around the norm …the law operates more and more as a norm, and that the judicial institution is increasingly incorporated into a

> continuum of apparatuses (medical, administrative, and so on) whose functions are for the most part regulatory (Foucault, "History of Sexuality" 144).

Tinker takes the role of a voyeur gazing on its patients for whom he performs as the doctor He regulates manners and punish inhabitants of the institutions severely whenever they attempt to reveal an act of love. The brutal punishments by the hand of Tinker are the projections that point to his repression of his true desires felt towards Grace. Tinker does not often tend to kill, but correct:

> **Tinker** I'm not going to kill either of you.
>
> **Carl** I couldn't help it, Rod, was out my mouth before
>
> I -
>
> **Tinker** Shh shh shh.
>
> No regrets.
>
> *(He strokes* **Carl***'s hair.)*
>
> Show me your tongue.
>
> **Carl** *sticks out his tongue.*
>
> **Tinker** *produces a large pair of scissors and cuts off*
>
> **Carl**'s tongue.
>
> **Carl** *waves his arms, his mouth open, full of blood, no*
>
> *sound emerging* (Kane, "Cleansed" 11-12).

This heteronormative social order imposed on the inhabitants of the institution enforces corporeal punishment on the bodies in its most subversive in-yer-face form in *Cleansed*,

especially on Carl who does not hesitate to show acts of love towards Rod but punished severely for them. As the rituals of dismemberment in Carl's corporeal correction continues, any act of love or compassion outside of the heteronormative gender economy is met with extreme form of violence by Tinker:

> **Tinker** *is watching.*
>
> *He lets* **Carl** *finish what he is writing, then goes to him and reads it.*
>
> *He takes* **Carl** *by the arms and cuts off his hands.*
>
> **Tinker** *leaves.*
>
> **Carl** *tries to pick up his hands - he can't, he has no hands*
>
> **Rod** *goes to* **Carl**
>
> *He picks up the severed left hand and takes off the ring he put there.*
>
> *He reads the message written in the mud* (Kane, "Cleansed" 23).

The homosexual love threatens the inherent nature of the appropriate sexual relation as part of the binary gender system thus it must be severely punished "since anal and oral sex among men clearly establishes certain kinds of bodily permeabilities unsanctioned by the hegemonic order, male homosexuality would … constitute a site of danger and pollution, prior to and regardless of the cultural presence of AIDS" (Butler, "Gender Trouble" 168).

Michel Foucault traces the genealogy of power in his works, focusing on the distinction between a non-authoritative power - a power that is not enforced by law or state apparatuses in traditional sense- and what he calls power/knowledge that is governed by a naturally circular and encompassing "discourse" in the creation of the subject. For Foucault, discourse as a circular phenomenon in imposing on subjects' behaviour and not

to mention thinking processes creates power/knowledge, which in turn forms identity. In relation to gender, this power/knowledge has a regulatory effect on the subject in terms of imposing a binary logic of gender norms, out of which the abnormal is born as a consequence of being cast outside of such heteronormative matrix. Carl as a homosexual resident of the institution is heavily beaten and progressively amputated for not conforming to the heteronormative mode of production demanded by the patriarchal order. The violent response of such order against non-conforming members of the society are exemplified through "the voices" who obey the orders of Tinker: "Tinker *holds up his arm and the beating stops. He drops his arm. The beating resumes"* (Kane, "Cleansed" 10). Carl and Rod as a homosexual couple threaten the boundaries of the heteronormative sexual mode of production. The reproductive economy of the gender binary system would be rendered obsolete as the biopower imposes the fact that an "encounter with the totally "other" [connoting to homosexual relationships] always signifying death" (Irigaray 24). As for *Cleansed*, this signification of death is a symbolic one as is apparent in the rituals of dismemberment to which Carl is subjugated. Carl first loses the tongue followed by hands and feet. The brutal ritual of cutting off the tongue is an act done towards the erasing of the discourse on the homosexual love outside of the heteronormative gender economy, as Carl has always been open to talk of his love towards Rod throughout the play until he loses his tongue. Through these rituals, the audience witnesses the coerciveness of the heteronormative order in its most violent form. What the ideology at work does is eliminating and removing the power of speech and discourse as the very possibility of a discourse around the homosexual love, represented by Carl and Rod in the play, means the possibility of a resistance against the coercive forces of the binary gender matrix. In other words, what the ideology does through the deployment of Tinker followed by his brutal actions is eliminating the discourse out of the equation that discourse creates power/knowledge and in turn power/knowledge creates identity.

Carl and Rod in the play express their love through a discourse that resists the heteronormativity of gender. Eliminating the discourse is thus a pivotal task of the ideology that surpasses Tinker but nevertheless makes him an instrument of brutal corporeal corrections. In the deployment of such ideology that conceives eliminating the discursive power of the abject love in the form of same-sex as well as incest love, Tinker first cuts out Carl's tongue, hands, feet and penis but also mutes Grace by techniques of domination such as electrocution. However, as every character goes under a subjectification, Tinker is not resistant to it at all since as if this ubiquitous change in identity the other inhabitants are subjugated to leads Tinker to re-evaluate his own. Tinker's subjectification is evident in the epiphanic moment of the passionate love scene with the unknown woman and it would be wrong to see him as a mere brute at the deployment of ideology. Tinker begins to function outside of this ideology and its impositions by becoming a mechanic of non-subjectification in the merging of Grace/Graham that defies gender. As Delgado-García notes, Tinker is not an instigator only for the deployment of the heteronormative order since the ideology at work in the campus imposes punishment "irrespective of identities, desires, or behaviours: Graham's addiction to heroin, Grace's incestuous love for her brother, Carl and Rod's dispute over the necessity of marriage, Robin's heterosexual desire for Grace, and the unnamed Woman's exposure of her body" (234). In this respect, Tinker is an ambiguous character like Grace. He is betwixt and between the employment of ideology and an urge of compassion and love as opposed to it. The frictions in his identity are observed in his interactions with the unknown woman in the peep-show booth:

…

Tinker What you doing here?

Woman I like it.

Tinker It's not right.

Woman I know.

Tinker Can we be friends?

The flap closes.

…

Tinker *(Doesn't look at her.)*

What you doing here?

Woman I don't know.

Tinker You shouldn't be here. It's not right.

Woman I know.

Tinker I can help.

Woman How?

Tinker I'm a doctor (Kane, "Cleansed" 15-16).

Tinker is in a way the extreme form of a sadistic corrector, the result of a violence-ridden society enmeshed in wars, drug culture and pornography. He is the result of a culture embarking on a project of subjectification on its subjects through media, literature, films. For the purpose of achieving such goal, the ideology deploys a beautification of violence, whereby the violence that is beautified desensitize one, masking the reality from truth. Tinker can be said to develop his own moral compass and not necessarily belonging to any category. Tinker is not completely free from ideology but he is an inseparable part of its violent structure. His transformation makes him ambiguous but he embodies the Foucauldian idea that the resistance against the law only exists within the structures of

the law. Tinker's transformation echoes to some degree Robert De Niro's iconic Travis Bickle in Taxi Driver (1976) who similarly takes upon himself to eradicate the filth from the streets of New York. Both show acts of compassion towards prostitutes after having been initially rejected from women, acting violently as their moral compass dictates. Kane's Tinker embodies several means of the extreme form of subjectification the modern subject is subjugated to: He overdoses Graham, corporeally corrects Carl, cuts Rod's throat and objectifies women by frequently masturbating to them in the peep-show booths but in the end, he is able to love and facilitate a utopian vision of gender that breaks the very order he has been an instrument for.

Liminality, a term derived from the Latin word *limen* meaning threshold, as averred by Victor Turner, is the condition of being "betwixt and between," (*Ritual Process* 95) or in transition. Developing his theory of the liminal on Arnold Van Gennep's earlier theory on *Rites of Passage*, Turner benefits from the liminal aspect of the rituals through which the subject gains a new identity. The ritual has the liminal character of showing the subject the fact that it is neither here or there, but living on the margins until the ritual is completed. Turner broadens the liminal aspect of the rituals and attempt to apply it to the modern society, coining the term *limionoid* when referring to the modern industrial societies. Turner's theory provides a diverse angle in analyzing the Foucauldian and Butlerian conception of the subjectification period the subject undergoes through in modern societies. The theory of liminality has anthropological origins as Turner wrote extensively on the ritualistic aspect of the liminal in African tribes. Turner's famous concept relating to "public episodes of tensional irruption which [he] called 'social dramas'" (*Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* 33) which serve as a formula to explain social frictions through the terms "breach, crisis, redress, reintegration or schism" (*The Anthropology of Experience* 41). Turner's conception of social dramas is applicable to literature and in this case to the analysis of theatrical pieces since Turner draws attention

to the close relationship between the liminal and theatre. He indicates that “both ritual and theater crucially involve liminal events and processes and have an important aspect of social metacommentary” (Turner, *On the Edge of the Bush* 291). The formula of social dramas is explained as follows:

> In many field situations in markedly different cultures, in my experience of Western social life, and in numerous historical documents, we can clearly discern a community's movement through time as taking a shape to which we can hardly deny the epithet "dramatic." A person or subgroup breaks a rule, deliberately or by inward compulsion, in a public setting. Conflicts between individuals, sections, and factions follow the original breach, revealing hidden clashes of character, interest, and ambition. These mount toward a crisis of the group's unity and continuity unless rapidly sealed off by redressive public action, consensually undertaken by the group's leaders, elders, or guardians. Redressive action is often ritualized and may be undertaken in the name of law or religion. Judicial processes stress reason and evidence; religious processes emphasize ethical problems, hidden malice operating through witchcraft, or ancestral wrath against breaches of taboo or the impiety of the living toward the dead. If a social drama runs its full course, the outcome (or "consummation, " as Dewey might have called it) may be either the restoration of peace and "normalcy" among the participants or social recognition of irremediable breach or schism” (Turner and Bruner 39).

For Turner, the first phase of social dramas, the *breach* marks the “Breach of regular, norm-governed social relations [which] occurs between persons or groups within the same system of social relations” (*Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* 38). It is a phase in which the character in question deliberately breaks a rule in social order. The breach in *Cleansed* involves deeds causing disruption in the social order, exemplified first when

Grace removes her clothes and redresses in his brother Graham's clothes worn by Robin as the act of crossdressing marks a breach of the heteronormative gender norms:

> **Robin** *removes his underpants and stands shivering with*
>
> *his hands over his genitals.*
>
> **Grace** *undresses completely.*
>
> **Robin** *watches, terrified.*
>
> **Tinker** *looks at the floor.*
>
> **Grace** *dresses in* **Robin***'s/***Graham***'s clothes.*
>
> *When fully dressed, she stands for a few moments,*
>
> *completely still.*
>
> *She begins to shake.*
>
> *She breaks down and wails uncontrollably.*
>
> *She collapses.*
>
> **Tinker** *lifts her onto a bed.*
>
> *She lashes out - he handcuffs both arms to the bed*
>
> *rails.*
>
> *He injects her. She relaxes.*
>
> ***Tinker*** *strokes her hair* (Kane, "Cleansed" 7).

The recurrent image of inflicting wound on self-hood, the coherency of identity and gender reality as part of the argument of what this wound entails in the category of breach in Turnerian sense connotes to a "motif of the wound in *Cleansed* mark[ing] the play's

pulverization of the individuated fashioning of selfhood, and the discursive constitution of subjectivities that exceed the self–other dichotomy" (Delgado-García 232). This wound initially takes the form of a longing for a merge with Graham on Grace's part. This is an unintelligible discourse outside of our normative understanding of gender, as Grace insists to stay within the institution of correction, exclaiming: "**Grace** I look like him. Say you thought I was a man." (Kane, "Cleansed" 8). The wound also takes the form of same-sex love, a love attributed to the homosexual couple Carl and Rod. The incision deepens on the conventional understanding of selfhood, marking a significant breach in the heteronormative gender economy, as Carl pushes Rod to exchange wows of marriage to mark their love:

> **Rod** *(Takes the ring and* **Carl***'s hand.)*
>
> Listen. I'm saying this once.
>
> *(He puts the ring on* Carl*'s finger.)*
>
> I love you now.
>
> I'm with you now.
>
> I'll do my best, moment to moment, not to betray you.
>
> Now.
>
> That's it. No more. Don't make me lie to you.
>
> **Carl** I'm not lying to you.
>
> **Rod** Grow up.
>
> **Rod** I'll never turn away from you (Kane, "Cleansed" 5).

As Turner indicates, following the breach, the *crisis* escalates, as a result of which certain adjustive measures are taken to address the crisis, heal the wound, and thereby re-assert the subject to the status-quo in the name of what Turner called the redress of action:

> conflicts between individuals, sections, and factions follow the original breach, revealing hidden clashes of character, interest, and ambition. These mount towards a crisis of the group's unity and its very continuity unless rapidly sealed off by redressive public action, consensually undertaken by the group 's leaders, elders, or guardians (Turner, *On the Edge of the Bush* 292).

The *crisis* therefore in Sarah Kane's *Cleansed* reveals around the disruption caused by the main incision that is Grace's ubiquitous insistence on merging with Graham. The events of the crisis are furthered by Tinker's brutal reaction to the love of the same-sex couple and rituals of dismemberment. These brutal acts are exemplified first in scenes where Grace is raped by Voices since during the stages of crisis or redress, Turner believes, "use of organized ritualized violence" (*On the Edge of the Bush* 292) is observed, which is evident in the following scene:

> **Voices** Do it to me Shag the slag
>
> **Grace** *is raped by one of the* **Voices**. *She looks into* **Graham**'s eyes throughout. **Graham** *holds her head between his hands.*
>
> **Voices** Gagging for it
>
> Begging for it
>
> Barking for it
>
> Arching for it
>
> Aching for it

She gone?

Not a flicker (Kane, “Cleansed” 26).

The “voices” at the behest of Tinker, embodied in the unseen henchmen serve also in the play as the mediums enforcing the heterosexual mode of production engraved in the biopolitics of the patriarchal order. For possessing taboo of incestuous of desires towards her brother Graham and thereby posing a threat against the reproductive norms of the heteronormative order, Grace performs outside of such heteronormative gender economy, and for doing so she is brutally punished. Furthermore, *the redress of action* as the third phase of the social dramas marks the entrance of the liminal and it is “often ritualized and may be undertaken in the name of law or religion” (Turner, “On the Edge of the Bush” 292). During this third phase, *redressive action,* as Turner suggests, in order to limit the spread of crisis, certain adjustive and redressive "mechanisms," informal or formal, institutionalized or ad hoc, are swiftly brought into operation by leading or structurally repre-sentative members of the disturbed social system” (*Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* 39). In this vein, the rituals of dismemberment targeting the outspoken lover Carl in his relationship to Rod connotes to the adjustive mechanisms employed by heteronormative ideology to address the crisis by extreme form through the deployment of Tinker. Tinker’s unseen “Myrmidons”, the voices at his behest, starts with beating; “*The beating continues methodically until* Carl *is unconscious”* (Kane, “Cleansed” 10), followed by a metaphorical rape “Carl's *trousers are pulled down and a pole is pushed a few inches up his anus.”* (Kane, “Cleansed” 10). Carl loses his tongue for being so vocal of his love for Rod as “**Tinker** *produces a large pair* of *scissors and cuts off* Carl’s tongue” (Kane, “Cleansed” 12), then the hands for writing:

Tinker *is watching.*

He lets **Carl** *finish what he is writing, then goes to him*

and reads it.

He takes **Carl** *by the arms and cuts off his hands.*

Tinker *leaves.*

Carl *tries to pick up his hands - he can't, he has no*

hands.

Rod *goes to* **Carl**.

He picks up the severed left hand and takes off the ring he

put there.

He reads the message written in the mud.

Rod Say you forgive me.

(He puts on the ring.)

I won't lie to you, Carl.

The rat begins to eat Carl*'s right hand* (Kane, "Cleansed" 23).

In the last ritual of dismemberment, he is subjugated to, Carl loses his feet for dancing for Rod, "Tinker is watching *He forces Carl to the ground and cuts off his feet"* (Kane, "Cleansed" 30). Carl eventually then loses the penis which is used to complete Grace's merging as "**Carl** *lies unconscious next to her. He is naked apart from a bloodied bandage strapped around his groin."* (Kane, "Cleansed" 38). The brutal rituals target the subject's discourse, self-expression, the signatures of personality and identity, all of which pose a threat against the biopolitics of the heteronormative order as Delgado-García further notes:

> Carl's dismemberment is also the effect and condition of possibility for the subjectivizing power of the discourses of selfless love and totalizing punishment ... In suffering the mutilating blows, Carl's body becomes a twofold material citation, repeating, first, his desire to formally seal and repair his romantic relationship with Rod and, second, Tinker's prohibitions. Likewise, the stumps of Carl's arms are a testament to the heart-felt apology he writes in the mud after having betrayed Rod, and to Tinker's punitive power (235).

Staging *sparagmos*, the dismemberment of Carl's limbs, connotes to the fragmentation of the self, which stems from post-mirror stage phase and the loss of the *imago.* Kane draws our attention to the fact that identity is a fluid, non-stable and unfixed phenomenon. Carl's progressive sparagmos and his dissolution of the self is a subversive way of looking the argument on subjectification as Butler points out, "For Foucault, the subject who is produced through subjection is not produced at an instant in its totality. Instead, it is in the process of being produced, it is repeatedly produced" (*Psychic Life of Power* 93). It is the physical castration of his limbs that reveals a subversively violent corporeal subjectification ritual attempted on stage: Carl goes from a functioning, existing and discursive self to a non-existing one.

Ghosts occupy a liminal presence in plays as they are perceived as having unfinished business with the living, thus unable to pass through the gates of the underworld. As compared to the traditional employment of the trope of the ghost, the ghost of Graham is given a materialized emphasis in *Cleansed*. Graham literally enacts the role of the Father in the unresolved Oedipal complex from which Robin suffers tragically. The symbolic castration of Robin, his suicide by hanging, is executed by Graham. In this vein, Graham as a ghost occupy a material existence by killing Robin:

Graham He's dying, **Grace**.

Grace *(Doesn't respond.)*

Graham *looks at* **Robin**.

Robin *looks at* **Graham** - *he sees him.*

Still choking, **Robin** *holds out a hand to* **Graham**.

Graham *takes it.*

Then wraps his arms around **Robin***'s legs and pulls.*

Robin *dies.* (Kane, "Cleansed" 38)

Aside from the literal representation of the castrating father, Graham's ghost is representative of a memory. The ghost points to a past that haunts, which signifies Grace's incompatibility and inability to conform the rules and regulations of the heteronormative gender matrix as she does not feel in the right body. Thus, the ghost that haunts also embodies a possibility of how things could have been if Grace was in fact Graham. In other words, Grace is haunted by Graham's ghost because it represents what she wanted throughout his life: to be Graham. The more Graham the ghost is engraved in Grace's self, the fiercer his control is asserted over her identity:

Graham *dances - a dance of love for* **Grace**.

Grace *dances opposite him, copying his movements.*

Gradually, she takes on the masculinity of his movement,

his facial expression. Finally, she no longer has to watch

him - she mirrors him perfectly as the dance exactly in

time.

When she speaks, her voice is more like his. (Kane, "Cleansed" 13)

The haunting is the beginning of a transformation for Grace/Graham as Grace starts to feel the literal *animus* embodied in the ghost of Graham, masculine part of her feminine identity, takes control of the bodily functions; "**Grace** My balls hurt" (Kane, "Cleansed" 28). Kane subverts the notion of ghost's presence haunting the absence attributed to the ghost trope in literature. Graham is not simply conceived as a mere spectre since he perseveres till the last moment but also transforms. He kills Robin and he is able to make love to Grace; "*They begin to make love, slowly at first, then hard, fast, urgent, finding each other's rhythm is the same as their own.*" (Kane, "Cleansed" 14). All in all, Graham embodies the core essence of existence for Grace, which is of being Graham, and the audience sees the ghost of Graham which has material existence progressively coalesce into Grace, culminating in the formation of Grace/Graham.

As Turner indicates, the ritualistic process is characteristic of the liminal phase and the transition rite through which Grace merges with Graham can be analyzed through Turnerian formula. To achieve the perfect union that goes beyond the normative understanding of the binary logic of gender roles, Grace undergoes a subversive *rite of passage.* This is a transition rite which can be ascribed to the third phase of the social dramas that is *redress of action* where the ideology at work attempts to redress the crisis and maintain the status quo. Grace's merging with Graham ends in a hermaphrodite, which echoes Turner's association of symbols with the ritualistic process where the redress of action is

> ritualized in many ways, but very often symbols expressive of ambiguous identity are found cross-culturally: androgynes, at once male and female, theriomorphic figures at once animals and men or women, angels, mermaids,

> centaurs, human-headed lions, and so forth, monstrous com-binations of elements drawn from nature and culture (*On the Edge of the Bush* 295).

The figure of the hermaphrodite ritualistically realized in Grace/Graham merging as part of the phase of the *redress of action* thus occupies a liminal understanding since it is betwixt the male and the female, outside of the heteronormative gender matrix. This monstrous combination embodied in the merging challenges the gender reality which is purely a construct of culture. As it threatens its scheme of normalized and gendered subjects, certain adjustive measures are taken to address and heal the breach, ultimately resulting in either reintegration or schism.

The final phase *reintegration* or *recognition of irreparable schism* marks either the re-entrance of the ritualized and subjectivated into the social order, the *reintegration*, or *the recognition of schism* that has been achieved post-ritual. A schism occurs in *Cleansed* in the sense that at the ending of the play, Grace's new post-ritual "non-identity" breaks the heteronormative gender norms. The entity created breaks the social taboo of incest by providing a subversive and visceral representation of a transcendental unity in the merging. Even though Grace is rejected a subjectification by Tinker at first, she is later accepted as a patient. Tinker is in love with Grace but represses his desires as expressing them would undermine his authority. Grace actively seeks for a subjectification mediated through Tinker as she feels she was born in the wrong body:

> Graham, Robin } What would you change?
>
> **Grace** My body. So it looked like it feels.
>
> Graham outside like Graham inside (Kane, "Cleansed" 20).

Sarah Kane re-negotiates the idea of a fixed and stable selfhood by presenting stark contrasts that defy such notion. Grace goes through a series of operations by the hands of Tinker at his asylum to find a true-self that would resonate. Grace's transformation to Graham blurs the gender realities, challenging the perceptions of what means to be a man and woman. Grace perceives herself as part of a materialized Graham without whom an existence is impossible:

> **Graham** *takes one hand,* **Tinker** *the other.*
>
> **Grace** My balls hurt.
>
> **Tinker** You're a woman.
>
> **Voices** Lunatic Grace
>
> **Grace** Like to feel you here.
>
> **Graham** Always be here.
>
> And here.
>
> And here (Kane, "Cleansed" 28).

The fluidity of gender not only defies our normative understanding of gender roles but also shows that identity is not a stable, fixed phenomenon. The performativity of gender embodied in the transformation of Grace is condensed by an "all-encompassing punishment and love that is blind to incest and same-sex taboos" (Delgado-García 233). This unintelligible and utopic vision of gender manifest itself in the most controversial scene in which Grace completes her transformation to Graham by having her breasts removed by Tinker as well as a penis attached to her belly, culminating in the "body perfect" (Kane, "Cleansed" 47):

> Grace *lies unconscious on a bed. She is naked apart from a tight strapping around her groin and chest, and blood where her breasts would be.* Carl *lies unconscious next to her. He is naked apart from a bloodied bandage strapped around his groin.* Tinker *stands between them.* Tinker *undoes* Grace*'s bandage and looks at her groin.* Grace *stirs* (Kane, "Cleansed" 38).

Kane here deconstructs the heteronormative gender matrix in her in-yer-face way, providing a subversive way of re-evaluating what is posed as "true" sex by the binary logic enmeshed in social reality. This regulative and imposing "reality" enforces a binary logic of gender that is posed as true and appropriate. In the introduction to the Memoirs of the French hermaphrodite Herculine Barbin, Foucault delves into the question of "Do we truly need a *true* sex" (Barbin 7), questioning the appropriation of gender "abnormality" as "an "error" as understood in the most traditionally philosophical sense: a manner of acting that is not adequate reality. Sexual irregularity is seen as belonging more or less to the realm of chimeras" (Barbin 10). This fictitious attitude of furthering the problem of gender away from its real counterparts, the real experiences of people outside the imposed gender norms is a discursive problem. It can thus be said that it is the ubiquitous circulative nature of the discourse at the behest of the heteronormative gender matrix that enforces such masking out and appropriation of truth which is concealed by the discursive power of the ideology.

Pondering over the domain of the abnormal and its genealogical structure, Foucault points to a tripartite analysis of the abnormal phenomenon consisting of the human monster, individual to be corrected (the incorrigible) and the masturbator. Of monstrosity, Foucault traces the inherent characteristics of the human monster in disturbing the law. Foucault indicates that "Monstrosity, however, is the kind of natural irregularity that calls law into question and disables it" (*Abnormal* 64) as there can be a monstrosity "only when the confusion comes up against, overturns, or disturbs civil,

canon, or religious law" (*Abnormal* 64). For Foucault, another type of monstrosity begins to emerge in classical age, which is the hermaphrodite, the mix of two sexes that defies the laws of nature. In his historical account of the image of the hermaphrodite, Foucault takes a look at two cases of hermaphroditic nature and marks a change in them:

> Anyway, when we compare the first and later case, the Rouen case and the Lyon case, the one from 1601 and the one from 1765, we can see a change that is, so to speak, the autonomization of a moral monstrosity, of a monstrosity of behavior that transposes the old category of the monster from the domain of somatic and natural disorder to the domain of pure and simple criminality. From then on, we see the emergence of a kind of specific domain that will become the domain of monstrous criminality or of a monstrosity that does not produce its effects in nature and the confusion of species, but in behavior itself" (*Abnormal* 74).

The image of the monster takes the form of the criminal in blurring the boundaries of the appropriate gender norms in the form of the hermaphrodite. Furthermore, "sexuality" for Foucault cannot be detached from its inherent association with power and the circulative and ubiquitous discourse that creates the power-knowledge surrounding sexuality:

> Biological theories of sexuality, juridical conceptions of the individual, forms of administrative control in modern nations, led little by little to rejecting the idea of a mixture of the two sexes in a single body, and consequently to limiting the free choice of indeterminate individuals. Henceforth, everybody was to have one and only one sex" (Barbin 8).

