THE RENUNCIATION, DISTORTION AND SUBVERSION OF HEGEMONIC DISCOURSES IN LIZ LOCHHEAD'S PLAYS

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ABSTRACT

THE RENUNCIATION, DISTORTION AND SUBVERSION OF HEGEMONIC DISCOURSES IN LIZ LOCHHEAD'S PLAYS

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This dissertation argues that Liz Lochhead challenges and reconsiders the patriarchal epistemological categories in her plays and creates an alternative space of existence which grants acknowledgement to women's responses to the social and empirical reality by reworking the taken for granted notions of patriarchy. To this end, this dissertation analyzes Lochhead's three plays *Medea*, *Thebans* and *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped* against the backdrop of Lacanian theory and yet attempts to transgress his entrapment in phallogocentricism by reading his epistemology subversively, re-employing the terms he has formulated and opening up an alternative feminine space, which, in the end, will direct this study towards a post-Lacanian position. In relevance to the aim of this study, Lochhead's above-mentioned plays will be discussed so as to display the employment of language as a political and an ideological tool to construct realities, to give voice to liminal figures and to appropriate already existent categories in its own terms. Lochhead's revisiting of European history and myths, and reconstructing them from a feminine and Scottish point of view through her fluid and decentred language engender an alternative space renouncing the hegemonic discourses embedded in language, out of which counter hegemonic ones arise. This dissertation comes to the conclusion that a global look at

her plays testifies to her success in creating an alternative space, which subverts grand narratives, phallocentric history and its hegemony in artistic and dramatic production.

Keywords: Liz Lochhead, Myths, Lacan, Scottish Drama, Hegemony.

ÖZ

LIZ LOCHHEAD'İN OYUNLARINDA HEGEMONİK SÖYLEMLERİN REDDİ, ÇARPITILMASI VE YIKILMASI

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Bu tez, Liz Lochhead'in, oyunlarında, ataerkil epistemolojik kategorileri sorguladığını, tekrar gözden geçirdiğini ve kanıksanmış ataerkil nosyonları yeniden işleyerek, kadınların sosyal ve ampirik gerçekliğe verdikleri tepkilere söz hakkı tanıyan alternatif bir yaşam alanı yarattığını öne sürmektedir. Bu amaçla, bu tez Lochhead'in üç oyununu (*Medea*, *Thebans*, ve *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped*) Lacancı teori bağlamında tartışmayı, ancak diğer yandan, Lacan'ın epistemolojisini tersinden okuyarak, onun oluşturduğu terimleri yeniden ele alarak ve alternatif feminen bir alan yaratarak, Lacan'ın saplanıp kaldığı fallus merkezciliği aşmayı amaçlamaktadır, ki bu çaba bu çalışmayı post-Lacancı bir konuma doğru yönlendirecektir. Çalışmanın amacıyla bağıntılı olarak, dilin, gerçeklikler inşa etmek, liminal figürlere ses vermek ve mevcut kategorileri kendi amacına uygun hale getirmek için siyasi ve ideolojik bir araç olarak nasıl kullanıldığını göstermek amacıyla, Lochhead'in yukarıda bahsi geçen oyunları tartışılır. Lochhead'in Avrupa tarihi ve mitlerini yeniden değerlendirmesi ve onları akışkan ve merkezsiz bir dil aracılığıyla feminen bir bakış açısı ve İskoç bakış açısıyla yeniden yaratması, dilde gizlenmiş hegemonyacı söylemleri reddeden ve hegemonya-karşıtı söylemler üreten alternatif bir alan yaratmaktadır. Bu tez şu sonuca varmaktadır: Lochhead'in oyunlarına global bir bakış, onun alternatif bir alan yaratmadaki başarısına kanıt teşkil

etmektedir, ki bu başarı büyük anlatıları, fallus merkezci tarihi ve bu tarihin sanatsal ve dramatik üretimi üzerindeki eğemenliğini yıkma çabasıdır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Liz Lochhead, Mitler, Lacan, İskoç Draması, Hegemonya.

To my husband Tolga and our beloved son Rüzgar,
from whom I've occasionally stolen his "mom."

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Aim of the Study

This study aims to analyze the renunciation, distortion and subversion of hegemonic discourses in Liz Lochhead's plays against the background of Lacanian epistemology and to reveal her desire to offer a challenge by engendering her own dramatic strategies in her plays, which paves the way for the creation of a de-phallogocentric discourse and a new dramatic language, causing the disruption of the existing norms and notions perpetuating the dominant discourse. Lochhead's *Medea*, *Thebans* and *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* will be put under scrutiny by consulting Lacanian conceptual tools such as desire, love, Phallic Other, the Law of the Father and *jouissance*. However, this process of reading will involve a subversive reading of Lacan as it will employ Lacanian conceptions in a de-phallogocentric context. Why this study has chosen Lacanian epistemology is closely related to what Lochhead tries to do in her plays. She tries to offer a re-reading of patriarchal discourse from a new vantage point and tries to generate new concepts. Lochhead's aim is to open a new space of signification in which women could assert their side of the truth. Her plays have a pragmatic agenda aestheticizing this truth, which is to read "the woman" on a new ontological and epistemological ground. By re-reading the seminal texts by Western literature, she asks the question of whether such a woman depicted in these plays really exists. If not, who or what is this category of woman? And how can one get to know about her? For all these reasons, she has a pragmatic reason to rewrite these seminal plays and to consult alternative views. As her starting point is the discourse and the question of how one can re-shape this discourse, Lacanian epistemology, which locates the genesis of the human in discourse/symbolic offers new insights into her plays. It is because of this reason that this dissertation consults Lacan and borrows key concepts from him to explore Lochhead's plays on a new ground.

"It was certainly the Word (verbe) that was in the beginning" says Lacan, problematizing the conventional understanding of language as he claims that language is the main constituent in identity formation (*Écrits* 45). Lacan, in this way, challenges the Cartesian ego of a stable identity; however, in his desire to display the fact that subjectivity comes into being "in" and "with" language, Lacan avails himself of masculine language and is entrapped in phallocentricism, which necessitates the deconstruction of the masculine Symbolic so that the liminalized women can engender a living niche and a space to generate an alternative version to the patriarchal world. Liz Lochhead, with her peripheral and doubly marginalized standing as a woman and as a Scottish figure, fights against phallocentricism by means of her employment of feminine language as a political and an ideological tool to construct realities, to give voice to liminal figures and to appropriate already existing categories and her reconstruction of European myths, histories and Lacanian desire through a lens of feminine standpoint.

The rationale for why I have chosen Lochhead to study stems from Lochhead's providing an idiosyncratic and a womanly reading in her adapted work, which transgresses the populist mainstream dramatic interpretations, thus inducing her plays to offer a challenge to the discourses in the center. Distinct writers and literary critics have studied and interpreted Lochhead and her work mostly in terms of gender and cultural identity, and her plays have generally been scrutinized from the angle of gender issues (Scullion (2000), Varty (1993), Harvie (1999) and Horvat (1999)) or from a nationalistic point of view (Stevenson (1996), Brown (2000) and Cole (2007)). However, these exclusive analyses do not completely display and reflect Lochhead's groundbreaking position in the development of Scottish drama. The previous studies have the drawback of limiting Lochhead's fluid position to merely one aspect, which is against what Lochhead attempts to achieve in her adaptations: demonstrating alternatives, alternative sides of truth and alternative realms. As a feminist playwright, her plays have been analyzed on an Anglo-American feminist ground which established her as a British, not as a Scottish, playwright, ripping her off from an integral component of her identity-her nation- which she struggles to foreground

in the domination of Britain/British. Her work has been analyzed with the aim of detecting how far she has succeeded in giving voice to the nationalist context/culture but this time her feminist agenda has been cast aside.

The previous studies, thus, have offered exclusively the analyses of either nationalistic or feminist concerns, failing to juxtapose these two agendas and offering readings generally from a thematic or political angle. Yet, this dissertation plans to approach and analyze these two segregated identities on a unifying trajectory as Lochhead's adaptations encompass the voice of a Scottish woman playwright, doubly marginalized because of her nation and gender. Also, they enter the male dominated Scottish literary canon and attempt to engender a new womanly/feminine dramatic discourse by bearing in mind the nationalistic context and employing it as the background to her adaptations. This dissertation, hence, diverges from the preceding studies in its attempt to juxtapose Lochhead's feminist and nationalistic agendas on a similar path in a post-Lacanian perspective and tries to achieve what Lochhead has intended to do in her work: reconfiguring an alternative reality. This study is divergent from the mainstream, center-based and thematic interpretations of Lochhead's plays, and the aim of this study, then, will be to discuss how Lochhead challenges the patriarchal categories in her plays and to emphasize her escape from the patriarchal world by engendering her own feminized world, by applying Lacanian notions and eventually overturning them. To reach this aim, it would be useful to contextualize the Scottish dramaturgy as it will prepare the ground to discuss Lochhead's plays on a much wider scale.

