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**OBJECTIFICATION OF THE HUMAN BODY IN
CONTEMPORARY BRITISH THEATRE**

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ÖZ
ÇAĞDAŞ İNGİLİZ TİYATROSUNDA İNSAN BEDENİNİN
METALAŞTIRILMASI
AJDA EREN

Ataerkil düzen heteroseksüel erkek kimliğini över ve bu sistemin dışında kalan hiçbir şeyi hoş karşılamaz. Hiç şüphesizdir ki kadınlar ötekileştirmeye en çok maruz kalanlardır fakat ataerkil düzen LGBT bireyleri, çocukları ve gençleri de ikinci plana atar ve onların bedenlerini ve kimliklerini tanımlar. Bu doğrultuda, bu çalışma insan bedeninin metalaştırılması konusunun 1990'lardan itibaren yazılan üç çağdaş İngiliz oyununda nasıl farklı şekillerde ele alındığını inceleyecektir. Sırasıyla Anna Furse'ün **Augustine (Big Hysteria)**'sında bilimin, Mark Ravenhill'ın **Shopping and F***ing**'inde kapitalizmin ve Lucy Kirkwood'un **NSFW**'sunda medyanın insan bedenini nasıl metalaştırdığı tartışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çağdaş Tiyatro, Beden Politikası, Histeri, İnsan Bedenin Metalaştırılması, Heteronormatif Sistem, Erkek Bakışı, Kadın Bedeni İmgesi.

ABSTRACT
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Patriarchal order is designed to celebrate heterosexual male identity and anything that does not adhere to this system is not welcomed by patriarchy. It is beyond doubt that women are the ones who are mostly exposed to the marginalisation regardless of time and space but patriarchal order also subordinates LGBT individuals, children and youth and it defines their bodies and identities. Accordingly, this study will examine how the three contemporary British plays written after the 1990s address the topic of the objectification of the human body differently. How science in Anna Furse's **Augustine (Big Hysteria)**, capitalism in Mark Ravenhill's **Shopping and F***ing** and media in Lucy Kirkwood's **NSFW** objectify the human body will be argued respectively.

Keywords: Contemporary Theatre, Body Politics, Hysteria, Objectification of the Human Body, The Heteronormative System, The Male Gaze, The Female Body Image.

PREFACE

This thesis is the result of my two-year research on the objectification of the human body in contemporary British theatre. It analyses this topic in the light of three contemporary British plays written after the 1990s: Anna Furse's **Augustine (Big Hysteria)**, Mark Ravenhill's **Shopping and F***ing** and Lucy Kirkwood's **NSFW**. These plays respectively examine the materialisation of the human body from different angles: science, capitalism and media.

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İstanbul, 2018
Ajda EREN

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INTRODUCTION

Patriarchy refers to a social system in which all values, rules and regulations are established according to heterosexual men who dominate the society. This existing order puts women, LGBT individuals, children and youth in a secondary position. Those who are subordinated by the patriarchal order seek their identities. However, their identities are denied and exploited. Therefore, their bodies have become objectified. Starting from this point of view, this study will examine the human body which turns into an object of the patriarchal system in three contemporary British plays written in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries; Anna Furse's **Augustine (Big Hysteria)**, Mark Ravenhill's **Shopping and F***ing** and Lucy Kirkwood's **NSFW**. The aim of this study is to investigate these contemporary playwrights' ideas on the objectification of the human body and how they criticise this problem in their plays in the light of theories on body politics and consumerism.

1. Historical Background

The three plays covered in this study were written in the 1990s and 2010s. Therefore, it is important to look at the period and its political state that has affected the British playwrights in general. The decades in which the playwrights of the nineties have been brought up starting from the 1970s, were already marked by global wars and their effects as well as Thatcher's impact on the home front. As for 1990s, although this decade seemed to be unperturbed, this decade is also very much under the influence of and traumatised by the conflicts old and new: aftereffects of World War II, the Cold War, the collapse of the Communist bloc, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and so on. Kirby Farrell refers to these years in his book, **Post-traumatic Culture: Injury and Interpretation in the Nineties** and states that:

Historically, post-traumatic mood makes sense as an aftershock of the great catastrophes of the midcentury, the Great Depression and the World War II. The postwar years advertised compensatory serenity but they also inaugurated the Cold

War, the Korean War, McCarthyism, threats of nuclear annihilation, and new racial and socioeconomic tensions (1998: 2).

The 1990s and the following years also witnessed so many other traumatic events of their own including the Bosnian War, 9/11 attacks, War in Afghanistan and the invasion of Iraq. After all the catastrophes and cultural tensions, the playwrights of the 90s and 2010s such as Sarah Kane, Mark Ravenhill, David Greig, Lucy Kirkwood, Simon Stephens and their contemporaries revealed the effects of these cultural traumas in the embodiment of their characters in their plays (Karadağ, 2013).

Margaret Thatcher's term of office coincided with these contemporary playwrights' growing up period in the eighties. Margaret Thatcher was the Prime Minister of Britain and also the Leader of the Conservative Party. Her government lasted eleven years between 1979 and 1990. She was called "Iron Lady" due to her fierce determination in maintaining her policies. Thatcher brought forward an idea of privatisation and regulated all parts of the society according to individual enterprise. However, this resulted in the change of British society and their life style. Everything became more dependent on money. Consumerism reached its peak. In his book, **State of the Nation**, Michael Billington states:

What, though, did we mean by Thatcherism? [...] a mixture of free markets, monetary control, privatisation and cuts in both spending and taxes, combined with a populist revival of the Victorian values of self-help and nationalism. At the heart of Thatcherism also lay a belief in the sacredness of the individual entrepreneur (2007: 28).

As it is understood from Billington's interpretation, Thatcherism refers to a whole of political ideologies that include pecuniary system of control; privatisation and the social values depending on individualism. However, such policies created a gap between people at those times. The notion of "the state nation" yielded to nuclear family ideology. Thatcher's policies brought about chaotic atmosphere in Britain. Conservatism limited the choices people make for their private lives. For example, Thatcher turned a hand to sex education system because she underrated the education of young adults' usage of contraception. Rather than accepting the reality of pregnant young adults and finding a solution to the problem, Thatcher's government found it

beyond tolerance and changed the education system (Karadağ, 2013: 11). In this sense, it is obvious that the state prefers to regulate the system immediately when something problematic to the policy of government is encountered. However, it just makes the problem bigger once it is looked at from a larger scale. Accordingly, Thatcher explains her own ideology in **Women's Own** magazine:

I think we've been through a period where too many people have been given to understand that if they have a problem, it's the government's job to cope with it. I have a problem, I'll get a grant. I'm homeless, the government must house me. They're casting their problem on society (1987).

As a result, the policies unconcerned of individuals and their choices cause an increase in the population of indifferent people.

2. Theoretical Framework: Consumerism and Body Politics

From this historical background prepared by Thatcher's policies, it is essential to discuss consumerism which will be one of the dominant theoretical approaches in this work. In **Consuming Life**, Zygmunt Bauman describes consumerism:

In most descriptions, the world formed and sustained by the society of consumers stays neatly divided into things *to be chosen* and their *choosers*; commodities and their consumers: things to be consumed and the humans to consume them (2007: 12).

As Bauman unveils that with consumerism, society turns into an entity divided into two parts which refer to commodities, things 'to be chosen', and their consumers who serve as choosers. The money becomes the basis of everything. Consumerism that dominates the works in focus in this study can be investigated under different titles such as consuming human bodies/lives through technology and/or media, consuming food/goods. It can also be seen that this ever-growing consumer ideology also paves the way in the rise of the objectification of the human body.

As a requisite issue to touch upon, it can be said that hunger defines human nature because first of all, people work and make money for food. It is an instinctive drive and you need food to survive. People want more and more in the contemporary culture because getting food becomes fetishized and it is considered as more than a need for the contemporary culture. There is so much food circulation in the world and it paves the way to take-away foods each designed for one person. In **Consuming Life**, Bauman comprehensively explains that:

Food ready to eat could be found at the family table but nowhere else: the gathering at the common dinner table was the last (distributive) stage of a lengthy productive process that started in the kitchen and even beyond, in the family field or workshop. What bonded the diners into a group was the cooperation, accomplished or expected, in the preceding process of productive labour, and sharing consumption of what was produced was derived from that. We may suppose that the 'unintended consequence' of 'fast food', 'take-aways' or 'TV dinners' (or perhaps rather their 'latent function', and the true cause of their unstoppable rise in popularity) is either to make the gatherings around the family table redundant, so putting an end to the shared consumption, or to symbolically endorse the loss, by an act of commensality, consuming in company, of the onerous bond-tying and bond-reaffirming characteristics it once had but which have become irrelevant or even undesirable in the liquid modern society of consumers. 'Fast food' is there to protect the solitude of lone consumers (Ibid., p.78).

In the 'liquid' world where everything happens and changes so fast, food also begins to be produced fast. The unities in the family bonds have broken down. As Bauman supports, the process of making food and taking it to the family table was the implication of unity in the family accordingly in the society. For example, when you have dinner with your family, everybody gathers around the table and communicate with each other. For Bauman, it is consumption too but the difference is that people share the moment.

When it comes to technology, starting in the late nineteenth century and especially in the twentieth century, rapid improvements in science and technology not only facilitated the lives of people but they were also used for negative ends like objectifying and consuming human bodies more and more. In the twentieth century, television and computer were invented and they changed people's way of life making everything dependent on screens. By the help of continuous developments in

technology in the twenty-first century, people have become more addicted to electronic devices. The devices have become smaller and portable such as laptops, tablets and smart phones with touch screens. Therefore, as technology becomes more accessible, it gets not only into homes but also into the pockets of people. The accessibility of technology makes society a more consumerist one. In a sense, contemporary life makes people slaves of the screens. Accordingly, everything has been more dependent on images. For example, Zygmunt Bauman, in his book **Consuming Life** defines this technology-based life style as follows:

an *electronic* life or *cyberlife*, [...] where most 'social life' is conducted primarily in the company of a computer, iPod or mobile, and only secondarily with other fleshy beings [...] living social life electronically is no longer a choice, but a 'take it or leave it' necessity (2007: 2).

As technology has become handy, social media has intensified the use of this cyber world. This means that more female images appear in public and accordingly the female body is objectified more than it was in the past. In **Consuming Life**, Bauman asserts that social networking sites have spread expeditiously like a virus (Ibid., p. 2). This enables people to witness each other's lives, get updates about what is going on in their neighbourhood and around the world because everyone keeps sharing information about their personal lives in detail and they continually post photographs, even the pictures that disclose their private lives. The most striking truth is that they are happy to promote themselves in a public sphere (Bauman, 2007: 2). Bauman gives an example from the teenagers who are the most frequent users of social media in Britain. He asserts that:

The teenagers equipped with portable electronic confessionals are simply apprentices training and trained in the art of living in a confessional society – a society notorious for effacing the boundary which once separated the private from the public, for making it a public virtue and obligation to publicly expose the private, and for wiping away from public communication anything that resists being reduced to private confidences, together with those who refuse to confide them (Ibid., p.4).

In this sense, contemporary culture establishes a ground for possible body objectifications. The desires to be recognised to gain the approval of the peers are the

drives that lead people to using social networks and sharing their private. However, with or without realising it, they commodify themselves. The society of consumers turns into a society of commodities (Ibid., p. 6). Same as it ever was, women are the ones who are affected by this subordination more because their bodies are the object of attention by the patriarchy. Like an object to be chosen, they are exposed to the male gaze.

Furthermore, with consumerism, children have begun to be educated easily about the materialisation of the body from the early ages. For example, the toys in market are designed according to the sexual differences of children and de facto beauty criterions. The famous one of these toys is Barbie which is made for girls. As known, Barbie dolls represent the ultimate beauty code of the society. They are slim and slender with fashionable, seemingly expensive, luxury designer clothes with full make up on their faces. They are attractive in a way accepted by the society. In **Cyborgs, Feminism, Popular Culture and Barbie: The Posthuman Body Dolls**, Kim Toffoletti examines the ways how women are dehumanised under the radar of the male gaze. To clarify her point, she gives the Barbie example. She explains that:

Barbie signifies fixed gender roles, heterosexual norms and consumerist values to which women must strive. Barbie is said to teach girls the codes of femininity through standards of dress, bodily ideas and modes of behaviour. She is rigid and slender, always smiling and immaculately groomed and attired, mostly in pink. By playing with Barbie dolls girls learn that in order to be successful and popular women, just like Barbie, they must look good. Importantly, this fashioning of the self relies on buying clothes, make-up, and material luxuries (2007: 60).

In the light of Toffoletti's criticism of fixed gender construction, which has been taken for granted for centuries, it is obvious that Barbie is designed to be a role model for girls. She fits both the ideal body image and the socially appropriated manner for woman. Therefore, girls are culturally encoded with Barbie's image. They learn how to act and how to dress according to this image. If they follow Barbie's path, they believe that they will be accepted by their environment. In the end, they join the army of beauty stereotypes of the contemporary society. Moreover, Barbie's image is one of the underlying causes of plastic surgery done in an

exaggerated level. Women, who are culturally encoded from an early age, are amazed by Barbie's plasticity. However, they are unaware that "Barbie can offer little more than a harmful and exploitative image of femininity" (Ibid., p. 61). With a series of everlasting plastic surgeries, women seek for eternal youth. In this sense, the aim is to be flawless like a bibelot. On the contrary, this causes impassive facial expressions. Herewith, women lose their natural beauty and become ghost like creatures. Yet, they continue their plastic obsession. By the help of their demand, beauty parlours and fitness centres serve the good of capitalist-consumerist ideal. In addition, mainstream cosmetic industry intensifies this plastic obsession with its infinite products which have the same contents combined with different packaging. Toffoletti criticises the aspect of plasticity as a bodily ideal saying:

Writing on the plasticity of Barbie, Mary Rogers maintains that Barbie symbolises a type of contemporary body associated with the consumption of 'new technologies of the flesh' (Rogers 1999: 112). Barbie is indicative of the plastic body of endless transformations and eternal youth, manifested via the consumption of mechanisms of control such as cosmetic surgery, fitness clubs and health retreats. In this schema, Barbie functions as 'an icon of an emergent, consumerist "somatics"—a technology of the body driven by the idea that our bodies can be whatever we like if we devote enough money and attention to them' (Rogers 1999: 112). The manifestation of the self as 'plastic', as Rogers conceives it, deems plasticity as not only elastic and variable but as a mould casting a fixed bodily ideal (2007: 61).