Merging of Grace with Graham forms the hermaphrodite and thereby this subversive "re-appropriation" of what is conceived as "gender" in *Cleansed* is in conflict with heteronormative schema of erasing the discourse on the homosexual, the hermaphrodite

or the lesbian means a renunciation of the existence of such realities. Discourse in this respect affects the way one thinks, acts and even performs. Even though Foucault insists on the fact that sexuality is an essential part of discursive power as claimed in his *History of Sexuality*, as Judith Butler puts forward, "he fails to recognize the concrete relations of power that both construct and condemn Herculine's sexuality" (*Gender Trouble* 120). Foucault refers to "h/er [Herculine's] world of pleasures as the happy limbo of a non-identity, a world that exceeds the categories of sex and of identity" (*Gender Trouble* 120). Butler is critical of Foucault's re-appropriation and romanticizing of Barbin's story in terms of reducing her story to her liminal nature of non-identity. Butler points out that this pre-discursive nature of the multiplicity of Herculine's pleasures is not completely outside the power relations as Foucault claims, but in part within the law and power-knowledge:

> Herculine's pleasures and desires are in no way the bucolic innocence that thrives and proliferates prior to the imposition of a juridical law. Neither does s/he fully fall outside the signifying economy of masculinity. S/he is "outside" the law, but the law maintains this "outside" within itself. In effect, s/he embodies the law, not as an entitled subject, but as an enacted testimony to the law's uncanny capacity to produce only those rebellions that it can guarantee will—out of fidelity—defeat themselves and those subjects who, utterly subjected, have no choice but to reiterate the law of their genesis" (*Gender Trouble* 135).

Grace/Graham merging is located at this place of non-identity Foucault speaks of. However, the fact that Tinker as the doctor creates a new entity that goes beyond one's understanding of gender, proves the fact that one is never outside of the structures of power and law. Nevertheless, Grace/Graham provides a striking encounter of walking on the borders of gender and not dying since traditionally such crossings culminates in tragic

deaths. Regardless of what the merge achieves, therefore, it makes the audience question the very truth of gender reality that is enmeshed in their relationships within social hierarchy:

> **Grace/Graham** Body Perfect.
>
> …
>
> Felt it.
>
> Here. Inside. Here.
>
> And when I don't feel it, it's pointless.
>
> Think about getting up it's pointless.
>
> Think about eating it's pointless.
>
> Think about dressing it's pointless.
>
> Think about speaking it's pointless.
>
> Think about dying only it's totally fucking
>
> pointless.
>
> Here now.
>
> Safe on the other side and here (Kane, "Cleansed" 44).

It is at least plausible to think that the symbiosis counterposes the conventional idea of a unique, fixed and stable self by presenting "an amalgam of sexual, gender, and psychic identities: those of Carl, Graham, and herself" (Delgado-García 234). Grace/Graham is not only representative of the fluidity of identity in the play. Tinker also transforms from being a mere brute of the heteronormative order imposed on the campus to a person who is able to love and cry. In similar vein, the unknown woman whose progression from an

objectified body to be gazed upon to a lover is completed when she is eventually called Grace. Robin's tragic transformation marks a re-enactment of an unresolved Oedipal complex leading to his tragic death upon entering the impositions of the law of the Father. Lastly, the rituals of subjectification in the form of dismemberment that Carl undergoes marks a transformation from a subject to a non-subject, the unintelligible non-body whose sacrifice of the phallus creates the new entity in the merging of Grace/Graham that deconstructs gender.

Furthermore, even though Barbin challenges the regulations of the categorization of sexuality, which is always inherently imposing a binary gender system, h/er "sexuality constitutes a set of gender transgressions which challenge the very distinction between heterosexual and lesbian erotic exchange, underscoring the points of their ambiguous convergence and redistribution" (Butler, "Gender Trouble" 128). Similar to Butler's critique of Foucault's account of Barbin, the merging of Grace with Graham in *Cleansed*, does not necessarily break the law but in and of itself challenges its impositions. Since this subjectification is achieved by a figure of authority who is an integral part of the patriarchal order, Tinker, one should understand the law as

> the law which is not simply a cultural imposition on an otherwise natural heterogeneity; the law requires conformity to its own notion of "nature" and gains its legitimacy through the binary and asymmetrical naturalization of bodies in which the Phallus, though clearly not identical with the penis, nevertheless deploys the penis as its naturalized instrument and sign" (Butler, "Gender Trouble" 135*).*

Tinker embodies the law, the corrector, the doctor, the panoptic tower-gazer and thereby the Phallus in *Cleansed*. That Grace can only achieve her transformation through Tinker affirms the original Foucauldian notion that sexuality and the creation of sexual identities

coexist within the power-knowledge relations. In regards of the liminal subjectification process by which the subject gains a new identity through the rites of passage, Butler recognizes the fact that "the rites of passage that govern various bodily orifices presuppose a heterosexual construction of gendered exchange, positions, and erotic possibilities. The deregulation of such exchanges accordingly disrupts the very boundaries that determine what it is to be a body at all" (*Gender Trouble* 169). Kane subverts the nature of such rites of passage that are heteronormative in nature, e.g. the circumcision rites, marriage rites, nuptial rites by envisaging a rite of passage that breaks the norms outside of the binary logic of gender in the form of a hermaphroditic transcendence that goes beyond gender. Kane understands the inherent nature of violence caused by the appropriation of sex by the heteronormative order and reflects them in their extreme forms in her plays and in this respect *Cleansed* provides the most visceral and shocking forms of violence unleashed on the figure of the other, the abject.

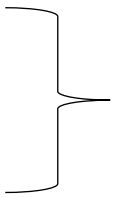
Julia Kristeva indicates in "Powers of Horror" (1980) that "any secretion or discharge, anything that leaks out of the feminine or masculine body defiles" (*Powers of Horror* 102), meaning that anything oozing out of our body shakes the very boundaries of meaning, results in the abject. The brutal representation of violence, gore, blood and cruelty coupled with the taboo representations of incest and homosexual love embodied in the tradition of in-yer-face theatre makes it a fit place for the representation of the abject:

> A wound with blood and pus, or the sickly, acrid smell of sweat, of decay, does not *signify* death. in the presence of signified death - a flat encephalograph, for instance-I would understand, react, or accept. No, as in true theater, without makeup or masks, refuse and corpses *show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live. These body fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of

death. There, I am at the border of my condition as a living being (Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 3).

Aside from its obvious connotation to the in-yer-face oeuvre, Kristeva's notion of abjection refers to the processes of identity formation. It coincides with Foucauldian subjectification but differs in terms of presenting the very threat of forming identity as opposed to the abject, the other and the disgusting. Furthermore, abjection refers to identifying oneself as not the abject but the opposite of it. Many of the core problems of today including racial bigotry and misogyny stems from such identification since "it is … not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (Kristeva, "Powers of Horror" 4). This marks the link between the liminal subjectification of Grace and the abject nature of her hermaphrodite identity achieved at the hand of Tinker. Grace/Graham occupies the liminal terrain of gender and the merging does not envisage neither man or woman. This ambiguous positioning of gender disrupts the status quo and presents an unintelligible way of looking at gender relations. At first hand, Grace seems to possess the kindness and maternal affection attributable to female towards Robin:

Robin



I think you've got a nice body.

Graham

Grace I'm glad. I think you should write that word now.

Robin My mum weren't my mum and I had to choose another, I'd choose you.

Grace Sweet boy.

Robin If I -

If I had to get married, I'd marry you.

…

Grace Listen to me. If I was going to kiss anyone here, and I'm not but if I was, it would be you (Kane, "Cleansed" 20).

Having been barred from maternal affection, Robin's self-redemption is through ending his life by Grace's clothes as he still lingers on the memory of the unresolved Oedipal attachment. He cannot find a substitute for the loss and the only way is clearly death. Grace's ambiguity stems from her liminal abject standing between the forces of Graham the lover and Tinker the mechanic. This liminal positioning is evident in the stage directions of Scene Twelve "**Graham** *is on one side of her,* **Tinker** *the other*" (Kane, "Cleansed 28). However, Grace's silence towards Robin's suicide marks a liminal shift from Graham to Tinker. As Grace's body is began to be shaped by Tinker through his correctional techniques, Graham is rendered obsolete:

Tinker Can make you better.

Grace Love you.

Graham Swear.

Tinker Yes.

Grace On my life.

Graham Don't cut me out.

…

Tinker *drops* **Grace***'s hand.*

An electric current is switched on.

Grace'*s body is thrown into rigid shock as bits of her*

brain are burnt out.

The shaft of light grows bigger until it engulfs them all.

It becomes blinding (Kane, "Cleansed 29).

Grace's abjection stems from a liminal position between an object of desire by Tinker who idealizes this object of desire embodied in the figure of Grace as he keeps calling the unknown woman Grace and a subject yearning for a self-subjectification but eventually evolving into a non-subject in the form of the hermaphrodite abject. In this respect, the term abjection itself has inherent liminal attribution; as it is conceptionally marks an inbetweener notion stuck between the subject and object and since the abject,

> is anterior to the distinction between subject and object in nonnative language. But the abject is also the non-objectality of the archaic mother, the locus of needs, of attraction and repulsion, from which an object of forbidden desire arises. And finally, abject can be understood in the sense of the horrible and fascinating abomination which is connoted in all cultures by the feminine or, more indirectly, by every partial object which is related to the state of abjection (in the sense of the non-separation subject/object). it becomes what culture, the *sacred* must purge, separate and banish so that it may establish itself as such in the universal logic of catharsis" (Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader* 317).

Kristevan notion of the abject is significant to understand the subjectification process. For Kristeva, this subject formation is done through the exclusion of the other. The abject forms the disgust and filth that has been expulsed from the body. The subject's identity

formation is done through the abject, by associating oneself with the not-me. In this respect, abjection has close connotations to understanding sexism, homophobia and racism in terms of the construction of the subject's identity as opposed to the ones that are conceived as the abject; since "homophobia, and racism, the repudiation of bodies for their sex, sexuality, and/or color is an "expulsion" followed by a "repulsion" that founds and consolidates culturally hegemonic identities along sex/race/sexuality axes of differentiation" (qtd in Butler, "Gender Trouble" 170). In this respect, Carl and Rod can be regarded as the abject couple in the play, perceived as the abomination of an unholy union between men as dictated by the heteronormative social order. As they pose a direct threat against the biopolitics of the heteronormative social order, which is dependent on reproduction of human species, their punishment and corporeal correction depicted in Carl's dismemberment by Tinker is justified as they refuse to be part of such order. In a similar vein, Grace's merging with Graham, the creation of a hermaphrodite is a form of abjection, outside of normative boundaries of gender. By writing and staging an ending that challenges such norms, Kane deconstructs the heteronormative narrative reality of gender as dictated by phallocentric social order. It shocks the audience to the core of their understanding of what is dictated as "sexuality" by creating a visceral creation of a new entity on stage, a hermaphrodite. By our normative understanding, this ultimate Abject at least serves as a subversive form of subjectification achieved outside the norms of heteronormative patriarchal order. Grace's incestuous desires towards his brother Graham form her as an abject and they are met with severe repercussions by the coercive heteronormative order as a result of which she is raped by the Voices for breaking the incest taboo. The voices represent the punitive force of the discursive power of the symbolic order and the form of "defilement" Grace is subjected to is explained by Kristeva:

> Defilement, by means of the rituals that consecrate it, is perhaps, for a social aggregate, only-one of the possible foundings of abjection bordering the frail identity of the speaking being in this sense, abjection is coextensive with social and symbolic order, on the individual as well as on the collective level. By virtue of this, abjection, just like *prohibition of incest,* is a universal phenomenon; one encounters it as soon as the symbolic and/or social dimension of man is constituted ... abjection assumes specific shapes and different codings according to the various symbolic systems" (Powers *of Horror* 67-68).

This defilement and filth stemming from abjections such as the incest taboo is often avoided and excluded by purification rites in societies in the name of religion and law. This marks the aforementioned phase of what Turner called the *redress of action* in social dramas as Kristeva writes; "The purification rite appears then as that essential ridge … filth becomes defilement and founds on the henceforth released side of the "self and clean" the order that is thus only (and therefore, always already) sacred" (*Powers of Horror* 65). However, Kane's *Cleansed* presents a subversive way of challenging the heteronormative purification rites since it rather envisages a unification rite in the merging of Grace with Graham by which the incest taboo is broken in the transcendental entity of a hermaphrodite.

The abject causes the intermixing of the internal with the external and when the subject comes too close with what is disgusted, the abject, this causes a dread of a primal repression long repressed. Kristeva gives the example of a corpse which upon encountered reminds one its own death which has been repressed after entering into the symbolic order. As Butler claims "the boundary of the body as well as the distinction between internal and external is established through the ejection and transvaluation of something originally part of identity into a defiling otherness" (Butler, "Gender Trouble"

170). In subject-formation, the expulsed, the "not-me" phenomena such as Jewishness, homosexuality or racism, is elevated to the status of the repulsed. As the subject is always drawn into the abject as Kristeva claims, the confusion created by the intermixing of internal with external causes identities formed through the exclusion of others. The conception of the inner and the outer encapsulating one's desires and fears of the others are similarly constructed through

> a border and boundary tenuously maintained for the purposes of social regulation and control. The boundary between the inner and outer is confounded by those excremental passages in which the inner effectively becomes outer and this excreting function becomes, as it were, the model by which other forms of identity-differentiation are accomplished. In effect, this is the mode by which Others become shit" (Butler *Gender Trouble* 170).

When the subject comes too close with the abject, the meaning collapses. The inner becomes in contact with the outer, amalgamating, culminating in the "inner" "truth" being questioned through such a shocking encounter with the abject. However, Butler points out that "if the "inner world" no longer designates a topos, then the internal fixity of the self and, indeed, the internal locale of gender identity, become similarly suspect" (*Gender Trouble* 170). Addressing this suspicion, Butler believes that a true gender identity does not exist at all, the repeated actions of "gender" imposed and inscribed by the heteronormative order, creates what is known as gender;

> […] because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all. Gender is, thus, a construction that regularly conceals its genesis; the tacit collective agreement to perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the credibility of those productions— and the

> punishments that attend not agreeing to believe in them; the construction "compels" our belief in its necessity and naturalness." (*Gender Trouble* 178).

In this vein, Grace's act of crossdressing means a renunciation of appropriated gender codes of the heteronormative order, as Shiller indicates, "cross-dressing often has to negotiate its historical ties to the mirror, the illusionistic representation of some essential idea of woman, the idea of her presence as absence, or its practical potential as a subversive means to investigate the arbitrary construction of gender and gender roles" (15-16). This confirms the Butlerian claim that gender is performative, and this is where Butler is closer to Foucault in asserting that any "performance" by the appropriated gender is based on a set of gestures, acts and behavior. They are all imposed by fictitious truth engraved in and culturally imposed by the ubiquitous discursive power-knowledge, since, for Butler, "if gender is not tied to sex, either causally or expressively, then gender is a kind of action that can potentially proliferate beyond the binary limits imposed by the apparent binary of sex" (*Gender Trouble* 143). The performativity of gender is explained through a pre-existing set of repetitions of acts:

> The act that one does, the act that one performs, is, in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene. Hence, gender is an act which has been rehearsed, much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it, but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again (Butler, "Performative Acts" 526).

Grace as a liminal character in this respect does not *possess* a gender but performs one, and the act of crossdressing affirms the performativity of gender counterposing against the heteronormative gender matrix engraved in cultural reality. In the end, she forms a transcendental unity, achieved in the hermaphrodite, which goes beyond gender. This unintelligible vision signifies the fact that even though Grace performs *being* a man in the

act of crossdressing- not to mention the fact that Grace performed being a woman up until her brother died-, Sarah Kane subverts Simon de Beauvoir 's notion that "one is not born a woman but rather becomes one" by making Grace become or *perform* Graham. In connection with Turner's formula of social dramas, Butler points out "as in other ritual social dramas, the action of gender requires a performance that is *repeated* ... a reenactment and reexperiencing of a set of meanings already socially established; and it is the mundane and ritualized form of their legitimation" (*Gender Trouble* 178). Thus, what is conceived as gender is a ritualized set of behaviour enforced by a binary gender matrix, created through a repeated set of actions, gestures, notions culturally determined and inscribed on the subject. Kane's subversive way of challenging the gender norms in *Cleansed* confirms the Butlerian claim where she asserts

> That gender reality is created through sustained social performances means that the very notions of an essential sex and a true or abiding masculinity or femininity are also constituted as part of the strategy that conceals gender's performative character and the performative possibilities for proliferating gender configurations outside the restricting frames of masculinist domination and compulsory heterosexuality (*Gender Trouble* 180).

Through a ritual of subjectification connoting to her liminality by which Grace gains a new identity, Grace's symbiosis with Graham is concluded with "the subject [Grace] disappear[ing] in the Other [Graham]" (Verhaeghe 101). This points to a transcendental unity, the hermaphrodite, "who has ascended to an aura-surrounded divinity as the embodiment of the reconciliation of all oppositions" (De Vos 116). That Grace actively seeks for subjectification to assume a new "identity" connotes the idea that "my apperception *(moi)* stems from the *image de l'autre,* the image of someone else that I identify with" (De Vos 113). This means that Grace seeks to form her new identity based on Graham who represents more than the object of desire, the Lacanian *objet-petit-a* in

the sense that Graham embodies the "body perfect" (Kane, "Cleansed" 43) for Grace. Grace achieves a merging through Tinker, a metaphorical *Gestalt*, based on the notion that "I is an other" (Lacan, "Ecrits" 96), and this provides a vision of gender going beyond any heteronormative mode of production.

The almost utopian vision of a unity achieved in *Cleansed*, the new symbiosis moving beyond gender biases echoes Donna Haraway's Cyborg which by definition is "a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction" (149). Grace/Graham merging is a mechanical construction by the medium of Tinker, through which Kane visualizes a social reality by a fictitious representation of non-gender, thus fittingly ascribable to the cyborg in the Harawayan sense. Furthermore, the cyborg is a new vision that "does not dream of community on the model of the organic family, this time without the oedipal project" (151). Harawayan cyborg is outside of our normative understanding of gender matrix stemming from the psychoanalytical schema of the Oedipal dilemma. In this respect, it is true to assert that Grace/Graham transcends the impositions of the post-Oedipal schema, that necessitates an understanding of woman and thereby gender reality in its clear-cut binary logic deriving from the complex. Cyborg goes beyond that and can be regarded, by its premise, sharing the same programme with what Kane presents in the merging of Grace/Graham: it not only challenges our perception of what gender actually means but also presents a rather subversive way of re-thinking it by simply rendering it obsolete. Grace/Graham in the form of Harawayan cyborg teaches the need to transcend into cyborgs:

> … we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics. The cyborg is a condensed image of both imagination and material reality, the two joined centres structuring any possibility of historical transformation. In the traditions of 'Western' science and politics - the

> tradition of racist, male-dominant capitalism; the tradition of progress; the tradition of the appropriation of nature as resource for the productions of culture; the tradition of reproduction of the self from the reflections of the other – the relation between organism and machine has been a border war (150).

The cyborg, as Haraway further avers, does not rely on the law of the Father and by rejecting the "Frankenstein's monster, the cyborg does not expect its father to save it through a restoration of the garden; that is, through the fabrication of a heterosexual mate, through its completion in a finished whole, a city and cosmos" (151). Cyborg occupies a new understanding of gender in a post-gender world. This new understanding is observed in the post-gender creation of Grace/Graham, as "it [Grace/Graham] has no truck with bisexuality, pre-oedipal symbiosis, unalienated labour, or other seductions to organic wholeness through a final appropriation of all the powers of the parts into a higher unity" (Haraway 150). Haraway's vision of the cyborg counterposes the rhetoric on the employment of technology in reproductive sex to foster more bodies that are essential to the biopolitics of modern nations. As Haraway notes, cyborgs are "more to do with regeneration and are suspicious of the reproductive matrix and of most birthing" (181). Haraway further indicates that the biopolitics in its traditional sense is not the answer as "We require regeneration, not rebirth, and the possibilities for our reconstitution include the utopian dream of the hope for a monstrous world without gender" (181). Kane in this respect reveals the subversive truth of the monstrous reality that is the gender reality that is imposed on its subjectified bodies. It is her powerful symbolism in revealing the monster through the image of a monster as Haraway affirms: "Cyborg imagery can suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves. This is a dream not of a common language, but of a powerful infidel heteroglossia" (181).

Judith Butler's genealogy of gender forfeits normative ways of viewing gender as located in its binary logic but presents a rather post-humanist way of re-thinking gender that transcends the limitations of identity politics. In accordance with Foucauldian notion that the new biopower which demanded the control of the population and bodies coincides with the subjectification processes of human beings, Butler asserts that "this process of subjectivation takes place centrally through the body" (*The Psychic Life of Power* 83). Butler recognizes the need for the destruction of the body for the creation of the subject's identity in Foucault who claims that "the body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration" (*Counter-Memory* 148) This essentially means the newly formed subject takes hold of the destroyed body on which an inscription of power/ knowledge is embedded in. In this respect, Kane's subversive merging destroys the body and the repetitive cycle of subjectification is broken. Grace/Graham is a non-subject, it is un-inscribable corporeal creation it stands outside of our normative understanding of body. Grace's self coalesces into Graham and renders the male anima obsolete in the process. Butler questions the dissolvement of the body into the subject, which forms the disassociated self, asking:

> If the body is subordinated and to some extent destroyed as the dissociated self emerges, and if that emergence might be read as the sublimation of the body and the self be read as the body's ghostly form, then is there some part of the body which is not preserved in sublimation, some part of the body which remains unsublimated? (*The Psychic Life of Power* 83).

Kane's ending makes one re-think the above quote in favor of the creation of a self that harmonizes both Grace and Graham. The transcendental sublimation in the merging of Grace with Graham envisaged at the end of *Cleansed* comes at the expense of the aforementioned destruction of Grace's "body". However, the question arises in terms of

whether this sublimation marks a disunity or a "disassociated self" as Foucault claims or a transcendental unity with a new vision of breaking the heteronormative rules of binary gender logic in *Cleansed*. The premise of *Cleansed* in breaking taboos, representing homosexual love on stage stemming from the fact that "homosexuality is instrumental to the overthrow of the category of sex" (Butler, "Gender Trouble" 127) in challenging the binary matrix of gender, as well as challenging gender norms works in favor of the latter. The transcendental symbiosis Grace achieves comes at the cost of a destruction of identity and personality on Grace's part. Grace's sacrifice to merge with Graham makes her lose her own identity. On the other hand, from the viewpoint of feminist criticism, the merging does not create a symbiosis based heavily on Graham's identity whereby Graham is rendered obsolete and redundant since Grace/Graham challenges the very boundaries of the heteronormative patriarchal order by eluding from the simple binary opposition of gender equating men with women. This new hermaphrodite, new symbiosis going beyond gender biases at the end of *Cleansed* renegotiates the issue of subjectification of the liminal other(s) through theatre. As this chapter argued, *Cleansed* goes beyond merely representing an extreme form of Lacanian *jouissance* that the real love is painfully harder to come by. However, it provides an alternate discussion on the gender roles forcing the audience to ponder over a possibility of a world free of gender biases and repression of sexual desires through a violent and grotesque representation of the otherwise.

CHAPTER III:

JOURNEYING INTO THE UNCONSCIOUS: PSYCHOLOGICAL SUBJECTIFICATION OF THE PHANTASMAGORIC LIMINAL OTHER IN ANTHONY NEILSON'S *THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DISSOCIA* (2004)

> The unconscious constantly reveals the 'failure' of identity. Because there is no continuity of psychic life, so there is no stability of sexual identity, no position for women (or for men) which is ever simply achieved. Nor does psychoanalysis see such 'failure' as a special-case inability or an individual deviancy from the norm. 'Failure' is not a moment to be regretted in a process of adaptation, or development into normality … Instead 'failure' is something endlessly repeated and relived moment by moment throughout our individual histories. It appears not only in the symptom, but also in dreams, in slips of the tongue and in forms of sexual pleasure which are pushed to the sidelines of the norm … there is a resistance to identity at the very heart of psychic life (Jacqueline Rose 91).

Anthony Neilson's experiential drama *The Wonderful World of Dissocia* was first produced in Glasgow by Tron Theatre and then picked up to be performed again as part of the Edinburg International Festival in 2004, followed by a revival by the National Theatre of Scotland in 2007 for an extensive tour in the United Kingdom. The critical receptions of the play ranged from calling it a "tedium bordering on dementia" (qtd in Reid 492), to marking it "a tremendously brave piece of stagecraft that carries both insight and heart" (Fisher 53). Critical bitterness of some London-based reviews notwithstanding, the Scottish playwright's play is praised at home for its visually stunning

first act enriched by colorful set design and energetic, queer but powerful performances. *Dissocia's* first colorful act echoes the same non-sensical amusement and wit in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, followed by a rather static and anemic second act in a psychiatric prison room in which the protagonist is kept, through which the audience witnesses the shocking truth of Lisa's psychological imprisonment and her perpetual medicational and psychiatric subjectification. Even though Neilson was famous for his plays that were considered as part of the in-yer-face movement in the 1990s along with Sarah Kane and Mark Ravenhill, mainly Normal (1991) and The Penetrator (1993), he counts his drama as experiential. Neilson draws specific attention to the aim of elevating drama to its most powerful visual and visceral level in an interview with Tim Abraham, indicating that "I've always felt that theatre should have a real visceral effect on the audience . . . I'm not really interested in being known as a great writer. I'm more interested in ensuring that people's experience in the theatre is an interesting or surprising one" (qtd in Reid 489). Neilson's experientiality envisages a dramatic experience that "engage[s] the morality of an audience" (6) in theatre where they become "participants rather than voyeurs" (7). *The Wonderful World of Dissocia* in this respect excels at providing a visceral as well as a visually stimulating experience of Lisa's inner voyage for identity, absent to her in the real world, through which "the audience feel, breathe and experience the fragile mental state, extreme emotions, violence, inner world and traumatic internal journey of the heroine as a probable domestic abuse victim" (Biçer 31).Trish Reid refers to critics that observe a failure in *Dissocia* and these critics claim that "[*Dissocia*'s] comedy is derivative and not funny enough, and its political message is not robust or direct enough" (492). However, Neilson is not interested in forming a contextually political agenda in *Dissocia* and he is careful not to develop an anti- psychiatric discourse of the subjectified who is perpetually controlled and monitored, pointing out that:

> It is important to me, however, that this play does not seem biased against the notion of psychiatric treatment; on some level, such treatment is always about the suppression of individuality which already loads the dramatic dice somewhat. In light of this, I would ask directors/designers to be careful not to tip the dice even further. For example, it's important that the room has a window: to omit a window would hint at an unacceptably inhumane environment (93).