1.2. Contemporary Scottish Drama

"Was there a Scottish Literature?"
T. S. Eliot

Hailing from the depths of a coercive and eventful albeit inspiring history, Liz Lochhead carries the collateral influences of her resistant, combatant and fluid homeland Scotland, positioning her far from the mainstream and engendering a

liminal and peripheral figure out of her self. Her voice refusing to be silenced and gradually increasing as she gives voice to the unvoiced, misfit and marginalized figures is raised from the very center of the Scottish Drama, which has had a restless history marked by the attempts to discover its own path. This dramatic history with its peculiarities and Lochhead's place in it makes a brief introduction to the genealogy of this dramaturgy necessary.

The existence of a Scottish Renaissance and its underpinnings have a controversial and recurring role in the Scottish theatrical tradition as the concept of one/unified Scotland has been challenged, shattered and later has evolved into the dream of different Scotlands against the backdrop of political and historical changes taking place from the 19th to 21st century. These political and historical fluctuations paved the way for the emergence of new playwrights and the reawakening of already existing ones to reshape, rediscover and remake Scotland and transform it into a proliferating, multi-layered and pluralistic country. Especially with the referendum at the end of the century, the nation was rejuvenated, and in a sense, reborn, which offered a new context for emerging distinct Scottish identities and made Scottish literature a diverse one as it started to be defined "in contrast to a linear, monolithic literature with imperial weight and the trajectory of a colonial empire, unified by a single language" (Brown and Riach 1).

Shrugging off the yoke of British Imperialism and breaking the chains of a kindred nation, Scottish literary movement found itself in a slippery and dynamic political setting, struggling to survive by its own means and aiming to resist the silencing of "Gaelic voices, women, brutalizing ethos of industrial exploitation, the historical richness of Scotland's cultural production over centuries" (1). The voicing of the unvoiced made mute by the more powerful side and the discarding of the hardships the country had experienced earlier became possible with the undertaking, struggle and boldness of the Scottish writers, the number of whom increased with the launch of the New National Theatre of Scotland (NTS). The year 1999 evolved into a turning point not only in the political history of Scotland but also in the theatrical tradition as

that year witnessed the production and revival of many works of merit, ranging from James Bridie's *The Anatomist* (1930) to Iain Heggie's *An Experienced Woman Gives Advice* (1995), adaptations such as Robert David MacDonald's *Death in Venice* (1999) and Harry Gibson's *Filth* (1999), translation of Bertolt Brecht's *Mr Puntila and His Man Mati* (1999) by Peter Arnott. New plays were also written such as David Greig's *Mainstream* (1999), David Harrower's *Begin Again* (1999), Aileen Ritchie's *The Juju Girl* (1999) and Linda McLean's *Riddance* (2000).

The questions revolving around borders, boundaries, inclusion and exclusion triggered the Scottish playwrights working in the post-devolutionary context to concentrate on the issues of identity, self and difference. As Tom Nairn suggested, "the establishment of the new Scottish parliament in 1999 created cultural momentum and provoked a general sense of an incoming tide which enabled and indeed required reimaginings of Scotland and Scottishness" (in Reid 188). The playwrights attempted to achieve a reconstructed world view and aimed to follow a new Scotland built around the idea of a new country "as a template from which other nations can learn how to develop a non-threatening conception of nationalism, one that is tolerant both of internal plurality and of flexible subversion of its sovereignty in larger forms of social organization that have positive benefits for its citizens" (Paterson in Reid 191). Theatre, thereby, undertook the pragmatic aspiration and social responsibility of displaying political underpinnings of a revived view of Scotland on both collective and individual level, and these became the themes recurring occasionally in the dramaturgy. However, as Scullion avers, "for all the innovation of a new, contemporary Scottish drama of one major aspect of the post-devolution repertoire remained virtually unchanged from previous decade," which is the domination of male voices and the representation of solely male experience (73).

Out of all the Scottish works produced in the post-devolution era, Greig's *The Speculator* (1999) stands out as it heralds a new point of departure by revisiting the history genre, which used to restrict the development of the Scottish drama and hinder its attractiveness in the spectators' eyes. Setting the context in a remote land, far from

Scotland, Greig aims to display the fluctuations between a failing world doomed to be destroyed and falling into pieces with ingrained traditional notions, established orders and hierarchies and a bold new world led by economic and social innovations and cultural practices. The unrest caused by the unsettling contrast between the old and the new, and the inbetweenness between looking back and looking forward echoes tension in Greig's work and sets theatrical parallelism with the underpinnings of the political ideas implied by the launch of the parliament on 1 May 1999.

The dream that the new voice rising gradually but confidently in the parliament would "shape Scotland as surely as the echoes from the past" parallels Greig's aspiration to engender a vision for the future that is revolutionary but not disconnected wholly from the roots of its very own history (Dewar in Schoene 69). Greig's play, written right after the slippery political setting shaped by groundbreaking political changes, aspires to capture a new kind of future. Greig sets the play in a novel and unfamiliar land, Paris, far from mainland Scotland to demonstrate the failing and the melting of the old-world order in major cities of Europe in an attempt not to be entrapped in a singularist cultural analysis. Not merely Scotland, but Paris and London are dissolving and gradually breaking into pieces against the modern and the new as they cannot keep up with the wind of change brought by/in time and are unable to convey its meaning. The cities, Paris, London and Edinburgh, fail to hold initial promises of difference and change with a focus on a freeing future, and they are depicted correspondingly as suffocating and restrictive. The freedom pledge that these cities offer happens to be deceptive as even Paris, seen as the center of the world, turns out to be the center of an old world dominated by the hierarchical system perpetuated by the old elite, which makes the creation of the new worlds necessary and inevitable. As suggested by Scullion, "Greig's post-devolution thesis appears to be that what matters most is the possibilities afforded by an aspirational future bold enough to confront and progress away from the assumptions and prejudices of the past" (71). The play, *The Speculator*, thereby, progresses into a metaphor for a new Scotland with its characters aspiring to mediate between the past and the future and to hold a place in the new order. *The Spectacular* as a new metaphor for a new Scotland from

an internationalist point of view was welcomed acceptable and appropriate in contemporary Scottish theatre tradition. Yet, the works of some playwrights such as Arnott's *White Rose* and John Clifford's *Losing Venice* failed to survive in a problematic and confusing society struggling to survive through distinct identities and labels. This inbetweenness and originality of these plays made their attempt to find a place in contemporary criticism rather difficult.

Apart from these pieces of work unable to attain popularity with their political and dramaturgical internationalism, other plays of the late 1980s and the early 1990s such as Liz Lochhead's *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* (1987), Tory Roper's *The Steamie* (1988) and Sue Glover's *Bondagers* (1991) employed the concept of Scottishness and its underpinnings in a more overt and direct manner, and this integrated them into the ingrained establishment much more easily.

The year 1985 welcomed a new generation of writers such as Arnott, Clifford and Stuart Peterson at the Traverse Theatre with their bold politics and theatrical internationalism. Despite their attempt to engender an eclectic understanding of history, they failed to earn a place in the academic and theatrical circle. The 1990s experienced a revival in international touring and exchange of works, as a result of which the popularity of international work increased in places such as Glasgow Tramway, and accordingly, some already existing companies like the Traverse and The Tron collaborated with the international sources and engaged in theatre imports and exports, which led Scottish theatre to gain a place in the international arena. Other than those established theatres/theatre companies, new companies like Suspect Culture and Theatre Cryptic were founded with a focus on international emphasis. With the production of an increasing number of international work and/or work with international focus, the course of Scottish theatre changed and moved from an indigenous nature to a more international one. The watershed in the industry, however, occurred with devolution, "the Scottish legislative revolution that holds the potential to change everything hitherto taken for granted about representation and identity in Scotland's cultural and critical outputs" (Scullion 71).

Though the appearance of new playwrights and opening up prospective fields for them to produce their works would seem like a progressive and positive step, the downside of this change was the infeasibility of developing and maintaining a stable career, different from the theatres of England and Ireland, which helped the production of new pieces of work alongside the revival of the earlier ones. The recent Scottish theatre, however, eliminated this deficiency and narrow vision by welcoming different voices from all ages, all eras and all experiences.