If women follow this idea of socially constructed body image, they are inevitably exposed to the male gaze and they provoke their own objectification.

Media market consisting of magazines, advertisements and music videos reflect the ideal body image. For instance, in magazines like **Cosmopolitan**, the editors give tips for the perfect beach body before the summer seasons or how to get a better tan with specific suntan oils they are promoting, or which exercises are the most effective in losing weight. Women are expected to be skinny and flawless in advertisements. In music videos, especially in hip-hop clips, women are presented with bodies merely clothed, dancing seductively, twerking next to men. Generally, songs overtly describe sexuality and the shape of the female body. Rebecca Ann Leach describes all these representations of the female body in media-market saying:

When reading magazines, such as *Cosmopolitan*, *More!*, and *Now*, it is not long before one is drawn to the many articles advising women on how to achieve the sexiest beach body, sex tips, and photos shaming and criticising celebrity bodies and fashion sense. Television adverts can often be seen utilizing women's sexualised bodies to sell a range of products such as perfume, cars, and razors. Popular music videos show female singers in minimal clothing and performing raunchy dance moves. It appears as though young girls and women are adopting the images of femininity that they see in the media when styling and presenting themselves (2013: 11).

As a matter of fact, so much exposure to these cultural constructions of the perfect body image brings about wrong interpretations of beauty among young girls. Therefore, it becomes unavoidable that generations with prejudices about the image of female body will be raised.

Talking about Barbie dolls, perfect body images imposed by media, it is inevitable not to discuss body politics which is the main theoretical approach that will be used to discuss these chosen plays. Body politics is a term which "refers to the practices and policies through which societal powers regulate the female body" (Clercq, 2013: 3). This rules and regulations system is determined by patriarchy. It can be said that the female body is more open to objectification as it is more restricted by the system. However, it is just one side of the coin. Other bodies that patriarchy rejects take part in this materialisation too. As a matter of fact, when it comes to human body, the difference between sex and gender comes to mind. Sex refers to a biological entity while gender is socially constructed. Gender is just a performance; we are given roles to play in the society as Judith Butler claims in her **Gender Trouble** (1990). For example, from the moment one is born, he or she is labelled as girl or boy. According to Butler, these immediate articulations are not that simple. In her **Bodies That Matter**, she asserts that a body cannot be fixed by a mere materialisation. Bodies cannot be considered "as simple objects of thought" (2011: vii). However, patriarchal system puts bodies into a specific shape and they are forced to become a part of this vicious cycle. Butler supports this idea and claims that "bodies only appear, only endure, only live within the productive constraints of certain highly gendered regulatory schemas" (Ibid., p.x). In this study, how the playwrights react to this patriarchal regulation system will be investigated. Once the

issue of the objectification is articulated, woman has lead the way because throughout the history, woman is the one whose place in the society is mostly argued and whose body is constantly sexualised and objectified. “[T]he female body [is] violated by technology, mass reproduction and consumerism” (Akass and McCabe, 2004: 67). For instance, woman’s skin is expected to be flawless while man’s stays as it is. Therefore, woman is made to feel that she has to be slim and slender and her skin has to glow. Society forgets that no one is perfect. For example, in the magazine programs, every year or maybe every day the spectators witness the appropriation of female body. It appears that the celebrities who have perfect photo shoots have cellulite or stretch marks on their bodies, for instance. As a matter of fact, this enables the spectator to see the artificiality of beauty standards which brings about the post human appearances among people (Toffoletti, 2007: 12). The male gaze, therefore, has become the cause of the transfiguration in the human body together with the technology (Toffoletti, 2007: 77). Therefore, plastic surgeries, face lifting and Botox have taken part in the daily life. The human body will be the focus of this study.

While the girls take up the role of Barbie, the boys are expected to be superheroes like Action Man. Toffoletti refers to Action Man and its connotations in her book as follows:

The active engagement required in the process of ‘transforming’ the toy from its vehicle state to a machine–man and vice versa reinforces the alignment of man/culture/activity in opposition to woman/nature/passivity. If we are to maintain the dichotomous positioning of women with nature and passivity, Barbie, as a standard object of girls’ doll play, fails as a transformative entity. Judy Attfield identifies the prevalence of such dichotomous thinking in her examination of the different types of joints in the design of Barbie compared with those of the boys’ toy Action Man. Her study illustrates how Barbie’s limited and simplistic joints render her more suited to posing than motility (Attfield 1996: 82). Comparing Barbie with Action Man’s moveable parts and complex ball and swivel joints, Attfield concludes that the ‘cliché of “feminine” as passive and “masculine” as active is literally embodied in the design of the toys’ (Attfield 1996: 85).

As it is understood from its name, Action Man refers to the socially appropriated idea of “man/culture/activity” (Ibid., p. 73). As opposed to the Barbie’s passive

representation, men are supposed to be active and strong in the society. Since their childhood, boys have been exposed to that idea. They have to be the superheroes who save beautiful girls from danger. Under all circumstances, they have to be the protectors of the weak ones. In addition to this, their body image is defined by patriarchy too. Men who work out to have the perfect body and who have six packs are accepted to be more attractive to women in society. Besides the socially constructed representations of their bodies, these men are also expected to be rich. If they are handsome and wealthy, they suddenly turn out to be a material that the women dream of. Their value is degraded to money because their brand new cars or houses begin to attract more attention than their identities. However, one cannot be expected to be rich, healthy and robust all the time. Men are crushed under this definition. As a matter of fact, like women, men's identity is restricted by the patriarchal ideology as well. They are also the victims of this system starting from their childhood.

3. Theatre Movements

This study focuses on three plays that were written in the 1990s and 2010s. Although there is not a huge time gap between them each of the plays discussed here comes as a representative of a certain movement or genre in drama. Anna Furse's **Augustine (Big Hysteria)** is an example of feminist theatre. Feminist theatre emerged as a genre in the 1970s with Women's Liberation Movement or in other words the Second Wave Feminism because the seventies were the decade in which woman's question began to be studied more as a subject matter. With feminist texts, women became more aware of their rights. These texts which revealed women's subordination to the patriarchal system in the seventies enabled women to access information about woman's question. Awakened by these texts, women began to claim their rights and recognised their subjugation more. In the seventies and onwards, the notion of false representation of the female body was criticised by the feminists as they thought that the female body was objectified by the dominant culture built by patriarchy. In her book, **Feminist Theatre Practice: A Handbook**,

Elaine Aston criticises the bodily representations of woman and gives an example from the beauty contests as follows:

Feminists made 'spectacles' of themselves to object to how women were objectified in dominant social and cultural systems of representation. For example, feminist protesters at the Miss World beauty contests in the late 1960s and early 1970s staged counter spectacles, by decorating their own bodies with flashing lights attached to clothing at their breasts and crotches, or parading a dummy draped in the symbols of domestic oppression, such as an apron, a stocking, and a shopping bag (see O'Sullivan (1982) for details and illustrations; see Canning (1996:46) for details of American protests). This kind of early street protest is embryonic of the body-centred critique of gender representation that, subsequently was to dominate feminist theatre, theory and practice in the 1980s (1999: 5).

Women became more aware of their rights in the workplace, education and motherhood through Women's Liberation Movement in Britain in the seventies. The objectification of the female body was the key factor of their resistance. With growing realisation about their rights, women gathered around as groups to stand against inequalities. The Second Wave Feminism, with which feminist theatre came into being, paved the way for research of the objectification of the female body more. The playwrights in the seventies like Caryl Churchill, Pam Gems, Bryony Lavery, Claire Luckham and Louise Page reflected woman's question in their plays as they thought that female playwrights were also subordinated by the traditional structures of the theatre. For example, Caryl Churchill's **Cloud Nine** and **Top Girls** became very influential in bringing the woman's question to light. In the eighties, the playwrights such as Sarah Daniels, April De Angelis, Winsome Pinnock and Timberlake Wertenbaker supported the body of women's playwriting. When the nineties and the twenty-first century came, Rebecca Prichard, Judy Upton, Lucy Prebble, Polly Stenham and Laura Wade maintained the genre. Although decades have gone by, feminist playwrights are still working on the injustices of the existing order imposed upon women (Aston, 1999).

Mark Ravenhill's **Shopping and F***ing** is one of the prominent examples of the in-er-face theatre. The playwrights who witnessed the post-war culture and Thatcher's government wrote their plays accordingly. Some playwrights like Mark

Ravenhill, Sarah Kane, Anthony Neilson, Philip Ridley indigenised the in-yer-face tradition. In-yer-face theatre began to appear in Britain at the beginning of the nineties. Aleks Sierz coined the term in-yer-face theatre and called the writers of this tradition “Thatcher’s children” (2000: 237) in his book, **In-Yer-Face Theatre: British Drama Today**.

In **Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English**, the phrase “in-your-face” is defined as a “behaviour intended to be noticed and to shock or upset people” (2003: 859). The aim of this theatre is to show the truth which lies underneath people’s minds. These truths are explicit concepts which can irritate people when they are articulated in public such as sex, rape, violence, using slang and the like. The plays that belong to in-yer-face wave are “confrontational”. Therefore, the audience have a chance to confront the society’s taboos. It is a kind of theatre that enables people to face the truth by invading their personal space (Sierz, 2000: 4). In-yer-face theatre aims at shaking the feelings of the audience by shocking them so that people can see what they really are. As human beings, everybody has needs and instincts like having sexual intercourse, using drugs, eating and shopping. While in-yer-face theatre let the audience confront their natural and moral drives, it gives way to seeing the darkness inside every individual. In his book, **In-Yer-Face Theatre: British Drama Today**, Sierz describes this staggering trait of in-yer-face theatre:

The widest definition of in-yer-face theatre is any drama that takes the audience by the scruff of the neck and shakes it until it gets the message. It is a theatre of sensation: it jolts both actors and spectators out of conventional responses, touching nerves and provoking alarm. Often such drama employs shock tactics, or is shocking because it is new in tone or structure, or because it is bolder or more experimental than what audiences are used to. Questioning moral norms, it affronts the ruling ideas of what can or should be shown onstage; it also taps into more primitive feelings, smashing taboos, mentioning the forbidden, creating discomfort. Crucially, it tells us more about who we really are. Unlike the type of theatre that allows us to sit back and contemplate what we see in detachment, the best in-yer-face theatre takes us on an emotional journey, getting under our skin. In other words, it is experiential, not speculative (2000: 4).

In-yer-face theatre is a theatre of senses in which the audience experience the shocking concepts brought to their faces that stimulates the senses. It is a kind of

journey to the self, voyage out to the subconscious. According to Sierz, that “shock is one way of waking up the audience” (Ibid., p.5). It is because private, intimate concepts like sex are brought forward to the stage, thus to the public. These concepts cannot give the same sense when they are read. They have to be revealed directly to the face in order to taste the perception of experiencing yourself. Thus, in-yer-face theatre challenges the binary oppositions that make us who we are as human beings such as good/evil, normal/abnormal, just/unjust and so on (Ibid., p.7). The reason Sierz considers in-yer-face theatre experiential, not speculative is that the audiences experience the moment on their own rather than negotiating with one another about the possibility of the shattering notions happen to them and about what they can do when they are confronted by these kinds of things in their lives (İzmir, 2014: 45).

In addition to all these, in-yer-face theatre makes the audiences look at the other side of the coin. It pushes them to see beyond the boundaries so that they can experience the feelings they avoid. Realising that they can lose self-control and the sense of safety can be broken down is a tough experience for people. However, by the help of in-yer-face theatre, they can explore such feelings (Sierz, 2000: 6).

Lucy Kirkwood’s **NSFW** is an example of new writing due to the dominant characteristics of the era she writes. As a characteristic feature of the twenty-first century theatre, plays of early decades of the age cannot be categorised under certain titles and movements because these decades are also under the influence of so many old and new national and global conflicts. In their book, **Twenty-First Century Drama: What Happens Now**, Adiseshiah and LePage assert that twenty-first century drama that is marked by 9/11 is still affected by the themes of the 1990s such as Thatcherism, in-yer-face tradition and (post-) feminism. They explain that:

Writing about 1990s British political drama, Saunders recognizes ‘In-Yer-Face Theatre’ as that decade’s truncated view, but while acknowledging its influence, in *Cool Britannia: British Political Drama in the 1990s* (2008), he and his co-editor, Rebecca D’Monté, seek to complicate this narrative. In their collection of essays, they connect 1990s British drama to New Labour and Cool Britannia, and they also find a number of significant political threads and themes influencing the decade’s drama: Thatcherism, (post-)feminism, nation, devolution and globalization. These themes continue to press upon twenty- first-century history and its drama, and are to

be found as subjects in the current volume. However, in an age that is still marked by 9/11, they do so in terms that move beyond the 'smaller' stories, which were perhaps characteristic of the 1990s: today's thematic concerns are arguably more pervasively global and sincere in their political mediation (Adiseshiah and LePage, 2016: 3).

In her article "Agitating for Change: Theatre and a Feminist 'Network of Resistance'", Elaine Aston claims that **NSFW** can be accepted as a work of political theatre because it was premiered at London's Royal Court Theatre which is known as a leftist playhouse (2016: 9). For Aston, Kirkwood reflects her society in a satirical way in the play. In the light of her argument, the play can be considered within the tradition of feminist theatre, too, because it depicts a contemporary scene where the female body is materialised by patriarchal ideology. The play's symbolic stand can be accepted within the feminist tradition. However, by covering *faux feminism* in the play, Kirkwood criticises the problem in general without asserting feminist propaganda. Therefore, the play cannot be categorised only as political or feminist. It contains the aspects of both political and feminist plays.

This thesis consists of three chapters and each chapter contains two parts. The first parts of each chapter include a terminological and theoretical discussion while the second parts examine one contemporary play each in terms of the objectification of the human body.

In the first part of the first chapter, the definition of hysteria and its historical background will be examined. In the second part, scientific objectification of the (female) body will be investigated in Anna Furse's **Augustine (Big Hysteria)**. As one of the examples of the 1990s feminist plays, the play reflects the objectification of the female body as Furse witnessed this issue through/after Women's Liberation Movement in Britain as a young woman in the seventies and the eighties.

In the second chapter, the first part will examine the term "heteronormative system", and in the second part, capitalism's crucial effect on the human body will be discussed in Mark Ravenhill's **Shopping and F***ing**. In the discussion of the

play not only the reflection of the hypocrisy of the heteronormative system but also subjugation of the homosexual body in patriarchal ideology will be the subject matter of the argument.