Such stage directions are deployed for the purpose of dismissing the possibilities of a political message on the psychiatric subjectification of the soul on which Foucault and Butler have written extensively. Trish Reid is critical of the reviews that give too much emphasis on the text's political agenda, thereby ignoring the visually and viscerally stunning display of *Dissocia* with incredible design. Reid believes that Neilson's experiential theatre "gives significant weight to the elements of performance other than written text" (489). According to Reid, Neilson's plays and *Dissocia* in this respect, are actually enactments of "problematising the politics of representation itself" (493) as opposed to the negative critical receptions of the play specifically indicating the incoherent political content and message. Nevertheless, she points out the fact that "This is not to say that in Neilson's most recent work text has disappeared altogether … in Neilson's theatre, political engagement does not necessarily consist only in the topics but also in the forms of engagement" (498). In this vein, this chapter treats *Dissocia* as a theatrical work incorporating a rich language and archetypal characters enriched by powerful symbolism in the first act of a phantasmagoric dream excursion into Dissocia by employing a Jungian analysis. It then seeks an analysis on the renegotiation of the conception of the subjectification of the soul in Foucauldian and Butlerian sense in the second bleak act. The stark contrast between two acts culminate towards a critique in terms of exploring the play's premise in portraying Lisa Montgomery Jones'

psychological liminality and her inner voyage to her unconscious. Her adventure into a magical land in search of an identity that is disallowed to her in real life by the dominant patriarchal social order is studied in this chapter to understand "on a visceral level why she is drawn to her condition" (Neilson 7) by mindscaping to a fantasy.

Dissocia begins with an ominous scene where Lisa in her thirties is tuning the e-string of her acoustic guitar until the string snaps followed by a rattle in her letter box, the intrusion of Victor Hesse who dresses up like Sigmund Freud, pointing towards the fact that Lisa is entering into a dream sequence as Freud was most famous for his interpretation of dreams. Victor with her wise look and pocket watch acts as the mediator facilitating the protagonist into the dream sequence. This acts as the archetypal call for an adventure for the heroine, just as the rabbit lures Alice into Wonderland, but in a dissimilar fashion instead of running away into the rabbit hole, he perfectly explains Lisa why everything has been out of balance in her life: she hast lost an hour during a flight from New York. To restore it and balance her life, which she admits was out of balance lately, she is instructed to venture into Dissocia, a dream-like fantasy world. As she descends into Dissocia in the most non-sensical way through an elevator, she is welcomed to this topsy-turvy world by the overly anxious and insecure Insecurity guards who do not hesitate to show off their insecurities in every manner. She is then initiated to the world of Dissocia by a rite of ridiculous nature identical to Monty Python humor, performed by an Oath-taker by pleading allegiance to the missing Queen Sarah of House Tonin of Dissocia in defending this phantasmagorical world from her bitter enemy the Black Dog King. In search of her lost hour, she meets the scapegoat who suffers from not being able to be blamed for anything anymore. The mischievous trickster figure embodied in the scapegoat attempts to rape Lisa but she is saved by Jane, a council worker who substitutes herself for victims in Dissocia and thus she gets raped by the goat instead of Lisa. The polar bear sings a beautiful song to Lisa to restore her faith in animals inhabiting

Dissocia and she later flies with Jane and drops bombs on Black Dog's supporters. After reaching Lost Property run by Britney and wise but mute Biffer, Lisa encounters two pairs of bizarre characters, Argument and Inhibitions and Laughter and Ticket, all suffering from not performing their identified roles properly, caught in a web of ingesting perpetual hot dogs. The characters she encounters during her adventures in Dissocia point to Lisa's real-world struggles of not developing a coherent female identity and the confusion, incoherency and lacking of a properly developed identity. What Lisa experiences in *Dissocia* is reminiscent of what Alice goes through in terms of her evident confusion of identity as part of her problematic individuation process throughout her adventures in both *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*. This idea of identity confusion is also presently embodied in all of the non-sensical characters in Neilson's *Dissocia*. The insecure guards suffer from being overly anxious of their personalities, the scapegoat suffers from not being blamed for anything anymore, Argument has lost any sense of argument, Ticket misses its ticket every time and Laughter has forever lost his sense of humor, all point towards a theme of identity in crisis plaguing Dissocia. They all admit the fact that they exist in Lisa's head and they fight Lisa's war for her but it is time for Lisa to reclaim her destiny and title, Queen Sarah of House Tonin. The title allegorically points to Serotonin, a chemical compound used in psychiatric clinics to correct mental illnesses, dissociative disorder in Lisa's case, to face Black Dog King and defeat him to save the kingdom. The colorful first act ends with her striking encounter with the enemy and Lisa sees someone familiar in the figure of Black Dog King, his boyfriend Vince. The second act is formed with a gray and dark set "as the audience discovers in the starkly contrasting second act which takes place inside a muffled white room where Lisa is being treated by the staff of a psychiatric unit for a dissociative disorder" (Reid 489). Lisa is constantly monitored, drugged and visited by family and friends who remind her the fact that she lacks and must develop a coherent identity to face the struggles of the real world.

Her sister Dot asks her not to refuse drugs as she takes hers every day, pointing out that the illness is hereditary and she does not want to be associated with a lunatic sister. Lisa has a difficult relationship with her boyfriend Vince who reminds her of the real-world struggles, her inability to fit in and conform to society which in a way condemns her, divides her, categorizes her to be controlled, drugged and monitored. A close reading of Neilson's *Dissocia* thus raises issues on the forced subjectification of the bodies and souls in clinical spaces through drug usage, renegotiating the impositions forced upon the body and soul in terms of restricting and confining the subject, which are overtly rejected by Lisa who journeys back into her inner self 'Dissocia' to assume the identity absent to her in the real world.

Anthony Neilson's *Dissocia* employs the theme of identity crisis and presents a visceral story of the inner journey of Lisa Montgomery Jones' search for identity in visualizing the repressed traumatic experiences of Lisa located in her unconscious but reflected in her dream excursion revealed in the first act of the play. *Dissocia* takes its inspiration from Lewis Carrol's *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* and Lyman Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, but it differs from them in the sense that both Alice and Dorothy complete their journeys and come back home matured. Indeed, Alice and Dorothy do not feel themselves belonging to the topsy-turvy fantastical worlds they journey through but they rather know and accept the social order their identities are engraved in. However, Lisa Jones does not wish to leave Dissocia and return home since "home" signifies the responsibilities and difficulties she has to shoulder, the social impositions forcing her to be someone she is not and a social order that is "normalized" through drugs. (Karadağ 212, translation my own). Furthermore, as Neilson himself points out, *Dissocia* provides a much bloodier if not more visceral take on Alice's adventures in Wonderland, indicating that "If you like Alice in Wonderland but there's not enough sex and violence in it, then Dissocia is the show for you" (Law 350). Lisa's

inner journey to Dissocia to reclaim her title, Queen Sarah of House Tonin coincides with what Alice aims to achieve in Through the Looking Glass: she literally journeys through a chess board, meeting various "pieces" such as the White Knight along the way, tackling the obstacles on her way to be promoted to a "queen":

> Another Rule of Battle, that Alice had not noticed, seemed to be that they always fell on their heads; and the battle ended with their both falling off in this way, side by side. When they got up again, they shook hands, and then the Red Knight mounted and galloped off. 'It was a glorious victory, wasn't it?' said the White Knight, as he came up panting.
>
> 'I don't know,' Alice said doubtfully. 'I don't want to be anybody's prisoner. I want to be a Queen.'
>
> 'So you will, when you've crossed the next brook,' said the White Knight. 'I'll see you safe to the end of the wood—and then I must go back, you know. That's the end of my move (Carroll 211).

The descent into the rabbit hole in *Alice in Wonderland* or using the mirror as a passage to the Wonderland serve as a motif indicating an inner journey into the unconscious and they are embodied through the elevator scene in *Dissocia*, evident in the stage direction Neilson gives: *The elevator begins its descent* (*although, curiously, it sounds more like an underground train*) (22). Additionally, the stage design of the first act attempts to depict an inner journey into Lisa's psyche troubled with identity confusion:

> In Act One there is no scenery as such. Instead, the playing area is covered with domestic carpeting. Ideally, the stage should be raked. In venues with a proscenium arch it is suggested that the area in front of the safety curtain is also carpeted, that the first scene should be played in front of the curtain and that the curtain should be lifted after the elevator sequence, as Lisa enters

> Dissocia, to reveal the full expanse of carpet. This design concept is recommended for two reasons: firstly, it suggests that Act One is occurring in Lisa's 'interior'; secondly, such a large expanse of carpet mimics the view we have of the world in infancy – the hope being that the audience will be subconsciously more imaginative as a result.
>
> The emphasis in the first act is on colour, imagination and variety in all departments; but in costume terms this should be built up slowly. The elevator passengers will look quite normal; the Guards likewise, though one might begin to introduce some subtly odd elements. The first really outrageous costumes shouldn't appear until the Oathtaker team enters. This will serve to ease us into the world of Dissocia and maintain at least a tenuous link to the real world. In the 'Lost Property' sequence, Lisa is totally immersed and you can be as outrageous as you want (11).

It can be inferred from these stage directions that Lisa is not capable of performing the identity she is given within the social order owing to the fact that she lingers on with infantile worldview she once had and she has not been able to reach maturity so she needs to journey into Dissocia to achieve maturity as she closed herself off from the outside world and she is inaccessible by it (Karadağ 206, translation my own). In the same vein, Alice's confusion of identity and the question of who Alice is are often encountered many times in the books. Alice keeps changing in shapes and sizes in this new world that is the phantasmagoric Wonderland and this is indicative of her confusion of identity. Indeed, a very important theme that runs through the Alice books is identity and there are a lot of instances where Alice has to explain herself to the creatures she encounters by answering who she is but she often finds it very difficult to do so, thereby the question of who Alice is becomes a very important question throughout the books (Korkut-Naykı 00:43:35-00:44:00). In her encounter with the caterpillar sitting on a mushroom which is

symbolically associated with the phallus and sexual virility along with Alice's confusion of her sexual identity and puberty, Alice clearly suffers from a lack of coherent identity:

> 'Who are *you?*' said the Caterpillar. This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied, rather shyly, 'I—I hardly know, Sir, just at present—at least I know who I *was* when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then. ''What do you mean by that?' said the Caterpillar, sternly. 'Explain yourself! ''I can't explain *myself,* I'm afraid, Sir,' said Alice, 'because I'm not myself, you see. ' 'I don't see,' said the Caterpillar. 'I'm afraid I can't put it more clearly,' Alice replied, very politely, 'for I can't understand it myself, to begin with; and being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing. ''It isn't,' said the Caterpillar. 'Well, perhaps you haven't found it so yet,' said Alice; 'but when you have to turn into a chrysalis—you will some day, you know—and then after that into a butterfly, I should think you'll feel it a little queer, won't you?' (Carroll 40).

In a similar vein, as she attempts to find the lost hour that would bring balance to her life, Lisa encounters characters that echo her fragmentation of identity, suffering from not fulfilling their roles and identities. The characters Lisa meets in her excursion to Dissocia are the embodiment of the struggles and difficulties one suffers from in the real world as they serve as reflections of social impositions on each individual by the social order that attempts to fabricate normalized identities. The insecurity guards are the embodiment of feeling unsecure about their own looks and behaviour after interrogating Lisa who has just landed on Dissocia:

> *The* **Guards** *seem pleased with themselves*.
>
> **Guard 2** Well – I think we did pretty well there!
>
> **Guard 1** We did not bad.

Guard 2 We did OK.

Guard 1 We could have done better.

Guard 2 A lot better.

Guard 1 We made a total balls of it!

Guard 2 I was talking absolute shit!

Guard 1 I feel so fucking worthless! (Neilson 31).

As the identity formation is a mutual phenomenon along with the fact that the way one identifies oneself and the way one conceives oneself within the social order shapes one's identity, what matters most is that they must be accepted and met by the social norms and expectations. (Karadağ 207, translation my own). If such process fails, one is easily discarded as the other. Lisa is discarded as other even though her desire for recognition is always suppressed. Thus, this dream like wonderland called Dissocia is a way out for her to be someone with a quest to have a purpose. Furthermore, similar to the insecurity guards, Laughter has lost the most precious thing he ever had, his sense of humour in *Dissocia*:

Argument *sits down*. **Laughter** *brays out another laugh*.

Lisa Why do you keep doing that?!

Ticket He's lost his sense of humour.

Lisa Oh, I'm sorry. That must be awful for you.

Laughter Are you being sarcastic?

Lisa No, not at all.

Laughter I can't tell, you see. I tend to just laugh and hope it fits. It fits more things than not, I find.

Lisa How did you lose it?

Ticket He was the victim of a buse.

Lisa (*not smiling*) Oh – that's … terrible.

Ticket Isn't it? Especially as the buse has long been considered extinct.

Laughter In the wild at least (Neilson 78).

Imaginary characters in Dissocia, in this respect, Argument and Laughter, are revealed to show one aspect of identity that is lost to them, but also another one that is hidden: they are the queen's protectors. These imaginary characters with two sets of identities, one in conflict and the other is hidden and repressed denote the fact that all stereotypical rules and even language is turned upside down, culminating in a show of complete identity disorder in the first act in stark contrast with the second (Karadağ 203, translation my own). *Dissocia* follows the same pattern of nonsensical language and play on words peculiar to Alice books in which Lewis Carroll subtly investigates the role of language in shaping one's identity. This points to the fact that that Lewis Carroll was ahead of his time in uncovering the incoherency as well as the illusion of language in forming identities which are thought to be determined by their place in a structure of which they are an integral part. Unlike Structuralism which focuses on the grounding principle that language is generated by human consciousness, Post-structuralism does not provide a grounding principle in the pursuit of fixed meaning. It opposes to the structuralism's clear-cut binary oppositions and claims that more than one meaning exists in the form of chain reactions of associations in the mind. While structuralism offers an orderly analysis of the text, Post-structuralism tries to decompose the text, tracing the conflicts in meaning

and traces of ideology. The deconstruction is a process which enriches one, making one aware of the fact that language one uses is in fact a constructed playground of ideologies in conflict with one another. Furthermore, Derrida's concept of *différance* in this respect means that since language is the playground of different associations of the signifiers, the real "meaning" is achieved through differences. For Post-structuralism, then, there is no fixed meaning and the sign ("meaning") which is constructed by ideology is actually a culmination of a mental trace by the play of signifiers (associations). In this vein, language always betrays Alice when confronted with question of who she is. This post-structuralist idea of a language which creates an illusion affirms the idea that there is no fixed identity because of the fact that language always *defers*. This idea of language in creating confusion of self is remarkably well-placed within the norms of the non-sensical literature Carroll is famous for in the books. Advancing on the board, Alice enters the wood "where things have no names" (Carroll 155), meeting the fawn but forgets who she is:

> 'What do you call yourself?' the Fawn said at last. Such a soft sweet voice it had! 'I wish I knew!' thought poor Alice. She answered, rather sadly, ' Nothing, just now.' 'Think again,' it said: 'that won't do.' Alice thought, but nothing came of it. 'Please, would you tell me what *you* call yourself?' she said timidly. 'I think that might help a little.' 'I'll tell you, if you'll come a little further on,' the Fawn said. 'I can't remember *here*' (Carroll 156).

The passage through the wood marks an entry into a pre-linguistic phase where the symbolic order has not yet infiltrated through the child's mind. Indeed, when symbolic order is restored and language of the Other is re-established, the fawn innately flees the scene terrified, claiming that Alice is a human child. The underlying subtext of such

encounters are supportive of the post-structuralist claim that language illusively shapes one's identity so there cannot be one fixed meaning let alone a coherently fixed self. The ending premise of *Dissocia* confirms that Lisa will go back to Dissocia in her quest of a "coherent" identity, which is, from a post-structuralist point of view, cannot be achieved. She can never achieve a coherent identity of her own since it is impossible to form one in a social conjuncture where a gendered and familial normativity is imposed on her feminine self. Since this does not resonate with her imaginatively rich mind, Lisa feels she must venture back to Dissocia to at least pursue one that is provided through the fantasy, the dream. This post-structuralist notion of the implausibility of a fixed self-echoes Lacan and his ideas on the formation of the self, which are located in his essay on the Mirror Stage. Through the Mirror Stage, a process of the formation of self which necessitates a separation from the mother, is initiated in which the formation of I is achieved at the expense of entering into the Law of the Father and the symbolic order which ends the symbiotic union with the maternal figure. The image the child sees on the mirror is an illusion of a self, separated from mother, marks a fragmentation of a self that can never be fully restored, resulting in the idea that:

> The mirror stage is a drama whose internal pressure pushes precipitously from insufficiency to anticipation—and, for the subject caught up in the lure of spatial identification, turns out fantasies that proceed from a fragmented image of the body to what I will call an "orthopedic" form of its totality—and to the finally donned armor of an alienating identity that will mark his entire mental development with its rigid structure (Lacan, "Ecrits" 78).

Lacan also asserts that unconscious functions similar to how language functions in terms of substituting a lack. The separation from the mother, entry into Symbolic Order, is so shocking for the child that the result is repression that ultimately creates the unconscious. Obviously, one does not need the unconscious in the imaginary order where no imposition

is forced upon, where every desire is met immediately, as evident from what Freud called the Pleasure Principle. When Lacan says the "unconscious is structured like a language" (*Ecrits* 737), he means that just as unconscious always seeks the fulfillment of desire that one was familiar with as infants, language in a way functions the same way in always deferring one to another object in one's quest to find that fulfillment. Lacan called this phenomenon *objet petit a* which serves as a substitute to the lack that is lost as by entering into the symbolic order of the Other which enforces the formation of the subject. The term has a pre-linguistic connotation in representing the symbiotic union with the mother but to substitute this lack, *object petit a* always serves as a medium of desire that always defers to the "fantasy" of restoring the symbiosis, which for Lacan cannot be achieved. The objet petit a by its premise is inherently doomed to fail in restoring one's symbiotic union with mother but it is essential to life and it manifests itself even in dreams which as reflections of desire share the conundrum of desire in always deferring to *petit as* in perpetuity. The objet petit a manifest itself in Lisa's dream excursion as the lost hour. In the attainment of this lost hour that is lost during a flight which points to anomalies from which Lisa suffers from in real life in terms of not being able to conform to the rules and regulations of the social order, she is promised a restoration of peace and balance to her life. To restore peace, she accepts the journey:

> **Victor** You didn't get it back! Somehow, in all the temporal confusion of that instant, the hour that you surrendered – the hour that was rightfully yours – went astray! Do you see?
>
> *Pause.*
>
> Your watch is not an hour slow, Lisa, *you* are.

Over the next speech, lights narrow down on to **Lisa**. *A stage mike is used to add a hint of reverb to her voice. Strange, discordant sounds can be heard on the soundtrack.*

Lisa Yes … yes, you know, that's right – I was really ill after that flight. And ever since, I've had this sort of … head cold, that I can't seem to shake off … And God, yes, you know it has been since then! Everything was OK before that trip to New York. But so … it's not me then, is it? I mean, it's not just me? This isn't just … how I am. Oh God and, you know, I *knew* that! I told them! Everyone's been giving me such a hard time about it – saying I don't care about anyone but myself, that I was just being lazy and miserable, but I wasn't! It wasn't my fault! I just lost an hour along the way!

Return to normal.

But, so – is there a way to get it back?

Victor I am sure of it.

Lisa And everything would be back … back to how it was?

Victor Yes. If you reassimilate the hour, balance will be restored to your life.

Lisa Balance will be restored to my life … God, you know, that's just like me to go losing an hour! I'd lose my head if it wasn't screwed on! So what do I have to do? (Neilson 20).

Lisa continues talking about her objet petit a, her lost hour, in a song called "What's an Hour" sung by her, denoting the fact that even though it is crucial for her to restore the lost hour, "an hour is just a construct Concocted by an order-hungry race" (Neilson 47). This affirms the Lacanian notion that the price of admission to the symbolic order is giving up the jouissance, entering into the laws and regulation of ideology that hurts. Having

acknowledged the fact that Lisa, a woman in her thirties, could not form a coherent identity and still lingers on her childhood innocence because of a childhood trauma, the hour serves as her objet petit a which deceptively promises the fact that the attainment of the lost hour would provide the long-desired symbiotic pre-linguistic union with the mother where no laws or regulations of the Other is imposed upon the subject. From a Lacanian point of view, the hour will always be lost for Lisa and this necessitates a journey back into Dissocia as evident in the final scene of the play: "*Dissocia still exists, caged within her head. There is little doubt that she will return to her kingdom*" (Neilson 110). This points to a perpetual search of coherent identity which is inherently impossible to achieve as the subject will always remain a fragmented being after being fully immersed with the Law of the Father and the symbolic order. This point where Lacanian identity-formation engages with the post-structuralist claim that there can never be a fixed self marks the entrance of the Foucauldian phenomena of subjectification to the discussion that is parallel to the post-structuralism in claiming that subjectification is not a *fait accompli* but a repetitive formation:

> the subject who is produced through subjection is not produced at an instant in its totality. Instead, it is in the process of being produced, it is repeatedly produced (which is not the same as being produced anew again and again). It is precisely the possibility of a repetition which does not consolidate that dissociated unity, the subject, but which proliferates effects which undermine the force of normalization (Butler, "The Psychic Life of Power" 93).

Michel Foucault gives great emphasis on the formation of the subject and questions how the external and internal factors contribute to the realization of such a repetitive process. In delving into the question of the subject, Foucault calls the process of identity-formation of the subject as objectification of the subject, offering three modes of

objectification of the subject in his analyses. The first mode of objectification of the subject is the scientific classification, through which Foucault attempted to understand the role of language and discourse in the formation of the subject. In relation with the first mode, the second mode of objectification of the subject is of the dividing practices that historically incorporated the processes of isolating the diseased, poor and insane, all of which giving rise to the psychiatric correction, medicine, hospitals and prisons. The third mode, subjectification, is how a subject form and transforms itself to a subject:

> The first is the modes of inquiry which try to give themselves the status of sciences; for example, the objectivizing of the speaking subject in grammaire generale, philology, and linguistics. Or again, in this first mode, the objectivizing of the productive subject, the subject who labors, in the analysis of wealth and of economics. Or, a third example, the objectivizing of the sheer fact of being alive in natural history or biology. In the second part of my work, I have studied the objectivizing of the subject in what I shall call "dividing practices." The subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others. This process objectivizes him. Examples are the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, the criminals and the "good boys." Finally, I have sought to study-it is my current work-the way a human being turns himself into a subject. For example, I have chosen the domain of sexuality-how men have learned to recognize themselves as subjects of "sexuality" (Foucault, “The Subject and Power” 778).

In this vein, the second mode of objectification which Foucault calls the dividing practices, the confined subject is a victim caught in the processes of objectification, controlled and monitored by a disciplinary power. This mode obviously revolves around the correction processes of the patients suffering from mental disorders as well as prisoners. Such mode of objectification of the subject is applied to those members of

society living on the margins, necessitating the person in question to be constrained in a passive position. The form of subjectification Lisa Montgomery Jones is enforced to undergo by the state-sponsored mental institution in an attempt to normalize her fragmented self suffering from dissociative disorder echoes this form of subjectification that divides, controls and monitors by spatial confinement. This method is inherently detached from the third mode of objectification, that is called *subjectification* or the self-formation of the subject as it dictates a disciplinary power, through techniques of dominance, to inscribe its will on the body and soul of the subject. Foucault has written extensively on the dividing principles of the masses in his works, tracing the genealogy of madness and the confined. Foucault in his early works saw the soul "as an instrument of power through which the body is cultivated and formed … [becoming] a normative and normalizing ideal according to which the body is trained, shaped, cultivated, and invested; it is a historically specific imaginary ideal *(ideal speculatif)* under which the body is materialized" (Butler, "The Psychic Life of Power" 90). With the advance of technology of biopower that necessitated the survival of the bodies, the punitive elements of the disciplinary power, the torture and taking life are replaced by contemporary spatial confinement techniques that shifted the focus on the correction of the body to the correction of the soul. In relation with the domination techniques of medicinal and clinical correction, Foucault avers that "medicine is a power-knowledge that can be applied to both the body and the population, both the organism and biological processes, and it will therefore have both disciplinary effects and regulatory effects" (*Society Must be Defended* 252). The regulatory effect of the drugs in psychiatric control to numb the self is evident in *Dissocia* when Lisa asks for lighter pills but she is force to take what is prescribed:

Nurse 2 *enters.*

Nurse 2 Hello again.

He empties the pills into **Lisa**'*s hand and pours her a glass of water*.

Lisa *stares at them*.

Lisa Are these the same ones as before?

Nurse 2 Before when?

Lisa It's just I asked Dr Clark about some other pills. He said he'd see if there was anything less heavy.

Pause.

Nurse 2 These are what it says on your sheet (Neilson 100).

This adds to the claim that Lisa as the subject who is confined is also subjected to an encompassing discursive schema employed by psychiatric control that enforces the repetitive subjectification of the identity of a prisoner. In this vein, Foucault is of the notion that the subjectification of the confined or the prisoner is not realized through an external power apparatus, but as a counter-argument, "the individual is formed or, rather, formulated through his discursively constituted "identity" as prisoner. Subjection is, literally, the *making* of a subject, the principle of regulation according to which a subject is formulated or produced" (Butler, "The Psychic Life of Power" 84). The subject can only be constituted by its own regulative limits which is part of the discursive power-knowledge of medicine that circulates the subject in spatial captivity, pointing to the fact that "prison thus acts on the prisoner's body, but it does so by forcing the prisoner to approximate an ideal, a norm of behavior, a model of obedience. This is how the prisoner's individuality is rendered coherent, totalized, made into the discursive and conceptual possession of the prison" (Butler, "The Psychic Life of Power" 85). This deployment of a discursive subjectification as Foucault envisaged it is subverted by Neilson who presents us a heroine who rejects any idealization or normalization imposed on her

already fragmented self. Even though the second act shows Lisa often taking her medication willingly, ceasing the medication dissociates her from real life that overwhelms her. Thus, she chooses to stop taking pills so that she can venture into Dissocia in search of a self where she is the Queen, not a failed subject who is scorned for being abnormal by family and boyfriend. Furthermore, Lisa disobeys the processes of medicinal subjectification imposed on her identity by venturing into Dissocia. The subtle use of symbolism such as polar bear affirms the notion that Lisa is very protective of her imaginatively rich psyche embodied through the creation of Dissocia which presents a stark contrast to the anemic second act in the bleak psychiatric prison room. In Lisa's case, the polar bear symbolically refers to an encompassing internal struggle to fight against external forces to preserve an untainted self, body and soul which are protected from the impositions of subjectification to which she is enforced. The soul in the form of encapsulating the imposing regulations of the discursive medicinal power-knowledge is what imprisons the actual body, thus serving as a prison of its own:

> The man described for us, whom we are invited to free, is already in himself the effect of a subjection much more profound than himself. A "soul" inhabits him and brings him to existence, which is itself a factor in the mastery that power exercises over the body. The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body (Foucault, "Discipline and Punish" 30).