The Traverse, the Playwrights' Studio Scotland and specifically the NTS perpetuate their aim to discover and support new writers and revive the earlier ones through revivals, translations, adaptations and workshop activities. John Byrne's adaptation of TV series *Tutti Frutti* (1987), Clifford's translation of *Celestia* (2004), Arnott's production of *Full of Noises* (2002), *Court of Miracles* (2003), *House of Murders* (2004) and *Cyprus* (2005) and rewritings such as Hannan's *Shining Souls* (2003) and *Elizabeth Gordon Quinn* (2006), all reflected the traces left by the post-devolution period and revealed its agenda to revoice the long forgotten voices.

In the context of such theatrical, cultural and political changes, dramaturgical issues revolving around history, nation and identity politics have started to be raised. Increasing nationalism dominating Europe in recent years has caused the historians, critics and writers to question the ingrained cultural notions, colonialism, nationalism and binary oppositions surrounding them. The coining of the term "imagined communities[1]" to define nations by Benedict Anderson and the redefinition of identity as slippery, hybrid and elusive have encouraged the Scottish writers to challenge established cultural orthodoxies, problematize the concept of identity, create more fluid works of literature and thereby move the Scottish theatre to a more distinctive and boundless ground. Scullion avers that:

[1] An imagined community is a concept developed by Benedict Anderson to scrutinize nations and nationalism. He considers a nation to be a community socially constructed and imagined by those who assume themselves to be a part/member of that group.

> the articulations of cultural hybridity and fruitful instability are demonstrably useful ways of conceptualizing post-devolution Scotland, and Scottish theatre indeed ubiquitously deploys a catalogue of relevant metaphors for mutable edges and liminal terrains, the space between, as well as the 'here' and the 'there.' (74)

In some contemporary writers' works such as Glover's *Shetland Saga* (2000), Greig's *Outlying Islands* (2002) and Riccardo Galgan's *The Found Man* (2005), topographies and exterior landscapes are employed to reflect characters' psychological situations onto geological structures, thereby setting a parallelism between their dissolving identities and fissures in the landscape and borders.

Doubly marginalized in the patriarchal context because of their identities labelled as Scottish and woman, some Scottish women playwrights of the 1970s challenged the male domination by writing plays from a female perspective. Names such as Joan Ure and Marcella Evarists, and already known playwrights such as Ena Lamont Stewart embarked on the difficult task of writing outside the male domain. Despite Stewart's efforts to have a solid place in the theatrical dramaturgy, she could not achieve her intention as merely two of her plays- *Towards Evening* and *Walkies Time for a Black Poodle*- found a place at the Netherbow Theatre in 1975. The plight of these courageous woman playwrights was changed in the 1980s through the appearance of new playwrights such as Lara Jane Bunting, Aileen Ritchie, Anne-Marie Di Mambio, Sue Glover, Liz Lochhead and others. Tom Maguire evaluated the attempt of these writers as follows:

> [T]he claiming by these women writers of a space for their voices within the theatre as an industry has been matched with a concern to investigate the dimensions of the gendered spaces which might be taken to constitute Scotland. [... Confounding] easy categorisations and fixed definitions of what it might mean to be both woman and Scottish [...], they have contributed to the creation of a public sphere where women are better able to define those categories for themselves. (149)

By focusing on historical material, these playwrights opened up the alternative historical space from the feminine perspective and voiced the silenced voice of women living in a world dominated by men's rules. Of all the significant woman playwrights, however, Liz Lochhead, alongside a few others such as Glover, stands out as she is the natural creator of historical space and myths and most certainly engaged in writing them from a fresh angle. Her aim is to deal with historical and mythical material and yet revisit and reconstruct the alternative ways of history and myth far from the hegemonic configuration in male dramaturgy.

1.3. Liz Lochhead: War against Patriarchy

Heralded as "Scotland's greatest living dramatist," the Glaswegian poet and playwright Liz Lochhead has earned this well-deserved merit and acclaim and guaranteed her place as such by producing adaptations of the Greek classics blended with her vibrant, colloquial, humorous, pun-ridden and fertile Scots diction (Papadopolou 123). As averred by Ksenija Horvat in *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Drama*:

> Lochhead's fascination with different facets and tonalities of language, with its colors, tastes and textures has led her to experiment in her poetry and drama with a broad range of styles from lyrical, classical and heightened to idiomatic, popular and urban registers from standard English to her Lanarkshire grandmother's broad Lowland Scots. (179)

Lochhead's eclecticism of distinct dialects, registers and styles has diversified, rendered her work multilayered and versatile. Dwelling on a familiar material, Lochhead achieves engendering a distancing effect in her reader/audience by adding varied flavors to the already known text: "she relocates, selects and reworks the canonical text into a form that estranges the familiar source material by updating and domesticating it" (84). Lochhead's literary success in blending the universal and the familiar with the novel and the local astounds the reader, and the integration of the stories of the ordinary/common people/everyman, the dissolution of the binaristic

categories in her writing and the cherishment of the plural identities make her work rich, elaborate and multilayered. Robert Crawford propounds that "Lochhead likes to define her work in terms of splits or binary oppositions- female/male, Scottish/English, Scot/Celt, working class/middle class, performance/text" (in Horvat 182).

Shaped by a liminal Scottish background, Liz Lochhead achieves positioning her drama, her characters and even her self far from the threshold of the dominant ideologies as she is cognizant of the ideology hidden in language and beneath each and every single word produced in language. Thus, she cherishes marginal positions in her works, and her attempts to transcend the limitations of the theatre both in content and form make her nomadic in Braidottian sense[2] and her works fluid.

Liz Lochhead is an oppositional and reactionary figure resisting the limitations of the male dominated theatre with the power of her pen. Also, carrying nationalist feelings, Lochhead "has taken Scotland beyond its borders and brought home new worlds, transforming both her native landscape and its global position" (Varty 1). She, in a way, contributes to the nationalist traditions of the country into which she was born by revisiting ethnic myths and roots, and juxtaposing them with Greek and Roman ones with a critical eye on issues such as gender and race. Thus, she succeeds in challenging the Western myths laden with the binaristic, male dominated and

[2] The main concern in Rosie Braidotti's work is the constitution of contemporary subjectivity in Western metaphysics and political theory. Braidotti's aim is to scrutinize the concept of difference/differentiation in positive terms, which means saving it from the straightjacket of the constrictive binary paradigm. In her illuminating work, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (2011), Braidotti reconstructs subjectivity as a process of being nomad. She proposes that "the figuration of the nomad renders an image of the subject in terms of a nonunitary and multilayered vision as a dynamic and changing entity. Politically, nomadic subjectivity addresses the need to destabilize and activate the center. Mainstream subject positions have to be challenged in relations to and interaction with the marginal subjects" (5) and thereby contests the unitary and incorporate understanding of the subject and offers an alternative with her nomadic subject and subjectivity.

hegemonic viewpoints and ideas, and engendering counter discourses and offering alternative contexts.

Constructing and deconstructing stories is an indispensable part of women's writing as they desire to transcend the male writings which are written by the male gaze and which ignore women's voices. As suggested by McMillan, "the construction or reclamation of a women's tradition shapes and brings to light hidden or neglected stories. And the retelling of traditional stories and myths has become one of the significant strategies of female and feminist creativity" (17). Lochhead, too, is aware of the strong presence of storytelling in voicing the repressed feelings and histories of women and considers it her work/vocation. Rather than regarding storytelling as a means of entertainment or embellishment, Lochhead trusts its functional and pragmatic aspect in assisting the suppressed voices to be heard again as storytelling can be related to controlling the Word and thus can be influential in opening up a (new) space of signification. In her poem "Storyteller" (1981), she focuses on the effectiveness of stories:

> No one could say the stories were useless
> for as the tongue clacked
> five or forty fingers stitched
> corn was grated from the husk
> patchwork was pieced
> or the darning done (6-11)
>
> […]
>
> To tell the stories was her work
> It was like spinning
> gathering thin air to the singlest strongest
> threat. (15-18)

Through her creative and subversive storytelling ability, and her poetic and evocative language, Lochhead rejects the limitations imposed on women by men and repudiates women's objectification under the male gaze. She desires to deflect the representation of women as object: physically weak so as to help men feel superior, sexually active

so as to serve the male fantasies, and psychically inferior so as to make men feel intellectual and sophisticated. She also refuses to admit such generalizations and ventures into subverting the binary oppositions demoting women to the inferior leg of the binary and ascribing weak features such as dark/passive/weak to them, and promoting men to the superior leg and attributing strong features to them such as bright/active/strong. In "The Complete Alternative History of the World: Part One" (1972), Eve is portrayed as an opposed figure talking to Adam and defying the male ascribed roles cast upon her:

> I'm not Jezebel
> and I'm not Delilah
> I'm not Mary Magdalen
> Or the Virgin Mary either (51-54)
>
> […]
>
> Not Medusa, not Medea
> And, though my tongue may be salty
> I'm not the Delphic Sybil-
> Or Sybil Fawlty (63-66)
>
> […]
>
> No, I'm not your Little Woman
> Not your Better Half
> I'm not your Nudge, your snigger
> Or your Belly Laugh (91-94)

The oppositional poetic persona discards all the labels associating her with historical figures and belittling her with words such as "little woman," "better half," or "nudge," and thus, the poem offers an alternative to the traditional understanding of woman as a category and challenges the conventions. Instead of being a slave to Adam, Eve repudiates being confined to the boundaries drawn by him, rejects the role of a "slave" and asserts her subjectivity and personality.