In the third chapter, the objectification of the female body by media in the twenty-first century will be studied through Lucy Kirkwood's **NSFW**. The first part will cover the term *scopophilia* and the male gaze, while the second part will examine Kirkwood's play according to the contemporary female image, appropriation of beauty in relation to these ideas. In **NSFW**, discussion will examine how the advancement of technology has intensified the objectification of the female body.

Consequently, in the conclusion part, these plays will be compared and contrasted according to the ways they deal with the objectification of the human body. The conclusion will show that women, homosexuals, children and young people have the same destiny because their bodies become the objects of the male gaze. With the notion of consumerism in contemporary society, this objectification has enhanced. People's relations have become more based on money. Developing technologies with new touch screen devices have an impact on the objectification also because, as Freud asserts, patriarchal society has 'the pleasure in looking'. However, the origins of all these objectifications of the human body comes from the socially constructed divisions of gender.

CHAPTER 1

OBJECTIFICATION OF THE HUMAN BODY IN ANNA FURSE'S *AUGUSTINE (BIG HYSTERIA)*

1.1 Historical Background of Hysteria

As Anna Furse's fictional Augustine goes through hysteria in the play, it is necessary to give the definition and the historical background of the disease. Etymologically, the word *hysteria* stands for the Greek word *hysteron* meaning womb, the female genitalia. In antiquity, Hippocrates defined hysteria as "the disease of the wandering womb" (Wald, 2007: 28) and that was the reason of some hysterical symptoms like hallucinations, loss of sense in any part of the body, fainting. Haute and Geyskens explain the definition of hysteria and its roots:

Hysteria is characterised by convulsive attacks, mysterious pains in various parts of the body, an inexplicable loss of functions (speech, for instance) and conversion symptoms: corporal symptoms such as paralysis for which no clear organic cause can be found. This syndrome was already known to the Greeks. As the name 'hysteria' indicates, they linked this syndrome with the 'agility of the uterus'. The Greeks viewed hysteria as a typically female problem: the uterus travels throughout the whole body, and in this way constantly causes different symptoms in different locations (globus hystericus, pains in various parts of the body and so forth) (2012: 11).

Hysteria was attributed to the female alone and it was believed to be caused by the lack of sexual intercourse (Wald, 2007: 28). According to the patriarchal thought, it was against the nature of woman because the woman is the one who is supposed to marry, bear a child and live a domestic life. Such expectations from woman were to pull her into the patriarchal order (Devereux, 2014: 20). After the rise of Christianity, the ancient ideas about the cause of hysteria gave place to the beliefs that hysteria was an "indicator of evil possession" (Wald, 2007: 28). At these times, hysteric women were regarded as witches and they were punished and even burned. Giving them immediate labels as witches, nobody was bothered to give the hysterics appropriate treatment. In the seventeenth century, hysteria was thought to

be a disease to be treated, and the brain and the nervous system were the cause of it. In the eighteenth century, hysteria was feminised again (Ibid., p.28). This time, it was comprehended that women's weak psychical nature was the reason because they did not have the strength to overcome hysterical symptoms as the men did. Christina Wald states this in her book:

The feminine norm prevalent in the eighteenth century is the sensitive, excessively refined woman who is too frail and too easily impressionable to resist the hysterical symptoms of her own body and, by extension, morally dangerous influences from the outside. Because of their weaker physical constitution, women are considered more prone to hysterical symptoms and attacks than the physically and mentally more robust men (Ibid., p.29).

Wald asserts that according to eighteenth century understanding of hysteria it was not only caused by woman's physical weakness but also by her mental fragility. Its relation to the womb was relinquished. Instead, both physical and psychological state of woman became the reason.

In the nineteenth century, the studies on hysteria reached the top. The lectures of Professor Jean Martin Charcot were famous as he was using hysterical women using hypnosis on hysterical women on the stage. He worked at the Salpêtrière where he began his study of hysteria. He claimed that hysteria was a hereditary disease and had psychological origins. Besides this, he maintained that although the symptoms were caused by emotions, hysterical patients did not have control over their situations. Furthermore, he thought that hysteria could also be seen in men (Showalter, 1987: 147-148).

1.2 Augustine (Big Hysteria)

In this part, the issue of woman and the objectification of the female body by the patriarchal medical discourse will be examined with reference to Anna Furse's play, **Augustine (Big Hysteria)**. Furse's aim is to show us how a woman resists her subjugation through portraying a hysterical girl, Augustine. Underneath Augustine's story, Furse argues that the phallogocentric Symbolic Order silences women so

Augustine rejects her gender role and creates an alternative language through her body to triumph over patriarchy.

In **Augustine (Big Hysteria)**, Furse takes the female body and its association with hysteria as a starting point and rewrites the story of Augustine. Furse gives us a triangle of real life characters in the play which includes Charcot, Freud and the patient, Augustine. Furse creates fictional versions of these real life personalities to criticise the ideas which have been taken for granted throughout history. The play takes place in the nineteenth century but it was produced in 1991. Furse brings forward an issue that belongs to the previous century so that the twentieth century audience can compare and contrast what has changed till then. The nineteenth century was an important era for the studies of hysteria. It was a time when Professor Jean-Martin Charcot became famous for his studies and lectures on hysteria. He was the first European theorist working on this branch. He was regarded as “the Caesar, or the Napoleon, of hysteria” (Showalter, xv). According to him, hysteria was a hereditary disease caused by psychological origins (Showalter, 2004: 147). He carried out his researches at the Salpêtrière Hospital which was the heart of the study of hysteria in that era. He developed a hypnosis technique in order to find a cure for hysterical symptoms. Sigmund Freud, who was a student at the time, had a chance to work with him in the Salpêtrière Hospital in 1886. Freud was attracted by Charcot’s lectures. However, he chose to use a new technique developed by his colleague, Joseph Breuer which was called talking therapy. By listening to patients and recording, the doctors could explore what had been hidden in the patient’s mind which enabled them to reveal the patient’s subconscious (Furse, 1997: 8). In the play, we can see Freud practicing this therapy on Augustine. As Furse explained in the introduction of the play, after reading the real life accounts of Augustine in Elaine Showalter’s **The Female Malady** (1985), she decided to go to the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris to make further research. She found the genuine copy of the **Iconographie Photographie de la Salpêtrière** which included the case studies of hysteria with sketches, photographs and written accounts. Among the patients, Augustine was the one who was photographed the most and that even caused her to become colour blind. According to the iconographies that were searched by Furse,

Augustine's life story was a tragic one. At an early age, she was left with her relatives who gave her to the convent. She was exposed to harsh punishment by priests and nuns there because as "a bright, rebellious and precocious child" (Ibid., p.2) she was believed to be possessed by the Demon. When she was just thirteen, she was raped by her employer Monsieur C who threatened to kill her. The exploitation of her body continued through the years within her mother's knowledge. Her abuser was also her mother's lover. She could be considered as a child woman who suddenly found herself as sexually matured even before she had her menstruation. With a close look at her life story, it is obvious that sexual abuse that she has gone through in her past makes her hysterical. Therefore, her situation is an example of trauma. For Freud, trauma is caused by an unpleasant event that has been experienced in the past which goes back to childhood (Mollon, 2000: 18). He claims that sexual abuse that has been gone through in the childhood has traumatic effects on one's psychology and it results in hysterical situations. Similarly, Wald states that:

Freud's therapy uncovers that in many cases, the psychic trauma instigating hysteric conversion was caused by sexual child abuse, often by a close relative or a friend of the family; he therefore comes to develop a theory that acknowledges the importance of sexual traumata for the aetiology of hysteria (2007: 35).

Sexual trauma that she was exposed to in her childhood is what Augustine tries to express through semiotic language in the play. In order to reveal her suffering caused by the tragic circumstances in her childhood years, she uses her body as a mode of writing as Cixous defines it (Gamble, 2001: 140). Joanna Townsend mentions the relationship between hysterical action and memory in her article "Remembering the Performing Body":

The conflict between memory and the repression of memory which is at the core of the hysterical condition is thus through bodily symptoms by means of what Freud and Breuer termed as 'conversion': the hysterical symptom acts out repressed memories through the disguised, performative language of the body (2000: 128).

In this sense, we can say that fictional Augustine's suppressed agony in her subconscious finds a way through her hysterical actions. These actions turn into a

body language for her. Although phallogocentric discourse excludes woman from the centre, woman's body can speak for itself and tells woman's own story. For example, in the lectures of Charcot, Augustine is shown as if she was the embodiment of hysteria. From time to time, she loses control of herself. Moreover, she loses some of her senses and becomes paralysed. Her grief unveils through her body movements and performance. Her mind is converted to her body and she expresses herself in an unconventional way. Similarly, Showalter considers hysteria as an emotional stress and mental conflict and she explains that the ones who are in a hysterical condition cannot find the right words to express themselves. Therefore, she maintains that they use their bodies as a way of communication (Young, 2000: 135).

Together with the characterisation of the renowned neurologist, Charcot, the play uncovers the patriarchal imperative who subordinates women. At the beginning of the play, Furse describes him as "witty, arrogant showman" (Furse, 1997: 16). As a spokes model of the male discourse which associates man with the mind and reduces woman to the body, Charcot, unrelentingly, emphasises the presupposed relationship between the body and hysteria throughout the play. For instance, he tells Freud initially:

My dear Herr Doctor. The first thing you must learn about our hysterics is that they may have particularly lively minds, excited no doubt by reading cheap novels and romances! Then they come here and spend a lot of time lying on their backs – fiction affliction! Now the disease is precipitated by some trauma no doubt and of course we cannot ignore a predisposition to hysteria, nor its hereditary basis, true. Madness breeds madness! And the past may shape the present! But we won't find the answer in her chattering, Herr Doctor. And certainly not in dreams! No, the answer lies IN THE BODY [...] (Ibid., p.34).

In this conversation, Charcot, as a representative of the patriarchal medical community, claims that madness is a hereditary disease. Although he does not directly say that it is peculiar to women, his actions show that he uses the (female) hysterics' bodies as objects of his lectures.

According to the phallogocentric ideology, women are supposed to be weak and emotional whereas men are the strong ones. However, it is only a social construction

for the appropriation of woman's body standing for madness. That is how patriarchy sees the female in terms of gender as language reveals binary oppositions constructed by patriarchy which gives one superiority over the other such as mind/body, culture/nature, father/mother, sun/moon, active/passive. The female and the objects associated with her occupy the right side which makes them the other (Cixous, 1998. 578-84). According to the patriarchal binary thought as Cixous calls it, woman is supposed to be irrational. In order to reveal these binaries, Furse tries to show us how patriarchy subjugates woman by "creating a hospital setting with all female hysterics and all male spectators" (Aston, 2002: 79). In Charcot's lecture, Augustine is presented like an actress who gives us hysterical performance as a resistance to her objectification. Charcot uses her body as an object of the male gaze. Thus, Furse chooses to open the play with one of Charcot's lectures in which he attracts public attention due to his use of hypnosis and the reactions of the patients to his techniques. In the amphitheatre full of spectators, she is like a "showgirl" (Furse, 1997: 1) on the stage. Her body is the focus of the lecture. Charcot thinks that the hysterical body should be examined in detail as a first step to understand what hysteria is. It is clear from his words:

[...] Now all diseases come from Nature and Nature is most certainly Divine. Severe, cold, heat, wet, the restlessness of winds, all play their part in weakening the human body. There's no need to ascribe a special divinity to one disease over another. Each has a nature, power and intrigue of its own; none is hopeless or incapable of treatment, **HYSTERIA INCLUDED!** But firstly, **WHAT IS HYSTERIA?** We must begin by exploring the territory of the hysterical body, then, like cartographers, we must chart it, map out its contours, possess its enigmas... (Ibid., p.18).

We can say that he associates all diseases with the nature. He claims that nature weakens the human body. According to Cixous' explanation of the aforementioned binaries, the patriarchal ideology considers nature related to woman. In this sense, although he tries to defend that he is just "a visionary", he is the one who uses female body insensibly as a map in order to define hysteria. For example, when he is explaining the hysteria, he shows the part of Augustine's body which is through the womb. His treatment of Augustine is as if her body is the object that can be exhibited in a gallery. He explains this saying:

[...] I am a visionary! Mine is a SCIENCE of looking (and I know those artists amongst you, will vouch for the deep revelations the mind's eye can bring forth); art has its basis, observation, experience, and reasoning. My method is a form of vivisection if you like – and these slices of life conjure answers BEFORE MY VERY EYES! [...] (Ibid., p.18).

He is just interested in the symptoms of the disease, so he uses Augustine's body as a way of proving his scientific research. He does not listen to her story. When she speaks, he immediately labels her speech as "Much ado about nothing" (Ibid., p.20). In his book, **Assault on Truth**, Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson frames this issue through Freudian psychoanalysis and refers to Freud's work in Paris:

In 1895 and 1896 Freud, in listening to his women patients, learned that something dreadful and violent lay in their past. The psychiatrists who had heard these stories before Freud had accused their patients of being hysterical liars and had dismissed their memories as fantasy. Freud was the first psychiatrist who believed his patients were telling the truth. These women were sick, not because they came from "tainted" families but because something terrible and secret had been as children (2012: 27).

Although Freud remains under the influence of Charcot at the end of the day, at least he tries talking therapy on Augustine. In this sense, Freud can be considered as the victim of the system too as he cannot get over Charcot.

However, it is obvious that Charcot degrades hysterical patients by ignoring what they are saying. Similarly, in her article "Remembering the Performing Body", Joanna Townsend asserts that patriarchy rejects the memories of woman and her explanation about her suffering, she says that:

[...] the memories of hysteric women have reached us only via the frame of their doctors [...] The woman's voice was itself hardly ever heard or when recorded, was denied importance [...] Furse seeks to reclaim and most vitally to perform the hysterics memory for their audiences, not through the doctors' words by which these patients' stories have reached us, but from the perspectives of the patient themselves (2000: 127).

In the play, as Augustine feels that she is ignored even by Freud who seems to be listening to her at the first glance, she starts struggling to speak after a while.