This obsession with correcting the soul by psychiatric control has its origins in the great confinement of the masses, but it also is a modern phenomenon. In response to the Foucauldian notion of the subject, Butler points out that "If discourse produces identity by supplying and enforcing a regulatory principle which thoroughly invades, totalizes and renders coherent the individual, then it seems that every "identity," insofar as it is totalizing, acts as precisely such a "soul that imprisons the body" (86). Butler then

associates the imprisoning effect of the soul with the psyche in the purpose of countering Foucault. Butler emphasizes that in Lacanian subject-formation the subject is "always produced at a cost, and whatever resists the normative demand by which subjects are instituted remains unconscious" (86) after being introduced to the symbolic order. In this regard, it is concluded that "thus the psyche, which includes the unconscious, is very different from the subject: the psyche is precisely what exceeds the imprisoning effects of the discursive demand to inhabit a coherent identity, to become a coherent subject. The psyche is what resists the regularization that Foucault ascribes to normalizing discourses" (Butler, "The Psychic Life of Power" 86). This psychic resistance is formed through the creation of a mindscape of fantasy embodied through Dissocia in Lisa's troubled psyche which shows the boundless imagination of a female self in a response against the patriarchal impositions. This unconscious psychic resistance Butler speaks of should be considered within the psychoanalytical discourse, since whatever is repressed to the unconscious during the psychoanalytic notion of Lacanian subject-formation. The Lacanian view on the formation of the subject theoretically incorporates the formation of "I" as an *Other*, not to mention the separation of the child from its symbiotic unity with the mother and narcissism, revealing itself especially potently in dreams. In an ensuing final battle, Lisa, the Queen of Dissocia, confronts her bitter enemy Black Dog King in the final moments of her dream excursion at the end of the first act:

> CHARGE!
>
> *And set off towards the enemy, swords aloft.*
>
> *The Dissocians follow, all of them shouting.*
>
> **Lisa** *watches them disappear into battle.*
>
> *The sound is deafening now – the sound of battle – which soon becomes the sound of death, as the Dissocians are slain by the Black Dog army.*

Lisa *watches helplessly, in fear and sorrow. The sound of the battle finally ceases, and a shadowy figure emerges from the carnage.*

Lisa *backs away from him as he walks towards her – backs away until there is nowhere left to go.*

Finally, the Black Dog King steps into the light and **Lisa** *sees his face for the first time.*

It is a face she knows only too well. She shakes her head in horror and disbelief.

Lisa Oh my God – it's you!

For a moment, the lighting suggests we are back in her flat (Neilson 92).

This encounter with the big Other embodied in the figure of the Black Dog King serves as a projection of Lisa's external struggles with patriarchal impositions to his inner journey. The magical land of Dissocia points to the idea that Lisa can be said to project a rejection of a familial interiority as part of the heteronormative schema of creating gendered roles by locating his boyfriend as the enemy. Additionally, she completely disregards the figure of the paternal figure as a king and most importantly employs the maternal attribution of a Queen for Dissocia.

Foucault calls for new forms of subjectivity in his later works to liberate it from the impositions of state-sponsored objectifications of subjectification: "the disciplinary apparatus of the state operates through the totalizing production of individuals, and because this totalization of the individual extends the jurisdiction of the state (i.e., by transforming individuals into subjects of the state), Foucault will call for a remaking of subjectivity beyond the shackles of the juridical law" (Butler, "The Psychic Life of Power" 100). However, Foucault was much more interested in the transformation of the

perception of the physician as an identity in his early works, tracing the genealogy of how the image of the physician has been given soul-correcting status and how the modern psychiatrist came to inherit such legacy. In his genealogy of the birth of the asylum, Foucault gives account of a case of a seventeen-year old girl subjected to a brief clinical confinement:

> It was decided to subject her to a regime of strict authority; "the keeper, in order to tame this inflexible character, seized the moment of the bath and expressed himself forcibly concerning certain unnatural persons who dared oppose their parents and disdain their authority. He warned the girl she would henceforth be treated with all the severity she deserved, for she herself was opposed to her cure and dissimulated with insurmountable obstinacy the basic cause of her illness. Through this new rigor and these threats, the sick girl felt "profoundly moved . . . she ended by acknowledging her wrongs and making a frank confession that she had suffered a loss of reason .... After this first confession, the cure became easy: "a most favorable alteration occurred . . . she was henceforth soothed and could not sufficiently express her gratitude toward the keeper who had brought an end to her continual agitation, and had restored tranquility and calm to her heart (*Madness and Civilization* 257).

Foucault here draws attention to the moral identity of the doctor in correcting the patient in question as opposed to the scientific identity, whereby the doctor "by relying upon that prestige which envelops the secrets of the Family, of Authority, of Punishment, and of Love; bringing such powers into play, by wearing the mask of Father and of Judge, that the physician, … became the almost magic perpetrator of the cure … and restored the order of morality" (*Madness and Civilization* 257).The function of confinement in the asylum then had inherently possessed a moral value in the pseudo-scientific identity of

the doctor in doctor-patient relationship, which is closely associated with the role of a thaumaturgist as Foucault calls it in curing the "madness", giving birth to

> a structure that formed a kind of microcosm in which were symbolized the massive structures of bourgeois society and its values: Family-Child relations, centered on the theme of paternal authority; Transgression-Punishment relations, centered on the theme of immediate justice; Madness-Disorder relations, centered on the theme of social and moral order (*Madness and Civilization* 258).

The physician drew his power from such moral correction and was attributed a magical connotation in the 18th century but the modern psychiatrist came to inherit this moral duty of correcting the subject as "positivism imposes itself on medicine and psychiatry, this practice becomes more and more obscure, the psychiatrist's power more and more miraculous" (Foucault, "Madness and Civilization" 259). In linking the soul-correction processes of the confined with the emergence of the psychoanalytic evaluation of the patient, Foucault finds a common inherited pattern attributed to the psychiatrist, suggesting "What we call psychiatric practice is a certain moral tactic contemporary with the end of the eighteenth century, preserved in the rites of asylum life, and overlaid by the myths of positivism" (*Madness and Civilization* 260). The positivist doctor by nature of his positivist virtue could not accept such magical connation he was attributed to and in addressing madness, changed or more accurately reversed its meaning:

> And by a strange reversal, thought leaped back almost two centuries to the era when between madness, false madness, and the simulation of madness, the limit was indistinct-identical symptoms confused to the point where transgression replaced unity; further still, medical thought finally effected an identification over which all Western thought since Greek medicine had

> hesitated: the identification of madness with madness-that is, of the medical concept with the critical concept of madness. At the end of the nineteenth century … we find that prodigious postulate, which no medicine had yet dared formulate: that madness, after all, was only madness (Foucault, "Madness and Civilization" 260).

This demystification of the nature of the mentally ill patient from thaumaturgy is made possible through the efforts of Freud and his psychoanalytic enterprise that focused the patient as well as the complexes and traumatic experiences the patient went through. However, Foucault is critical of Freud in the sense that this 19th century psychiatric developments spearheaded by Freud did not necessarily abolish the previous structures and confinement, but "regrouped its powers, extended them to the maximum by uniting them in the doctor's hands; he created the psychoanalytic situation where, by an inspired short-circuit, alienation becomes disalienating because, in the doctor, it becomes a subject" (*Madness and Civilization* 261). Thus, the contemporary psychiatric treatment of the patient still incorporates within itself the same coercive premise of normalizing the subject just as it was in the confinement of the subject in the asylum. This continuation propels the idea that as a process of subjectification, the psychiatric treatment of the mentally ill is still attributed to and contains within itself the moral and often paternal duty of correcting and normalizing the subject as a dutiful member of societal structure.

Foucault sees the process of subjectification as a repetitive act as the subject itself is bound to the process of subjection, in another words, it can only exist within the discursive power matrix of subjectification and the subject. However, Butler sees a kind of resistance within this practice of repetition, pondering if "we might ask whether this possibility of resistance to a constituting or subjectivating power can be derived from what is "in" or "of" discourse" (*The Psychic Life of Power* 94). Foucault's answer is clear: there can be no resistance outside of the law that forms and regulates the process of

subjectification, indicating that "resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others that are quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial; by definition, they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations" (*History of Sexuality* 96). In this vein, any notion of "resistance" by the psyche of the subjectified, Butler indicates, can then only be made possible within and by the power that regulates it:

> [P]sychic resistance thwarts the law in its effects, but cannot redirect the law or its effects. Resistance is thus located in a domain that is virtually powerless to alter the law that it opposes. Hence, psychic resistance presumes the continuation of the law in its anterior, symbolic form and, in that sense, contributes to its status quo. In such a view, resistance appears doomed to perpetual defeat (*The Psychic Life of Power* 98).

For Foucault, however, the resistance emerges as an effect of the discursive power it resists, since, "the symbolic produces the possibility of its own subversions, and these subversions are unanticipated effects of symbolic interpellations" (Butler, "The Psychic Life of Power" 99). Taking these into consideration, there emerge two perceptions of psychic resistance that can be attributed to Lisa's excursion to Dissocia. The first revolves around the psychoanalytic or Lacanian view of perpetual defeat of psychic resistance Butler speaks of which can be attributed to the dreams in their function of proposing an alternate site of an escape from real life to fantasy. The second perception stems from the Foucauldian understanding of psychic resistance in treating Lisa's mindscape to Dissocia as a site of imaginary resistance from which she pursues a fight against the real-life impositions of normalization, within which the real-life connotations of an identity in crisis is observed. Lisa's excursion is more than a romantic notion of an unconscious resistance. The journey is indicative of the subjectification she is subjugated to in real life

by the same medicinal power-knowledge Foucault speaks of, a power that controls, drugs and monitors Lisa in an attempt to normalize her being.

A passive form of objectification of the subject is evident in the confinement of Lisa 's case as compared to a mediational and voluntary one in the merging of Grace/Graham in Sarah Kane's *Cleansed*. Even though Grace achieves a self-subjectification through Tinker in *Cleansed,* Lisa Montgomery Jones in *Dissocia* is in a passive position, controlled, monitored and systematically drugged in a psychiatric prison cell. She is disallowed for a self-formation of identity in real life and thus she journeys into Dissocia as a mindscape from the imposed regularities and roles set before her by the patriarchal order in order to find her true identity as the queen Sarah of House Tonin. The search for identity is interrupted abruptly by the anemic second act that shows the psychological entrapment of the soul derived from the first subjectification process Foucault envisaged, which segregates Lisa Jones as the other:

> **Dot** A few pills, twice a day, that's all you've got to manage. I take four myself and they're only vitamins – I don't end up scribbling on the walls if I miss a day, but I still manage to take them. And if you don't care enough about yourself, then at least do it for Mum and for Mark and for me. I mean how do you think I feel, knowing everyone thinks my sister's a loony? (Neilson 103).

A metaphor Neilson uses in the play emanates from the equation that "Sarah of House Tonin= Serotonin" overtly suggests that she is regularly drugged to trigger serotonin hormone which is associated with the hormone for happiness. It is known that anti-depressants such as Prozac provides such effect, affirming the supposition that she is not being allowed to form her own self at all as her body is always monitored, drugged and subjectivated, questioning the validity of her 'mental illness'. Is Lisa being made unwell

by the drugs and thus not being allowed for a self-formation of identity in the real world? The question is furthered if one acknowledges the fact that she is made ill by an ideology that has cracked her identity in shivers of fragments, stemming from childhood trauma. Is it not the the institutional regulation of the biopower inscribed on her body necessitating the process of subjectification incarcerating her that deemed her abnormal as well as an individual to be corrected? Judith Butler emphasizes the soul's imprisoning nature, affirming the Foucauldian claims that "the prisoner is subjected in a more fundamental way than by the spatial captivity of the prison" (*The Psychic Life of Power* 85). For Foucault, soul is a prison, a spatial captivity and "The soul [is] the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul [is] the prison of the body" (*Abnormal* 19). The confinement of Lisa in a psychological clinical prison as well as the regulative measures taken upon her body, numbing her brain via drugs, denies her even small remnants of her identity on the rocks:

> **Lisa** *is dancing manically around the room, on the bed, everywhere, Walkman in*
>
> *her hand*. **Nurse 1** *enters accompanied by* **Nurse 3**, *and attempts to take the Walkman*
>
> *away from* **Lisa**, *who resists*.
>
> **Lisa** No!
>
> **Nurse 3** *restrains her, with as little contact as possible, and manages to get the*
>
> *Walkman. She wraps the headphone cable around it*.
>
> **Lisa** What are you doing?
>
> **Nurse 1** You're supposed to be resting, Lisa.

Lisa You can't take that, it's mine!"

….

Lisa I was just dancing! What the fuck is wrong with dancing?! (Neilson 98).

Acknowledging the discourse of psychiatry as a "monologue by reason *about* madness" (Foucault, "Madness and Civilization" 10), Foucault regards the true nature of the psychiatric diagnosis in barring the patient from "any power and any knowledge concerning his illness" (*Ethics* 49). Lisa is expelled from any power paving the way for her self-formation of identity, she is forced to journey into Dissocia, to her inner self where the regulation and control blur and dissipate. The quest she is given for a lost-hour which upon acquired promises to restore balance serves as a metaphor of her subconscious in finding meaning and identity to her existence as a self. The colorful first act is replaced by the black and white second act where the audience witnesses the panoptic surveillance of the psychiatric prison evident in Nurse 3's explicit remark: "Now don't be creeping around cos I'll be watching" (Neilson 96). This only adds to the idea that the subjectification of the body, in Lisa's case, coincides with the correcting of the soul which serves a spatial being entrapping the body, culminating in re-affirming the Butlerian claim that "if [psychiatric] discourse produces identity by supplying and enforcing a regulatory principle which thoroughly invades, totalizes, and renders coherent the individual, then it seems that every "identity," insofar as it is totalizing, acts as precisely such a "soul that imprisons the body" (*The Psychic Life of Power* 86). This adds to the claim that Lisa escapes to Dissocia to be free from an identity that is imposed on her through the discursive medicinal power-knowledge which constrains her in an attempt to normalize her true self which is in definite conflict with what is being imposed.

The Lacanian thought points to the fact that the result of the mirror stage is indubitably the fragmentation of the self and one will strive for completing and fulfilling this self-image that is achieved through fantasy which will forever remain broken and unfulfilled. The completion of the full-image is but a fantasy: “This fragmented body—another expression I have gotten accepted into the French school's system of theoretical references—is regularly manifested in dreams when the movement of an analysis reaches a certain level of aggressive disintegration of the individual” (Lacan, “Ecrits” 78). The fantasy then manifests itself through dreams that the psychoanalyst uses to uncover hidden and repressed traumas and complexes:

> Indeed, for imagos—whose veiled faces we analysts see emerge in our daily experience and in the penumbra of symbolic effectiveness—the specular image seems to be the threshold of the visible world, if we take into account the mirrored disposition of the *imago of one's own body* in hallucinations and dreams, whether it involves one's individual features, or even one's infirmities or object projections; or if we take note of the role of the mirror apparatus in the appearance of *doubles*, in which psychical realities manifest themselves that are, moreover, heterogeneous (Lacan, “Ecrits” 77).

The dreams incorporate symbols that psychoanalysis uses to uncover repressed desires and traumas in the working through process of the patient. However, fantasy thereby dreams also function as a site for the satisfaction of desires of the dissatisfied subjects, feeding and relying on the imaginary order. Albeit their unreal and unreliable nature, dreams as fantastical phenomena alleviate the ambiguous nature and paradox of desire in gaining the subject a glimpse of certainty. As Slavoj Zizek points out, “fantasy provides a rationale for the inherent deadlock of desire: it constructs the scene in which the jouissance we are deprived of is concentrated in the Other who stole it from us” (*The Plague of Phantasies* 43). Having acknowledged the fact that jouissance is the price of

admission to the symbolic order of the Other which is associated with the paternal authority, this manifestation of the Other in Lisa's dream is realized through the figure of the Black Dog King. It is not a coincidence that Lisa encounters this dark and mysterious figure at the end of the colorful first act, since it signifies to a traumatic experience that is long repressed in her unconscious.

Freud believed that the interpretation of the dream functions towards uncovering the repressed desires and traumatic instances located in the unconscious, famously putting forward that "The interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind" (604). Freud attempted to develop a dream language through which he makes sense of the symbols in uncovering the repressed desires, indicating that there is a universal language of dreams, a mythical connection that is passed through but reflective of the cultural unconscious of the subject:

> These wishes in our unconscious, ever on the alert and so to say immortal, remain one of the legendary Titans, weighed down since primeval ages by the massive bulk of the mountains which were once hurled upon them by the victorious gods and which are still shaken from time to time by the convulsion of their limbs. But these wishes, held under repression, are themselves of infantile origin, as we are taught by psychological research into the neuroses (554).

Freud does not specifically point to a cultural unconscious at work in dream symbolism. However, a recurrent archetypal images or motifs one encounters in myths and thereby dreams is derived from the collective unconscious as was suggested by Carl Jung: "Things that are symbolically connected today were probably united in the prehistoric times by conceptual and linguistic identity. The symbolic relation seems to be a relic and a mark of former identity" (365). For Hanna Segal, Freud's most influential impact on the dream

interpretation was his idea that "repressed unconscious expresses itself in dreams and that this involves a lot of psychic work; a whole language has to be developed in order to have a dream; symbols have to be found and things have to be put together" (Pick and Roper 239). It is possible to think that Jung's starting point in his theory of dreams is derived from Freud as he aligns himself with what Freud indicated in the function of the unconscious in revealing what is not admitted freely in dreams. In this respect, Jung points out that "Freud says that the wishes which form the dream-thought are never desires which one openly admits to oneself, but desires that are repressed because of their painful character; and it is because they are excluded from conscious reflection in the waking state that they float up, indirectly, in dreams" (Jung 1304). Freud has not been supportive of the idea that dreams incorporated any sense of a particularly unique wisdom. As opposed to what Freud thought, Jung tried to unearth a pattern or motif in mythological means to be found in dreams as he believed that "there was a universal language of mankind revealed in myths, visions and dreams because dreams were messages, not only from the self, but also from the collective unconscious" (Budd 264). Indeed, Carl Jung, unlike Freud, delved into and gave particular emphasis to the mythological traces to be found within dreams in his extensive theory of dreams. Jung claimed that "No one with the faintest glimmering of mythology could possibly fail to see the startling parallels between the unconscious fantasies brought to light by the psychoanalytic school and mythological ideas" (1415). Jung further points to to a dream symbolism and dream language derived from his theory of the collective unconscious:

> The collective unconscious is a part of the psyche which can be negatively distinguished from a personal unconscious by the fact that it does not, like the latter, owe its existence to personal experience and consequently is not a personal acquisition. While the personal unconscious is made up essentially of contents which have at one time been conscious but which have

> disappeared from consciousness through having been forgotten or repressed, the contents of the collective unconscious have never been in consciousness, and therefore have never been individually acquired, but owe their existence exclusively to heredity. Whereas the personal unconscious consists for the most part of *complexes*, the content of the collective unconscious is made up essentially of *archetypes* (3982).

For Jung, the archetypes manifest themselves in dreams in different contexts and characteristics that incorporate within themselves traces of mythology and symbolisms which are indicative of repression, childhood trauma and the individuation process: "The symbols of the process of individuation that appear in dreams are images of an archetypal nature which depict the centralizing process or the production of a new centre of personality" (6273). What goes wrong in the individuation process of the child, the childhood traumas, for example, cause disorders in the subject's mental capacity to conform the realities of the social order. Dreams in this respect are reflective of such remnants of trauma and Dissocia in this respect is not an exception. Both the word and world 'Dissocia' point to a mental disorder in regard with identity. In Lisa's case, the mental disorder known as Dissociative Identity Disorder is likely caused by many factors, including severe trauma during early childhood such as sexual abuse. Jung points out that the trauma symbolism in the dreams generally point to a repression but also a regression to a much safer thus maternal state which are the sources of trauma:

> Repression, as we have seen, is not directed solely against sexuality, but against the instincts in general, which are the vital foundations, the laws governing all life. The regression caused by repressing the instincts always leads back to the psychic past, and consequently to the phase of childhood where the decisive factors appear to be, and sometimes actually are, the parents (1863).

This explains why the regression in the heroine's case manifests itself as a dream excursion to Dissocia since Dissocia by its premise is both indicative of what is lost to Lisa and the medium of restoration: a fantasy replicating the symbiotic union with the maternal figure of the mother which is ended by entering into the language and the Law of the Father. Freud also considered the close link between fantasies and trauma, as Segal points out, "Phantasies of course are linked with defences … Freud's earliest view was that phantasies were defences against memory, but it soon became apparent to him that they could be used as defences against any painful reality" (16). However, this is where Jung is closer to Lacan when he indicates "The heroes are usually wanderers, and wandering is a symbol of longing, of the restless urge which never finds its object, of nostalgia for the lost mother" (1888). In this vein, Dissocia can be attributed to possess a maternal meaning for Lisa as it indicates a coexisting bond of maternal nature:

Britney Dissocia is the life your hour generated.

Biffer *continues*.

Inhibitions Your hour is like the sun to us.

Biffer *continues*.

Laughter And if you reabsorb your hour –

Biffer *continues*.

Argument – Dissocia will sweat?

Britney Die.

Argument Dissocia will die.

…

Britney Nobody loves you more than us, Lisa. Don't you remember?

They gather around her, hemming her in, softly singing:

All

And now you are our friend we will

Protect you to the end remember

No one in the world above will

Love you like the people of

This wonderful new world – (Neilson 85).

Taking this quote into consideration, given the fact that Dissocia and its inhabitants form an inseparable bond in Lisa's psyche as they coexist together, this fantasy world could be interpreted as a site of substitution to the long-lost but forever-sought symbiotic union with the mother. Lisa hesitates to fight for Dissocia first, claiming that she is not a queen but seeing the Dissocians bravely preparing to protect and fight for her, she decides to face the enemy alone: "**Lisa** No, wait – I don't want you to die for me! Let me face the Black Dog King alone!" (Neilson 91). The mother archetype for Jung is often associated with "maternal solicitude and sympathy; the magic authority of the female; the wisdom and spiritual exaltation that transcend reason; any helpful instinct or impulse; all that is benign, all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility" (4022). Not only Lisa but Dissocia as serving as a fantasy of the above-mentioned lack, which is the symbiotic union with the mother, is also reflective of this archetype. Of this maternal attribution of Dissocia, Jung asserts that "Many things arousing devotion or feelings of awe, as for instance the Church, university, city or country, heaven, earth, the woods, the sea or any still waters, matter even, the underworld and the moon, can be mother-symbols" (4021) and Dissocia fits the description. Jung is a strong supporter of the opinion that complexes such as the Oedipus complex or the mother complexes are

influential in the individuation process of the child. Of the mother complex which derives from the mother archetype, Jung delves into the link between the childhood originated neuroses and the mother. In regards of this link, Jung came "to believe that the mother always plays an active part in the origin of the disturbance, especially in infantile neuroses or in neuroses whose aetiology undoubtedly dates back to early childhood" (4025). Among the four psychological effects of the mother complex of the daughter he lists a problematic one that he calls "identity with the mother":

> *Identity with the Mother.* —If a mother-complex in a woman does not produce an overdeveloped Eros, it leads to identification with the mother and to paralysis of the daughter's feminine initiative. A complete projection of her personality on to the mother then takes place, owing to the fact that she is unconscious both of her maternal instinct and of her Eros. Everything which reminds her of motherhood, responsibility, personal relationships, and erotic demands arouses feelings of inferiority and compels her to run away—to her mother, naturally, who lives to perfection everything that seems unattainable to her daughter (Jung 4029).

This not only affirms Lisa's rejection of familial subjectification and patriarchal impositions on the gendered role of her female self as a mother and wife via mindscaping to the maternal creation of Dissocia but also echoes her troubles in conforming to the role she is enforced to play in the heteronormative patriarchal social order but she is unable to do so. Lisa's dream or any dream that repressed trauma reflects a world, a wish-fulfillment where it did not happen since "The dream disguises the repressed complex to prevent it from being recognized" (Jung 1304). Lisa is able to escape from the abuser and thereby a sexual assault in her imaginary world Dissocia. However, everything discussed so far points to her being a real victim of a sexual abuse in the real life she is unable to conform. Furthermore, Lisa's mental disorder is inherited from his aunt as the watch that

caused all the trouble which signifies the dissociative disorder, is passed down to her by her aunt and possibly her mother had it too as her sister confirms:

> **Dot** You know what happened to Auntie Liz. You want to end up like that? How d'you think that'd make Mum feel? How do you think it'd make me feel? And all because you can't manage to take a few pills twice a day (Neilson 16).

All of this can be considered to point to a troubled childhood stemmed from a hereditary mental illness that made Lisa psychologically unstable. Furthermore, the idea that her mother has also presumably been psychologically unstable and victim of the same mental disease had exacerbated Lisa's neurosis. Of the trauma caused by the mother, Jung asserts:

> The aetiological and traumatic effects produced by the mother must be divided into two groups: (1) those corresponding to traits of character or attitudes actually present in the mother, and (2) those referring to traits which the mother only seems to possess, the reality being composed of more or less fantastic (i.e., archetypal) projections on the part of the child (4023).

The mother can be regarded as the source of trauma as the female child sees herself in a competition for the affection of the father. This marks the entrance of the penis envy into the discussion whereby the female child is terrified by the lack of the penis in her body. To substitute the lack, she either sublimates the idea of the lack by becoming a woman and performing the gender role she is designated to play and having a child of her own or completely rejecting the existence of any lack at all. However, the figure of the castrator in the shape of a paternal figure seems relevant to the discussion of who Lisa encounters at the end of the first act: the Black Dog King. Jung, delving into the dream symbolism to explain a case for a Miss Miller in his analyses in this respect, encounters the

appearance of a male monster in her dream and concludes that "the danger for a woman comes not from the mother, but from the father" (1865). In a similar vein, the world Lisa visits is invaded by an ambiguous dark figure that is the Black Dog King, which is a common observation in the dreams of patients who suffer from borderline disorders: "the dreams of borderline patients commonly depict the body or the inner self being invaded by a parasitic being" (Budd 259). All in all, this figure can be interpreted to be a symbolic representation of a repressed childhood trauma. Indeed, as Şenlen-Güvenç points to the liminal nature of Lisa, it seems strongly plausible to infer that "*Dissocia* questions the state of Lisa torn between an imaginary world (Dissocia) and real life (hospital) due to a dissociative disorder created by the trauma of childhood rape" (301).