Either in the form of poetry or drama, language, for Lochhead, is a fluid entity to which she can give a shape and a shelter in which she can reside and act out her

desire. She is cognizant of the power of language, and thereby, she manipulates it and appropriates narrative registers according to her own ends. In an interview with Rebecca Wilson, she remarks the substantial impact of language on her life:

> I think my principal love is language itself. When I can't write, it's because I can't find the right language. It's not the ideas. Any ideas I've got come already clothed in language. I find language very funny anyway. The whole act of framing untidy old experience in language is inherently funny. If something doesn't have irony in it, for me, it wouldn't be alive. The kind of amazement I have is often in simple language, how much of a giveaway it is. (in Crawford and Varty 21)

Lochhead, in a way, employs language as an ironical tool, bends it, and through it, she displays the dynamic connection between the past and the present, and explores traditions. While exploring the traditions and/or demonstrating the joints of the past and the present, the language she engenders and the ideas she communicates are mostly multi-layered. Varty, too, emphasizes the versatility of Lochhead's language in deciphering the conventions:

> Whether these [the explorations] are traditions of story, evinced in *Medea* or *the Grimm Sisters*; history, seen in *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* or *Shanghaied*; the Gothic in *Dracula* but also in *Cuba*; or language itself, the absolute foundation of Liz Lochhead's work, seen perhaps at its most dazzling in *Tarfuffe* and at its seemingly simplest in "Kidspoem/ Bairnsang," the vision she communicates is always layered. (1)

In almost all her plays, Lochhead leans against the multi-layered aspect of language and makes use of its political underpinnings. Nicholson states that:

> If attitudes to language encode attitudes to politics and class, Lochhead continues to use "colloquial, urban and demonic" Glaswegian speech patterns as both poetic and dramatic vehicles focusing her attention on political subjectivities still in active process of identifying themselves and looking to find fit voices in the theatre of social interaction. (166)

She borrows her subject matter from the historical events consisting of real characters or the myths of the shared culture. However, her version of the stories does not feed general understanding or perpetuate underlying political messages that sustain the conventional patriarchal notions. "Rather, Lochhead's work reconfigures each story both thematically and structurally, from a feminist standpoint" (Harvie and McDonald 124).

Adrienne Rich, in "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Revision" (1971), dwells on the concept of re-vision, which might as well be applied to Lochhead's plays since her plays are re-visitation and reconfiguration of the Western stories, myths, characters and images. Rich asserts:

> Re-vision- the art of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes of entering an old text from a new critical direction- is for women more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival. We need to know the writing of the past and know it differently than we have ever known it; not to pass on a tradition but to break its hold over us. (18)

In order to break the past's hold, Lochhead uses her plays as a means of reexamining the past, myths, images, visions and tailor-made roles which have restrained the possibilities of "women," limited their existence and endeavored to curb their fluid identity. Thus, rewriting has bestowed on Lochhead a way out to demonstrate the possibilities that can come into being with the term "woman" and open up alternate forms for women other than the ones already imposed on them. Lochhead's struggle is deliberate as she aims to tell familiar stories albeit from a fresh angle. Lochhead's rewriting is a tribute to the women who lived in the past and who were denied the opportunity to voice their stories and write about their lives, desires, fears and hopes. Rewriting the past and reconfiguring it from the womanly perspective means changing the authorial perspective from man to woman and the gaze from male to female. With the space she engenders for the suppressed voices, Lochhead contributes to the war of women and generates counter discourses by reshaping history and myths and standing at the juncture of the past and the present.

1.4. Why Rewrite Myths/ History?

> "What does the past tell us? In and of itself, it tells us nothing. We have to be listening first, before it will say a word; and even so, listening means telling and then re-telling."
>
> Margaret Atwood

> "A life of feminine submission, of 'contemplative purity,' is a life of silence, a life that has no pen and no story, while a life of female rebellion, of 'significant action,' is a life that must be silenced, a life whose monstrous pen tells a terrible story."
>
> *The Madwoman in the Attic*
> Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar

> "What's the use of stories that aren't even true?"
> Salman Rushdie

In this part, I aim to reflect on the ways myths are engendered and perceived, attempt to trace the origin and the use of the myths, which brings it at a crossroads where it is impossible to offer a single explanation and a precise starting point. Thus, I aim to lay bare the the constructedness of the myths, making them open to questioning. Different explanations have been offered about the genesis of the myths ranging from externalist theories represented by Max Müller, Sir James Frazer and Branislow Malinowski, who adhere the existence of the myths to an external cause, to internalist ones the representatives of which are Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, who entwine the psyche into the creation of the myths. This part will touch upon them with an attempt to cast light on the formation of the myths. The entrapment of myths in the binaristic framework and putting men and man-made stories at the center of the dominant discourse have suppressed the voice of the women, erased their role in the engenderment of the myths and restrained the perpetuation of their survival niches. To this end, feminist project re-visions, rewrites and reconstructs myths so as to return the suppressed voice, the ripped authentic selves and the lost integrity of women back to them.

Arthurian-like quest for the Holy Grail has mutated into the insuppressible urge in humans to discover the origin of self and being, and motivated people to gather around myths and common histories which provide a sanctuary and ease the survival of the mankind. The shared truths around which people build their lives and out of which they engender their histories pave the way for the appearance of consciousness and unconscious of a common past and for the shaping and defining who "one" really is. Sharing a communal past, attaining a similar cultural and social heritage bearing in itself traditions, customs and ways of life help people identify themselves with a specific group, which, in the long run, guarantees the perpetuation of established societies. Language, the backbone of life and literature, is employed by the members of societies to create myths that are not only "symbolic projections of a people's hopes, values and aspirations" (Guerin 81) but also "imaginative patterns, networks of powerful symbols that suggest particular ways of interpreting the world" (Midgley 1).

Northrop Frye, in *The Modern Century* (1967), emphasizes myths' power in assisting man to come to terms with existential questions: "[a] myth is an expression of man's concern about himself, about his place in the scheme of things, about his relation to society, and God, about the ultimate origin and ultimate fate, either of himself or of the human species generally" (11). Misane and Priedite point out the function of myths as unifying bridges between past and present as follows: "myths develop a sense of togetherness, they are the means by which human beings tie themselves to the world, feel at home there and become the heirs of their ancestors" (160). In the same vein, Frye, too, in *The Stubborn Structure* (1970), recognizes the coalescent and binding effects of mythology as follows: "mythology as a whole provides a kind of diagram or blueprint of what literature as a whole is all about, an imaginative survey of the human situation from the beginning to the end, from the height to the depth, of what is imaginatively conceivable" (102).

Deriving from the Greek word *mythos*, myth encapsulates the meanings of "word" and "story", and thereby, it is open to distinct interpretations as "the correct definition

of myth exists as little as that of the correct definition of human being itself" (Frank in Doty 32). The versatility and the in-flux characteristics of myths have cancelled out a closed understanding of its very nature but "the impossibility of establishing a satisfactory definition of myth has not deterred scholars from developing comprehensive theories on the meaning and interpretation of myth" (Lenardon and Morford 5). The scholarly attempts to dissect myths into their components and to find the unifying principle, pattern and element among them have not been successful but these attempts have enhanced awareness on the nature, function and probable origins of myths.

The dissemination of myths and various definitions, interpretations and critical approaches have testified to the very fact that myths are by-products of humans. As stated above, the scholarly theories of myths generally rest upon two approaches, "those that assume an external basis, such as a reaction to physical nature, for the creation of myth and those that see mythmaking as spontaneous and internal, an instinctive expression of the human mind" (Harris and Platzner 30). The first of the externalistic theories is the nature-myth theory, the primary advocate of which is Max Müller, who asserts that "myths are nature myths, all referring to meteorological and cosmological phenomena" (Lenardon and Morford 5). Here, myth is considered to be a reaction to the remarkable powers of physical nature which affect human experience such as summer and winter, life and death and the cycles of day and night. Apart from Miller, Sir James Frazer, with his ritualistic theory of myth, employs an externalist approach to the interpretation of myths and establishes parallelism between myths of primitive tribes and classical myths. Frazer expounds on the reason behind the creation of myths as the eagerness to illuminate the core of the rituals and religious rites. In an attempt to pass on the following generations their rituals, humans have engendered stories and myths, contributing to the perpetuation of the dissemination of knowledge. Significant in the externalist theories of myths is the work of Branislaw Malinowski whose "great discovery was the close connection between myths and social institutions, which led him to explain myths not in cosmic and mysterious terms, but as charters of social customs and beliefs" (4). At the very

center of Malinowski's work is "the claim that what defies the class of myths is not their fabulous content but the distinctive role that they play in the functioning of the society, that function is not to explain nor entertain, but to strengthen tradition, to provide a mandate for social arrangements" (Joyce 233).