However, to create an alternative language which Julia Kristeva calls the semiotic dimension of the language (Butler, 1989: 109), she finds another way to express herself. For her, language contains two dimensions: the symbolic and the semiotic. The symbolic consists of words and meanings attached to them. However, the semiotic is made of sound, music, rhythm and the body language. The semiotic reflects the way we speak rather than what we articulate. The symbolic orders what we are expected to do in the society while the semiotic is more driven by our instincts so it becomes a way out through the patriarchal system of language as Tyson states:

It is noteworthy, Kristeva observes, that both our instinctual drives and our earliest connections to our mothers are repressed by our entrance into language. For, language is the dominion of patriarchy, which controls its symbolic, or meaning-making, dimension. The semiotic, however, remains beyond patriarchal programming, and whatever patriarchy can't control outright, it represses (Tyson, 2006: 104).

In this sense, we can say that Furse presents us the Violinist as Augustine's alter ego in order to show that through music, Augustine can express her feelings within the male discourse which subjugates her. For example, whenever she has hysterical attacks, she becomes the Violinist playing her tune according to her feelings as her doppelgänger. Furse describes the Violinist saying: "Light up on Violinist in a tight overhead light. She shifts the vibrato note into painful, high-pitched playing" (Furse, 1997: 35). For example, in a gloomy atmosphere of the Salpêtrière Hospital, with the noises of a group of people attending Charcot's lectures and the scream of hysterics, a girl child's voice is heard singing a song. In pursuit of this children's song, Augustine's reaction is seen:

Oh, there's something pulling my fingers, pulling my tongue, there is something in my throat... MAMAN!!!!!!!! (She weeps.) My neck, oh, my neck, my neck hurts, I can't, can't breathe... MAMAN!!!! (Ibid., p.17).

This scene, which opens with one of Augustine's hysterical situations, is accompanied by violin in the background. Throughout the play, Furse lets violin play according to Augustine's condition. For instance, when Augustine's words are

independent of each other and sometimes unfinished, her situation seems to show an ordinary hysterical symptom. However, when music plays in the background, it reflects her mind and stands for her psychological state. This can be considered as an approach that represents psychoanalysis. In conventional psychoanalysis method, patients talk in order to reveal their repressed feelings (Barry, 2009: 92). Thus, the secrets lying under their subconscious are revealed. Louis Tyson, in his book **Critical Theory Today**, addresses the origins of the unconscious to comprehend Freud's theory of psyche (2006). He asserts that human beings are affected by desires, fears, needs and conflicts and they are not aware of these motivations. The unconscious occurs at a young age through the repression due to these painful experiences and emotions. However, we cannot get rid of these unhappy psychological events by repression. On the contrary, it accelerates the current experience to happen. In this stage, our conflicting feelings about these unhappy events come to surface. If we consider this for the play, we can say that revealing of the unconscious is a Freudian approach while the Violinist playing music in the background as a doppelgänger of Augustine turns that into a feminist criticism. In the introduction of the play, Furse explains that she wants to match the Violinist with Augustine as her doppelgänger so that the Violinist can uncover the reason of Augustine's hysterical screams, her worries, in short all of her diseased psyche (Furse, 1997: 10). Furthermore, in one part, Augustine's nightgown falls on her shoulders when she is photographed and this scene is accompanied by the Violinist playing music. According to Furse, this scene is a criticism of female body's turning into an instrument for science whose limits are determined by patriarchy. In this sense, while there is a reference to Freud's psychoanalytical approach through Augustine's hysterical condition and music, there is also a reference to Lacan's psychoanalytical thought. It is because Lacan associates psychoanalysis with language. Moreover, points that remain in the subconscious are shaped by language (Barry, 2009: 106). Whereas this approach becomes a subject of multiple studies by Feminist theoreticians afterwards, it is reflected through music by Furse in her play.

Charcot gets the hysterics' photographs taken in the Salpêtrière Hospital and calls the asylum "a living museum of suffering" (Furse, 1997: 17) because it was

used as a saltpetre store making gunpowder at the age of Louis XIII. He claims that the hysterics have such energy that they are ready to explode. He makes a connection with the saltpetre and “the arsenal of women” (Ibid., p.17), which contains their repressed feelings about incest, rape, etc. When they try to unfold these reminiscences as it is in the personification of Augustine, they are just ignored by their doctors. Therefore, their feelings are trapped inside ready to be relieved by the hysterical actions. In the play, it is obvious that as a representative of patriarchy Charcot wants to shape them. For example, his assistants take Augustine’s photographs. Once he turns her into a holy image by folding her arms in prayer as Furse describes: “He is moulding her body and she is free associating with the physical cues he gives her, now with gestures. He folds her arms in prayer. Augustine’s whole body becomes suffused with saintliness. Her eyes gaze heavenward” (Ibid., p.27). In order to avoid this cultural shaping which regards the hysteric as a misfit, Augustine uses her body for communication. For Cixous, hysterical symptom is a reaction just like the paralysis of a limb. The body represents a repressed idea so the body speaks out what a conscious mind cannot say. In a way, unconscious thoughts are written out through the body itself (Tyson, 2006: 150). Within this argument, we can consider her idea of *écriture féminine*, feminine writing, and hysterics because Augustine has the effects of the unconscious and she uses her body as a mode of writing. Cixous says: “Write yourself: your body must make itself heard” (Cixous, 1998). Then the huge sources of the unconscious will burst. Finally, the inexhaustible feminine imaginary is going to be deployed” (Wald, 2007: 35). For Cixous, if woman writes through her body, she will get rid of the appropriation inflicted upon her and the limitation of her voice. In the play, although the doctors, Charcot and Freud are indifferent to her condition and her story, we see her resistance to patriarchy when she dances, and her alter ego when the Violinist plays music according to her mood.

Augustine’s language is childish and descriptive. She often uses the word “maman” which refers to her mother. As a child woman, we can say that it is normal to articulate this word. Although the play is written in English, the word “maman” is French. In this sense, it can be considered an indicator of her childhood memories

because she is French. It can be thought that she remembers her traumatic past. In the book **Trauma Explorations in Memory**, Cathy Caruth defines the post-traumatic stress disorder:

[...] there is a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event (1995: 4).

Caruth's definition of trauma is related to unpleasant past experiences recurring through hysterics' actions. Similarly, in Augustine's hallucinations, she continually talks with her mother because she recalls her problematic childhood. Yet the word "maman" is also the indication of her bond with the mother. In her essay "The Bodily Encounter with the Mother", Luce Irigaray describes the child's life long relation with his/her original place in the life as "nourishing earth, first waters, first envelopes, where the child was whole, the mother whole through the mediation of her blood" (Furse, 1997: 39). When the child is born and the umbilical cord is cut, that wholeness is broken down. Then when the child grows up and starts to speak, he/she begins to be exposed to the Law of the Father as Lacan calls because once we as human beings become "the speaking subject" (Tyson, 2006: 143) of the symbolic order, we begin to define our identity. In this system of the society, the father decides what we believe, value, respect or love because men create the culture, women stay at home. We are introduced to these rules which are created by men. In fact, they are not unique, they are socially constructed. In relation to this point, we can say that Augustine is in the Real stage related to the mother that shows us that she is resisting to the Symbolic order because although she speaks nobody listens. Her situation is deteriorated after Freud who seems to be listening to her at first misunderstands her and implies that she can be in love with the doctor or maybe she is the reason of her suffering. The most important symptom is that she feels suffocation while speaking. It indicates that the Symbolic order limits her speaking. She is literally struggling to speak. For instance, at the beginning, the play opens with a lullaby which is again the presentation of Augustine linked with the mother. There is girl child's voice along

with the invisible Violinist. The child sings and goes like: “Oh my pretty Augustine, Augustine, Augustine/Oh my pretty Augustine, everything’s cracked. /Eyes are cracked, head is cracked, /Hand is cracked, heart is cracked, /Oh, my pretty Augustine, everything’s cracked” (Furse, 1997: 17). It looks like a lullaby but in fact, it is a way of telling a story. In the play, it actually reflects Augustine’s suffering about her past, the times she is raped and her mother remains indifferent to her situation. It shows how everything is shattered in her life due to sexual abuse. The lullaby is one of the best examples of Kristeva’s semiotic which is “the poetic flow of the language” (Butler, 1989: 104).

In the play, Augustine’s body is regarded as the archetype of the disease and Charcot as a male voyeur like the other male spectators in his lectures, objectifies her body. Furse describes him as a TV reporter as he shows the parts of her body especially her womb area. He also uses methods like ovarian compression with his fingers hurting her. He touches the parts of her body, for example, under the breasts. He is totally obsessed with the body using her like a model to his lectures. However, he does not care if he hurts her body or not. He is like her rapist; he uses her body for a purpose. That’s why; we can say that Charcot is a similar name with her rapist Carnot. Charcot ignores her words; he only sticks to his research. He is not able to recognise that illness does not have to be physical and the problem with the doctors is that they are very scientific. Especially Charcot is very obsessed with the idea that hysteria is a physical illness. Therefore, the patient is just a subject for them. They cannot see Augustine as she is. We can understand that in his conversation with Freud:

CHARCOT: See how hysterics scream and shout? Much ado about nothing! [...]

FREUD: Herr Professeur, you know you were talking of the adventure, the courage to see the new?[...] Couldn’t it all be an antic disposition an outward performance if you like...of some deeper story trying to be told? Of a sexual nature... I have noticed, with Mlle Dubois, whose words during an attack I have been documenting as you asked.

CHARCOT: Herr Freud, I merely asked you to record what occurred, physically and vocally...[...] we none the less adhere stringently to the ethics of our profession, namely: it is inappropriate, not to say inadmissible, to develop particular affection for the patients. [...] Our job is to step back, take a look, keep our minds clear for our scientific purpose (Furse, 1997: 31).

Charcot does not even know his patient Augustine's name. When Freud asks if he remembers or not, he just calls her as their young pearl. That indicates that he is not aware of her identity. Until Freud tells him who she is, he takes her as an object, a pearl. In fact, in the play, both Charcot and Freud dehumanise her. In the scene, when Charcot pricks her body with a pin, he makes an association between hysterical body and witch's body because her body does not respond to his pricking. Seeing that she does not sense, he labels her as a witch. He tells the audience:

You see, I have pierced the skin or slightly drawn a little blood, and yet there is absolutely no sensation. We are reminded of the skins of sorceresses. Prick a stigmata diaboli, there will be no sensation. Indeed the comparison between hysterics and witches is not to be passed over lightly. Scratch a hysteric, find a witch! (Ibid., p.24).

That reminds us of how women are blamed for witchcraft in medieval times. If a woman is found guilty of witchcraft, she is burned alive in public or if she cannot untie her hands and feet in the water, she will be drowned. In **Augustine**, Charcot considers hysterics as evil creatures as he says "The demon has entered the demon has left" (Ibid., p.24), when the attack of hysteria occurs. From the medieval times to the late nineteenth century when the play is set, the fate of the woman has never changed because witches and hysterics are actually women who can think. Especially hysterics bring out what they repressed in their actions. In the play, Augustine's destiny which is determined by patriarchal medical community is similar to these women. She is condemned by patriarchy as a misfit and her fate is punishment or can be even death. For example, Augustine tells about how Sister Jeanne reacts, she tells Augustine about her situation: "God will punish you for this, my child. The flames of hell burn all sinners! The devil has got into you! You are unclean. They threw ice water in my face. The next day I was put in the slammer again." (Furse, 1997: 28). Here, Sister Jeanne represents the patriarchal thought, the Law of the Father because she reveals how society sees her because the religion is also shaped by patriarchal language. In this sense, she explains that society regards her as devil and that she has to be punished.

In the play, even though nobody listens to her and for this reason her attacks happen more frequently than before, Augustine uses symbols while telling her story. She explains how her mother ignores the rape of her daughter by her lover. Even as an act of resistance to the patriarchal medical community, she tears her straitjacket. In fact, she is acting out against phallogocentric ideology which regards her as hysterical. In order to show her defying to patriarchy, she tells her story by using symbolical words standing for the phallus and the rape scene. For example, she describes phallus as snake, rat etc. and this is constantly repeated throughout the play. She describes rape scenes and her rapist as follows:

Pig! Pig! You are HURTING ME! Pig! Catch the rats, catch the rats! The rats are getting bigger! My throat! Oh my throat hurts...Something pulling my tongue. I won't uncross my legs! [...] You are so heavy [...] Put that snake back in your trousers! Oh the peacocks, the peacocks with their big tails cluttered with eyes! Get your rat out of my botto... Maman! Oh, the pig! The pig!... No, I didn't know that's how babies were made...it made me cry then[...] (Ibid., p.40).

Through her use of symbolical words, we can understand what kind of abuse she has been inflicted upon. The rapist uses her for his desires, for example; he probably forces her to an oral intercourse so she feels that she cannot breathe and that she is suffocated. Becoming a woman child who is forced to do a man's wishes is so hard for her. It is obvious that what she has been going through is a torture. However, in the asylum, she does not get better either as the doctors do not care about her condition. Instead, she begins to resist in a frenzied fashion. For example, she dances tarantella which takes its name from a poisonous spider tarantula in the South of Italy (Mızıkyan-Akfiçici). It was commonly believed that the person who was bitten by this spider can get rid of the poison with a frenzied dance (Moeggenborg, 2000). When she dances tarantella, she creates her own way of expressing herself as a woman who is not understood by man. She dances in the rain referring to nature which is supposed to be related to woman. Furse describes her dance:

AUGUSTINE: I love you trees! I love you! You are all right side up! I am all upside down. [...] I am the impossible dance! [...] I am the flood! [...] I am sour milk! [...] I am a bird and I am a snake! [...] (Furse, 1997: 46).

In this dialogue, with the word “flood” Furse refers to the Great Flood in the Bible. As commonly known, God punishes human race with the flood in order to wipe the wickedness off the face of Earth. Then, by regarding herself as a snake, Furse gives the implication of Adam and Eve story in the Bible. In the story, snake represents Satan and Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit due to Satan’s deception. Depending on these negative accounts, it can be said that Augustine as an hysterical woman is considered a destroyer like flood and Satan by the system and her body represents a misfit. Flood destroys the world and Satan in disguise of a snake demolishes the blissful life of first human being and paves the way for the eternal punishment for human beings. By considering herself as a snake, in a sense, she identifies herself with Satan. Satan rejects God’s orders, he is the rebellious one. Therefore, as this identification also supports, Augustine rejects her role as a hysterical woman and a misfit forced by patriarchy as well by using semiotic language revealed through her hysterical acts, singings and dances. Then, Furse gives the audience the image of Virgin Mary stepping on a snake in the visions of Augustine. Virgin Mary symbolises the appropriation of female image by the system. She can be regarded as a proper patriarchal ideal for women. By stepping on Satan in disguise of a snake, with which Augustine identifies herself, in fact, Augustine’s visions reveal how she feels crushed under the patriarchal medical society. In a hopeless situation like this, Augustine searches for her identity through an alternative language. For example, she is relieved through dancing tarantella in the last scene of the play. In the end, she escapes from the asylum and takes Charcot and Freud’s clothes. In a way, she takes their identities as men as we see the situations change in the end because Augustine dances her frenzied song and she gets away from the asylum with men’s clothes. When she escapes, the Violinist plays a lullaby again with “the sound of a heavy, purgative rainfall breaks” (Ibid., p.49). The men are left there without their identities as their clothes representing their manliness are taken by Augustine. However, this causes a problematic situation as well: running away from the institution in disguise of a man reveals that Augustine’s only way out from the asylum is through taking up a man’s role using men’s clothes. This again makes one think about the possibility of liberation from patriarchy for women.