Black Dog King could also justifiably be considered as a reference to the phenomena of black dog which as a phrase substitutes for melancholy and depression disorders as Winston Churchill himself has allegedly been famous for calling his moments of "depression" a black dog. In this vein, the argument could be extended to the claim that the symbol of the Black Dog King signifies the impositions of social norms and regulations to which Lisa is unable to conform given the fact that when she confronts the Black Dog King, she sees an embodiment of such "failures" in the form of his boyfriend Vince. Lisa's troubled psyche proves her liminal nature: "You know what it is: it's like the Sirens" (Neilson 108). Dissocia is a liminal world where real-world sounds mix with imaginary sounds along with the fact that it is filled with archetypal liminal characters such as the he-goat and a self-association with Siren. Furthermore, the symbols of liminality propel the idea that as Lisa dreams, Neilson intends to make the audience witness the lines between the real life and imaginary world blurring. Indeed, Lisa as a liminal character is an inbetweener, stuck between what the heteronormative patriarchal social order wants her to be and who she actually wishes to be. The metaphor of Neilson subtly uses, the "siren", a half bird half woman mythological creature reveals Lisa's fragmentation of the self. As

Turner indicates, “as is well known, theranthropic figures combining animal with human characteristics abound in liminal situations; similarly, human beings imitate the behavior of different species of animals” (*Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* 253). The liminal characteristic of the siren delineates Lisa’s psychological liminality deriving from not being able to conform to the real-world realities as well as not being able to finalize her search for identity and purpose in Dissocia. The imagery of the liminal siren connotes to a state of being betwixt and between an urge to fly free from patriarchal impositions which is pursued in Dissocia and a psychiatric normalization locating Lisa to her gendered space. Following Turner’s formula of social dramas, in Lisa’s case, *breach,* as the phase where the subject breaks a rule and thereby cause disorder in social unity, marks the moment where she ceases to take the medication and journeys into Dissocia to form a self of her own, as distinct from one that imposed in real life. The dream excursion and the enemy Lisa encounters, which symbolizes her inability to conform to the regulations and rules of the social order, the imaginary war launched on the Other, embodies the phase of *the crisis*. As Turner would point out, *the crisis* is addressed by the redressive process that aims to keep the status quo but in Lisa’s case enforces itself as part of the ubiquitous campaign of drug-controlled isolation by the medicinal biopower in the purpose of “normalizing” her. As a result of the success or failure of this process of redressing the crisis, the subject is either integrated to the status quo or a schism happens. As is shown at the end of the play, Lisa continues to cease medication and wants to go back to Dissocia, which could justifiably be interpreted through Turnerian lenses as a schism. Taking these into consideration, the fact that she is going to go back to Dissocia points to an effort for the recognition of irreparable schism since she does not wish to be what the society designates her to be. Furthermore, the liminal nature of Dissocia and Lisa can also be inferred from the fact that the two worlds are intertwined. Lisa is stuck in between the two and the subtle sound techniques Neilson uses proves this: Lisa is able to call Vince in Dissocia and “To

her surprise, it works" (45). Additionally, the intervening sounds exemplified in "The sound of passing cars, as if we're on a motorway lay-by" (54) when Lisa is about to be raped by the Goat gives a liminal sense of intermixing reality with fantasy. The sound technique Neilson uses adds to the liminality of Dissocia as "When sounds from reality encroach upon Dissocia, it seems to imply that events are spiraling out of control … when sound leaves Dissocia and impinges on the real world […] suggests the transformative, liminal properties of the mindscape" (Cassidy 77). However, the liminal implications of Dissocia also hints at a possible trauma, a sexual abuse in childhood, that paved the way for the psychological fragmentation and liminality of Lisa Montgomery Jones:

> Lisa's subconscious associatively constructs imaginative scenarios based on stimuli her consciousness is coming into contact with. And what we are presented with is a theatrical adaptation of these events which has been comically transfigured by the properties of the liminal zone which is Dissocia. But in this liminal landscape the scenarios we encounter are not only comedic imaginative fabrications; they are also renderings of encounters in reality. And the depiction of these incidents that we, as audience or reader, are proffered are a coping mechanism (Cassidy 77).

The figure of the trickster archetype is embodied through the goat in Lisa's dream and tries to rape her but Lisa is able to escape by the help of Jane the council worker. The scapegoat as he calls himself suffers from an identity crisis that is attributable to almost all Dissocians. The crisis in its identity is observed when the goat reveals he is no longer blamed for any wrong doing in Dissocia. However, there is obviously a sexual connotation to be found in the trickster figure of the goat. Of this archetype, it is true to indicate that "ability to change his shape seems also to be one of his characteristics" (Jung 4196). The trickster archetype in the form of he-goat in mythology is often referred to the Mercurius who is often accompanied by shape-shifting goats signifying fertility but "the he-goat in

general has a sexual significance" (Jung 7876). The shape-shifting goat is the phallus and often associated with creative power as in reproduction, usually manifested in dreams as "the bull, the ass, the pomegranate, the yoni, the he-goat, the lightning, the horse's hoof, the dance, the magical cohabitation in the furrow, and the menstrual fluid" (Jung 8419). Often associated with the devil, the goat symbolizes wickedness and mischief, tricking the individuals he encounters into evil misdoings. In tracing the mythology of the trickster archetype which is also to be found in dreams, Jung points out that:

> In Persian lore the devil is the steed of God. He represents the sexual instinct; consequently, at the Witches' Sabbath he appears in the form of a goat or horse. The sexual nature of the devil is imparted to the horse as well, so that this symbol is found in contexts where the sexual interpretation is the only one that fits (2024).

The multifarious mythology behind the goat figure notwithstanding, the trickster figure embodied through the he-goat who tries to rape Lisa also points to a repression of childhood trauma. In dreams, it manifests itself as "a minatory and ridiculous figure, he stands at the very beginning of the way of individuation, posing the deceptively easy riddle of the Sphinx, or grimly demanding answer to a "quaestio crocodilina"" (Jung 4211). This aligns well with the claim that Lisa who has been subjected to a sexual abuse as a child could not form an identity as a result of the neuroses brought about by such trauma, hindering the completion of the individuation process of the child. Behind the trickster figure, then, lies a shadow in dreams and if unveiled, pointing towards "clearly discernible traits and associations which point to a quite different background. It is as though he were hiding meaningful contents under an unprepossessing exterior" (Jung 4210). The dream for Lisa represents a wish that is fulfilled in fantasy, as Freud famously pointed out "*every dream represents the fulfilment of a repressed wish*" *(*Jung 1303). However, Lisa's imagination of herself as a savior is an attempt that is showing her strong willingness and

fight to find a self that is not regulated and enforced by the same social order that brought upon her the childhood trauma that disordered her psyche. This is precisely why she resists to being an ideal member of the social order that always enforced a ubiquitous subjectification upon her being. Her imagination of a self that is a savior, a self that fits in, is a common motif in dream encounters with the trickster figure:

> If, at the end of the trickster myth, the saviour is hinted at, this comforting premonition or hope means that some calamity or other has happened and been consciously understood. Only out of disaster can the longing for the saviour arise—in other words, the recognition and unavoidable integration of the shadow create such a harrowing situation that nobody but a saviour can undo the tangled web of fate. In the case of the individual, the problem constellated by the shadow is answered on the plane of the anima, that is, through relatedness. In the history of the collective as in the history of the individual, everything depends on the development of consciousness. This gradually brings liberation from imprisonment in αγνοία, 'unconsciousness,' and is therefore a bringer of light as well as of healing (Jung 4211-4212).

This adds to the claim that the unconsciousness represented in the dream excursion into Dissocia is an attempt of bringing balance to the conscious life which Lisa cannot achieve in real life so she has venture into Dissocia. Lisa contains that “shadow” and that she being a victim is reversed into a heroic figure provided by her dream excursion.

Lisa wakes up in a psychiatry clinic in Act II, suffering from a dissociative disorder. The disorder stemming from a severe memory loss, repression of trauma caused supposedly by rape in childhood that deepened the fragmentation of the self, force Lisa to have an inner journey to her “self” where she may assume an identity and cling on to life. The anemic second act shocks the audience that experiences the stark contrast between Lisa’s psychological entrapment and her colorful inner world Dissocia where

every character suffers from having insecurities and problems related to identity. Lisa is classified as a mentally ill woman and she is imposed on a subjectification she never asked for. Even her sister Dot calls her a "loony" and a "nut-case", her boyfriend Vince is the projection of the true enemy in her subconscious Dissocia, the Black Dog King. The enemy Lisa encounters additionally serves as the symbol of repressed desires of childhood trauma of a sexual abuse in terms of Lisa's inability to conform to the real impositions of the patriarchal world. This points to the idea that Lisa stands against such impositions of the patriarchy in terms of ceasing medication, which equates with rejecting the pre-determined roles of motherhood and wifehood as her vision of "the real world" differs from that of Dot:

> **Dot** I mean, I've tried being nice, I've tried everything. But now you're just going to have to take the consequences. We can't all be floating around with our heads in the clouds, playing the guitar and being 'artistic'. The sooner you get that through your head, the better. This is the real world (Neilson 102).

Lisa is blamed for being artistic by the normalized members of the societal structure like her sister Dot as the real world, or ideology injects the body and soul with conformity and normality. Dot regards Lisa as a selfish human being and she is unable to form any sense of sympathy for Lisa "since within the society to which Lisa belongs, the role of the women is to reproduce and care for the family just as Dot does" (Karadağ 211, translation my own). What Dot asks and what the patriarchal ideology imposes in an attempt to normalize and appropriate the female being, the ideal woman confined to the house to perform the dutiful positions of motherhood and wifehood, is an instance deriving from a long tradition engraved in the phallogocentric patriarchal society. This tradition historically involved the notion of the cult of true womanhood, a phrase used in 19th century to associate true womanhood with God, religious virtue and maternal roles. Barbara Welter draws attention to the fact that there have been four virtues that defined

women in the 19th century American society: “piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity … they spelled mother, daughter, sister, wife-woman. Without them, no matter whether there was fame, achievement or wealth, all was ashes. With them she was promised happiness and power” (152). The literature on women including magazines, for Welter, “sought to convince woman that she had the best of both worlds-power and virtue-and that a stable order of society depended upon her maintaining her traditional place in it. To that end she was identified with everything that was beautiful and holy” (174). Welter further criticizes how “the True Woman evolved into the New Woman -a transformation as startling in its way as the abolition of slavery or the coming of the machine age” (174), in regards of which Betty Friedan reformulated the recurrent pattern observed in such transition with regards to the role of the women’s magazines confining the women to their familial interiority. This phallocentricism promotes images of women “whose great ambition has been marriage and children” (Friedan 55) as the feminine mystique inscribed on the soul of the female by patriarchal forces at work that controls the media would prohibit any acts of heroism on women’s part. What such patriarchal scheme attempts to imbibe the modern subject is to prescribe a gendered place for the women, binding them to their familial interiority for the sake of an image of better womanhood and motherhood. Since they are essentially patriarchal constructs, serving the patriarchy’s aims to constrict women into their homes, domestic duties and motherhood, the patriarchy can thereby maintain the separation of spheres, whereby they can reign over the public sphere forever. However, no matter how hard Vince and Dot push her to take her medications and just be normal as patriarchal impositions dictate, Lisa’s mindscape through Dissocia provides her with an alternate world where she has the capability to assume an identity. Even though the tragedy of Lisa’s predicament is that even though fantasy seems to provide a pseudo-escape from the trauma in reversing the process of such terrible events, and that she might never be able to develop a consciousness of a fixed and

coherent self which is dictated by ideology, free from trauma and social impositions, her unique mindscape to Dissocia serves as an inspiration that shows the power of imagination to form a self, a self of her own.

CHAPTER IV:

BURIED ALIVE: FAMILIAL SUBJECTIFICATION OF THE ABJECT LIMINAL OTHER IN MARINA CARR'S *PORTIA COUGHLAN* (1996)

> [Antigone] fails to produce heterosexual closure … she does seem to deinstitute heterosexuality by refusing to do what is necessary to stay alive for Haemon, by refusing to become a mother and a wife, by scandalizing the public with her wavering gender, by embracing death as her bridal chamber and identifying her tomb as a "deep dug home" (*kataskaphes oikesis*) ... If the tomb is the bridal chamber, and the tomb is chosen over marriage, then the tomb stands for the very destruction of marriage, and the term "bridal chamber" (*numpheion*) represents precisely the negation of its own possibility. The word destroys its object. In referring to the institution it names, the word performs the destruction of the institution. Is this not the operation of ambivalence in language that calls into question Antigone's sovereign control of her actions? (Butler, "Antigone's Claim" 76).

Marina Carr's *Portia Coughlan* was first premiered in the Abbey Theatre on 21 March 1996, winning the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize in the following year and later revived shortly on the Peacock Stage again as part of the AbbeyOneHundred centenary programme in 2004. The play is planned to be staged once more in September 2020 by Young Vic Theatre based in London, with Caroline Bryne directing and Academy award-

nominee Ruth Negga portraying the asphyxiated heroine. The notable productions of *Portia Coughlan* are celebrated for their sharp portrayal of a broken self. One critique called the original Garry Hynes production on the Peacock Stage in the Abbey Theatre in 1996 "a brutal and passionate drama of family relationships and personal disintegration, set on the day of Portia's thirtieth birthday over three, time-bending acts" (Ruane 83). Another London-based production again in 1996 by Royal Court Theatre praised the haunting play as "a rereading of rural Ireland ravaged by lovelessness, penury, and emotional reticence … [where] the past weighs down these characters as might a limp corpse, the play's most potent stage image" (Dean 234). Marina Carr breaks the linear plot structure in the play, placing the death of the heroine in between the first and third act. This non-linear story-telling adds to the liminal fragmentation of Portia who is tore between the impositions on her feminine identity by patriarchal authority and a ubiquitous call by her twin brother's call for a reunification in death. The liminal structure of the play also builds the sharpness of its theatrical implications for the audience, in regards of which Marina Carr reveals the reason why she does so in an interview:

> **MM**: But you put the endings in early?
>
> **MC**: I put them in the middle, because I can't do them at the end. If you had the ending of Portia Coughlan at the end, it wouldn't work. It would be too melodramatic, but, because of its position in the play, it works. It resonates through the third act.
>
> **MM**: We know she's going to commit suicide
>
> **MC**: Yes, so you're watching her living, knowing she's dead. Everything you see is with that knowledge. It does shift the focus (*Reading the Future* 53).

The audience witnesses Portia slowly withering away from the surface of the world after a backlash of a suicide pact of which she backs out at the last minute but nevertheless

beholds the horrifying act of her twin brother's suicide. As a result of this terrible act, Portia feels ubiquitously imprisoned in a purgatory of darkness enshrouding her liminal post-Gabriel presence, the aberrations of her psyche. Furthermore, Portia refuses to perform the duties of a wife and a mother and this refusal is part of a feminist discourse Carr builds throughout her Midland plays, exemplified through taking the portrayal of patriarchal impositions on the wifehood and motherhood to extremities and taboo depictions. In this vein, Marina Carr's plays revolve around "family and female subjectivity in particular, renegotiating limiting cultural notions of "woman" as idealized Mother-figure and symbol of nation and addressing issues of sexuality, gender, and the body" (Sihra, "Nature Noble or Ignoble" 133). Indeed, Carr's female heroines in her early Midlands plays suffer from a self-alienation in regard of the pre-determined socially imposed roles attributed to them by the traditional catholic Irish society. Marina Carr's *Portia Coughlan* in this respect represents the suffocation of the heroine who is entrenched between the land of his husband Raphael Coughlan and his father Sly Scully while struggling to perform her socially imposed pre-determined roles of motherhood and wifehood as "Portia hovers on the threshold of adjacent male-owned properties but mostly wades through the free-flowing river" (Sihra, "Marina Carr" 95). Portia rejects familial and interior objectification of the subject imposed on her by rejecting motherhood and wifehood explicitly. She walks on the borders of a self-identification closely aligned with the death drive, embodied through the ghost of Gabriel who haunts the stage as well as Portia's post-Gabriel self. In Midlands trilogy and her other plays, Carr offers a re-reading of several female characters from Greek mythology such as Medea, Phaedra and Antigone by locating them in a traditional yet modern Irish Midlands setting. Portia's hysteria and murderous thoughts on what she might do to her children, evident in the lines where she sees "knives and accidents and terrible mutilations" (Carr, "Plays 1" 203) every time she looks upon them deriving from her unstable self echoes Euripides' Medea and her filicide

of her own innocent children. However, the stark disobedience of Portia against paternal authority, the incestuous cycle of her familial environment and upbringing and her liminal, fragmented and ambiguous self condensed by loss is closely reminiscent of Antigone's defiance and legacy. The tragic story of Antigone revolves around her crime of giving his brother Polyneices a proper burial against her uncle Creon's orders, the new king of Thebes, since Polyneices had led a foreign army to invade Thebes, ensued a fight with his brother Eteocles. The fight ends with both of them lying dead as Oedipus prophesized and thus Polyneices was labelled a traitor, his body left for the beasts to be devoured. Antigone is willing to die for giving him a proper burial so that Polyneices' soul can pass through the liminal River Styx just like the Belmont River standing between life and death, connecting the realm of the living with the underworld under the domain of Hades. Furthermore, Antigone is considered to possess an incestuous love towards Polyneices, for whom she gives up motherhood and wifehood. This sacrifice resonates with Portia's defiance since both of them commit suicide in spaces reminiscent of pre-natal existence: Antigone kills herself in a cave whereas Portia jumps into the Belmont River. Sophocles' *Antigone*, especially her defiance raised issues in regard of kinship, authority, subjectification and gender, all of which pointing to Judith Butler's reading of Antigone in his influential book entitled *Antigone's Claim*. Through this book, Butler revisits the literature on Antigone and ponders over her modern implications. In this respect, this chapter attempts to read Marina Carr's *Portia Coughlan* through Butlerian lenses that follow the literature on Sophocles' Antigone in terms of re-negotiating the triad of kinship, the incest taboo and subject-formation for the purpose of unearthing the modern implications of Antigone by equating its reflections on Portia Coughlan's defiance. To constitute such a reading, following the Turnerian formula of social dramas, this chapter first explores the liminal implications of the heroine in Carr's play and then

revisits Antigone by inquiring its possible reflections on Marina Carr's *Portia Coughlan* through the argument on kinship ties, biopolitics and gender.

The first act of *Portia Coughlan* begins with a scene introducing Portia standing with a drink in her hand at her home, and simultaneously Gabriel as a ghost standing at the infamous Belmont River, culminating in an uncanny sequence where "*they mirror one another 's posture and movements in an odd way; unconsciously*" (Carr, "Plays 1" 165). The lost part of Portia's self, embodied through the ghost of Gabriel who often sings in the beginning of acts is only encountered by herself and the audience throughout the play. Portia's husband Raphael Coughlan who has a limp occupies the first scene, complaining about the state of Portia drinking early: "Ten o'clock in the mornin' and you're at it already" (Carr, "Plays 1" 165). Portia lives an unhappy marriage with Raphael, her father married her off to one of the wealthiest men in the area, a factory owner whose partnership as a result of this marriage would only add to the fortune of Sly Scully, his father. Portia is often scorned by her family for not performing the duties of a proper wife and mother, neglecting and even rejecting such interior ties, spending her time flirting with the lover Damus Halion and barman Fintan Goolan in the Belmont River instead. The sharp discrepancy between the interior and exterior for Portia is embodied with the complete rejection of familial interiority contrasted by several external attempts of a self-identification which are doomed to fail since Gabriel is an unforgettable and inseparable part of Portia's very essence of existence. For this reason, she often escapes to the liminal landscape that is the Belmont River which flows between the lands of her husband and father. It not only flows through these lands but also slashes through them, serving as a way of escape from the interiority of familial bonds and impositions since it still occupies the symbolic meaning of returning to Gabriel who killed himself by jumping into the river fifteen years ago. The river represents uncontainable nature of the heroine who refuses to be locked up in an interior space but also it serves as "a polyvalent metaphor … [a] watery

womb, it is the place of original oneness, secret sexual union, and the dissolution of sex and gender boundaries. As River Styx, it represents the permeable border between the world of the living and the world of the dead" (Wald 194). The liminal reasserts itself potently when the audience learns that Portia's thirtieth birthday marks the departure of her twin brother on their fifteenth birthday. Portia could not kill herself that day and she has been haunted by Gabriel's ghost calling her to reunite with him ever since. Breaking the linear plot structure, Marina Carr opens up the second act with Portia's body being raised out of the Belmont River, the exact spot where Gabriel committed suicide. After the funeral, the incestuous secrets of Scully family are revealed where Maggie May, an old prostitute and Portia's aunt, confesses she had sexual relationship with Portia's grandmother Blaize Scully's husband, Old Sly Scully. This comes after Blaize's abject depiction of her daughter-in-law Marianne's gypsy blood, calling them "Fuckin' tinkers, the Joyces, always and ever, with their waxy blood and wanin' souls" (Carr, "Plays 1" 198). The third act follows Portia picking right after the end of the second act, giving more insight to the grief-stricken Portia and the hereditary incest looming on her familial background. Portia's closest friend Stacia, the Cyclops of Coolinarney as Marina Carr names her, often takes care of the children for her and in a conversation with Maggie May, Portia's aunt, she learns the looming secret of the cycle of incest long embedded in Scully family. Maggie reveals that Portia's parents Sly and Marianne were brother and sister and Blaize Scully, the old grandmother, knew the secret all along: "Marianne was auld Scully ' s child, around the same time Blaize was expectin' Sly. She knows. The auld bitch! Always knew. That I ' m convinced of" (Carr, "Plays 1" 213). The incest as a hereditary disease is carried through the Scully blood, as Maggie and Blaize insist, since Portia and Gabriel also had an incestuous relationship. This is evident towards the end of play where Portia confesses to her husband Raphael that: "ya see, me and Gabriel made love all the time down be the Belmont River among the swale, from the age of five - That

' s as far back as I can remember anyways" (Carr, "Plays 1" 222). Portia's marriage is closest to being entombed alive, echoing Antigone whose vivisepulture in a cave by the orders of Creon is defied by a self-cathartic death. In a similar vein, Portia defies the patriarchal impositions on her already fragmented self. Portia walks on the borders of the symbolic order, attempting to exceed it the same way Antigone did in Sophocles' play. This liminal crossing is a way of transcendence of the symbolic impositions which Lacan called *Atè,* an encounter with which only leads to death and punishment. However, both Portia and Antigone are liminal in nature, breaching certain norms and regulations of the social order such as the incest taboo, wondering on the borders of gender, kinship, family, love; all of which requiring an initial close examination of the liminal attribution of these characters within their respective social stratum.

The liminal connotes to a state of being betwixt and between, marking a significant phase in what the French anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep called *rites de passage*. In this study, Van Gennep organizes such rites of passage in subject's life "theoretically include[ing] preliminal rites (rites of separation), liminal rites (rites of transition), and postliminal rites (rites of incorporation), in specific instances [they] are not always equally important or equally elaborated" (11) in an attempt to understand the human experience closely aligned with rites such as birth, death, marriage, and funeral. The British anthropologist Victor Turner has developed his liminal theory by extending on what Gennep articulated to performance and theatrical studies, focusing more on the significance of the liminal phase in rites of passage. Turner placed the term in its cultural context and attempted to understand the implications of the liminal, indicating:

> The attributes of liminality or of liminal *personae* ("threshold people") are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they

> are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions. Thus, liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon (Turner, "Ritual Process" 95).

In other words, the liminal stands for subjects who are stuck between two phases of rites of passage, that is the separation and aggregation. This state of being an inbetweener embodied in the liminal phase points to a certain level of ambiguity as to what the subject holds in the hierarchical structure of the culture it is subjected to since for Turner;

> the characteristics of the ritual subject (the "passenger") are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state. In the third phase (reaggregation or reincorporation), the passage is consummated. The ritual subject, individual or corporate, is in a relatively stable state once more and, by virtue of this, has rights and obligations vis-a-vis others of a clearly defined and "structural" type; he is expected to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards binding on incumbents of social position in a system of such positions (*Ritual Process* 94).

This ambiguity is born out of a necessity for the subject undergoing the rite of the passage. It can neither be conceived as part of the hierarchy it belonged since it is slipping away from it through the rite, nor they belong anywhere within any order pertaining to the culture it is still part of. Furthermore, for Turner, as these subjects are ambiguous and their passages are often ritualized, they are "very often symbols expressive of ambiguous

identity … found cross culturally: androgynes, theriomorphic figures, monstrous combinations of elements drawn from nature and culture, with some symbols such as caverns, representing both birth and death, w**o**mb and tomb" (*Anthropology of Experience* 42). Marina Carr's *Portia Coughlan* in this respect occupies this liminal zone entrenched between two figures of patriarchal domination in traditional Irish catholic Midlands setting, embodied through Raphael Coughlan and Sly Scully. Landlocked between the interior familial ties she explicitly rejects and an external search for self-identification which crosses the borders of symbolic impositions, her uncontainable nature is symbolized through the Belmont River. From a psychoanalytic understanding, Belmont River points to a return to a pre-natal, womb-like existence, yearning for a re-unification with Gabriel. The fact that Portia is in between fifteen years before his twin brother Gabriel killed himself and fifteen years of a netherworld without Gabriel afterwards, along with the fact that Marina Carr places her tragic death in between two acts serve as potent implications of liminality in theatre. Portia occupied the liminal zone between life and death since her birth as her grandmother Blaize exclaims: "To Portia in the murky clay of Belmont graveyard where she was headin' from the day she was born" (Carr, "Plays 1" 198). Portia's tragedy echoes Antigone who already embraces of her liminal existence in Sophocles' play, addressing the polis: "What a wretched creature I am with nowhere to dwell, neither among mortals or corpses, not the living nor the dead" (Sophocles 170). An argument can be made to think both of them as victims of a cursed family engraved in incest. Antigone suffers from the curse of the Labdacids, the family from which Oedipus sprung. Antigone's father Oedipus kills his father Laius and marries to her mother Jocasta. As the familial ties of the cursed family gets even more ambiguous, Antigone is betrothed to his cousin Haemon. It is also true that some critics see her having incestuous desires toward her brother Polyneices whom she views irreplaceable. In similar fashion Portia's parents Marianne and Sly are revealed to be brother and sisters,

same father different mothers. Furthermore, Portia had incestuous relationship with Gabriel, as her father confronts her in the play: “watched how you played with him, how ya teased him, I watched yeer perverted activities, I seen yees, dancin ' in yeer pelts, disgustin’, and the whole world asleep barrin' ye and the river - I ' ll sort you out once and for all, ya little hoor, ya, ya rip, ya fuckin' bitch ya!” (Carr, “Plays 1” 219).