The metaphorical approach and internalist interpretation of the myths have been shaped by the theories of psychologists and psychoanalysts, the forefathers of whom are Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, who construe myths as the extension of the unconscious mind and the sediments of the psyche. Freud sets a parallelism between dreams and myths; dreams, for Freud, are the fulfillments of the repressed wishes providing insight into the mind of the individual. Likewise, he considers myths to be wish fulfillment assisting humans to move from the realm of taboos unharmed and untouched with the help of the psychological tools such as condensation and displacement[3]. Babbage claims that "for Freud, mythmaking was to be understood as manifestation of the primitive in the human psyche rather than as an indicator of primitive cultures" (14).

In Freudian epistemology, desires and impulses remain intact as they are repressed by the conscious mind and appear in dreams, considered to be the "royal road." To grasp the dynamics of the unconscious mind, Freud concludes that "myths could be regarded as signposts toward that which could not be acknowledged in rational discourse" (Babbage 14). Familiarity with myths, thereby, is essential in understanding the human psyche. Freud, for instance, takes the most infamous *Oedipus Rex* as the ground work and draws an analogy between Oedipus's fate and the fate of those who would follow his path, "his fate moves only because it might have been our own, because the oracle laid upon us before our birth the very curse which rested upon him" (Freud in Lenardon and Morford 7). As suggested by

[3] In Freudian psychology, condensation means the dream's or an idea's propensity to combine several themes or associations into one dream symbol or object. Displacement, however, means the redirection of an impulse with the help of an unconscious mechanism that defends the mind by substituting the new object considered to be dangerous with a powerless one.

Baggage, "in Oedipus's transgressive rewriting of familial relations, …we see the fulfillment of our own childhood impulses" (14). Freud implies that the myth of Oedipus deters people from committing the same crime of incest and parricide by distancing themselves from their own desires unconsciously.

The other influential internalist is Carl Jung, who transcends the Freudian connection of myths and dreams by interpreting myths "as projection of what he called 'collective unconscious' of the race, that is, a revelation of the continuing psychic tendencies of society" (Lenardon and Morford 8). Jung differentiates the personal unconscious from the collective one, "the personal concerns matters of an individual's own life; the collective embraces political and social questions involving the group" (8). Jung maintains that myths, like dreams, encapsulate universal images or archetypes, conventional expressions of collective dreams recurring throughout history in distinct groups of people and in distinct experiences of them. As the psychic residues of countless experiences of the same group, archetypes are embedded in myths, projecting the collective psyche of human beings, "when anyone breathes, his breathing is not a phenomenon to be interpreted personally; the mythological images belong to the structure of the unconscious and are an impersonal possession" (Jung 186).

Following in the footsteps of the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, who demonstrates that myths engender a language which depends on concepts of opposition and relatedness and on an attempt to continuously compromise oppositions such as life and death or order and chaos, the anthropologist Edmund Leach avers that the definitions of myths are two-sided, "either a myth is a fallacious history- a story about the past we know to be false- or it is a formulation of a religious mystery in which case it is divinely true for those who believe, but a fairy tale for those who don't" (in Golsan 61). Rene Girard, however, brings forward another definition of myth by sharing the view that "myths aren't precise accounts of historical occurrences" but "they originate in real or historical events and are in fact distorted representation of these events" (61).

The distortion and slipperiness of myths in the formation of consciousness have found resonance in the works of feminist critics questioning and critiquing the quintessence of myths as universal and unchanging truths and their monolithic nature. Babbage touches upon the aim of the feminist project of re-visioning myths and explicates it as follows:

> A central project of feminist analysis has been to re-examine the narratives of mythologies sacred and secular, and especially to deconstruct supposedly archetypal images of the feminine to reveal how these- far from being "timeless" entities outside the processes of human development- are reflections of the symbolic order through which cultures are produced. (22)

Angela Carter declares that "myths are lies desired to make people unfree" ("Notes[4] 25). Therefore, the primary aims of the wider feminist agenda are to decipher the underpinnings of the Symbolic order, which sustains the existence and proliferation of the patriarchal and exclusive myths and to rewrite myths from an alternative standpoint. Joseph Campell defines the function of myths with a quotation from Shakespeare as "to hold, as 't were the mirror up to nature" (*Hamlet* 3.2). The reflection of the mirror that is reverberated is that of the western realm with its oppressive power structures, muting the voices of certain groups, deterring their access to the "word" and making them outsiders. Cast aside as one of the underprivileged groups, women have been denied the right to create their own myths, voice their own stories and have merely repeated the words of men who have dictated their own truths. De Beauvoir asserts that "children's books, mythology, stories, tales all reflect the myths born of the pride and desires of men, thus it is that through the eyes of men the little girl discovers the world and reads therein her destiny" (172). Kate Millet also addresses the same topic in her *Sexual Politics* (1970):

> under patriarchy the female did not herself develop the symbols by which she is described. As both the primitive and the civilized worlds are male worlds,

[4] Angela Carter's article "Notes from the Front Line" has been abbreviated as "Notes."

> the image of women as we know it is an image created by men and fashioned to suit their needs" (46).

Then, how could women see through the reality and create their own myths if they look at the world through the lenses provided by men? In her fundamental essay "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-vision" (1971), Adrienne Rich says that the creation of feminist rewriting and re-visioning is necessary and suggests that "re-vision- the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering a text from a new critical direction- is for us [women] more than a chapter in cultural history; it is an act of survival" (18). "Refusal of the self-destructiveness of male-dominated society" resonates in the works of many women acting as mythmakers and critics attempting to transgress the patriarchal understanding of myths (18). Mary Daly, with her epochal work *Gyn/ecology* (1987) emphasizes the existence of man-made language and finds the solution in the creation of a female centered culture:

> [t]he strategy Daly advocated was two-fold: on the one hand, the deconstruction or destruction of 'patriarchal myths;' on the other, the discovery and the creation of gynocentric alternatives, 'stories arising from the experiences of Crones[5]' which articulate female identified power. (Babbage 26)

Daly, in a way, aims to "create a women-centered mythology that could interweave pasts, presents and imagined futures" (27). Creating a woman-centered mythology can be realized with the help of regaining the control of the "word" and then shaping it through a womanly vantage point, leading to the retrieval of women's lost/unvoiced/ignored selves/stories and beings. Hélène Cixous is among those critics recognizing and acknowledging the interrelatedness of language and woman's salvation from the dominion of the male-centered vision. Cixous, in her "The Laugh of the Medusa[6]" (1976), embarks on the challenging task of experimenting with a

[5] A crone is a stock character that appears in folklore and fairy tales as a sinister and an old woman generally with supernatural and magical power. She is also the archetype of a wise woman.

[6] Cixous' "The Laugh of the Medusa" (1976) will henceforth be abbreviated as "Medusa."

new type of writing- a feminine writing called *écriture feminine* granting women the opportunity to revoice the long-forgotten voice of their authentic selves. Cixous repudiates and stands up against male writing and "self-admiring, self-stimulating and self-congratulatory phallogocentricism":

> now, women return from afar, from always: 'from' 'without,' from the heath where witches are kept alive, from beyond 'culture,' from their childhood which men have been trying desperately to make them forget, condemning it to 'eternal rest.' ("Medusa" 879-880)

Likewise, Elaine Showalter, with her coined term gynocriticism engages in exploring the psychodynamics of the female writings and clarifies the fact that "the task of feminist critics is to find a new language; a new way of reading that can integrate our intelligence and our experience, our reason and our suffering, our skepticism and our vision" (272). The word and the myth should be juxtaposed to achieve the task of creating new mythos for women and restoring their selves to them as "self is an essence in motion, a be-ing continually constructed through the interweaving of myth and language, a be-ing participatory in Be-ing" (Daly 160). Truly, there exist distinct myths swirling around women such as *Medea* and *Antigone*; yet, Greek myths cannot escape gender stereotypes in the patriarchal and misogynistic representation of women by the male perspectives and stereotypes. Women have been represented as submissive and passive beings and an extension of men as their existence only means something in relation to men; they are wives to men, slaves to masters and daughters to fathers. Coexistence with the male and nonexistence without them have erased their past and triggered women playwrights vehemently to re-vision the myths since "in the context of female writing, this return to the past becomes a means of creating a specifically female historical space in which traditionally oppressed female figures are given an opportunity to make themselves heard" (Rousselot 131).