However, the play closes with the water imagery, the rain, which is attributed to femininity and the lullaby which are the examples of semiotic language as an alternative way of expressing feelings for the issue of woman. In a sense, Augustine is celebrating her femininity by dancing tarantella in the rain (Mızıkyan-Akfiçici). It can be related to Dionysiac mystery-cult as well. To begin with, Dionysos is an ancient Greek god of wine, ecstasy, chaos, tragedy, frenzy and community. According to Richard Seaford who is the author of the book called **Dionysos**, Dionysiac ritual is defined as a place where “the paradoxical union of life and death, dominated by life, is realized” (2006: 9). The ritual reflects human beings’ irrational side because people drink wine at the rituals and go mad. They become intoxicated. They sing and dance till their entire subconscious has been prevailed. In a way, they are purified from repressed emotions and fears. Seaford gives example from Plato as follows:

Plato notes that mothers calm their babies not by stillness but by rocking and a kind of singing, and compares this, as a cure, to the effect of dance and song on those who are ‘out of their mind’ in a Dionysiac frenzy. In both cases the state to be remedied is a kind of fear, which is by external motion transformed into peace and calm in the soul (2006: 106).

Like a baby crying, person in frenzy calms his soul after the dance. We see Augustine reach ecstasy in the tarantella dance. In this sense, by placing a frenzied dance scene in the play, Furse tries to show how Augustine gets rid of her past and her subordination by phallogocentric discourse after running away from the asylum.

To sum up, Furse’s Augustine is the great example of the hysterization of the female body. In the personification of Augustine, Furse wants us to see how patriarchy subordinates female hysterics which Showalter calls this subjugation as a female malady and as a resistance to it, how hysteric woman as the male discourse label her creates her own way of telling her story which is writing through her body.

CHAPTER 2

OBJECTIFICATION OF THE HUMAN BODY IN MARK RAVENHILL'S *SHOPPING AND F***ING*

2.1 The Heteronormative System

After referring to in-yer-face theatre and Thatcher's children in the Introduction, it is essential to cover the heteronormative system in order to understand the homosexual characters that will be described in the second part of this chapter. In **Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English**, the word "heterosexual" means "sexually attracted to people of the opposite sex, straight" (2003: 763) while "homosexual" is described as someone "sexually attracted to people of the same sex" (Ibid., p.780). As it is comprehended through the definitions of two poles apart, patriarchal ideology tags people according to their differences. However, this causes sex discrimination. Someone can be different and "abnormal" from what is assumed as primary. This socially accepted notion is being heterosexual male. Once patriarchy witnesses the divergence, it takes them as other right after. Homosexuality holds the difference too and homosexuals are subordinated in the patriarchal system, because according to the patriarchy, it is against the nature, sexuality should be depended upon production of children and man should be the holder of power (Tuna, 2004: 10). Therefore, it cannot be regarded as a source of pleasure.

According to psychoanalytical approach, homosexual tendency originates in the childhood. Besides classical psychoanalytical theory, Lacan's approach to the development of the infant covers this issue as homosexuality subverts the symbolic order. For Lacan, in infant's early months, it does not have the ability to understand itself and its environment. It sees world as random and it does not shape it in its mind. Between six and eight months, mirror stage occurs. In this stage, it starts to know itself as a whole on contrary to its former image of formless environment in its mind. It can see itself in an actual mirror or it can see itself in the reactions of its

mother. The mirror stage paves the way to the imaginary order. It is actually a world of perception in which child starts to shape its sense of world through images rather than through words. However, when the infant starts talking, it is the indication that it enters the symbolic order. For Lacan, it becomes a speaking subject as it uses language which is shaped by patriarchal ideology (Tyson, 2006). Therefore, it is clear that language which is built upon patriarchal norms rejects homosexuality and discriminates it. In fact, it causes the polarisation of heterosexual and homosexual. Monique Wittig in her essay “The Straight Mind” examines the working of the psyche as a socially constructed entity:

For they produce a scientific reading of the social reality in which human beings are given as invariants, untouched by history and unworked by class conflicts, with identical psyches because genetically programmed. This psyche, equally untouched by history and unworked by class conflicts, provides the specialists, from the beginning of the twentieth century, with a whole arsenal of invariants: the symbolic language which very advantageously functions with very few elements, since, like digits (0-9), the symbols "unconsciously" produced by the psyche are not very numerous. Therefore, these symbols are very easy to impose, through therapy and theorization, upon the collective and individual unconscious. We are taught that the Unconscious, with perfectly good taste, structures itself upon metaphors, for example, the name-of-the-father, the Oedipus complex, castration, the murder-or-death-of-the-father, the exchange of women, etc (1992: 22).

In this sense, Wittig implies that the psyche comes back to childhood and it is taught in the society. Our unconscious is shaped by what we learn in the language which is constructed by patriarchy. When we consider the role of the symbolic order, we can say that we are not independent individuals as we believe. It is a result of our immersion which is affected by our parents own responses to the symbolic order. We think that our personalities and our judgements shape our world. Yet actually we are taught what we desire. Also, society’s ideologies including our beliefs, values and biases; our education and the system of government affect our desires. As a result, our responses to these ideologies shape our identities (Tyson, 2006).

2.2 Shopping and F***ing

Mark Ravenhill, who wrote **Shopping and F***ing** in 1996, is considered as one of the most prominent representatives of in-yer-face theatre. As it is obvious from the title of the play, it caused controversy when it was first performed. Before, the play was read or seen as a performance at the theatre, its title attracted people's attention because it is a taboo to talk about sex in the society. In this part of the chapter, capitalism's effect on the objectification of the human body will be explored and the issue of homosexuality and the objectification of homosexual body will be addressed in accordance with Ravenhill's **Shopping and F***ing** while the play is placed within the in-yer-face tradition. In addition to this, this study will examine the relation between material commodification and bodily subjugation of people.

As considered one of the "Thatcher's Children" by Sierz, Ravenhill, who was brought up in the eighties creates his play to show people how "there is no such thing as society" works in the practice. Sierz presents the time by which young writers are affected in choosing their themes. He explains their motives while writing their plays in relation to the time they live in. He states that:

One way of understanding the point of view of a young writer is to do a thought experiment. Imagine being born in 1970. You're nine years old when Margaret Thatcher comes to power; for the next eighteen years- just as you're growing up intellectually and emotionally- the only people you see in power in Britain are Tories. Nothing changes; politics stagnate. Then some time in the late eighties, you discover Ecstasy and dance culture. Sexually, you're less hung up about differences between gays and straights than your older brothers and sisters (2000: 237).

It is clear from his words that at the end of the eighties, through the end of the term of office of Margaret Thatcher, people had been already exposed to homosexual culture. It was a time when dance culture and drug use appeared more in the society. However, in the play, the club, music and ecstasy scenes can be given as an example (Kan, 2015: 12). For example, Lulu and Robbie become drug dealers in scene five. Also, when Robbie tells the story of how he gives the drugs to people free of charge, there were dance scenes with people using ecstasy. In the contemporary life, Britain

became a place of change. Yet this change reflected dark and uninviting picture of Britain. The dilapidated apartments, malfunctioning families, lonely people were shown in this frame. Youth culture went hard. The streets were place of girl gangs and rent boys that one can encounter more instead of seeing the ordinary people going to their work. Sierz reveals this picture of urban darkness in his book, **In-Yer-Face Theatre: British Drama Today**:

In the nineties, state-of-the nation plays fell out of favour, but most young writers did paint a vivid picture of contemporary life. Accepted pieties about what it meant to be British were not merely questioned, they were interrogated. Britain was seen as a bleak place where families were dysfunctional, individuals rootless and relationships acutely problematic, a place where loners drifted from bedsits to shabby flats. Here, you were more likely to bump into a rent boy than a factory worker, a girl gang than a suburban birthday party, a group of petty thieves than a couple buying their first house. Foul-mouthed and irreverent, wildly gleeful and often hip, these were also troubled people. Despite their bravado, there was helplessness and anxiety: sexual, moral, existential. Such vividly drawn characters inhabited episodic stories rather than three-act plots, metaphor-rich situations rather than well-made plays. But amid the confusion, the nihilism and the pain, there were often faint rays of hope shining through the dark of the urban jungle (2000: 238).

In **Shopping and F***ing**, this vivid picture of Britain is clearly presented by Ravenhill. The play opens with the imagery of a flat which seemed elegant once yet now has become a tattered place. 1990s were accepted as an era in which art and culture developed and country was rich, therefore, it was called Cool Britannia. However, that was the image of Britain on the surface, the other side of the coin revealed the different face which is in fact the face of “cruel Britannia” (Urban, 2008: 39). By taking out the mask, Ravenhill’s play presents Britain’s exterior real visage. For the sake of uncovering this mask, young writers chose unconventional concepts like sex, drugs, rent boys, etc. Homosexuality was one of them. Although the homosexuality existed crystal clear in the British society, it was still considered unconventional. Therefore, the gay characters were portrayed in the in-yer-face tradition. As a matter of fact, in **Shopping and F***ing**, Mark Ravenhill gives place to multiple identities in terms of sexuality. For example, Lulu is a heterosexual woman and Robbie is bisexual while Mark and Gary are homosexuals. In fact, Ravenhill tries to emphasise the world with all different identities and sexual choices. In this sense, the play reflects the trait of the in-yer-face tradition which subverts the

binary oppositions, normal/abnormal. Putting the characters that have divergent sexual preferences, Ravenhill challenges the socially constructed idea of norms. Although the play shows the gloomy picture of corrupted society of Britannia, the reality is that homosexuals exist in this frame with all their ups and downs. For example, the concept of gay rape is presented as a striking truth in the play. Generally, people consider rape as a female issue. However, woman is not the only one who is subordinated. There is child abuse, gay rape and the prostitution of transsexuals. Thus, **Shopping and F***ing** can be regarded as a play open to multiple interpretations. Rape is not peculiar to woman. Society combines diversity of sexual identities. Patriarchal ideology undermines not only woman but also homosexuals. Phallogocentric discourse gives priority to white heterosexual male. Apart from this primary concern, it subordinates the others. Therefore, Ravenhill gives place to gay rape in his play. For example, he presents the audience Gary, fourteen-year-old teenager as a rent boy. He is a boy with a traumatic life story. The traces of his past life begin to reveal in scene four which includes Gary, the rent boy and Mark. They make a deal for the sexual intercourse. However, when they have anal encounter, Mark notices the blood on his mouth because Gary's arse is bleeding. Their conversation is as follows:

Mark *pulls away. There is blood around his mouth.*

Mark There's blood.

Pause.

You're bleeding.

Gary Didn't think that happened any more.

Thought I'd healed, OK? That's not supposed to happen.

I'm not infected, OK?

Punter gave me a bottle somewhere. Rinse it out (Ravenhill, 2001: 26).

In this scene, Mark does not understand exactly what is going on. He just rinses his mouth and takes his ten Pounds back. As a result of this, they begin to talk about the bargain which they make for the sexual encounter. Here, the audience can witness how indifferent they are. Mark's concern is not Gary who is bleeding and there must be a reason for that. All he thinks is money. Gary continues telling his story related to his bleeding in scene six:

Gary Horrible int it? Little kid with his arse bleeding.
Mark Sorry. I need to go.
Gary Arse like a sore.
Mark It's not that.
Gary Thought I'd healed.
Mark Yes, yes. Sure.
Gary This bloke, my mum's bloke...
Mark No. Don't, please.
Gary I tried to fight him off, but I think he gets off on that.
Mark Please, if you...
Gary Whatever, you lie back, you fight, he still...
I started to bleed.
Mark No.
Gary He comes into my room after *News at Ten*... every night after *News at Ten* and it's, son. Come here, son. I fucking hate that, 'cos I'm not his son (Ravenhill, 2001: 32).

Mark, who seems to ignore Gary completely in scene four, now does not want to listen this tragic story because if he listens, he thinks that the mutual relationship begins and they become the couple who share each other's pain. As it is clear from the conversation below, Gary is exposed to child abuse. And the one who exploits him is his stepfather. Throughout the play, the audience think that it is a forced sexual relation. Yet, there is more to the story and it is the most shocking fact. It is not only the rape, the circumstance happened to him can be considered brutality. Through the end of the play, the whole truth is unfolded to the face of the audiences. Here is the conversations between Gary, Mark, Lulu and Robbie that uncovers the story:

Gary Because- look- this bit. It doesn't end like this. He's always got something. He gets me in the room, blindfolds me. But he doesn't fuck me. Well not him, not his dick. It's the knife. He fucks me- yeah- but with a knife. So...
Pause.
Lulu No.
Mark Gotta have something.
Gary In the kitchen. Or, or a screwdriver. Or something.
Lulu No.
Gary Gotta be fucking something. That's how it ends.
Robbie *pulls off Gary's blindfold.*
Robbie No, I can't do that.
Gary You're not gonna finish like this?
Robbie I'm not gonna do that.
Lulu You'll bleed.
Gary Yeah.
Lulu You could die.
Gary No. I'll be OK. Promise.
Robbie It'll kill you.

Gary It's what I want (Ibid., p.84).