Using Van Gennep’s formula of *rites de passage* on Marina Carr’s *Portia Coughlan,* Nancy Margaret Finn believes that the first rite of passage is undergone with Gabriel dying on the day of the suicide pact of which Portia breaks only to live in a torment consequently. Finn refers to the liminal ghost imagery found in the dead brother, averring that “[Gabriel] is thus suspended with one foot in the next world and one foot in this world, wandering the banks of the Belmont River visible only to Portia, waiting and calling to her in order to complete his transition into the reaggregation or postliminal phase” (199). The liminal phase is ensued and it is a phase of torment for the asphyxiated heroine, culminating in the post-liminal death by drowning:

> She forces the rite of passage into its next phase by causing her own violent death through drowning/suicide, echoing her brother's death, finalizing the reaggregation of the unfulfilled rite of passage that should have taken place with Gabriel, and freeing herself from the torment of her life in this world (Finn 200).

Drawing on Gennep’s liminal theory, Victor Turner however proposes his own formula on social dramas in an attempt to explain ongoing social events and conflict situations in a culture. He conceptualizes it as “an eruption from the level surface of ongoing social life, with its interactions, transactions, reciprocities, its customs for making regular, orderly sequences of behavior” (*Anthropology of Performance* 25). The four phases Turner speaks of are listed as breach, crisis, redressive action culminating in either re-

integration or recognition of irreparable schism. The breach, as Turner suggests is breaking of a norm, regulations in a system of social relations, "signalized by the public, overt breach or deliberate nonfulfillment of some crucial norm regulating the intercourse of the parties" (*Dramas Fields and Metaphors* 38). In *Portia Coughlan, the breach* manifests itself as breaking apart from customary and regulative kinship ties, exemplified through the hereditary incest engraved in the relationship between Gabriel and Portia. The *escalation of the crisis* points to the post-Gabriel netherworld Portia suffers from and is strictly liminal in nature since the liminal ghost occupies the years between Gabriel's death and Portia's final surrender. However, since *redressive actions* which are often ritualized aim at addressing the social fraction and they are "swiftly brought into operation by leading or structurally representative members of the disturbed social system" (Turner, "Dramas Fields and Metaphors" 39), Portia is married off to Raphael Coughlan by Sly Scully. Condensed by the loss of Gabriel, she acts in a rebellious way towards her family, husband and kids, explicitly rejecting the roles they necessitate:

> **Raphael** Been home since seven, kids atin' rubbish and watchin' videos, no homework done, no lunch, no dinner for them, where were ya?
>
> **Portia** Ah, Raphael, leave me alone.
>
> **Raphael** Quintin bawlin' his eyes out all evenin' for ya.
>
> **Portia** He'll grow out of me eventually. (Dries her legs with a cushion.)
>
> **Raphael** Ah, for Jaysus ' sake, Portia, he ' s only four.
>
> **Portia** I know what age he is and I want as little as possible to do with him, alright? (Pours the end of the wine for herself, sits and smokes.)
>
> **Raphael** Your own sons.

> **Portia** I never wanted sons nor daughters and I never pretended otherwise to ya; told ya from the start. But ya thought ya could woo me into motherhood. Well, it hasn' t worked out, has it? You 've your three sons now, so ya better mind them because I can't love them, Raphael. I ' m just not able (Carr, "Plays 1" 190).

Turner focused extensively on the liminal features of social dramas because of the fact that it is in the liminal phase in which the notion of in-betweenness takes place, giving birth to the ritual transformation of *rites de passage* in their potent characteristics. As the subject undergoes the liminal phase, it is neither here or there but betwixt and between. Nevertheless, what makes Turnerian liminal theory so distinct from Gennep is an emphasis on the fact that the theatre draws its power from the liminal staging pertaining to the phase of redressive action, of whose significance Turner indicates:" the world of theater … derive not from imitation … of the processual form of the complete or satiated social drama-breach, crisis, redress, reintegration, or schism … but specifically from the third phase, redress, and especially from redress as ritual process" (*The Anthropology of Experience* 41). Furthermore, Turner warns any student studying social change in this particular phase, advising:

> When one is studying social change, at whatever social level, I would give one piece of advice: study carefully what happens in phase three, the would-be redressive phase of social dramas, and ask whether the redressive machinery is capable of handling crises so as to restore, more or less, the status quo ante, or at least to restore peace among the contending groups (*Dramas Fields and Metaphors* 41).

The redressive action ritualized through marriage in Portia's case fails terribly to restore her spirits. It is apparent that the ritual of marriage only adds to the suffocation of Portia,

binding her to familial and interior ties even though she had a plan before marrying to Raphael: "I was going to college, had me place and all, but Daddy says no, marry Raphael" (Carr, "Plays 1" 171). This patriarchal imposition normatively viewing her as an object to be exchanged for profit by her father forced her to search for external associations of self-identification, all of which evidently and tragically failing. As Turner suggests, if the social drama runs through all three phases, the last phase is either manifested as the restoration of the status quo or schism. The social recognition of irredeemable schism is thus attributable to Portia's legacy as she defies norms and regulations imposed on her identity. She in a way breaks any norm attributed to life itself, she performs in a way no one does. In this respect, Portia is neither dead nor alive but an inbetweener walking over the boundaries of symbolic associations of life and death, but eventually re-uniting with Gabriel in death.

Ghosts embody a liminal presence in plays, a spectral or an apparition that is not alive but not quite dead, stuck between the two, haunting the living subjects for reasons repressed. The liminal ghost imagery is embodied through Gabriel in Marina Carr's play which is only seen by the audience and Portia. Echoing the concerns of Antigone over Polyneices' devoured body and unproper burial, the spirit of Gabriel was as if unable to pass through the River Styx, still occupying a presence in Portia's tormented netherworld. Ghosts as liminal entities are generally connoted to representing a repressed reality, a secret unknown but reflected in the image of the ghost. In Portia's case, this unutterable secret points to the cycle of incest running in the Scully family. This hereditary malady, as Portia's aunt and grandmother insist, condemned Portia and Gabriel to death since the day they were born out of incest between Marianne and Sly as half-siblings. The ghost is thus a symbol for the repression of a secret, as Abraham notes:

> From the brucolacs, the errant spirits of outcasts in ancient Greece, to the ghost of Hamlet's vengeful father, and on down to the rapping spirits of mod the theme of the dead - who, having suffered repression by their family or society, cannot enjoy, even in death, a state of authenticity - appears to be omnipresent (whether overtly expressed or disguised) on the fringes of religions and, failing that, in rational systems (287).

As Abraham further notes, the ghost is the repressed gap in the lives of others, whose presence is too fearful to utter as it signifies "a gap that the concealment of some part of a loved one's life produced in us. The phantom therefore, also a metapsychological fact. Consequently, what haunts not the dead, but the gaps left within us by the secrets" (287). Gabriel's ghost is a dissatisfied spirit, only encountered by Portia, not by his parents or others in the play. The reason why the apparition only appears to Portia can be ascribed to the close but uncanny connection between the twins. When Portia asks Marianne "We were so alike, weren't we, Mother?" (Carr, "Plays 1" 181), her mother responds:

> **Marianne**: The spit; couldn' t tell yees apart in the cradle.
>
> **Portia**: Came out of the womb holdin ' hands - When God was handin' out souls he must've got mine and Gabriel' s mixed up, aither that or he gave us just the one between us and it went into the Belmont River with him - Oh, Gabriel, ya had no right to discard me so, to float me on the world as if I were a ball of flotsam. Ya had no right. (Begins to weep uncontrollably.) (Carr, "Plays 1"181).

Portia feels the half of her existence gone with Gabriel's suicide, a reunification demands death at the same spot. This is arguably the result of crossing kinship boundaries as part of symbolic associations of the law of the Father. However, as Lacan's reading of Shakespeare's Hamlet shows, the ghost of Hamlet's father points to phallus, "one cannot

strike the phallus, because the phallus, even the real phallus, is a *ghost*" ("Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in Hamlet" 50). In Hamlets' case, one cannot strike the phallus since it is a ghost haunting the troubled subject suffering from the Oedipal dilemma. The father's ghost only exists in Hamlet's psyche because of the fact that it does not actually exist at all, unseen to others, and striking it would be the tragic reiteration of the complex of which Hamlet tragically wants to avoid and waver. The ghost of Hamlet's father represents the incest taboo since if the father wasn't killed by Claudius the uncle, Hamlet would have done the same thing dictated by the Oedipus complex, killing his father the king and then marrying his mother Queen Gertrude. In Portia's case, the twin brother's ghost is still the punitive representation of the breaking of the incest taboo. The incest taboo is traditionally regarded as a necessity for kinship ties giving away to state formation which launches techniques of biopolitics on bodies to ensure subjects that are proper. The prohibition of incest is absolutely necessary for the biopolitics of the modern state as the scientific knowledge would affirm the fact that it reduces the gene pool from which healthy bodies are born *or* for society to be "possible" at all, the prohibition is self-referentially a must law. Thus, the castration-complex which by itself serves psychoanalytically as the most affeered punishment of the child for any incestuous desires against the father ensures the entry into the symbolic order of the Father in the purpose of assuring a social order that regulates and administers sexual relationship, prohibiting incest.

The image of the ghost also points to failed expectations, unworthiness and not living up to the ideals of the big Other, represented by the Phallus through the imagery of Gabriel's ghost. In Portia's case, she was unable to live up to the expectations of her parents and Gabriel as her mother tells her "Gabriel was the one I loved, never you!" (Carr, "Plays 1" 217). Furthermore, Gabriel possessed an angelic beauty and "had a voice like God himself" (Carr, "Plays 1" 185), which points out an existence of purity to be

found in Gabriel unparallel to Portia. The reason why Gabriel began to live in a netherworld when he was alive stems from the very fact that Portia started to see other boys, ignoring him:

> **Marianne** Gabriel stopped singin ‘, Portia, when you stopped talkin' to him, when ya refused to go anywhere with him, when ya refused to ate at the table with him, when ya ran from every room he walked into, when you started runnin' round with Stacia and Damus Halion. That ' s when Gabriel stopped singin’. Oh, Portia, you done away with him as if he were no more than an ear of corn at the threshin' and me and your father could do nothin' only look on (Carr, “Plays 1” 218).

The ghost of Gabriel represents a haunting of the past, the decision of not going through with the suicide pact. Since Portia did not go along with the suicide pact, she is tormented till she is reunited with him in death. In close inspection, the entirety of Portia’s life is a ghost, haunting the ideal self that committed suicide along with her twin brother years ago. This view strangely echoes Lacan’s argument on Hamlet who, as psychoanalysis teaches us, wanted to kill his father and marry her mother the but could not do so because the whole re-enactment of the Oedipus complex was barred from him. Instead, the deed was realized by his uncle Claudius, and thus Hamlet was haunted by his father’s ghost. To revisit the Lacanian point, Gabriel embodies the phallus as the one who went along with the deed as promised by the suicide pact, the ghost thus represents the fact that she perhaps should have completed the pact and committed suicide with Gabriel. Since she simply could not do so, she will never suffice and be whole. Portia’s identity is doomed to remain fragmented, living under the very shadow of the phallus defining the core of her very being. Again, an argument can be made to view Gabriel as the object of desire in Lacanian terms, which only exists because Gabriel was non-existent in her life. However, the moment Gabriel in ghost form appears, it is no longer some ideal and desire

to be pursued but an overwhelming presence threating the boundaries between the living and the dead, as the angelic voice of Gabriel is heard not only by Portia throughout the play but near the Belmont River as well; “Still nights he can be heard singin' in his high girly voice” (Carr, “Plays 1” 205). Gabriel represents the unattainable fulfillment of desire, the fantasy of which only exists to the extent that it is always deferred in remaining unattainable as such is the conundrum of desire. Portia can never fulfill the desire Gabriel represents in real life, she is forever doomed, the only way to redeem is a self-redemption in death. What Portia does is daring to cross the boundaries of symbolic associations of the clear-cut boundary between life and death, but this dangerous encounter with the Real would only result in death. This lethal encounter with the Real is enacted when Portia kills herself by jumping into the Belmont river. As Zizek points out, the death drive “is the very opposite of dying, it is a name for the 'undead' eternal life itself, for the horrible fate of being caught in the endless repetitive cycle of wandering around in guilt and pain” (292). This is precisely what plagues Portia whose identity gets entrapped in the hereditary cycle of familial incest bounds followed by suffocation after Gabriel. The intrusion of “the Real” into the familiar territory, Gabriel’s apparition into Portia’s already tormented life, causes the breaking of the familiar, culminating in the provocation of anxiety leading to death. When Portia encounters her “double” embodied through the ghost, as psychoanalysis would tell us, it is that “moment [where] one encounters one's double, one is headed for disaster; there seems to be no way out” (Dolar 11).

Furthermore, if one is to apply the Lacanian identity-formation through the mirror stage on Portia’s self-identification, it seems apparent that she identifies herself with that lost part of her very existence, Gabriel. Portia and Gabriel as twins were uncannily inseparable as Damus tells Fintan after they witnessed Portia’s body raising out from the river; “You ' d ask them a question and they' d both answer the same answer - at the same time, exact inflexion, exact pause, exact everythin’” (Carr, “Plays 1” 194). Therefore, a

gap resulted from her twin brother's death plagues Portia's self-identification, causing Portia to feel alienated, fragmented and lost in her post-Gabriel existence. The ghost is a reminder of the lost part of her identity as one being, half-Portia and half-Gabriel, and as Portia always identified herself with her twin brother, even in the mirror stage as two beings in one body, the loss is unbearable to the point of death. This unfillable and forever-sought gap which Lacan formalized through the notion of *objet petit a* serve as a substitution to the lost desire of the fragmented self. Thus, having acknowledged that interior ties exemplified through the familial ties in the play, that is Raphael Coughlan and her kids, cannot substitute for the loss of Gabriel, Portia looks for ways of external self-identification to substitute the loss by meeting lovers in the Belmont River and heavy drinking to no avail. The gap which is created by Gabriel's death is unfillable by no mortal pleasure and is evident in an encounter with her lover Damus Halion:

> **Portia**: And if ya really care to know I've always found sex to be a great let-down, all that suck.in' and sweatin' and stick.in' things into one another makes sense to me no more. Give me a jigsaw or a good opera any day or the Belmont River. I ' d liefer sit be the Belmont River for five seconds than have you or any other man beside me in bed (Carr, "Plays 1" 205).

However, as she crosses the borders of symbolic impositions of arguably the kinship ties, Portia lives a liminal life, alive but dead. This is in parallel to how Antigone lived a living death imposed by a hereditary curse, a "serving death" prophesized by Oedipus. The result for this liminal crossing is what Lacan called tragic *Atè*, the form of tragic punishment for crimes for crossing such boundaries upon those like the accursed Labdacids but also in this tragic case, Portia Coughlan.

A Foucauldian account of the relationships between the familial structure and biopolitics would propel a re-negotiation of the conception of familial power and

sovereignty in conjunction with its implications on the state-sponsored biopolitics that aims at creating proper subjects which is vital for its existence. As the new technology of biopower surpassing the punitive power of the sovereign in traditional sense necessitates the survival of the bodies, it launches techniques of domination that instigates paternal authority over the subjects of the family that would ensure reproductive and well-disciplined subjects. For Foucault, the four techniques of domination launched by biopower on the regulation of sex focused on the Malthusian (reproductive) couple, the masturbating child, hystericized woman and the perverted adult. Since the family occupied a significant space of analysis for at least three of such domains, it has been the target of biopolitics. Tracing the genealogy of biopower in his works, Foucault was interested in the traditional sovereignty of family. The structural quality of the family is intrinsically paternal and patriarchal given the fact that the father held a sense of authority over the subjects of the family, an authority of blood-right. Foucault marks a shift of power in the eighteenth-century familial structure which he views slowly being dominated by the technical and scientific advancement targeting the bio-politicization of family. In regards to this contrast between the traditional and new family, Foucault indicates:

> Until the middle of the eighteenth century the aristocratic or bourgeois family (since the campaign is limited to these forms of the family) was above all a sort of relational system. It was a bundle of relations of ancestry, descent, collateral relations, cousinhood, primogeniture, and alliances corresponding to schemas for the transmission of kinship and the division and distribution of goods and social status. Sexual prohibitions effectively focused on these kinds of relations. What is now being constituted is a sort of restricted, close-knit, substantial, compact, corporeal, and affective family core: the cell family in place of the relational family; the cell family with its corporeal, affective,

> and sexual space entirely saturated by direct parent-child relationships. In other words, I am not inclined to say that the child's sexuality that is tracked down and prohibited is m some way the consequence of the formation of the nuclear family, let us say of the conjugal or parental family of the nineteenth century (*Abnormal* 248).

The emerging modern family is the result of biopolitics and even though the sovereignty of the father is weakened, especially with the blood-relations losing importance in the modern world. This weakening of paternal authority stems from the fact that "the significance of blood—is being diminished under the pressures of reproductive technologies such as in vitro fertilization and increasingly accepted family forms such as same-sex couples and parents, in familial relationships are weakened" (Taylor 206). However, the family as a nucleus of authority over its living subjects' bodies still exercise disciplinary power by subjecting them to state mechanisms of disciplinary power including schools, asylums, psychiatric clinics, military conscription and so on. Not only does the family cedes disciplinary power over to the state but also the power of sexualization of its children as well, exemplified perhaps best through state-sponsored sex education aiming at ensuring procreative heteronormative subjects. This is the great fallacy of the modern family, as Foucault exclaims:

> We have been deceived for two centuries! For two centuries we have been told: Give us your children and you can take care of their sexuality […] Give us your children, and your power over your children's sexual body, over their body of pleasure, will be maintained… And the State, psychologists, psychopathologists, and others say: It's ours, this education is ours! This is the great deception in which parental power has been caught. It is a fictional power whose fictional organization enabled the real constitution of this space to which one was so attached for the reasons I have just given, the constitution

> of this substantial space around which the extended relational family has been contracted and restricted and within which the child's life, the child's body, has been both watched over but also developed and treated as sacred. In my view, the sexuality of children concerns parents more than children. In any case, it is around this suspect bed that the sexually irradiated and saturated and medically anxious modern family was born (*Abnormal* 258).

The prohibition of incest has been a crucial element for the traditional familial structure and the deployment of alliance incorporated within itself this prohibition which was vital for the biopolitics of the state. In this respect, Taylor notes that "the traditional deployment of alliance is a static system of prohibitions, in contrast to the modern deployment of sexuality, which is mobile, polymorphous, and contingent in its techniques, continually expanding its areas and forms of control. The deployment of alliance is repressive, whereas the deployment of sexuality is productive" (207). The deployment of alliance traditionally had ties to kinship and formation of marriages. However, the deployment of alliance was considered to be superseded by the deployment of sexuality with the advance of biopower that necessitated the regulation of bodies, but especially the sexual relationships, controlling population and reproduction through elements of both the scientific knowledge and the institutionalized psychiatric power. Having acknowledged the fact that the incest taboo is crucial for the bio-politicization of the family and the function of the family is to produce well-disciplined subjects, it can be said that Portia Coughlan defies paternal impositions attempting constrict her to the gendered space of familial interiority. She acts in total denial of her maternal roles and proves any subjectification process targeting her troubled self wrong by ending her life in a netherworld. Portia neither confirms nor deny the prohibition against incest. What Marina Carr attempts to show through Portia is that relationships are not as normalized, contained and proper as they are perceived and promoted. This points to a ubiquitous

assimilation by patriarchal ideology that makes us the subjects deaden to the point of viewing any non-conforming instance a vital threat only to be met with violence and aggression. Portia Coughlan breaks the incest taboo and normative kinship boundaries, rejects paternal authority in interior setting. She poses a threat against the biopolitical order since "anyone who resists being part of such a [bio-politically normalized] family or who undermines its ruse of inevitability in the eyes of children must be abnormal and poses a threat to society. Such a person poses a danger to society against which society has the right to defend itself" (Taylor 215). Her defiance is of Antigone in rejecting the notions of "families, as cohabitating kinship units headed by male members of monogamous, procreative, heterosexual couples, are seen as quasi-natural formations, as indicated by the fact that they have allegedly sprung up everywhere since time immemorial" (Taylor 215). A Foucauldian-feminist reading of Antigone in this case points to the Foucauldian claim that "the subject's body and his well-being were always a gift from the sovereign, which the subject continued to enjoy as long as he did not challenge the sovereign's power" (Tripathy 27). Antigone challenges this claim which is exemplified through Creon who serves as the representation of the disciplinary punitive power of the sovereign, evident in lines, where Creon addresses Antigone's marriage to his son Haemon, exclaiming "It is Death who will stop the marriage" (Sophocles 160). Moreover, Antigone not only defies Creon's paternal law but also death equated with his patriarchal authority, since "by committing suicide, Antigone upsets Creon's plan of a living death and moves away from that twilight zone of life-in-death. Her suicide is another political act intended to relativize Creon's power over others' bodies" (Tripathy 29). In similar vein, Portia does not give away to the paternal authority of the heteronormative order imposed on her feminine identity. The symbolic meaning of her death resonates with Antigone as "the feminine figure who takes the place of Antigone and bears the residual trace of her crime thus ridicules the universal, transposes its

operation, and devalues its meaning through the overvaluation of male youth, thus recalling Antigone's love for Polyneices" (Butler, "Antigone's Claim" 36).

An argument on biopolitics specific to *Portia Coughlan* recalls Carr criticizing the traditional Irish catholic view on women which dictates and imposes the roles of motherhood and wifehood by launching them as cultural and religious realities. This is also part of a feminist discourse she tries to build in the Midlands Trilogy in terms of challenging the maternal attribution to the phenomena of Irishness, the Mother-Ireland. This traditional association of Ireland with motherhood has long been a central theme in the tradition of Irish theatre spearheaded by William Butler Yeats' Cathleen Ni Houlihan (1902) where the titular character is the embodiment of Ireland in search of fields that are stolen. Casting nationalistic and mythological attribution of motherhood to Irishness aside, Carr deviates from such tradition in an attempt to challenge the stereotypical view on the Irish women as child-bearers as Melissa Sihra points out:

> Carr points out the unattainable expectations of women in relation to children and motherhood, which go back to Catholic nationalist ideals of procreation: 'You're meant to adore your children at all times, and you're not meant to have a bad thought about them. That's fascism, you know, and it's elevating the child at the expense of the mother. It's like your life's not valid except in fulfilling this child's needs. What about your needs, your desires, your wants, your problems? (*Marina Carr* 97).

Marina Carr has written *Portia Coughlan* as part of a commission by National Maternity Hospital, "as Writer-in-residence, Carr received a room in the building in which to write for two years" (Sihra, "Marina Carr" 96). This unique project resulted in *Portia Coughlan* through which Carr represented a sharp heroine who defies all the norms attributed to women in an age where womanhood is associated first and foremost with being a natural,

nurturing and dutiful mother. Sihra draws attention to how the traditional view on women is engraved in traditional Irish society as well as in the constitution and law of Ireland, stating:

> The official status of women in the Republic of Ireland is determined 'by her life within the home' since the ratification of Eamon De Valera's 1937 Constitution in which the words 'woman' and 'mother' are, to this day, used interchangeably … Up until May 2018 Ireland was the only country in the world which upheld the equal right to life of the unborn foetus with that of the living mother as determined by the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution Act which 'Acknowledged the right to life of the unborn, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother' (*Marina Carr* 97).

Challenging the politically pre-determined identification of the Irish women with motherhood and wifehood, *Portia Coughlan* is a manifestation of resistance to the socially imposed regulations and gender roles enforcing a clear-cut Irish womanhood. The mother-Ireland figure is clearly defined in Irish constitution that clearly equates womanhood with motherhood:

> 1. In particular, the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved
>
> 2. The State shall, therefore endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home (Bacik 252-253).

Furthermore, defying the above-mentioned pre-determined values of conformity imposed by the patriarchal Irish societal order and nation state, Carr's *Portia Coughlan* begins with a non-conformist Portia drinking brandy alone at home in the morning, refusing to

perform the maternal roles. Portia as a “non-maternal, undomesticated, and seemingly neglectful of her family” (Sihra, “Nature Noble or Ignoble" 142) strikes as a challenging example of a woman who refuses to act according to the socially imposed rules attempting to shape her character by disallowing an undergoing of a self-discovery process for the female individual. Marina Carr endeavors to represent the underrepresented and those women whose voices are rarely expressed in a male-dominated theatrical tradition focusing “conspicuously around mutually dependent male-pairings” (Sihra, “Nature Noble or Ignoble” 133). *Portia Coughlan*, in contrast, does not talk of Irish nationalism but it instead reflects a woman who lives in a nether-world, walking on the liminal borders between life and death. The post-Gabriel life where she gets married to Raphael and bears three children is torturous for Portia who associates marriage with suffocation and being buried alive:

> **Portia** These days I look at Raphael sittin' opposite me in the armchair. He's always tired, his bad leg up on a stool, addin' up the books from the factory, lost in himself, and I think the pair of us might as well be dead for all the joy we knock out of one another. The kids is asleep, the house creakin' like a coffin, all them wooden doors and floors. Sometimes I can't breathe any more (Carr, “Plays 1” 178).

Forced to live in a familial space entrenched between two patriarchs, Portia feels she is slowly being buried alive just as Antigone was entombed alive after addressing the polis in a defiance against Creon’s orders. Antigone alone reveals the fact the enforced notion of female subjugation by patriarchal authority is long engraved in western society as Sihra notes;

> The relegation of women to the domestic sphere began in western society at least by 500 BCE where the formation of the Greek state situated women within the *oikos* while validating male identity in terms of the public sphere of the *polis*. From this period it was upheld that 'woman's body makes her more involved with "natural" biological activities such as giving birth, while man is free to engage in cultural pursuits. These bodily activities then "place her in *social roles* that in turn are considered to be at a lower order of the cultural process than man's", thus giving women a different "psychic structure" which is seen as closer to nature' (*Marina Carr* 98).