Relying on the idea that history is discursively constructed, and historical stories are initiated and appropriated from a patriarchal vantage point, foregrounding men and undermining women in the historical scene, I aim to expose the constructedness and

sidedness of history to trace the trajectory of creation "the woman" in the plays I discuss. By dwelling on Michel Foucault's denouncement of linearity and acknowledgement of discontinuities in history and Hayden White's term, emplotment, which is the selection of some details and exclusion of the others according to one's own terms, this section challenges and shatters the legitimacy and objectivity of history. Hinged on the imaginative and subjective accounts mainly of men, history abstains from accommodating women and their stories in its natural flow. With an attempt to change his-story to her-story, women endeavor to dehomogenize history by reclaiming their right to leave mark in history and rewriting it from a womanly standpoint.

Feminist revision of myths is intertwined with an agenda: re-visioning history which is "one of the preeminent transmitters of hegemonic culture and tradition" as "the stories it tells serve to legitimate standards of value and define the boundaries of intelligibility and subjectivity" (Hennessy 100). The subjectivity and constructiveness of history stem from a historical work's being a fiction and the historians' using her/his "constructive imagination" to engender a historical piece of work (Collingwood 151). Thus, as Collingwood asserts "historical knowledge, if we may still call it by that name, seems now to be a mere issue of imagination, pegged down as it were to the world of reality only at the fixed points provided by recorded fact" (152). The awareness about the construction of history has caused historians and critics to critique the traditional claims of history to represent the objective truth about the past, in a context of general skepticism where "the master narratives of history, religion and nation have lost much of their authority so that these 'substantial edifices' are in danger of being reduced to a 'pile of rubber'" (Vevaina 86). Indeed, the past existed; it really happened. However, "any historical account is only a reconstruction from fragments of the past which are available to us, and that any historical narrative is largely governed by the perspective adopted by a particular historian telling history is always a question of interpretation" (86). Furthermore, the excluded minority groups and castaway marginalized and peripheralized voices are generally left out from historical records, which highlights the assertion that the truths

and stories of the dominant discourse have the chance to guarantee their places on the pages of history. O'Farrell resonates Michel Foucault and similarly claims that "history is the tool *par excellence* for challenging and analyzing existing orders and for suggesting the possibility of new orders" (61).

The discursiveness of history and its nature constantly in motion have led Foucault to attempt to make people aware of the totalizing narratives of history and of shattering and escaping boundaries drawn by it:

> It is one of my targets to show people that a lot of things that are a part of their landscape- that people think are universal- are the result of some very precise historical changes. All my analyses are against the idea of universal necessities in human existence. They show the arbitrariness of institutions and show which space of freedom we still enjoy and how many changes can still be made. ("Truth[7]" 11)

Instead of totalizing, fixed and unchanging notion of history, Foucault suggests history, which is in constant flux, without beginnings and ends. Foucault denies "linear historical causality between events and epochs (or epistemes as he calls them), favoring instead a history based upon the discontinuities between dominant figurative structures operating in human consciousness" (Munslow 129). History, Foucault believes, can be employed as a tool to display the limitative dynamics of each thought system and the universality of any system since:

> the past construed as history is an endless process of interpretation by the historian as an act of imagination, and our categories of analysis, assumptions, models and figurative style all themselves become a part of history we are trying to unravel. (in Munslow 130)

In "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact" (1974), Hayden White expounds on how historical facts are organized with the help of "emplotment," the way in which historians make their materials into the narrative by paying attention to the selection

[7] Michel Foucault's "Truth, Power, Self: An Interview with Michel Foucault" (1988) has been abbreviated as "Truth."

and exclusion of certain details, characters and structure. This draws an unreliable picture of the occurrences that took place in that very history. White points out that "history fails if its intention is the modernist one of the objective construction of the past simply according to the evidence" (in Munslow 11). Having an objective truth in history is impossible to achieve as "writing history requires the emplotment of the past not just as a way of organizing the evidence but also taking into account the rhetorical, metaphorical and ideological strategies of explanation employed by historians" (11). He, in the end, comes to the conclusion that history is a form of literary artifact.

Even the word "history" resonates the voice of the male, bearing in itself the story of the man- his-story. So, what about women? What about their stories and histories? Women have been erased from the scene of history as they have been deprived of their history, excluded by the dominant voices abiding in the dominant discourse. History is composed of the imagined pieces of occurrences written down by men. Lerner avers "what they have recorded is what men have done and experienced and found significant" (4). They have labelled their records as history, and those of women have been left ignored and unrecorded. Yet, women should regain her history and reclaim her part in history. A history of her own, hence, should be written so that she will be redeemed from her subordinate position and from her recognition and objectification as the discriminated Other under patriarchy designated by male writing. They should use language as their sword and "criticize the dominant texts which form the foundation of western culture as androcentric, perpetuating the interests of patriarchy by serving as authorities and prescribing role models" (Crosby 30). Cixous avers that "woman un-thinks the unifying regulating history that homogenizes and challenges forces herding contradictions into a single battlefield" ("Medusa" 882), and this battlefield is *herstory*. Women should rewrite history and transform it into herstory in order to be heard again.

Gabriele Griffin and Elaine Aston define herstory as "women's version of events of the past both factual and mythological, a vision in which what women did and their

perspectives on the past dominate" (7). They also make a distinction between history and herstory by asserting that "the former being knowledge based on facts for which is documentary evidence detailing events that 'actually' occurred" while the latter term is "widened to include a mythological and literary heritage from which women have been excluded or within which they have been marginalized" (8). Erasing the past appropriated by the male domain is an infeasible task; so, instead, women should employ language to re-vision the past as it is "an act of bridging the past restored and revised from the historical representations, misinterpretations and omissions, with the present to become aware of one's present position and relation to past" (Lorek-Jezinska 50).

In this dissertation, thus, I aim to analyze Liz Lochhead's four plays *Medea*, *Thebans* and *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped* against the backdrop of Lacanian theory and yet attempt to transgress his entrapment in phallogocentricism by reading his theory subversively and opening up an alternative womanly world, which in the end will direct this study in a post-Lacanian position. Lochhead's revisiting of the European myths and history, and reconstructing them from a womanly and Scottish point of view through her fluid and decentred language engender an alternative space of signification which renounces the hegemonic discourses that are embedded in language. The result is a new dramatic discourse. The literary works that will be explored in this study are selected on the basis of two points. To begin with, each work is representative of the playwright's attempts to challenge the patriarchal discourse in a different frame and generate some survival strategies to unveil the hidden stories and the repressed voices of the oppressed individuals. In other words, Lochhead's aims to rewrite and evacuate the patriarchal myths and history and to feminize them are seen best in the selected plays. They, in a way, reflect their creator's attempts to challenge the patriarchal discourse and display the strategies she generates to deal with the oppressing system as they question and subvert the patriarchal and binaristic understanding of categories such as history and myth, and engender alternative realities in which the suppressed and marginalized figures are given voice. Namely, in *Medea,* Lochhead declares war on restrictive myths

entrapping women and their culture, and refictionalizes a new Medea, a more blatant threat to logocentricism as she refuses to be aligned in the Symbolic register and thereby mutates into an iconoclast; in *Thebans*, Lochhead reconstructs the classic myth of the Oedipus but by engendering a womanly space for the women- Antigone and Jokasta- and giving them voice. Antigone undermines the Logos though it means being penalized and castrated by the representatives of the Symbolic, and lastly, in *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, Lochhead dives into the depths of Scottish and English history, and questions the narratives bestowed on historically known woman figures and revisions the stories of Elizabeth and Mary by portraying Mary as a defier of the mechanisms of the Law and Elizabeth as a masculine mother figure. Lochhead's plays do not perpetuate the homogenizing, singularist and contemptuous narrative forms but invite the readers to engage in the pluralistic and alternative versions and eventually to engender polyphonic understanding of these narratives. Lochhead is specifically chosen to be analyzed in this study as she refuses to position her plays in line with the mainstream drama, and she aims to construct and deconstruct the patriarchal myths, and histories and unveil their underpinnings and dynamics by reconstructing them in a subversive mode.