In a sense, the sexual abuse that Gary has been through in his past haunts him now. The reminiscent of his body's objectification by his stepfather is devastating but using knife takes the issue to the extreme level. This rape is also the crucial reason that he becomes a rent boy. He gets by commodifying his body. In a society of consumers that Ravenhill describes in his play, the human body, in Gary's case the homosexual body, has become the object to sell and buy. Ravenhill conveys these problematic themes in his play in order to show that rape and child abuse happen in the society and the human body becomes a commodity. Moreover, nobody cares so much about the situation. Without searching for a solution to the problem, people chose to ignore and the victims become alienated. In **A Companion to Contemporary Britain**, L. A. Hall handles the topics of rape and child abuse and states that:

Rape is under-reported, and even when it is reported the conviction rate is very low. The concept of 'date rape' occludes rather than clarifies the issue: very few rapes follow the melodramatic paradigm of a woman assaulted by a total stranger, most involving at least an acquaintance. A depressing contrast to the low rate of rape convictions and the attrition rate of cases before they even reach the courts was the ferocious dedication with which Greater Manchester police pursued consensual, though extreme, gay sadomasochists in 'Operation Spanner', leading to a court case with 15 defendants in 1990... [T]hough seldom openly addressed throughout much of the twentieth century, the police and child-protection agencies were aware that, like that other domestic secret, spousal violence, child abuse occurred. In spite of the high-profile press campaigns over paedophiles, depicted as dangerous strangers, the greatest number of recorded cases take place within the home. (2005: 158-159).

Hall clearly defines that the issue of rape was underrated in 1990s because people found it less convincing. The important aspect is that most of the victims were abused by people they knew. Hall's interpretation is reminiscent of Gary who is raped by his father in Ravenhill's play. The abuser does not have to be a stranger coming from outside; he can be a relative inside the house. In this sense, it can be considered that **Shopping and F***ing** has a bright and strong picture within the in-ner-face tradition as it shows the back pages of the society, the concepts like forced incest within the home.

In addition to the notion of homosexuality, **Shopping and F***ing** reflects “the crisis of masculinity” (Sierz, 2000: 238) well. First of all, Lulu is the only heterosexual character in the play (Doğan, 2013: 28). In this sense, from the perspective of Lacan’s the Law of the Father, she is the only one who fits the heteronormative system. Normally, the male characters are expected to maintain the system. As a problematic, Ravenhill chooses Lulu to take this role because he wants to show the subversion of the conventional binary thought. Instead, he presents the world full of different identities, the world which is free from patriarchal discourses. At first sight, Lulu seems to be the representative of the Law of the Father because she supports the heteronormative system.

Lulu Fucking fucker asshole. Fuck.
Pillowbiter. (Hit.) Shitstabber. (Hit.)
Boys grow up you know and stop playing with each other’s willies. Men and women make the future. There are people out there who need me. Normal people who have kind tidy sex when they want it. And boys? Boys just fuck each other. (Ravenhill, 2001: 39)

This scene is when Lulu gets angry with Robbie who gives the drugs free of charge to people in the club. She is in such a rage that her language goes filthy. Here, she acts as if she is the spokesperson of the patriarchy. However, she is the victim of the system too. In her subconscious, her anger is for the system which gives her that forced role. For example, she talks about normal people engaging in normal relationships. She implies that production of babies is significant for creating the future generations, because same sex relationships cannot contribute the future of the society. In **Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and as Institution**, Adrienne Rich interprets the meaning of patriarchy and states that:

Patriarchy is the power of fathers: a familial- social system in which men by force, direct pressure, or through rituals, tradition, law and the language, customs, etiquette, education and the division of labor, determine what women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is subsumed under the male (1986: 57).

Rich's definition of patriarchy points out the inferior position of woman within the patriarchy. However, the same rules apply to the homosexuals; because language is full of phallogentric norms and people acquire and are exposed to these rules and regulations since they start talking and enter into the Symbolic order.

Furthermore, besides the objectification of homosexual body, the crisis of masculinity and heteronormative system, the relation between the concepts of shopping and sexual intercourse for money is essential to understand contemporary consumerist culture where everything even the human body turns into commodity. This commodification of culture and its values are well defined throughout **Shopping and F***ing**. The play opens with Mark's shopping story that Lulu and Robbie want him to tell. In fact, "the shopping story expresses a fantasy of objectification" (Wallace, 2005: 271). Mark buys Lulu and Robbie from a fat man in the supermarket. When they are standing by the yoghurt shelves, Mark sees them and wants to have them. He tells the story as if he is buying a commodity instead of human beings in flesh and blood. In a sense, in the eyes of the audience, Lulu and Robbie suddenly become dolls like Barbie and Ken which are the products of massive consumerist culture. At last, he buys them through transaction of money. Moreover, the interaction between Mark and the fat man is interesting. Mark narrates shopping story as follows:

It's summer. I'm in a supermarket. It is hot and I'm sweaty. Damp. And I'm watching this couple shopping. I'm watching you. And you're both smiling. You see me and you know sort of straight away that I'm going to have you. You know you don't have a choice. No control. Now this guy comes up to me. He's a fat man. Fat and hair and lycra and he says:
See the pair by the yoghurt?
Well, says the fat guy, they're both mine. I own them. I own them but I don't want them – because you know something? – they're trash. Trash and I hate them. Wanna buy them? [...] (Ravenhill, 2001: 5).

As a matter of fact, the shopping story is foreshadowing all the events in the play. The audience understands from the beginning that this will be a play about buying and selling including the human body because this story reveals that every relationship in the society turns into a transaction. If you do not have the money,

nobody stands by your side. In this sense, Ravenhill's play clearly shows that within this buying and selling notion of the society, even human relations are for sale. If you have the money, you can buy a relationship like Mark's buying Lulu and Robbie from a fat man in a supermarket who regards them as trash. If you run out of money, people turn their back to you. Lulu's behaviour can be an example of this because in the play, after Mark's money has finished, Lulu's behaviour has changed too. When Mark says he will go to the rehabilitation centre, rather than Mark's problem, Lulu begins to talk about the money. She says:

Look what you've done. Look what you've done to him.
What are you waiting for? A taxi? Or maybe you haven't got the money? You going to ask me for the money? Or maybe just take the money? You've sold everything. You've stolen (Ravenhill, 2001: 7).

Even in such a short conversation, Lulu uses the word 'money' in three times subsequently. This enables the audience to get the idea that money is the thing that maintains human relations. If you are broke, people's attitudes change accordingly. They begin to think that they can continue without you. Maybe, it is the reason why Mark avoids personal relationships; because if you get used to them and show your emotions to them, they can leave you in the lurch as Lulu does to Mark and says "We will be alright. We don't need him. We'll get by." (Ravenhill, 2001: 8). Mark's conversation with Robbie clearly mirrors the situation:

Mark Yeah. Sort out. In my head.
We've been talking a lot about dependencies. Things you get dependent on.
Robbie Smack.
Mark Smack, yes absolutely. But also people. You get dependent on people. Like... emotional dependencies. Which are just as addictive, OK? (Ravenhill, 2001: 17).

For example, in scene fourteen, Brian claims that everything begins with the money and it is the source of life. He maintains that he learns this from his father when his father asks him what the first words in the Bible. Accordingly, he answers himself: "get the money first." As it is understood from their conversation, patriarchy

descends from father to son through language. Fathers affect the way you think and determine what you value. Brian's words clearly define the meaning of the money:

Civilisation is money. Money is civilisation. And civilisation - how we did get here? By war, by struggle, kill or be killed. And money – it's the same thing, you understand? The getting is cruel, is hard, but the having is civilisation. Then we are civilised. Say it. Say it with me. Money is... (Ravenhill, 2001: 87).

Here, Ravenhill gives the message that money brings about all miseries in the world; wars, killing, etc. It is hard to get and everybody goes for it to make a living. In a sense, the world turns into a place in which the human body is considered just a piece of meat on the plate. As the fat man implies in the shopping story, the human body is just a trash after you use. According to Zygmunt Bauman, in his book **Consuming Life**, all these combine with buying and selling transactions (2007: 7). Furthermore, the innocents are killed for the sake of the money and some people have to sell their flesh for it. After all, every way to reach this capital begins to be accepted as fair. Everything is done for the happiness after affording needs like food, shelter etc. For example, the rest of Mark's shopping story illustrates this:

And I take you both away and I take you to my house. And you see the house and when you see the house you know it. You understand? You know this place. And I've been keeping a room for you and I take you into this room. And there's food. And it's warm. And we live out our days fat and content and happy. (Ravenhill, 2001: 5).

Mark claims that Lulu and Robbie know his place. In a sense, Ravenhill wants to attract the audiences' attention and implies that basically all people need the same thing, food and shelter. Moreover, throughout the play, the audiences see human beings exaggerate consumerism and corruption. People's indifference to the situations can be one of the examples of this. Lulu's confrontation scene reflects the idea of corrupt society. For instance, in scene five, Lulu tells Robbie the story of a student girl who is stabbed by a drunken man that she witnessed while walking past the Seven-Eleven all night store. The student girl who works as a cashier there is

stabbed by her artery. Lulu feels remorseful because she just leaves the store after she steals a bar of chocolate. She tells Robbie:

I took the bar of chocolate. She's being attacked and I picked this up and just for a moment I thought: I can take this and there's nobody to stop me. Why did I do that? What am I? (Ravenhill, 2001: 35).

Lulu's story enables the audience face with the reality because contemporary culture changes "from a society of producers to a society of consumers" (Bauman, 2007: 8). From this perspective, consumerist society paves the way to opportunism. This is the reminiscent of plundering when people get a chance to take without charge. For instance, after earthquakes and floods some people plunder damaged market places. They do not care about what is happening around them, they just act according to their instinctual drives. Lulu has the same situation when she steals the chocolate. However, underneath Lulu's remorsefulness, Ravenhill tries to show the audience how far people's instincts go.

Consequently, in **Shopping and F***ing**, Ravenhill breaks the boundaries of gender and picks multiple sexual identities for his play such as Lulu, the heterosexual, Robbie, the bisexual, Mark and Gary, the homosexuals. Even, at one point in the play, he presents Lulu as the defender of the heteronormative system of the society. However, towards the end of the play, after witnessing all the addictions in the society, the audiences can confront their own realities. Mark, for instance, has changed in his relationships. Before that, he claims that relationships cause addiction as well and he avoids emotional attachments with people. Yet, he begins to care Gary. Lulu starts sharing the food with her friends for which she asserts before that it is made for one person. After giving the dark picture of urban life in the contemporary culture, Ravenhill links the end of the play with a hope for the next generations.

CHAPTER 3

OBJECTIFICATION OF THE FEMALE BODY IN LUCY KIRKWOOD'S *NSFW*

3.1 *Scopophilia* And The Male Gaze

Laura Mulvey, who is a feminist film theorist, is the first one to examine the male gaze in her 1975 article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema". According to Mulvey, the male gaze can be examined through psychoanalysis (1999: 835). In his book, **Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality**, Freud focusses on *scopophilia*. It has voyeuristic connotations like 'pleasure in looking'. For Freud, *scopophilia* refers to the gaze which degrades what is seen to an object. The kind of gaze described by him, has erotic reasons basically. Therefore, it refers to the male gaze. "Gazing is implicitly erotic, because the spectator imagines possessing what he sees" (Sweeney, 2011:56). In this sense, it can be said that the female body turns into a commodity for the male gaze.

In **Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality**, Freud brings light to the reason of the desire to see the bare bodies:

The progressive concealment of the body which goes along with civilization keep sexual curiosity awake. This curiosity seeks to complete the sexual object by revealing its hidden parts. It can, however, be diverted ('sublimated') in the direction of art, if its interest can be shifted away from the genitals on to the shape of the body as a whole. It is usual for most people to linger to the some extent over the intermediate sexual aim of looking at that has a sexual tinge to it; indeed this offers them to possibility of directing some proportion of their libido on to higher artistic aims. On the other hand, this pleasure in looking [*scopophilia*] becomes a perversion [...] (2011: 156).

Scopophilia the term coined by Freud clearly explains the desire of people to look at the shape of the body. It is regarded as pleasure to look at what is hidden in the coverage of the human body. What Aidan has disclosed is the male gaze that the little girl is exposed to. Thus, it is also the indication that the male gaze holds the power over what is seen. In **Cixious, Irigaray, Kristeva: The *Jouissance* of French**

Feminism, Kelly Ives explains the approach in which media's false representations of women saying:

For some feminists, the question of feminism is largely the question of representation, and perhaps the commonest complaint of feminists about the media is the poor quality and frequency of authentic self-representations of women. It is a problem broadcasters and magazine editors address from time to time, but, outside of a very few areas, the media in general is thoroughly patriarchal (2007: 34).

Ives, who covers the issue of the objectification of the female body through feminist approach, explains that feminism is based on representation. However, in media, this representation is usually given away through bodily portrayals of women as if the only feature possessed by woman is her body. That's the reason why the media have not presented woman as intelligent. It only focusses on the body. The target audience which consists of men choose visual stereotypes rather than rational ones.

Mulvey's primary topic is based on the gaze of the camera and she criticises the objectification of female body in the film industry and in general. As the gaze is the prevailing factor in cinema, Mulvey covers it in her article. Accordingly, she claims that images and ways of looking are socially constructed by patriarchal thought which focusses on sexual differences (1999: 833). These sexual differences cause the objectification of the female body. Therefore, Mulvey reveals that patriarchal binary thought considers "woman as image, man as bearer of the look" (Ibid., 837). In her article, she comprehensively defines the phallogocentric aspect which degrades the female image by saying:

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness* (Ibid., 838).

Mulvey's argument in this passage is the reminiscent of woman's image in most of the Hollywood films. In these films, the spectators encounter socially accepted beauty standards. Desirable women are spectacularly presented to the male gaze.

Therefore, their roles are demoted to secondary degree. In this sense, they are objects used for the male protagonist to maintain his story (Leach, 2013: 12). This aspect lucidly presents the society's approach to beauty. Even the films and books with which children are claimed to be educated impose the idea of the beauty on them. For example, in their childhood, the world is presented as a fairy tale to them. Thus, from an early age, the objectification of the female body is imposed on them. They begin to think that they have to become like those beautiful princesses in those stories and they have to be flawless (Ibid., p. 13).

3.2 NSFW

Lucy Kirkwood's play **NSFW**, which was written in 2012, will be examined through media's effect on the objectification of the human body in this part. First of all, the play has a provoking title which stands for 'Not Safe for Work'. It refers to online material which would bother the viewer when he/she is seen watching it in a public sphere such as work (Aston, 2016: 9). From the very beginning, the play gets the audience's attention with its title. The first thing that comes to the minds is generally associated with the sexually explicit online material. That arouses immediate curiosity among people because the concepts like sex and pornography are considered obscene and taboo. No matter what is socially repressed in the minds of the people, it craves to come to the surface to be revealed. Therefore, people avoid looking at it in public and formal places. **NSFW** primarily reflects the objectification of female body and beauty standards of the contemporary culture.