Antigone is aware of the fact that she will never bear any child and be a dutiful wife to Haemon as prophesized by Oedipus. Furthermore, she dislocates herself from the submissive position of her sister Ismene who claims "Do not forget that we are women– it is not in our nature to oppose men but to be ruled by their power. We must submit, whatever they order, no matter how awful" (Sophocles 141). Antigone "unmans" Creon by the same vocabulary she is barred from using, as Butler emphasizes the fact that "to the extent that she occupies the language that can never belong to her, she functions as a chiasm within the vocabulary of political norms" (*Antigone's Claim* 82). Appealing to the same Gods Creon appeals, she subverts the discourse on "And there is no way we can allow a woman to triumph" (Sophocles 163) to Creon's tragic end resulting from his unjust treatment of Antigone, "all [his] misdirected and ill-fated plans" (Sophocles 185). If Portia occupies any role of female defiance of patriarchal authority embedded in mythology, it is Antigone in the modern context whereby the domestic impositions of marriage and being a dutiful wife to the husband while nurturing the children are completely and explicitly rejected. Portia cheats on her husband and neglects her children along with her husband with great contempt. In the first version of *Portia Coughlan*, she is a darker character who is filled with hatred against men, evident in lines where she

claims: “ah wish ta Jaysus he’d run off wud somewan an’ tache tha brats wud him. Noh a hope in hell. Men; ah jus’ want ta castrate thim” (Carr, “The Dazzling Dark” 276). The severity of anti-male statements by Portia especially condensed by her thoughts of castrating men could be considered a point of reference to the traditional view of women as *vagina dentata*, an association of the female genitalia with a monstrous set of teeth ready to devour the penis. Freud’s theory of castration which points to the fact that women are terrifying because they are received castrated by men along with women as castrators are criticized by feminist thinkers for the obvious reason of diminishing the figure of the female to either the castrated or the castrator. As Creed observes, “The myth about woman as castrator clearly points to male fears and phantasies about the female genitals as a trap, a black hole which threatens to swallow them up and cut them into pieces. The vagina dentata is the mouth of hell a terrifying symbol of woman as the ‘devil’s gateway’” (390). The male fear of the woman as the castrator is associated with the fact that “the male might desire to create a fetish, to want to continue to believe that woman is like himself, that she has a phallus rather than a vagina” (Creed 425). The reason why Portia wants to castrate all men points to the fact that all the torment and suffering she is subjected to are caused by men including Gabriel, but also has to do with the loss of symbiotic union with Gabriel in the womb, which is severed by entering into the symbolic order of the Father. Furthermore, Portia attacks her mother in the play, acting hysterically; she jumps on her:

> *Portia leaps, a wildcat leap front the table onto her mother, knocks her down, on top of her.*
>
> [**Marianne**] Me back! Have ya lost the run of yourself!
>
> **Portia** (flailing at Marianne who is pinned under her) You've me suffocated so I can't breathe any more !
>
> **Marianne** Let me up! Let me up! Portia, please, your mother.”

Portia Why couldn't ya have just left us in peace? We weren't doin' nothin'!

Marianne You' re not right in the head! Let me up! (Carr, "Plays 1" 217).

This metaphorical rape scene of the mother is enacted when she jumps on her mother but in the original The Dazzling Dark version of the play, she devises plans of raping her: "Ah want ta rape her, thah's noh righ is ud. […] Ah've imagined ways, don't worra, don't tell anawan ah said thah" (Carr, "Plays 1" 276). Portia's hysteric discourse targeting her mother stems from Scully family's treatment of Gabriel's pure being before he died as Portia exclaims: "It wasn 't me as severed us! Was you and Daddy! Was ye stopped hees singin' lessons!" (Carr, "Plays 1" 218), but it also takes its source from the interior subjectification Marianne, Portia and Gabriel were subjugated to, which suffocated them:

Portia Always spyin' on us!

Roars from Marianne.

Interferin' with our games! Out callin' us in your disgustin ' hysterical voice! Why couldn't ya have just left us alone? Why?

Marianne Left ye alone to, to yeer unnatural ways and stupid carry-on!

Portia We weren't hurtin' anybody and me and Gabriel locked in that room -

Marianne I was locked in there too –

Portia Aye, sobbin' into the pillow. That sound, that sound, I think hell be a corridor full of rooms like that one with that sound comin' from every one of them, and then you ' d turn on us because we were weaker and smaller than you, but that was nothin' compared with your feeble attempts to love us. We' d sooner have your rage any day! Your hysterical picnics, with your bottle of orange and your crisps -

Marianne That ' s right, sneer away! I wished to God ye ' d never been born!

Portia We wished it too (Carr, "Plays 1" 217).

Portia wishes that she is never born at all, since entering into the symbolic order of the Father along with gendered roles and social impositions brought by it causes a complexity that cannot be solved. Marriage, as Freud believed, was a great cure to women's hysteria thus a prescription to prevent hysteria traditionally points to the promotion of the vital role of "marriage and parenthood against drunkenness, promiscuity, illegality, disorder, negligence, and laziness, all behaviors that undermine the family's goals" (Taylor 205). Moreover, as Portia poses a stark contrast to this traditional view, her hysteric discourse continues as she loses the grip of reality and talks of hurting and drowning her own children:

> Will ya just stop! Leave me alone! Told ya I can't! Alright! I ' m afraid of them, Raphael! What I may do to them! Don't ya understand! Jaysus! Ya think I don't wish I could be a natural mother, mindin' me children, playin' with them, doin' all the things a mother is supposed to do! When I look at my sons, Raphael, I see knives and accidents and terrible mutilations. Their toys is weapons for me to hurt them with, givin' them a bath is a place where I could drown them. And I have to run from them and lock myself away for fear I cause these terrible things to happen. Quintin is safest when I'm nowhere near him, so teach him to stop whingin' for me for fear I dash his head against a wall or fling him through a window (Carr, "Plays 1" 203).

It is true to assert that "Portia's alienation from her children stems from her inability to identify with the patriarchal concept of the 'natural mother' to which all women are assumed to aspire" (Sihra, "Marina Carr" 98). She acts as if she does not know them as the bridge between life and death shrinks in favour of death embodied in the delineation

of Gabriel's ghost throughout the play. Portia's desperate attempt to cling on to life by drinking and flirting with other men is overshadowed by the continuing appearance of Gabriel towards the end of the play where the call for the tragic unity of the twins in Belmont River is intensified. Portia's conscious mind is conquered by the hysteria towards the end of the second act, and as her conscious psyche is full of hysteric thoughts, her mind is unable to perform a discharge, thus the only way to redeem herself is to give in to the "Sound of Gabriel 's voice, triumphant" (Carr, "Plays 1" 223).

Marina Carr's *Portia Coughlan* in the original The Dazzling Dark version written in Midlands dialect recounts a folk tale about the Belmont River and how a young woman is blamed for witchcraft, foretelling the future; "If ya lookt her in th'eye ya didn't see her eye buh ya seen how an' whin ya war goin' ta die" (Carr, "The Dazzling Dark" 253). Apart from her prophetic quality, the woman's expansive knowledge about nature is also seen as part of witchcraft by the people. She was accordingly subjected to the brutal acts of torture and slow death by townsfolk: "Anaways tha people 'roun' these parts grew auspicious of her acause everthin' she predicted happened. Tha began ta belave thah noh on'y war she perdictin', buh causin', all a'thim terrible things ta chome abouh" (Carr, "The Dazzling Dark" 253). Portia acts almost as a fortune-teller like the same young girl left to die in the folk tale, when she declares in a scene cut from the original text in guessing the imminent death of Gabriel who in a way had the same sort of supernatural purity in him as Melissa Sihra indicates:

> In the first edition, Portia foresees the future, like the young girl in the story, in a final monologue which is cut from the later editions: 'an' don't ax me how buh we boh knew he'd be dead chome spring. […] we seen him walchin' inta tha Belmont river; seen me wud you on our weddin' day […] we seen ud all Raphael down ta tha las' detail (*Marina Carr* 101).

The story of a young woman who was tortured and left to die because of her instinctive and expansive knowledge of nature, a punishment and correction brought by dominant patriarchal ideology resonates very closely with Antigone's tragic end in a cave. Antigone's premature burial is ordered by Creon who invokes the punishment of Gods against "the awesome throne of Justice" (Sophocles 171) deputized by himself as the new king of Thebes. Antigone had already known that the deed of giving her brother Polyneices a proper burial in defying Creon's orders would inevitably result in her death. This prophecy was already foretold by Oedipus who condemned and cursed his children a serving death. In similar vein, Portia knew that her end would be in the liminal terrain of the Belmont River, the same place Gabriel and she made a suicide pact fifteen years ago: "Ah wouldn't a bin afraid for ah know how an' whin ah will go down'" (Carr, "The Dazzling Dark" 253). Both Antigone and Portia arguably live on the margins of the symbolic order, kinship and familial ties but they do not only walk on such liminal borders but dare crossing the symbolic associations brought by them, which inevitably result in death as Lacan would argue.

In *Antigone's claim*, Judith Butler structures her reading by examining the philosophical arguments on Antigone leading up to hers mainly through the lenses of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Jacques Lacan. Butler tries to understand why they both viewed her death as an inevitable end. Hegel's argument on Antigone revolves around his dialectical understanding of the necessary transition from kinship to patriarchal state. Antigone, for Hegel, stands for kinship and familial ties, as was evident in her persistence over the proper burial of Polyneices against the orders of the patriarch of the state, his uncle Creon. For Hegel, she not only stands for those ties of primordial origin defining kinship but also the subordination of woman, affections and emotions that will have to eventually give way to the state which is to be associated with reason, power and authority, all male attributions. Hegel avoids from naming Antigone in his analysis

which is ascribed by Butler to his attempt of generalizing the unlawful deed attributed to all womanhood, which along with the representation of kinship dialectically transcending to state-formation. Lacan's analysis on Antigone derives from his claim that Antigone bases her seemingly just right to give a proper burial to her brother on an unwritten law, which is only applicable to her brother. This stems from the fact that Antigone has an implicit lust for his deceased brother Polyneices and she does not seem to be having the same passionate love neither for Ismene nor Eteocles. Lacan in his "Seminar VII" on Antigone points out that "It is because she goes toward *Atè* here … going beyond the limit *of Atè,* that Antigone interests the Chorus. It says that she's the one who violates the limits of *Atè* through her desire" ("Ethics of Psychoanalysis" 277). What Lacan calls *Atè* points to going beyond the symbolic associations of death and living and as Antigone embodies this dangerous terrain exemplified best in lines where she exclaims: "already at birth I was doomed to join them, unmarried, in death" (Sophocles 171). The price for crossing the line, for Lacan, is death:

> For Lacan, to seek recourse to the gods is precisely to seek recourse beyond human life, to seek recourse to death and to instate that death within life; this recourse to what is beyond or before the symbolic leads to a self-destruction that literalizes the importation of death into life. It is as if the very invocation of that elsewhere precipitates desire in the direction of death, a second death, one that signifies the foreclosure of any further transformation (Butler, "Antigone's Claim" 51).

The limit Lacan speaks of recalls his arguments on the Real which that cannot be confronted and if it is done so, signifying death. Butler does not necessarily associate this limit with the intrusion of the Real into Antigone's life but as she further emphasizes, this marks a Lacanian "limit that is not precisely thinkable within life but that acts in life as the boundary over which the living cannot cross, a limit that constitutes and negates life

simultaneously" (*Antigone's Claim* 49). For both Antigone and Portia, this limit can be conceived as an escape mechanism from the imposed structures of gendered norms and roles within kinship structure given the fact that it is the language and the symbolic entry into the father's authority that structure them in the first place. Hysteria can be considered as a way of questioning one's own social and symbolic identity, an encounter with the Real. In this respect, Portia's hysteric discourse evident more explicitly in the Dazzling Dark version affirms the intrusion of the Real into Portia's tormented life in the Lacanian sense, eventually leading to her tragic end. This return to a pre-natal state embodied through psychoanalytical attribution of the Belmont River as the womb functioning as a gateway to self-redemption also marks "the return to an ineffaceable ontology, prelinguistic, is thus associated in Lacan with a return to death and, indeed, with a death drive (referentiality here figured as death)" (Butler, "Antigone's Claim" 53), evident in the play:

> Times I close me eyes and I feel a rush of water around me and above we hear the thumpin' of me mother' s heart, and we ' re a-twined, his foot on my head, mine on his foetal arm, and we don't know which of us is the other and we don't want to, and the water swells around our ears, and all the world is Portia and Gabriel packed for ever in a tight hot womb, where there ' s no breathin' , no thinkin' , no seein ' only darkness and heart drums and touch (Carr, "Plays 1" 222).

Furthermore, Lacan evades calling Antigone's implicit lustful love for her brother an incestuous love, but as Butler points out, "It is not the content of her brother, Lacan claims, that she loves, but his "pure Being," an ideality of being that belongs to symbolic positions" (*Antigone's Claim* 51). This echoes the pureness of Gabriel who sang beautifully with his heavenly voice as his father recalls the past:

> God forgive me, but times I ' d look at him through the mirror and the thought would go through me mind that this is no human child but some little outcast from hell. And then he ' d sing the long drive home and I knew I was listenin' to somethin ' beautiful and rare though he never sang for me - Christ, I loved his singin', used stand in the vestry of Belmont chapel just to listen to his practisin ' - those high notes of God he loved to sing (Carr, "Plays 1" 199).

Gabriel represents the ideal self, the self that has gone along with the suicide, which Portia could never possess after witnessing his suicide and thereby she is haunted by his ghost. To revisit the Lacanian argument on Gabriel as the object of desire, it seems plausible in this respect to assert that "the object [Gabriel as the object of desire] … is no more than the power to support a form of suffering, which is in itself nothing else but the signifier of a limit. Suffering is conceived of as a stasis which affirms that that which is cannot return to the void rom which it emerged" ("The Ethics of Psychoanalysis" 261).

Having acknowledged the fact that both Lacan and Hegel saw Antigone's end necessary, the former seeing her as standing at the limits of symbolic associations of kinship and family and the latter as merely standing for womanhood and kinship eventually giving away to state-formation, Butler forms her own analysis in contrast to both. As Hegel has "her [Antigone] stand for the transition from matriarchal to patriarchal rule, but also for the principle of kinship" (Butler, "Antigone's Claim" 1), and to the degree that Lacan also associated her with representing kinship ties, it is concluded that "Antigone, who from Hegel through Lacan is said to defend kinship, a kinship that is markedly not social, a kinship that follows rules that are the condition of intelligibility for the social, nevertheless represents, as it were, kinship's fatal aberration" (Butler, "Antigone's Claim "15). Even though they both saw the kinship embodied in Antigone as a natural and primal phenomenon before the intrusion of the social, Butler disagrees to the extent that the incest taboo is not only naturally forbidden but also socially considered

taboo as well. She disagrees with both Lacan and Hegel, emphasizing that Antigone does not stand for all women but as a unique example and though she walks on the borders of intelligibility, she does not stand at the limits of the symbolic associations:

> Butler rejects both extremes (Hegel's location of the conflict WITHIN the socio-symbolic order; Lacan 's notion of Antigone as standing for the going-to-the-limit, for reaching the OUTSIDE of this order): Antigone undermines the existing symbolic order not simply from its radical outside, but from a utopian standpoint of aiming at its radical rearticulation. Antigone is a 'living dead' not in the sense (which Butler attributes to Lacan) of entering the mysterious domain of Ate, of going to the limit of the Law; she is a 'living dead ' in the sense of publicly assuming an uninhabitable position, a position for which there is no place in the public space - not a priori, but only with regard to the way this space is structured now, in the historically contingent and specific conditions (Zizek, "Antigone" 12- 13).

For Butler, the normative structure of kinship makes Antigone's standing ambivalent. In contrast with Lacan, she believes that Antigone is not driven towards her tragic end by merely *thanatos*, the death drive but simply a lustful love for Polyneices. Furthermore, Antigone, for Butler, does not stand for femininity as Hegel conceived her. Antigone is not as submissive as Ismene is depicted in the play. She defies orders of Creon and claims a public sphere and *unmans* him in his vocabulary, appealing to the Gods to justify her claim:

> Although Hegel claims that her deed is opposed to Creon's, the two acts mirror rather than oppose one another, suggesting that if the one represents kinship and the other the state, they can perform this representation only by each becoming implicated in the idiom of the other. In speaking to him, she

> becomes manly; in being spoken to, he is unmanned, and so neither maintains their position within gender and the disturbance of kinship appears to destabilize gender throughout the play (*Antigone's Claim* 10).

Butler's reading points to a liminal standing for Antigone who is in between the submissive femininity supposedly occupied by Ismene and state-associated masculinity by Creon. This provokes further discussion in terms of seeing Antigone walking on the margins of not only kinship but also gender norms. The question of what constitutes gender in the context of Sophocles' play and its modern implications in Marina Carr's *Portia Coughlan*, is further explored by our understanding of what kinship ties represent and to what extent they are impactful in shaping identity. Butler points to the performativity of kinship in her book, emphasizing the fact that kinship is "not a form of being but a form of doing" (*Antigone's Claim* 58). Antigone does not stand for kinship in its natural sense since the family she belongs to is a stark contrast to the ideal kinship ties: her father Oedipus is also her brother and she is to be married to her uncle's son Haemon which would only add to the ambivalence of the family tree. In close inspection, she also never openly admits that she did the deed of burying Polyneices customarily; "I admit it—I do not deny anything" (Sophocles 154). In regards of this ambiguity, Butler claims that "what she refuses is the linguistic possibility of severing herself from the deed, but she does not assert it in any unambiguously affirmative way: she does not simply say, ''I did the deed''" (*Antigone's Claim* 10). Albeit less ambiguous, Portia's ambivalence stems from her liminal nature stuck between the socially obligated roles of motherhood and wifehood and a ubiquitous call for a re-unification in death. Even though she rejects such roles, she still tries to cling on to "life", observed in the last scene with his husband Raphael; "I cooked your dinner, I poured your wine, I bathed Quintin, read him a story and all. Can't we knock a bit of pleasure out of one another for once?" (Carr, "Plays 1" 222). Furthermore, Portia further reveals another attempt of clinging on to life: "if

Raphael Coughlan notices me I will have a chance to enter the world and stay in it, which has always been the battle for me" (Carr, "Plays 1" 223). However, Portia only chooses Raphael since he had an angelic name attached to him, a substitute for Gabriel. However, as Portia still lingers on the lost memory of Gabriel and as the world of Raphael pushes her to the edge of symbolic associations, when asked to choose between her husband and Gabriel, she remarks the impossibility of such deed "And you say you want me to talk about ya the way I talk about Gabriel - I cannot, Raphael, I cannot. And though everyone and everythin' tells me I have to forget him, I cannot, Raphael, I cannot" (Carr, "Plays 1" 223). What Gabriel possesses for Portia, a love that surpasses kinship and familial ties, calls for a reunion that is only achieved in death by our symbolic understanding. Antigone possesses a much more ambiguous love since the love gets even more ambiguous when one considers it as a re-exercise of the Oedipal attachment to father in the play. In other words, Antigone's love is arguably not directed towards Polyneices but to his father Oedipus who is also her brother as they shared the same mother, Jocasta. On the other hand, as Patricia Johnson who attempts to situate Antigone as opposed to Oedipus the father as a point of departure for psychoanalytic criticism, claims, "Antigone transfers her affections to her brothers, and to Polynices specifically in *Antigone*. When this devotion earns her death, she both laments that death as a substitute marriage, and justifies its inevitability for a child devoted to the oedipal project" (395). Both Antigone and Portia have Oedipal attachments to the brother figure, for the former "Polyneices [represents] the natal family" (Johnson 393), and for the latter Gabriel is a reminder of the pre-natal, pre-symbolic symbiosis to be found in the womb, and thus, they cannot leave them for conventional marriage.

If one is to associate Antigone to kinship, for Butler, it only makes sense to see the deed of proper burial as the source of her kinship relationship to her brother. As kinship and familial structures involve a vocabulary of relationships that are strictly gendered, Antigone is in a defiance of normalized vocabulary of gendered roles of family:

> in acting, as one who has no right to act, she upsets the vocabulary of kinship that is a precondition of the human, implicitly raising the question for us of what those preconditions really must be. She speaks within the language of entitlement from which she is excluded, participating in the language of the claim with which no final identification is possible (Butler, "Antigone's Claim" 82).

Antigone is somehow outside of symbolic associations of kinship in its natural sense and as she is not intelligible within the norms governed by them. One finds it difficult to place her in a natural kinship context. She seems to be on the edge of kinship ties as well as the vocabulary of a kinship language that is gendered and structured as norms, she simply does not seem to fit. As Antigone does not appear to be a human but speaks its language as Butler claims, she really posits a very ambivalent character both in terms of her kinship and familial ties and attribution of gender. However, as the literature on Antigone continuously shapes the understanding of what she actually might be claiming, it is only plausible to assert at this point is that she claims for recognition for those that are ambiguous in nature, outside of normativity, resisting social impositions of social categorization, those that are uncontainable like Portia Coughlan. In *Portia Coughlan*, the titular heroine rejects the familial interiority, ties and roles that are imposed by them. Portia associates herself with the Belmont River, a liminal gateway breaking through the lands of two patriarchs that serves as a way of self-redemption as Sihra indicates:

> Characteristic of water is its excessive drive to overflow, to transgress demarcated boundaries. The Belmont River is a metaphor for Portia who, like the river, is uncontainable. Carr observes, 'With Portia I would say, the river is her. It's her and Gabriel'. The unceasing current of the Belmont River erodes the male-owned farmlands, powerfully redefining the contours of patriarchy (*Marina Carr* 107).

However, the tragic ending of these heroines begs the question: why do they have to die? The tragedy of their deaths adds to the sharpness of their defiance, but all the more asks: Can the ambivalent nature of their defiance still upset the gendered vocabulary of kinship and family that is imposing the roles of motherhood and wifehood on women? Butler questions the future of symbolic impositions brought by the psychoanalytical schema of the Oedipal dilemma for those outside of clear-cut gendered normativity applied to family and kinship:

> I ask this question, of course, during a time in which the family is at once idealized in nostalgic ways within various cultural forms, a time in which the Vatican protests against homosexuality not only as an assault on the family but also on the notion of the human, where to become human, for some, requires participation in the family in its normative sense. I ask this as well during a time in which children, because of divorce and remarriage, because of migration, exile, and refugee status, because of global displacements of various kinds, move from one family to another, move from a family to no family, move from no family to a family, or in which they live, psychically, at the crossroads of the family, or in multiply layered family situations, in which they may well have more than one woman who operates as the mother, more than one man who operates as the father, or no mother or no father, with half-brothers who are also friends−this is a time in which kinship has become

> fragile, porous, and expansive. It is also a time in which straight and gay families are sometimes blended, or in which gay families emerge in nuclear and nonnuclear forms. What will the legacy of Oedipus be for those who are formed in these situations, where positions are hardly clear, where the place of the father is dispersed, where the place of the mother is multiply occupied or displaced, where the symbolic in its stasis no longer holds? (*Antigone's Claim* 22).

Julia Kristeva also criticizes the psychoanalytical impositions of the Oedipal schema, mainly the "posterity the strength of (incestuous) desire and the desire for (the father's) death … [the] blinding light cast by Freud, following Oedipus, on abjection, as he invites us to recognize ourselves in it without gouging out our eyes" (*Powers of Horror* 88). The psychoanalytical law is therefore perverse since it incorporates within itself the perversion and the norm: "One might simply say in a psychoanalytic spirit that Antigone represents a perversion of the law and conclude that the law requires perversion and that, in some dialectical sense, the law is, therefore, perverse" (Butler, "Antigone's Claim" 67). The prohibition against incest as Kristeva asserts "has the logical import of founding, by means of that very prohibition, the discreteness of interchangeable units, thus establishing social order and the symbolic" (*Powers of Horror* 64). The kinship ties are therefore formed through the exchange of women with the establishment of the taboo in primitive society. The ties located the female in the passive familial position as the mother and wife whereas the men actively engaged in the political sphere. Kristeva talks of an authority of the male that "shapes the body into a *territory* having areas, orifices, points and lines, surfaces and hollows, where the archaic power of mastery and neglect, of the differentiation of proper-clean and improper dirty, possible and impossible, is impressed and exerted" (*Powers of Horror* 72). The inscription on the female body as submissive, passive mother and wife are rejected by Portia who, by definition, is the abject drawn

"toward the place where meaning collapses" (Kristeva, "Powers of Horror" 2). As Turner puts forward, the third phase of the social dramas, the redress of action, where the social forces enforce techniques to re-assert the subject to the status quo is ritualized. The fact that Portia is married off to Raphael can be considered as part of a ritual of purification as the catholic attribution of marriage connotes to Kristevan claim that "in a number of primitive societies religious rites are purification rites whose function is to separate this or that social, sexual, or age group from another one, by means of prohibiting a filthy, defiling element" (*Powers of Horror* 65). This is a defilement "by means of the rituals that consecrate it, is perhaps, for a social aggregate, only-one of the possible foundings of abjection bordering the frail identity of the speaking being (Kristeva, "Powers of Horror" 68), which is embodied in the incestuous relationship Portia had with Gabriel. The function of these rituals has strategic value for the religious programme of cleansing the defilement off the subject which poses a striking threat:

> the rituals of defilement and their derivatives, which, based on the feeling of abjection and all converging on the maternal, attempt to symbolize the other threat to the subject: that of being swamped by the dual relationship, thereby risking the loss not of a part (castration) but of the totality of his living being. The function of these religious rituals is to ward off the subject's fear of his very own identity sinking irretrievably into the mother (Kristeva, "Powers of Horror" 64).

Furthermore, the abject for Portia recalls the moment when she is severed from the mother in the womb and associated herself with Gabriel, thereby constituting the boundary between a united self, comprised of Gabriel and Portia and the other. Claire Wallace associates Portia with the abjection of Gabriel's haunting self, pointing out that "If described through the lens of Kristeva's discussion of abjection and food loathing, Portia hungers for Gabriel whom she regards as contiguous with her self, and yet in order to

establish her self she must expel Gabriel, in other words, abject her self" (446). In *Portia Coughlan,* the perversion of the law is literally embodied in the dictated marriage on Portia's part by his father whose union was perverse, which propels the idea that the law that condemns Portia is perverse by itself. The law is perverse since they push Portia into a role, a state of unintelligibility. No matter what she does, she will be disobeying some authority which is intrinsically patriarchal: if she chooses Gabriel, which she does, this will be a betrayal to her husband and kids, if she chooses them it will be a betrayal to Gabriel.

The pre-determined gendered norms and roles within kinship and family structure constitute gender and what means to be a man, woman and human. As is clear from the depiction of their relationship in the play, the gender attribution to Portia and Gabriel is enforced by socially constituted impositions. Gabriel is expected to help his father on his farm who only deals with "animals, not ghosts" (Carr, "Plays 1" 219), but far from it, he focused on singing, "the outcast from hell" also "Looked like a girl … Sang like one, too" (Carr, "Plays 1" 194). Furthermore, Portia and Gabriel were two sides of the same coin, they would dress the same and be undistinguishable from one another, blurring the socially-constituted gender roles attributed to them:

> Everythin's swapped and mixed up and you' re aither two people or you' re no one. He used call me Gabriel and I used call him Portia. Times we got so confused we couldn't tell who was who and we ' d have to wait for someone else to identify us and put us back into ourselves. I could make him cry be just callin ' him Portia (Carr, "Plays 1" 210).