In this first chapter, Lochhead's background, her relation to language and her attempts to transcend patriarchal parameters have been explained to cast light on the reasons why this particular writer has been selected to be studied in this study. The works of the playwrights constructing alternate realities and molding identities and selves are necessary in constructing alternative stories and niches. Lochhead's ideas, too, reflect the assertion that some writers employ language as a political tool to challenge the patriarchal language repressing the voices of the marginalized figures such as woman and to engender exclusive survival strategies, and her plays are in parallel with the catchphrase "the personal is political," first coined by Carol Hanisch in her 1970 essay of the same title. In line with this phrase, Lochhead, too, employs her personal stories, language, characters and images to demonstrate both the politics and constructedness of the categories such as history and myth. While defying the ingrained notions, she also shifts the gaze from the male to the female, and succeeds

in reconstructing the deconstructed elements in her own terms. Lochhead's survival strategies- visitation of stories, histories and myths written from the male point of view and feminization of them- were my main reasons to choose them. Her integration into this study also stems from her liminal position as she was born and raised in Scotland, which contributes to the versatility of her works and her eagerness to deconstruct the hegemonic establishments. Her distant position to the center triggers her inner motivation and engenders an urge in her to identify with the figures far from the center, and her plays are reflective of her desire.

In the second chapter, Lacan's conceptual key concepts such as the Law of the Father, paternal metaphor, desire, *jouissance* and love will be discussed and expanded on so as to be employed in the analysis part of Lochhead's plays. Lacan aims to reconstruct and rewrite Freudian ideas in relevance with the question of human subject and subjectivity and its relation to language, and he succeeds in reconfiguring Freudianism by basing his ideas on structuralist and poststructuralist theories of discourse and language. The fundamentals of Lacanian theory, its development into and its divergence from Freudian theory will be touched upon very briefly to prepare a better argumentative frame for the analysis of the plays. A broad and a very detailed discussion of these terms and their ramifications are beyond the limit and scope of this study. Only the necessary Lacanian theory is integrated into the study so that the ground on which the analyses of Lochhead's plays and the focus of the discussions are based on will be built.

In the third chapter of this study, Lochhead's play, *Medea* will be discussed through two lenses: initially, through Lochhead's revisioning of Euripides' *Medea* by reconstructing it from a feminine aspect and later through interpreting the play by dwelling on Lacanian conceptual tools and then offering a post-Lacanian reading of it. In order to include a womanly and nationalistic aspect into her adaptation, Lochhead makes the chorus feminine and depicts Medea as the iconoclast of the female archetype, and integrates Scottish diction as the dominant language into the play. After the illumination of the divergences from the original play, this chapter

will dwell on how Medea's transgressive and unyielding nature undermines and contests the authority of the father and subverts the Lacanian premise of the requisite entrance to the Symbolic register to be aligned in the Law and accommodated in the patriarchal discourse. Medea, in contrast, transgresses the boundaries of the Lacanian Symbolic by performing infanticide, discarding all the labels attached to her self following her desire and womanliness.

In the fourth chapter of the dissertation, *Thebans* will be discussed through Lochhead's subversion and rewriting of the Theban myths. Lochhead challenges the two Theban myths, Sophocles' *The Theban Plays* and Euripides' *The Phonecian Women*, and problematizes the hierarchical power structures buried in the Western canon. Also, this chapter will display Lochhead's engenderment of a womanly discourse in which the women characters are given a chance/voice/space to narrate their stories away from the restrictions of the hegemonic discourse and the oppression of the male. After that, discussions of "Antigone's act" by thinkers such as Lacan, Butler, Irigaray and Žižek will be incorporated into this chapter, which will pave the way for offering an alternative to the Lacanian phallocentric premise and for opening up a space where women are positioned afar from the Symbolic register.

In the fifth chapter of this study, the renunciation and subversion of epistemological categories, binary oppositions and power hierarchy will be discussed in relation to the chorus-like narrator of the play- La Corbie and her contestation of the binaristic organization with the help of the alienation effect and cross-dressing of the characters. Lochhead demystifies the established stories of Queen Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scots by showing the possibility of alternative truths and realities in historical perception. Consulting the Lacanian theorem also helps the transgression of the ingrained notions revolving around gender, sex and power and the exposition of the weaker side(s) of the Law. Mary contests the Lacanian Symbolic by refusing to comply with its rules and decrees, and by repudiating giving up on her feminine sexuality and desire which threaten the stability and integrity of the paternal society, as a result of which she is castrated. Elizabeth, in contrast, follows a different path,

employs some strategies, performs on gender and sex and turns into a phallic/masculine mother figure by evacuating the term “mother” and attributes a new meaning to it. Lochhead’s Elizabeth and Mary are stripped off the monolithic interpretations of their selves and life stories, and mutate into an image and a spark that lightens up a new survival niche.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

"With the unconscious, everyone is not a poet, but a poetry."
Pesson

"I always speak the truth. Not the whole truth because there's no way to say it all. Saying it all is literally impossible! Words fail. Yet, it's through this very impossibility that the truth holds onto the real."
Lacan

> "And Isaac spoke to Abraham, his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together."
> Genesis 22:7

This chapter construes the theoretical framework of this study, which pivots around Lacanian concepts of the Law of the Father, paternal metaphor, desire, *jouissance* and love with an attempt to pave the way for further development of this study's argument grounded in the reconstruction of myths and history in Liz Lochhead's fundamental plays. By dwelling on the aforementioned concepts against the background of their prospective ramifications and usages in the upcoming chapters, the theoretical framework provides a better basis for discussion in chapters-to-come. Lacan critiques the Cartesian *cogito*, the predetermined, embodied and unified subject, and repudiates the unity and self-knowledge that the Cartesian subject is attributed with. Lacan denounces the idea of a unified being with self-consciousness as he thinks that this idea is challenged by the presence of the unconscious, thereby problematizing the predestined and unified individual. He proposes employing the socio-linguistic engenderment of subjectivity which takes the individuals as the effects of history, language and society. Lacanian epistemology is integrated into this study as it locates the formation of subjectivity in discourse/in the Symbolic. Thus, looking at Lacanian ideas that will be consulted in this dissertation prepares the ground for a better treatment and discussion of the plays. However, the presentation

of Lacanian theorem does not intend to reduce his ideas to simple implications resonating in the plays verbatim but aims to initiate an argumentative and interrogative discourse, which will empower the gradual creation of an alternative world for alternative interpretations and for a post- Lacanian reading.

The *fin de siècle* witnessed a radical critique of the taken for granted notions about the "self" and Cartesian givens about such a self, and revealed a revolutionary attempt to unravel the mysteries of human subjectivity and to open the unlocked doors behind which the myths of origin, creation and development of essence of being. The implications and ramifications of these attempts still echo in many disciplines such as cultural studies, literature, psychology and sociology. The forefathers, Nietzsche, Marx and Freud, come to the forefront as they drew the borders of human subjectivity, attempted to problematize the assertion that human subject is a conscious and rational being and subverted it by claiming the opposite. Elizabeth Grosz underlines the innovations they brought to the field by declaring that:

> Each decentred the individual's pretension of sovereignty, self-knowledge and self-mastery. Each opposed a prevailing Cartesianism which had infiltrated liberalism, empiricism, idealism and humanism. Each distrusted the centrality and givenness attributed to consciousness, seeing it as an effect rather than a cause of the will to power (in Nietzsche), class relations (in Marx) or psychical agencies (in Freud). (1)

Consciousness, for Nietzsche, is the result of corporeality/bodily forces, or the struggle between dominant forces; for Marx, it is the result of class relations, giving way to a "false consciousness," which is the systematic misrepresentation of the members of the subordinate class and their acceptance of this misinterpretation in their consciousness; and for Freud, it is a kind of self-deception as it is the product of the unconscious, over which the subject cannot have a full control or understanding. Nietzsche, Marx and Freud all inverted the *Cartesian* cogito, the modern understanding of subjectivity initiated by Descartes and moved to the postmodern, decentered and destabilized understanding of the term.

Different from Nietzsche and Marx, Freud defies Descartes' unified and closed view of subjectivity more overtly as "his understanding of the unconscious sexuality, psychical representations and the processes involved in the constitution of the subject challenges the Cartesian subject's status as the foundation and source of knowledge" (Grosz 2). If the subject is unable to grasp the true meaning of her/his existence, how can one believe s/he can get a total understanding of the things around with certainty? Freud's work has provided a new insight into consciousness and subjectivity by reconceptualizing these terms. Likening his work to a "Copernican revolution," Freud paved the way for other studies and triggered a spark in the minds of those following in his footsteps. Jacques Lacan is indeed the most revolutionary interpreter of Freud's ideas as he attempts to renew and reconstruct Freudian ideas and "questions the taken-for-granted interpretations of Freud's texts subverting the centrality accorded to the ego in ego psychology by affirming the language-like operations of the unconscious" (Grosz 3). Lacan's analytic discourse challenges the fixation of the subject and cherishes its subversion "that is at the same time an oxymoronic requirement for slippage in speech and writing, leaving cuts, gaps and spaces on the recording surface of experience" (Winquist 27). His stylistics, thereby, seems "closer to the meanders of the unconscious. It seizes in a statement what precisely escapes every consciously reflexive order" (Badiou and Roudinesco 40). Lacan constructs the labyrinth of language around the remainders "that slipped away from univocal comprehension" and from the depth in which one's hidden desires, thoughts and fears reside (40).