The play takes place in the offices of two magazines, *Doghouse* whose target reader is eighteen to thirty-five-year-old men; and *Electra* aiming at *Sex and the City* profile of women whose "sense of achievement and pride" (Leach, 2013: 61) comes from their confidence in their look. The representation of both men's and women's magazines in the play enables the audience to see the reality of the objectification of the female body from two different points. This also helps the audience to compare and contrast between the two aspects.

The play begins at *Doghouse* magazine's open plan office with a contemporary atmosphere. There are Apple desktop computers on the desks. Masculine details are presented from the beginning. For example, the office includes a pool table on which toys, apparatuses and computer games are scattered, a Liverpool FC flag hangs from the ceiling (Kirkwood, 2012: 3). From the very beginning of the play, the audience get the hint that it will be a play about the female body image as there are topless photo shoots of women on the walls.

Kirkwood choses characters from different social backgrounds. Charlotte, Rupert and Sam work for *Doghouse* magazine. Charlotte is a twenty-five-year-old middle class girl. Although she is a feminist belonging to a woman's group, she keeps her job in men's magazine as a secret. She tells them that she is an estate agent. She works in *Doghouse* to get by. Rupert comes from the upper class and he is twenty-eight. He studied at Eton. Sam belongs to the working class, has a university and a master's degree and is almost the same age as they are. Aidan is the editor of *Doghouse* magazine who is in his forties. Mr Bradshaw is an unemployed father who comes to *Doghouse* after finding out his fourteen-year-old daughter somehow wins the local lovely competition with her erotic photo shoots. Last of all, Miranda, who is in her early fifties, is the editor of *Electra* magazine. She is the embodiment of **Sex and the City** type of woman who wears trendy clothes and keeps moisturising her hands throughout the play. She does not sexualise women yet still she objectifies them because her magazine edits the photographs of women in order to make them flawless (Leach, 2013: 40).

In the first scene, the audience encounter a photo shoot of a topless girl, who is chosen as the magazine's local lovely. The focus in the photo is her large breasts. It is a common photo shoot in which a girl stands kneeling on a bed, "arching her back, presenting her arse [...] a finger in her mouth" (Kirkwood, 2012: 6). It is a seductive photo with a topless girl with an untamed hair on an unmade bed. It reflects a classical fantasy of man. Thus, she is subjected to the male gaze. In a way, she turns into an object to be possessed. As Freud reveals in his **Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality**, *scopophilia* has erotic basis. The curious and controlling male

gaze as bearer of the look has a desire to possess the object. This can be seen in *NSFW*. For example, aforesaid local lovely of 2012 of *Doghouse* magazine amazes all the men in the office. Her breasts become the subject matter. In order to sell the men's magazine more, the female body serves as a crucial necessity. Accordingly, the editor of *Doghouse*, Aidan explains how to enlarge the profit of the magazine through what its targeted readers want for life:

AIDAN. Bums don't sell, what I am saying is, is let's really *live* in the spaces *between* the boobs, yeah? Let's not let them outgrow us, I want you all to keep putting yourselves in the head of that eighteen-to thirty-five-year old man. Thinking about who he is and what he wants to spend his disposable income on, what does he talk about his mates, what makes him laugh, what *Doghouse* magazine can give him that he can't get anywhere else (Kirkwood, 2012: 9).

In this conversation, Aidan considers women as nothing more than 'the boobs'. Kirkwood gives the vision of breasts in such a way that the audience set out on a voyeuristic journey through the eye of the audience and understand how women are objectified. Like a camera obscura, the audience areas if searching through a valley and staying between the spaces. That shows that women are the spectacles of the male gaze. And the holder of the gaze has the power.

The crisis emerges when Mr Bradshaw, whose little daughter wins the local lovely competition with a topless photo, calls the magazine. While Rupert keeps him waiting on the line to talk to Aidan about the situation, Aidan and Rupert negotiate how this happened. After Aidan finds out that the magazine selects the fourteen-year old girl for the local lovely competition, Sam gets shocked because he is the one who scrutinises the photos of the candidates and choses the most attractive one according to himself. He is feeling remorseful now as he chooses a little girl's photo for the men's magazine. Their conversation with Aidan is as follows:

SAM. I didn't know.

AIDAN. Come on, Sam mate, get up, it's alright, it's okay.

SAM. I'm not – I feel so – am I a...

AIDAN. *No*.

SAM. No because she's – I mean I picked her – I found her the most – I spent hours looking at those – choosing which one to – like, if I close my eyes, I can still see her,

that's in my brain now, that's actually stored in my – I can't erase that – I think I might. I think I might be a paedophile (Ibid., p. 23).

Kirkwood tries to bring forward the issue of paedophilia in society with two sides, Sam and Rupert. Paedophile can be described as a person who is sexually attracted to a child. It is a social issue which was intensified in the contemporary society. In the play, after discovering that a fourteen-year old girl with a topless photo kneeling seductively on a bed becomes the focus of the objectification, Sam cannot digest the situation. It is clear from his speech in which he struggles to complete his sentences. He cannot articulate the fact that among all other candidates he picks up a little girl and for a moment he desires to have her as she is sexually attractive to the eye. While Sam regrets that he looks at her from a sexual angle, Rupert still has the nerve to objectify her. He argues with Aidan about it:

RUPERT. Cos I'm not being funny but –

AIDAN. What?

RUPERT. Well, sorry, but have you seen the balcony on it.

AIDAN *stares at him.*

AIDAN. Get out.

RUPERT. What?

AIDAN. Seriously. I won't have that. What's wrong with you? She's a child, go and slam your head in a door.

[...]

RUPERT. This is my fault? Mate, ten minutes ago you were basically rubbing yourself off to her, suddenly her tits are out of bounds? Talking to me / like that, what's your damage? (Kirkwood, 2012: 24).

Kirkwood creates the character of Rupert who uses sexual bullying “to convey male culture in the workplace” (Leach, 2013: 41). It is observed that he tries to exert his power over Charlotte in the office throughout the first act. He sexually teases her whenever he finds the chance. In a sense, he can be considered as a victim of the system too because what he actually tries to do is to take part in the masculine system and play his role as a man. Moreover, he is a crucial character to show the audience the hypocrisy of patriarchal male gaze. In aforementioned conversation between Rupert and Aidan, Aidan gets mad at him due to his sexualisation of a girl child. No doubt, Aidan is right in his argument. Nevertheless, the problem is that Aidan never questions himself whether or not it would be appropriate to sexualise

and objectify her body if this girl were an adult. He was attracted to her breasts and posture then. He has changed his mind now. This reflects two-facedness of the phallogentric ideology which subordinates both women and children. By presenting the issue of paedophilia firstly through Sam and Rupert and secondly through Rupert and Aidan, Kirkwood enables the audience to compare and contrast both sides of the argument about the male gaze. As a result, both Rupert and Sam are fired by Aidan who represents the hypocrisy of patriarchy. In a sense, patriarchy eliminates the both sides of the argument.

In **NSFW**, Kirkwood presents the world of mainstream media market in which women are constantly objectified. For instance, as one of the representatives of this male dominated market, Aidan himself explicitly explains how female body is subjugated through the male gaze. In the second act, Mr Bradshaw comes to Aidan's office. In order to conciliate him, the magazine covers all the expenses of his visit. In spite of all Aidan's efforts, Mr Bradshaw seems determined to take it to the court. Aidan boasts about his legal team implying that he cannot win the case and he will show mercy for him. In disguise of an understanding man, he describes the situation Mr Bradshaw is in: "[t]his innocent man who's had to deal with the fact that his fourteen-year old daughter has got herself in a situation whereby her body has been put on show for all to see [...]" (Kirkwood, 2012: 34). In this scene, if Aidan is considered the embodiment of patriarchy in which media market built upon phallogentric norms, Aidan makes a confession about how the media maintains its power, using female body as an object of desire that catches people's attention easily. For instance, at one point in **NSFW**, Aidan tells Bradshaw: "The articles are shit. No offence, Charlotte. But no one buys our publication principally for the literature. I think it's important to acknowledge that." (Ibid., p. 37). Aidan tries to imply that the magazine's aim is to attract the attention of men. Therefore, they select the topics in which men are interested like the photo shoots of topless girls and man challenges. Aidan implies the kind of articles entitled such as 'How to Upgrade Your Girlfriend?' and 'Travels with my Erection' (Ibid., p. 37). In addition to this, writings for the magazine are not supposed to reflect reality. The writers of the magazine are not writing about science which has to depend on scientific researches. The readers

do not buy the magazine for literature which touches their feelings and helps them take life lessons. Above all, their aim is not reading. The texts just include the topics that satisfy men's appetite or visual representations of woman. For instance, in act one, Aidan gives colleagues the speech and explicitly explains that they are not expected to write the truths. He tells them: "We're your colleagues, I'm your boss. That's why I'm asking you to – anyway, you don't have to write reality, you write the *Doghouse* version [...]" (Kirkwood, 2012: 13). Throughout act one, the breasts of women with their topless pictures have been the subject of attention in the office. The description of photo shoots and the conversations about the female body are imprinted on the audience's mind. Therefore, Kirkwood helps the audience to get the message of the text through visual representations of women and the conversations that uncover how people react about the bare bodies of women. To illustrate, here is the conversation between Aidan and Rupert:

AIDAN. No this is what I'm talking about. We have an opportunity here, to move the readership on. The boys who started reading us ten years ago, they're grown-ups now, they are not out on the pull every Friday, they're settling down, they've got mortgages, girlfriends they love. The climate is changing. They are not just reading us for the tits any more.

RUPERT. Uh I think the tits are quite a part of it.

AIDAN. Okay, but they want to find a pair of tits to grow old with.

RUPERT. Again, I think they want to get old, while the tits stay the same age (Ibid., p. 12).

Rupert, who is seen as the reflection of male culture in act one and then turns into a plastic surgery failure towards the end of the play, unveils that the magazine is mostly sold for the topless photo shoots. Also, he implies that although men have aged, they are still interested in young women who have firm bodies. For instance, the scene in which Aidan and Mr Bradshaw argue about Mr Bradshaw's fourteen-year-old daughter winning the local lovely competition shows the unavoidable fact that every man looks at and objectifies the female body. This scene is one of the crucial parts of **NSFW** due to including the problematic in the society because phallogocentric ideology has two faces. These faces reflect the hypocrisy in looking at the visual representations of women. As Freud asserts gaze includes the pleasure in looking. In act two, the dialogues between Aidan and Bradshaw clearly explain that

every man appreciates the young, beautiful image of woman no matter who they look at:

AIDAN. I'm not suggesting anything except that you, like all of us here, appreciate certain types of images, that happen to be of beautiful girls in a state of undress.

[...]

BRADSHAW. Not young girls.

AIDAN. But eighteen, nineteen, twenty. Young compared to us old codgers, eh, Mr Bradshaw!

BRADSHAW. Not fucking fourteen. Sorry.

AIDAN. No, of course. Four years older than fourteen.

BRADSHAW. Eighteen's different to fourteen.

AIDAN. But you can see our dilemma? Your daughter *looks* like an eighteen-year old (Kirkwood, 2012: 35).

In these dialogues, Aidan, the editor of the man's magazine reveals the two-facedness of the phallogentric ideology. He admits that men are fascinated by young and beautiful female body. However, the problem is that the audience of this play should ask themselves in addition to the issue of child abuse and objectification of their bodies, it is still right to objectify the adult female body. Kirkwood implies that people should keep in mind that those women whom they gaze with their mouths open could be their daughters, sisters and wives. In the play, when Aidan asks Bradshaw whether or not he buys their magazine, this issue is revealed. Aidan criticises Bradshaw:

AIDAN. And to be honest, there was probably a moment, wasn't there, when your eyes went over this photograph and for a minute –

BRADSHAW. No.

AIDAN. No, come on, let's, in the spirit of – there would have been a moment, before you saw the face, before you, recognised the face and the feelings became more complicated, there would have been a moment where your feelings about this picture were in fact, very simple, because you're looking at this picture and what you're experiencing is –

[...]

AIDAN. Of very simply, very purely, a beautiful pair of firm, young breasts.

BRADSHAW. I didn't see.

AIDAN. I'm sorry, Mr. Bradshaw, but that's a bit, I find that quite confusing because if you didn't look at the picture, in the magazine that you bought, how did you come to make the phone call and be sitting here? (Ibid., 39).

By presenting this scene, Kirkwood wants the audience to see the reality happening right under their noses. In these kinds of magazines, advertisements and films

belonging to the mainstream media market there are lots of false representations of women. They are shown as the object of the male gaze. These aforementioned dialogues are the examples of how Kirkwood needles the phallogocentric order which subjugates women. She tries to make the audience question themselves about the hypocrisy of the system because in the aforementioned dialogues, Kirkwood brings forward a character who himself buys and reads the men's magazine yet still criticises the objectification of the female body.

In *NSFW*, Kirkwood covers the issue of *faux feminism* as Aston calls it in her chapter “*NSFW: A ‘Faux Feminist’ Masquerade*” (2016: 26). *Faux feminism* primarily is caused by the false representation of the female body and beauty standards in the contemporary society. With the rapid developments in technology, society's approach towards beauty has changed. The number of cosmetic companies has risen. Women have begun to find a beauty product for each part of their bodies because, the endeavour to get a flawless skin and a perfect body shape have become the primary concern of women in these days. For example, the increase in the understanding of complete hairless body results in the production of laser devices that offers long-lasting beauty. The suntan devices and products have become varied. Although men and women with dark skin were discriminated and subordinated in the past, everybody wants tan in summer; people even pay money for the sake of it as the understanding of beauty has changed. The plasticity of beauty has become the new trend now. People, especially women, tend to have plastic surgeries more such as the botulin toxin injections, face-lift operations, and aesthetic surgeries on different parts of the body and so on. The image of the body and the quest for luxury has moved ahead of personal relationships. In *NSFW*, the audience witness the issue of perfect body image and beauty standards in act three which takes place in the women's magazine *Electra*. This magazine's top editor is Miranda who is a *Sex and the City* type of woman. **Sex and the City** refers to a book by Candace Bushnell and its adaptation of television series produced in USA at the end of the 90s and was on screen until the beginning of the millennium. It is about the lives of four women who have urban life styles, who are single, career women in Manhattan. It has become one of the cult television series. Therefore, the *Sex and the City* women have turned

into stereotypes of posh women who have “glamour and style” (Akass and McCabe, 2004: 190). In **Reading the Sex and the City**, Kim Akass and Janet McCabe describe the *Sex and the City* women as follows:

Their knowledge of what clothes to wear and which restaurants and bars to frequent is underpinned by the spectacle of their taut Caucasian bodies, shiny hair and flawless make-up. This obsession with outward appearance, fashion sensibility and lifestyle is often at the core of women’s ambivalence to the series: how can women who embrace their own objectification speak for feminists? (Ibid., p. 190).