Taking these into consideration, Marina Carr's *Portia Coughlan* offers a subversive re-reading of the argument on gendered kinship and familial ties through the uncanny twins. Carr's reading not only asks the question of why gender is so crucial to our understanding

of what means to be a human being, but breeds another: Is it not the imposed gendered norms that binds her to a familial setting which suffocates her, pushing her to the edge of what constitutes a proper human being? Butler's response to the gender argument provides insight to what Marina Carr attempts to achieve through one of the darkest and sharpest characters in contemporary theatre embodied in the tragic story of Portia Coughlan: "There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results" (*Gender Trouble* 33). It is the pre-determined notion of "gender reality" which enforces heteronormative roles of the binary gender matrix on its subjects as part of "the law [that] requires conformity to its own notion of "nature" and gains its legitimacy through the binary and asymmetrical naturalization of bodies in which the Phallus, though clearly not identical with the penis, nevertheless deploys the penis as its naturalized instrument and sign" (Butler, "Gender Trouble" 135). The question is therefore furthered if one acknowledges gender as a performative notion:

> If gender is not tied to sex, either causally or expressively, then gender is a kind of action that can potentially proliferate beyond the binary limits imposed by the apparent binary of sex. Indeed, gender would be a kind of cultural/corporeal action that requires a new vocabulary that institutes and proliferates present participles of various kinds, resignifiable and expansive categories that resist both the binary and substantializing grammatical restrictions on gender. But how would such a project become culturally conceivable and avoid the fate of an impossible and vain utopian project? (Butler, "Gender Trouble" 143).

The normative structure of the heteronormative gender matrix still enforces a limited grammar on gender roles in the familial space; however, the stark representations of how such impositions torment the subject begs a re-negotiation of what gender ties constitute.

In a traditional Irish catholic setting where what means to be a woman is associated with being a dutiful mother and wife, Portia's stark defiance therefore offers a renegotiation of the gendered norms and roles attributed to family and kinship. *Portia Coughlan* also questions the applicability of such roles for those occupying a liminal presence, the uncategorized and thereby ascribed as the abject. In close alliance with Antigone's claim, *Portia Coughlan* not only upsets the very patriarchal language that creates the gendered roles within the family, but also renegotiates the necessity of the ways to come up with a new vocabulary of understanding for those outside of normative bounds of the pre-determined gender structure.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has argued through the analyses of the three plays that the modern subject is subjected to a ubiquitous schema of subjectification with regards to family, gender, identity, whose violent impositions are revealed and subverted by theatre. The function of the theatre is therefore to provoke thought and action in an attempt to unbind the subject from the ropes of normativity and tunnel-visioning of ideology. The impositions of the heteronormative gender economy still manifest its subjectifying programme not only in violent forms but also in the forms of institutionalized and policed techniques of domination in the modern setting. Targeting the non-conforming representations of gender, the heteronormative order aims to correct the subject and form idealized notions on the binary logic of gender. One significant function of theatre is to develop a discourse that would provoke a re-thinking and re-evaluation of norms imposed on the subject by the dominant ideologies on stage, the magic of which propels visualizing a non-normative way of envisaging subverted worlds and experiences. In this respect, the three plays discussed in this thesis point to representations that re-negotiate the enforced subjectification processes not only the liminal female subject but also the abject dramatic persona undergo. While each of them treats the level of liminal subjectification distinctly, they all can be defined as subversive representations that challenge one's understanding of gender normativity, kinship and familial ties as well as the patriarchal impositions on the identity.

The first chapter forms the theoretical base of analyses for this thesis through which three Foucauldian notion of the objectification of the subject are discussed in detail. As Foucault indicates, the first mode of the objectification of the subject revolves around the creation of the subject by a discursive power-knowledge that derives its power from science, language, biology and economics. In close relation with the first mode, the

second mode connotes the dividing principles of the subject who is confined, constrained and normalized through a ubiquitous control. Foucault's last mode, subjectification, is a formation of the subject by itself, meaning that a self-knowledge is formed by the subject, who views itself in regards to category of sex and gender it is subjected to internalize. In close inspection, this chapter reveals, the regulation of sex and deployment of sexuality are necessary components of a new emerging power, which Foucault calls biopower that demands the survival of bodies as opposed to eliminating them. The biopolitical techniques of domination targeting the body and soul of the subject enforce the prohibition of the incest taboo for the creation of proper familial relationships that would ensure bodies over which the modern biopower could exercise its encompassing power. Thus, the creation of the notion of gender plays a pivotal role for realizing such scheme in instigating a heteronormative social order in familial interiority targeting the female. As the three plays discussed in this thesis shows, the heteronormative gender matrix employs violent techniques of domination in enforcing the subject to undergo subjectification, whose liminal presence and non-conforming stance presents danger to the status quo. In classifying the liminal subjects who are neither here or there as abnormal, the theatrical productions of the subversive re-enactment of subjectifications on stage evokes re-evaluation of the imposed norms in enlightening the audience.

The second part of the first theoretical chapter has focused on the close connection between the liminal theory and theatre, pointing to the liminal ritualistic attribution of theatre, which stems from what British Anthropologist Victor Turner theorized as *the redress of action* phase as part of his social drama theory. Turner's social drama formula, comprised of four phases, breach, crisis, redress, reintegration or schism, proves a well-structured base of analysis for the three plays discussed in this thesis in terms of unearthing the heroines' liminal functions causing social frictions in the established social order. Turner's formula also helps inquire whether the premise of tragic heroines lead to

a re-integration or schism. Briefly focusing on the liminal that appears throughout the history of plays, from Shakespeare to Contemporary British Drama, this chapter has shown the applicability of Turnerian theory in literary textual analyses of plays but also the function of the liminal theatre in provoking thought and action. It is also revealed in this chapter there is a close connection to be explored between the liminal heroines and psychoanalytical identity-formation in tracing the complexes and trauma that is embedded in the text. The Lacanian criticism with regards to the mirror stage theory and his concept of *objet petit a*, as this chapter explored, provide an in-depth examination at the troubled psyches of the liminal heroines and dramatic personae in tracing the remnants of fragmentation of the liminal self which is originated in childhood. Lastly, it is concluded that the dream symbolism discussed through archetypal characters found in Jungian dream interpretation provides further analyses in unearthing the hidden trauma.

The second chapter on Sarah Kane's *Cleansed* has questioned extreme forms of subjectification by the figure of Tinker who tinkers with Grace's corporeality, molding it to a symbiosis achieved in the corporeal coalescence of Grace into Graham that deconstructs the binary logic of gender. Kane deconstructs gender by subverting the inherent subjectification of the subject engraved in the social order of the biopolitics of the modern state. It visualizes a utopian vision of gender in the most extreme, violent and in-yer-face forms that provokes thought and action. Tinker's transformation serves as an epiphanic moment where he transforms from a brutal executor of corporeal violence to a mechanic that finds love. Tinker's epiphany, this chapter has found, stems from the idea that fluidity of changes in identity in his surroundings makes him question his own self which leads him to develop a moral compass outside of heteronormative interests of the gender economy. Tinker's subversive transformation, as this chapter has found, lies at his utopian construction in the Grace/Graham merging. The play goes beyond a mere representation of violence, taboo depictions and the notion of love is hard to come by; it

is filled with inherent metaphorical lyricism Kane excelled at developing in her in-yer-face oeuvre. The almost impossible to form stage directions of the brutal acts of violence exemplified through the rituals of dismemberment, rats carrying away severed limbs and flowers blossoming form an uncanny aura in the play. The uneasiness Kane forms in the play not only threatens the core interiority of the subject, but also makes the audience that is so enmeshed by the established norms of gender reality, unbreakable taboos and romanticized love question its inner truth with regards to such issues.

Cleansed not only deconstructs gender but also points to representations of the performativity of gender. The patriarchal impositions on Grace's female identity are subverted to the extent that her identity progressively dissolves into a symbiosis of non-subjectification. Grace does not possess a gender but performs one exemplified in the cross-dressing first then her demeanor which clearly desensitizes her as Robin dies in front of her. This deadening reaction by itself reveals the effects of the performativity of gender: what is enforced on the subject as gender is done so that one internalizes it as the unquestionable truth of existence. Thus, gender is not so much of a truth about one's self but a reproduced, repetitive positioning that is not related to any inherent truth at all. *Cleansed* functions as an extreme form of institutionalized violence and policing that keep the subjects in their designated gendered places as dictated by heteronormative gender economy. This extremity of brutality targets the body, sex and gender, revealing its techniques of domination to keep us in our gendered place. Kane's *Cleansed* in this respect subversively employs the brutality of text as part of her in-yer-face lyricism to fight against norms that are equally suppressive and violent, revealing the fact that "the violence of the text has the identity and coherence of the category of sex as its target, a lifeless construct, a construct out to deaden the body. Because that category is the naturalized construct that makes the institution of normative heterosexuality seem inevitable" (Butler, "Gender Trouble" 161).

In the third chapter, this thesis has observed a passive form of subjectification which is imposed on the heroine Lisa Jones' already fragmented self as a result of a childhood trauma whose traces are studied through symbolism on the dream excursion. The institutionalized form of subjectification to keep the subject in the clutches of gender normativity is bitterly visualized in Anthony Neilson's *The Wonderful World of Dissocia* where the heroine is forced to journey into an imaginary realm in search of a self that is unavailable to her in the real life. Albeit the fact that Grace achieves a self-subjectification through Tinker in *Cleansed*, Lisa is in a passive constrained in Neilson's *Dissocia*, controlled, monitored and systematically drugged in a psychiatric prison cell. Lisa is disallowed for a self-formation of identity in real life and thus she journeys into Dissocia as a mindscape from the imposed regularities and roles set before her by the patriarchal order in order to find her true identity as the queen Sarah of House Tonin. Since she is normalized through institutionalized drugging, policing and control, Neilson reveals her creative mind that resists normativity in the creation of the phantasmagoric Dissocia and its inhabitants. Lisa's defiance of patriarchal norms is a battle ensued in Dissocia as he encounters the evil plaguing the land in the form of his boyfriend. The boyfriend and her sister echo are the epitome of the normalized subject but Lisa's return to Dissocia marks a defiance of what they represent.

The real-life impositions overwhelm Lisa but the real reason for her escape to Dissocia stems from trauma that caused a friction in her already-fragmented self. The subjectification of the soul and body is inscribed on Lisa by psychiatric control but Jung's theory of dreams provides insight to the troubled psyche of Lisa in revealing a possible traumatic experience in childhood exemplified through archetypal characters in the play. The clinical control of the subject is depicted in the stark second act where the audience witness Lisa in a prison-like box constantly monitored and drugged to normalize her. This chapter has found that the alternate world that grants a self that is free from impositions

not only reveals the potency of fantasy which provides a temporary relief in masking the fiction from reality, but also incorporates a feminist premise in revealing the limiting effects of institutionalized policing of the subject in normalizing her through techniques of medicinal biopower. It is not the question of death or conformity for Lisa, the play's ending affirms, but rather a stark depiction of a troubled psyche that relies on the power of imagination, creativity, liveliness deriving from her female self in defiance against patriarchal impositions on her gendered identity.

In the fourth chapter, it is argued that a familial subjectification is launched by patriarchal ideology to constrict the uncontainable heroine Portia Coughlan to the maternal duties of motherhood and wifehood, which is overtly rejected by Portia who marginally walks on the borders between life and death in her Post-Gabriel netherworld. In Marina Carr's *Portia Coughlan,* one witnesses a tormented self in the character of Portia as a result of the loss of an irreplaceable brother whereby a complete rejection of familial and interior subjectification is embedded in a defiance echoing Antigone in terms of walking on the liminal terrain of symbolic associations of kinship, family and gender. In connection with the feminist premise of the play in rejecting the roles of motherhood and wifehood, the play re-negotiates what gender normativity creates in terms of placing the feminine subject in her gendered place. The uncanny symbiotic characteristics found in the twins Portia and Gabriel echo Grace and Graham in terms of developing a discourse on gender reality. As this chapter has claimed, Portia and Gabriel as twins act as the embodiment of the performative attribution of gender, affirming that gender is a culturally formed phenomenon since they dressed the same, called each other the same but what divided them has been the patriarchal division of gender that placed them in their gendered positions. Portia is married off to Raphael Coughlan and is metaphorically entombed alive in a familial interiority as Antigone was literally by Creon's orders in defying the paternal order. While Gabriel could not simply deal with such impositions

and went along with the suicide pact, Portia attempted to conform but this unnatural conformity haunted her post-Gabriel self in complete agony and torment that called a re-unification in death embodied through the spectral existence of Gabriel. Portia's uncontainable self is in symbiosis with the liminal Belmont River and in an act of defiance she ends her life in the river as Portia's "abject" blood slashes through the lands of the patriarchs that condemned her to a gendered place that failed to resonate with her.

Portia Coughlan is outside of our normative understanding of a self as she walks on the borders between life and death, therefore posing an unintelligible characteristic. She arguably transcends the symbolic associations of such impositions that burden the normalized subject, threating the core of our existence as she withers away from earth in a liminal acknowledgment of death looming on the background of her half-alive half-dead self. What Portia does upsets the vocabulary of kinship and family not because simply she is in complete denial of the roles of a mother and wife but because her liminal existence reveals that gender is a reproduction of culture. Gender is not only a creation but also a domain of freedom and Portia's stark defiance reveals the necessity of a new language for the uncategorized, the abject that cannot be tied to spatial confinement as she embodies the river in its uncontainable nature. It is concluded that the explored ambiguous identities of Portia and Antigone walk on the borders of kinship and familial ties, stand outside of normative structures of the binary gender matrix engraved in the heteronormative gender economy of biopolitics but above all necessitate a vocabulary for the uncategorized, the abject that resist and upset patriarchal grammar on identity and gender. Echoing her defiance, the river flows not only in an uncontainable manner but it also erodes the artificial constructions along the way, in Portia's claim, the patriarchal construction of gendered roles, familial interiority and clear-cut kinship ties.

In conclusion, the three plays discussed in this thesis reveal the deadening effects of the subjectification processes enforced on the liminal self. However, in doing so, they

serve as representations that build a discourse that re-negotiates our normative understanding of gender reality, familial ties, kinship relations as well as identity, all of which are being dominated through techniques deployed for the creation of proper and normalized subjects and bodies, essential to the survival of the reproductive biopolitics of the heteronormative gender order. *Cleansed* depicts an extremely brutal form of the deployment of subjectification inscribed on the corporeality of its subject through acts of severing limbs and ritual of dismemberment at the hands of Tinker who facilitates a symbiosis *par excellence* in the merging of Grace/Graham that defies the normativity of gender. *Dissocia* builds a feminist discourse through a visualization of phantasmagoric brilliance in the formation of Dissocia stemming from the creative imagination of Lisa's self which is in a liminal way juxtaposed between patriarchal impositions on her feminine self in the real world and a self that is being formed in defiance of such impositions by mindscaping to the realm of the unconscious. *Portia Coughlan*, on the other hand, dramatizes an unintelligible and ambiguous self in echoing Antigone that resists categorization and stands outside of normative ways of looking at gendered roles. As this chapter has found, the familial interiority of the female subject is also denied formation explicitly by the heroine, resulting in the provocation of a re-evaluation of what the predetermined gender reality constitutes in terms of dividing the subjects it aims to dominate as man, woman and the other.

The three plays discussed in this thesis, *Cleansed*, *Dissocia* and *Portia Coughlan* are stark representations of subjectifications launched on the bodies and souls of the liminal self. However, they above all provide a subversive literature that provokes thought and propels action in revealing the necessity to build a discourse that resists normativity of gendered roles as well as its violent impositions and a vocabulary for the unintelligible, uncontainable, uncategorized. The unintelligible creation of an entity formed through Grace/Graham merging in *Cleansed* which is discussed through the figure of the

hermaphrodite and the Harawayan cyborg in this thesis not only reveals the violence and aggressiveness that often target the non-conforming gender positions but also propels a visioning of a world of the otherwise. In a similar vein, the visceral story of Lisa's tragic confinement opens the discussion of how important it is to treat people with mental illnesses, which is often scorned and deemed abnormal as was embodied in the representations of her sister and boyfriend. Lisa's colorful and rich imagination in creating Dissocia as well as her psychic resistance against the patriarchy provokes one to re-evaluate ideological positioning one is embedded in. On the other hand, Portia's tragic defiance of maternal duty serves as a striking instance of the feminist discourse Marina Carr builds in her plays. Portia walks hand in hand with Antigone in terms of having a liminal standing towards the living in knowing and accepting the looming and yet tragic death while breathing in a netherworld. It can be said that she almost always attempted to cling on to life but life always failed her, as Marina Carr shows us, leaving her no choice but a self-cathartic death in a re-unification with Gabriel.

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ÖZET

1990 sonrası modern İngiliz Tiyatrosu öznenin maruz kaldığı toplumsal cinsiyet kavramlarından biri olarak değerlendirilen normatif olgusunun yeniden ele alınmasını amaçlayan, şiddet, zulüm ve benliğin iğrenç olarak adlandırılan tasvirlerinin hüküm sürdüğü oyunlarla temsil edilmiştir. Bu dönemin Suratına tiyatro oyunları sahnedeki acı, eziyet ve gaddarlığın tasvirini çoğaltmış ve tiyatroyu içgüdüsel tahrik seviyesine çıkarmıştır. İngiliz tiyatrocu Sarah Kane'in deneyimsel tiyatrosu içerdiği anlam itibariyle izleyiciye normlara dayalı olmayan tabu, bedensel cezalandırma ve benliğin yaşadığı kriz tasvirlerini göstererek onları şok eder. Suratına tiyatro akımının köklerinden ayrılan İskoç oyun yazarı Anthony Neilson'ın deneyimselliği de sadece performans anlamında değil, ayrıca dil ve deneyim yönünden de içgüdüsel zenginlik içeren tasvirler sağlar. Modern İrlanda tiyatrosunun seçkin oyun yazarlarından olan Marina Carr ise ölüm ve yaşam arasındaki eşiksel sınırlarda yürüyen karakterleri keşfederken, deneyimselliği daha derin düzeyde olan oyunlar yazmıştır. Bu tezde seçilen Sarah Kane'in *Cleansed*, Anthony Neilson'ın *The Wonderful World of Dissocia* ve Marina Carr'ın *Portia Coughlan* oyunları karakterlere uygulanan baskı şekilleri yönünden farklılık gösterse de, mecburi özneleştirmenin tahrik edici bir biçimde yeniden sahneye konmasının birer örnekleri olarak göze çarpar**.** Bununla beraber, bu üç oyunda analiz edilen eşiksel kadın karakterlerin benliklerini cinsiyetlenmiş alanlara yerleştirmeye çalışan heteronormatif dayatmalardan kurtarmaya çaba gösterdikleri gözlemlenmiştir. Bu karakterler dayatılan normlara karşı dururken, tiyatro sahnesi ise izleyici ve kadın kahramanların temsil ettikleri arasında izleyicileri eylem ve düşünceye sevk eden eşiksel bir bölgeye dönüşür.

Bu tez ilk olarak Foucaultcu perspektiften özneleştirme sorununu araştırmaktadır. Foucaultcu özneleştirme fikrinin vurguladığı üzere, bu süreç üç bölümden oluşan bir yapıya sahiptir. İlk yöntem gücünü dil, biyoloji ve ekonomiden alan söylem üzerinden oluşturan bir özneleştirmeye dayanır. Foucault'nun bu yöntemdeki odak noktası bilim ve dilden yaratılan söylemin öznenin oluşumunu nasıl yürüttüğünü araştırmaktır. İkincisi ise öznenin diğer insanlardan ayrıştırılarak kontrol ve gözetleme yoluyla oluşturulmasından kaynaklanır. Bu yöntem aynı zamanda öznenin kişiliğinin kendi içinde bölünmesine ve kimliğin parçalanmasına işaret eder. Son yöntem olan Foucaultcu özneleştirme ise insanın kendisini bir özneye dönüştürmesi, öznenin kendi kendine oluşturulmasıdır. Bu tez Victor Turner'ın eşiksel teorisi ve sosyal drama formülünü kullanarak, üç bölümlü özneleştirmenin yansımalarını, analiz edilen eşiksel kadın kahramanlarda analiz etmek amacıyla eleştirel bir yaklaşımda bulunmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, bu tez Lacancı psikanaliz ve eşiksel teori arasındaki bağları kimlik-oluşumu çerçevesinde incelemektedir.

Sarah Kane'in *Cleansed* başlıklı oyunu Grace'in bedenselliği üzerine kazınan ve en uç sınırlarda olarak betimlenebilecek bir özneleştirmeyi, cinsiyeti etkisiz bırakıp normatif olmayan bir tasvirle sahneler. Harici bir figür olan Tinker tarafından şekillendirilen Grace/Graham'ın (gayri) özneleştirilmesi cinsiyetin sosyal norm sınırlarının dışında kalır ve ikili cinsiyet mantığının oturmuş ve dayatılan düzenini tehdit eder. Bu bölümde tabu olarak görülen kavramların iğrenç tasvirleri ile cinsiyetin normatif olmayan tasvirleri Foucaultcu bir kavram olan "anormal", yine onun hermafrodit figürü üzerine açıklamaları ile Julia Kristeva'nın "iğrençlik" ve Donna Haraway'in "cyborg" kavramları üzerinden tartışılacaktır. Anthony Neilson' ın *The Wonderful World of Dissocia* oyunu ise öznenin nesneleştirilmesinin ilk yöntemini, öznenin diğer insanlardan ayrıştırılmasını ve benlik içerisindeki parçalanmayı, Lisa Montgomery Jones'un eşiksel benliğinin parçalanması ile ilgili olarak içgüdüsel ve tahrik edici bir hikâye anlatıcılığıyla

sahneleyerek onun halihazırda parçalanmış kişiliğindeki kesiği derinleştiren çocukluk dönemine ait bit travmanın anlamlarını ortaya çıkarır. Kadın kahramanın parçalanmış benliğinin travmatik izleri Carl Gustav Jung' un kolektif bilinçaltında bulunan arketipler teorisinden elde edilen rüya analizleri üzerinden incelenecektir. Son olarak, Marina Carr'ın *Portia Coughlan* oyunu Judith Butler'ın *Antigone'nin İddiası* başlıklı kitabında tartıştığı Antigone mitinin modern yansımaları üzerinden analiz edilecektir. Bu son bölüm Portia'nin iddiasının, Antigone'nin meydan okumasını cinsiyet rollerini bulandırma ile akrabalık ve aile kavramlarının sınırlarında yürüme bağlamında nasıl yankıladığını inceleyerek, anlaşılmayan duruşa sahip iki karakterde de gözlenen muğlaklığın kadın figürü üzerine dayatılan cinsiyet rollerinin yeniden değerlendirilmesine yol açışının izini sürecektir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: 1990 Sonrası İngiliz Tiyatrosu, Özneleştirme, İğrençlik, Cinsiyet, Kimlik-oluşumu, Hermafrodit, Eşiksellik, Victor Turner, Sosyal Dramalar, Rüyalar, Carl Gustav Jung, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Sarah Kane, *Cleansed*, Anthony Neilson, *The Wonderful World of Dissocia*, Marina Carr, *Portia Coughlan*, Judith Butler, Suratına Tiyatro.

ABSTRACT

Post-1990s Contemporary British Drama is epitomized with plays over which violence, cruelty and abject depictions of selfhood reign in an attempt to propel a re-negotiation of imposed normativity on the subject. In-yer-face plays of the era multiplies the depictions pain, suffering and brutality on the stage and elevates the theatre to a level of visceral provocation. The experiential implications of the British dramatist Sarah Kane's theatre shock the audience to the core through showing non-normative taboo depictions, corporeal corrections and selfhood in crisis. Straying from his alleged in-yer-face roots, the Scottish playwright Anthony Neilson's experientiality also provides visceral representations which are not only rich in terms of performance but also in language and experience. Marina Carr, as a prominent playwright of the contemporary Irish theatre, writes plays that are experiential on a deeper level as she delves into characters that walk on the liminal borders between life and death. The selected plays in this thesis, Sarah Kane's *Cleansed*, Anthony Neilson's *The Wonderful World of Dissocia* and Marina Carr's *Portia Coughlan,* stand out as providing provocative instances re-enacting the enforced subjectification on the liminal dramatic personae albeit differing in the ways in which they are imposed. However, this thesis observes that the liminal female selves analysed in these three plays always strive to free themselves from the heteronormative impositions placing them on their gendered spaces. As they defy such scheme, the theatrical stage becomes a liminal zone between the audience and what the heroines represent, provoking thought and action.

This thesis first explores the question of the subjectification from the Foucauldian perspective. As the Foucauldian understanding of subjectification emphasizes, the process has a tripartite structure. The first mode is based on a subjectification formed through discourse drawing its power from language, biology and economics. Foucault's

focal point in this mode is to inquire how discourse created from science and language propels a formation of the subject. The second emanates from a division of the subject from others whereby the subject is formed through control and policing. This mode additionally points to the fact that the subject's self is divided inside itself connoting to a fragmentation of identity. The last mode is what Foucault called subjectification whereby a human being is transformed into a subject by itself, a self-formation of the subject. This thesis takes a critical approach to finding the reflections of the tripartite subjectification in the analysed liminal heroines through using the Victor Turner's liminal theory and his formula of social dramas. It then moves to exploring the ties between Lacanian psychoanalysis and the liminal theory within the scope of identity-formation.

Sarah Kane's play *Cleansed* enacts an extreme form of subjectification inscribed on Grace's corporeality with a non-normative depiction of an entity that nullifies gender. Moulded through an external figure of Tinker, the (non)subjectification of Grace/Graham stands outside the intelligibility of gender and threatens the established and imposed scheme of binary gender logic. The abject depictions of taboo and non-normative gender are discussed through Foucauldian notion of the "abnormal", his accounts on the figure of the hermaphrodite, Julia Kristeva's notion of "abjection" and Donna Haraway's discussion on the "cyborg". Anthony Neilson's play *The Wonderful World of Dissocia* enacts the first mode of objectification of the subject, the dividing of the subject from others as well as causing a fraction in its selfhood, in a visceral and provocative storytelling in regards to the fragmentation of liminal selfhood in Lisa Montgomery Jones' case, revealing strong implications of a childhood trauma that deepened the incision on her already-fragmented self. The traumatic traces of the heroine's broken selfhood are explored through the dream analyses of Carl Gustav Jung deriving from his theory of archetypes found in the collective unconscious. Lastly, Marina Carr's play *Portia Coughlan* is analysed through the modern reflections of the Antigone myth

discussed through Judith Butler's book *Antigone's Claim*. This last chapter will explore how Portia's claim resonates with Antigone's defiance in blurring gender roles as well as walking on the borders of kinship and family, tracing how the ambiguity observed in both characters with unintelligible stance leads to a re-examination of the imposed gendered roles on the female figure.

Keywords: Post-1990s British Drama, Subjectification, Abject, Gender, Identity-formation, Hermaphrodite, Liminality, Victor Turner, Social Dramas, Dreams, Carl Gustav Jung, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Sarah Kane, *Cleansed*, Anthony Neilson, *The Wonderful World of Dissocia*, Marina Carr, *Portia Coughlan*, Judith Butler, In-yer-face Drama.