According to this passage, these women represent allure and style. They give importance to their physical appearance and sleek body image. However, they objectify their own body. In **NSFW**, Kirkwood reflects both man’s and woman’s interpretations of the female body image. She criticises that women are the ones who willingly take part in this subjugation. They believe what they see in the media-market. Therefore, Kirkwood chooses the names of her characters from this television series, like Aidan, Carrie Bradshaw and Miranda Hobbes for the play. In **NSFW**, Carrie is the fourteen-year-old daughter of Mr Bradshaw who becomes the local lovely with her topless photo shoots. And Miranda is the editor of *Electra* who is obsessed with the beauty products and always moisturises her hands throughout the play. Kirkwood selects these two characters from **Sex and the City** to show the patriarchal definition of the representation of ‘the female self’. Akass and McCabe reveal this issue through Carrie’s character in **Sex and the City** saying:

Carrie follows a script for a role produced in fantasy, and in the process has fun playing with the artificiality of a patriarchal signifying system that defines the female self. What is going on here is that the sequence plays with familiar constructs that define the woman as ideal (2004: 78).

Like a parody, Kirkwood places these characters to reveal the fantasy of the female body and the self by the male gaze. For instance, in act three, the women’s magazine *Electra*’s office is described. It is obvious that the magazine takes its name from Electra myth. According to this myth, Electra is the daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. Clytemnestra kills their father. Electra uses his brother to revenge upon her. Her brother Orestes kills their mother. However, when the trial comes,

Orestes is not punished, Electra is found guilty and the Furies haunt her because she acts against her mother (Waterfield, 2012: 276-283). She does not accept the idea that violence brings violence, she takes her revenge. In the play, Miranda can resemble her because although she seems to be a liberated woman, she does not do anything to change the system; instead she goes on the objectification of woman's body by Photoshop.

At the beginning of the play, the audience are instantly presented with women on the covers who are photo shopped. Perfect pictures of women are not sexualised but idealised. There are cosmetic products on the table. Miranda lists what kinds of products they have: "shampoo, moisturiser, low-calorie salad dressing" and the like. (Kirkwood, 2012: 55). In act three, the appropriated beauty standards and the artificiality of plastic beauties are presented through Miranda and Sam's dialogues. Sam comes for the interview to get a job in *Electra* magazine. With the female voices and laughter in the background, they begin their conversation. The second image the audience get after the photo-shopped pictures is Miranda's posh image and her constant moisturising of her hands. Their first conversation is about the understanding of beauty imposed upon women in the society. She tells Sam that they are having a party for their beauty editor, Meredith, who is a cancer patient receiving chemotherapy. She reveals that Meredith is so sad about losing her hair. She describes her hair as "gorgeous, advert hair" (Ibid., p. 56). Thus, her friends will shave their hair for support. In this sense, Kirkwood criticises that beauty standards affect women's psychology. Even in illness, society's expectations trace back to women.

In act three, beauty expectations come on the scene again. For example, Miranda wants Sam to circle the flaws of the woman she shows him on the computer. Sam is shocked because this woman is a movie star and he thinks she is perfect. However, Miranda claims that nobody is perfect and confident in their bodies. After seeing that he struggles to circle flaws, she asks about the body of Sam's girlfriend whom he claims that there is nothing wrong in her body. Their conversation reveals this:

MIRANDA. But sometimes I expect, you notice something, a little thing perhaps and that thing brought you up short, perhaps you noticed it when she was in the shower, washing herself, or maybe after sex, when you were lying in bed together naked.

SAM. I don't – I'm not sure what you're –

MIRANDA. A small thing. A mole that made you feel sick to look at it. Or fungal infection in the toenails.

SAM. No. No I don't –

MIRANDA. Not even something as noticeable as that even, just maybe, a sagging, somewhere. Or a texture (Kirkwood, 2012: 45)

Sam denies that he notices anything irritating about her. Yet Miranda makes him see the reality. No matter how he tries to refuse, he finds the reason of his abandoning her. Later, he confesses to Miranda that his girlfriend has large breasts and this makes him uncomfortable to look at.

In the play, the artificiality of beauty standards is revealed through Rupert, who ends up working for *Electra* magazine and having plastic surgeries. Kirkwood describes him saying: "His face is expressionless, but his eyes are very wide open, his forehead is stretched taut, plastic-looking. His eyebrows plucked into neat arches." (Ibid., p. 62). Rupert has changed throughout the play. He is no longer a man who bullies women in the office. On the contrary, he is silenced and feminised towards the end of the play. In act three, Miranda calls him as "Miss Havisham" (Ibid., 62). By feminising Rupert, Kirkwood subverts patriarchal ideology which causes women becoming artificial and expressionless creatures with false plastic surgeries. She wants to open the minds of the audience and wants them to make empathy for women's situation. Miss Havisham is also a reminiscent of Charles Dickens' **Great Expectations** (1861). In Dickens' book, the prisoner is the private benefactor of Pip. In the play, Rupert is the one who recommends Sam as an employee in the women's magazine. Miranda serves as the lawyer Mr Jagers who constantly washes his hands. Accordingly, Miranda moisturising her hands in the same manner. Mr Jagers washes his hands because he is the defender of the criminals so he has a dirt in his hands. Miranda does the same thing as if she does a dirty business there because although she is the defender of liberated women, she

cannot help becoming the part of the system anyway by photo-shopping the female images in the magazine.

At the end of the play, *faux feminism* is unveiled when Miranda gets dressed like an Edwardian lady. She puts on “a green, purple and white sash” (Ibid., p. 75) like the women in the suffragette movement. She sticks to the appropriated beauty standards, and she is selling a magazine which photo shops women to perfection. However, she wears the emblem of suffragettes, women who fight for their rights (Aston, 2016).

All in all, **NSFW**, which is produced in 2012, uncovers the issue of the objectification of the female body and the beauty expectations of twenty-first century society and how the controlling male gaze exerts power upon women. Kirkwood refers to two problems in the society; both paedophilia and the objectification of adult female body by patriarchy. She touches upon the issue that no matter how old female is objectification and commodification of female body is wrong. In order to reveal the representation of woman’s self, she enables the audience to look at the problem from two sides which are women and men. She also reflects the commodification of their bodies and their psychology under harsh beauty standards.

CONCLUSION

In three plays analysed in this study, the heteronormative system is the key factor that affects them. Heteronormative system is the reason of disintegration of identities. At the first sight, it seems to divide the world into two, man and woman. However, with a close look, homosexuals, youth and children too have happened to be a part of the exploitation under patriarchal order.

These plays written in the 1990s and 2000s have multiple common features. Although the decades are in a constant state of flux, the perception of the human body remains the same. The most fundamental feature of these plays is being part of the dominant system. This system always objectifies the human body and people become the victims of this system. While Furse succeeds in revealing this issue by rewriting the nineteenth century perspective and shows how science considers (the female) body, Ravenhill makes interpretations about the dark future in the light of the fears stemmed from the decade he wrote his plays in. Accordingly, Kirkwood totally reflects the hidden side of the media in her time. She shows that people victimise not only themselves and their bodies but also the others around them with socially created systems and expectations.

Augustine (Big Hysteria) and **NSFW** can be compared in terms of the representation of woman. In general sense, an image refers to a representation of an object. The audience can see the subordination in the photographs of women in both plays. For example, both plays opens with the image presented to the audience in the first place. As mentioned in the first chapter, Furse fictionalises the real Augustine who is the patient of Professor Charcot at the end of the nineteenth century. Charcot and his visitor assistant Freud are characterised in the play by Furse too. Furse presents the audience a hysterical girl Augustine and describes how her body is objectified by Charcot. Besides ovarian compression, needling her flesh and using her body as the epitome of hysteria in the public lectures, first of all, the play opens with the projection screen which shows the photo of Augustine. This photo shows

Augustine in a “normal state” (Furse, 1997: 16). She is described in the photograph used in the play as “a gentle-looking girl, still with puppy fat, her hair pulled off her face and coiled, a buttoned dark dress with white collar and bow at the neck” (Furse, 1997: 16). Her state represents the ideal Augustine who seems to meet the expectation of society. She is regarded as normal in the photograph according to patriarchal thought as she is not in a frenzied state which the audience witness in the rest of the play. She is shown as docile with having all the grace that society expects from her. In the photograph, she seems to stick to the nineteenth century idealisation of woman rather than a hysteric girl who has wild hair and shabby clothes. When Augustine’s scream is heard, the audience see that the picture projected on the bedside has shaken strongly. It gives the audience the sense that when hysterical action begins, the image of woman has shaken. From the first moment, the audience gets the thought that hysteria breaks down the ideal image of woman. Then the audience see the lecture of Charcot in which he shows Augustine’s body reacting with the hysterical symptoms as a stereotype of hysteria. As a comparison, when Kirkwood’s *NSFW* is considered, the audience meet the image of woman again in the opening scene. However, this time the woman’s image is sexualised. In the play, the office of the man’s magazine, *Doghhouse*, contains lots of photo shoots of topless women open to male gaze. In the office which is comprised of mostly male workers, woman’s body is objectified. For example, in the meeting scene, the primary object of attention is the fourteen-year old girl with topless photo shoots. After they learn that she is a child, they feel remorse. In choosing this scene, Kirkwood shows the audience that not only woman but also children become objectified in the male gaze.

The objectification of the human body acquires another dimension in **Shopping and F***ing**. Heteronormative system which is imposed upon us by the Law of the Father, the phallus, causes the division among people. In the play, the audience get the idea that sexual identities are varied and homosexual body is also exposed to objectification. There are two homosexual characters, Mark and Gary, in the play. Especially, Gary’s rape story is the reminiscent of Augustine. Their comparison is combined with child abuse, exploitation of the female body and gay rape. Both characters are raped by their mother’s lovers, or stepfathers. Their bodies

are used selfishly by the hand of patriarchy. For example, after Augustine is raped, she is sent to the asylum and her body is used like a laboratory mouse by the doctors. After Gary is raped, he is left alone and becomes a rent boy who makes money by selling his flesh to stranger men. Both of their pasts cause trauma in their lives. For instance, Augustine suffers from hysteria, while Gary is going through trauma and becomes obsessed with harsh sexual relationships as his stepfather practices rough intercourse on him with a knife. Gary cannot get over with it and his psychology is badly affected by this trauma that happened in his past. As Anna Furse quotes Freud at the beginning of **Augustine (Big Hysteria)**, “it all goes back to remembering...” (1997: 15). **NSFW** can be added to the comparison because the audience witness how men look at the fourteen-year old girl’s topless photo shoots. At this time, controlling male gaze has sexualised a teenager. It is the implication that paedophilia exists in the society. And throughout the play, having young and firm body has been praised by patriarchy. No matter what identities they have, the comparison of these characters shows the audience how they are subjugated by patriarchal ideology.

In addition to these comparisons and the topic of objectification, the argument is developed around the definition of in-yer-face and how Ravenhill puts it into practice in the play. The traits of in-yer-face theatre also can be seen in the play. For example, the taboo concepts are included like sex and drugs. The style of revealing the harsh realities of life, consumerist culture for example, is one of the traits because taunting people with a reality irritates people and this results in developing an understanding about the issue covered in the play.

In **Shopping and F***ing**, the main issues evolved around consumerism in the contemporary era. In a society which becomes individualised by Thatcherism, people’s relation to each other has become scarce and money has turned out to be the primary criteria among people. Accordingly, the second chapter covers food fetishism and sexuality which brings about as a natural drive like hunger. As a result, in the play, eating and sexuality are covered as a relation to each other. However, Ravenhill shows the audience that in consumerist culture, everything has been done exaggeratedly. Therefore, people have hard times to digest the harsh life. Once

Mark's situation is considered for instance, the audience see him vomiting at the beginning of the play. He explains that he cannot control his guts and his mind anymore. In a sense, he implies that the loneliness and life depending on money without emotions eats him up. All he does is eating and having sexual relationships with the men he buys. However, Ravenhill shows the audience that at the end of the day, nothing feeds your soul; you just load your stomach. The life lessons given underneath the stories in the play make the readers question their own lives and see the inevitable truths. In the play, this realisation comes with Robbie who gives the drugs free of charge to everybody in the club and as a result, he becomes happy. He comes to a recognition that he is fed up with this contemporary world built upon buying and selling. He sees that everything depends on transaction and nothing more. As a comparison, the reality of the consumerist society can be seen in Kirkwood's *NSFW*. In the women's magazine *Electra*, the samples of cosmetic products placed before the audience. This enables them to see how people become the slaves of the cosmetic companies in fact. Miranda's moisturising her hands continuously shows to what extent cosmetics conquered our lives.

Kirkwood's *NSFW* is discussed through the issue of the objectification of the female body according to the twenty-first century woman's image. As a contrast to **Augustine (Big Hysteria)** taking the nineteenth century woman's image which is expected to be passive with proper clothes, the twenty-first century is an era of sexualised woman's image. If the nineteenth century woman's image is considered, the notion of the angel in the house comes to mind although Augustine is a misfit. However, if the twenty-first century woman is considered, as discussed before, it can be said that the outgoing modern women are more prone to the male gaze with the increase in the visual devices in the pockets of the people. *NSFW* shows that in the contemporary society women are both objectified and sexualised. With plastic surgeries and beauty operations, woman's image has become dehumanised. As a result, Kirkwood shows the audience that woman who lives her life according to the socially accepted beauty standards cannot defend feminism.

Consequently, all these plays covered in this study reflect that nothing has changed throughout the time. Patriarchal ideology continues to subjugate the human body. The division of identities has been valid in all parts of the society in all times. Only the concepts depending on money move on. Consumerism has become doubled in the twenty-first century. Artificiality of beauty standards has been intensified and gives way to post-human appearances. As a result, the patriarchy's dreadful cycle carries on.



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