Lacan's interpretation of the unconscious, sexuality and consciousness all imply that there is space for the production and subversion of meaning through language. His well-known maxim is "The unconscious is structured like a language" (Lacan *Écrits* 234) for "it is governed by the two poles of linguistic functioning, metaphor/condensation and metonym/displacement" (Grosz 4). This new conception and the unconscious is the innovative side he has brought to the Freudian theorem. Lacan's thoughts on return to Freud have undergone significant changes through the years. In his paper "The Freudian Thing, or the Meaning of the Return" (1955), he suggests that:

> What such a return involves for me is not a return of the repressed, but rather taking the antithesis constituted by the phase in the history of the psychoanalytic movement since the death of Freud, showing what psychoanalysis is not, and seeking with you the means of revitalizing that which has continued to sustain it, even in deviation, namely, the primary meaning that Freud preserved in it by his very presence, and which I should like to explicitate here. (*Écrits* 88-89)

As the meaning of Freud's discovery is indeed the meaning of the unconscious-the truth, his clinical reports and metapsychological explanations fail to correspond to his aim of unraveling the underpinnings of the unconscious:

> These discoveries range from concepts that have remained unused to clinical details uncovered by our exploration that demonstrate how far the field investigated by Freud extended beyond the avenues that he left us to tend, and how little his observation, which sometimes gives an impression of exhaustiveness, was the slave of what he had to demonstrate. (Lacan *Écrits* 89)

In the residue and crack of Freud's work arises a gap, which necessitates a return to his theories and which Lacan embarks on filling in by questioning his texts further and creating his own version of truth by guiding the letter of the text until a peculiar insight is gained as "the truth speaks through what Freud called a formation of the unconscious strictly dependent upon the letter of language" (Julien 6). In his quest for truth, Lacan has been received by distinct critics in both positive and negative ways. Some critics have found his ideas groundbreaking, revolutionary and insightful, some have attacked his ideas and theorem, taking them as male-dominated and phallocentric. The three interlocking areas, which are subjectivity, language and sexuality, as listed by Elizabeth Grosz in *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction* (1990) underlie Lacan's work:

a. Central to both is Lacan's critique of the Cartesian *cogito,* the pre-given, indubitable, unified subject. Lacan denounces the illusory mastery, unity and self-knowledge that the subject, as a self-consciousness, accords itself. For him, consciousness is continually betrayed by the evasion typical of the unconscious. The subject, considered as natural individual, is problematized by Lacan. He proposes a theory of the socio-linguistic

genesis of subjectivity which enables male and female subjects to be seen as social and historical effects, rather than pre-ordained biological givens.

b. Lacan's work also helped to introduce questions about sexuality to legimitized academic and political discourses. Although there may be a number of serious problems with Lacan's understanding of sexuality, his work does make it clear that patriarchal subjects acquire a social and speaking position only by confronting the question of castration and a sexual difference conceived in terms of the presence and absence of the male sexual organ (the oedipus complex/name-of-the-father). Lacan inserts the question of sexuality into the centre of all models of social and psychical functioning. To be a subject or "I" at all, the subject must take up a sexualized position, identifying with the attributes socially designated as appropriate for men or women.
c. His work has been instrumental in demonstrating the centrality of systems of meaning or signification to subjectivity and the social order. The discursive/linguistic order constitutes human socio-cultural and sexual activity as such. (147-148)

Lacan's decentering of the analytical and cognizant subject, the Cartesian cogito, his contestation of the speaking subject's discourse through language and his questioning of the pre-given/ingrained sexuality have shed light on the contradictory issues on subjectivity entrapped in the masculine and humanistic understanding that feminists have been dealing with and paved the way for further improvements of these. Though feminist and political thinkers taking a position in the post-Lacanian realm have made use of and employed some of the Lacanian propositions in their work, some others objected to and appropriated particular ideas and conceptual tools Lacan has formulated. The objections to Lacan's theories based on their being entrapped in logocentricism mainly come from post-feminists, namely and mostly from Kristeva and Irigaray, who, on the one hand, have borrowed from Lacan in the constitution of their theories and shared his anti-humanism; on the other hand, protested against some of his theories and attempted to expose the loopholes in the Lacanian theorem and offered feminine alternatives to save it from the alleged yoke of phallocentricism.

Kristeva's relation to Lacan remains complicated and ambiguous as she takes Lacan as her starting point to formulate the methodological grid of her theory and employs the conceptual tools such as Lacanian stages of infantile development, linguistic terms (need, demand and desire) and identities emanating from identifications

(phallic mother, symbolic Father). However, she criticizes and amends certain points to develop her own theory. Different from Lacan who adheres to a more metaphysical and universal understanding of subjectivity, Kristeva sticks to "the historical and social specificity of signification and subjectivity" necessitating the subject to undergo a signification process that reveals the ideological and political expectations of the discourse (Grosz 157). Kristeva's other divergence from Lacan is taking the imaginary order/imaginary registers as synaesthetic, involving all sensory registers though Lacan depicts the imaginary order as a visual realm, and her last departure is Lacan's definitive break between the imaginary and the symbolic, which are detached by the rupture caused by the intervention of the third party-the castration and the suppression of the pre-oedipal desires. Kristeva, in contrast, posits a more continuous approach and takes this transition as progression. Despite all these additions and modifications, Kristeva is regarded as the dutiful daughter of Lacan, always in accordance with the father's Law. Irigaray, however, is the defiant daughter, criticizing Lacan's repudiation to accommodate women in his Symbolic and thereby, focusing on the ways to decipher and expose the loopholes in the operation of Lacanian theorem. Irigaray's criticism is mainly directed at the women's place in the patriarchal society, and with her desire to open up an alternative space of existence for women, Irigaray analyzes and subverts women's oppression in the phallocentric discursive praxis. Irigaray's aim is to engender a new theoretical and linguistic space that can attest patriarchal and phallocentric domination in the presentation of women and to bestow on women a more positive representational model. Irigaray suggests that if women's bodies are written and defined as a lack by the dominant discourse depriving them of living and showing their femininity and womanliness, then, their boundaries must be contested, redrawn and/or transgressed.

Irigaray desires to develop a subjectivity that includes not only the male but also the female: the existence of two sexes, two bodies and two desires. In her *Speculum of the Other Woman*, she insinuates Lacan's limited exploration of the question of femininity over the questions of the Oedipus complex and the Name-of-the-Father. Irigaray, thus, attempts to challenge this psychoanalytic phallocentricism by

foregrounding and sexualizing the specific forms that each sex takes in relation to the pre-oedipal/imaginary and oedipal/symbolic realms. She claims that psychoanalysis displays the imaginary and symbolic processes from the male point of view and excludes and erases the female, which must be included in the signification and identification process. According to Irigaray, Lacan should adopt a more sexual neutral pre-symbolic bearing in his theorization. This dissertation will follow a similar trajectory on which some of the Lacanian conceptual tools will be embraced and employed to display Lochhead's desire of creating an innovative womanly discourse/space. However, some of the most criticized aspects of Lacan, his slippage to the male domain and favoring of the phallogocentric mentality, will be denounced in this study to accommodate women's subjectivity and foreground their stories, protest and contestation.

Lacanian concepts such as desire, love, *jouissance*, Law of the Father and Phallic Other and elucidation of them will establish the backdrop against which Lochhead's plays will be discussed and construct the foundation through which a post-Lacanian reading will be provided in the following chapters of this dissertation. To be able to analyze how the category of woman comes into being in relation to the category of man in patriarchal discourse, we need to look at how psychoanalysis deciphers the processes of subjectivity formation. However, we have to bear in mind that this is the side of the coin from a phallocentric perspective. That is, it is also possible to look at it from a reversed vantage point and to give an account of what happens to the category of woman from a womanly perspective. In this theoretical overview of Lacanian epistemology, I will follow Lacan's trajectory first and look at the issues on the same cognitive/psychic ground but from the vantage point of the subordinate leg. Though Lacan is unable to reach a total understanding of the Freudian unconscious as it is elusive and slippery, he has succeeded in displaying the very foundation of the Freudian ego in the mirror stage and in laying emphasis on the indispensability of language in the construction of consciousness, subjectivity and the unconscious, which will be delineated in the forthcoming part.

2.1. Ego as an Identificatory Process and the Oedipus Complex

"I is an other."
Lacan

In one of the earliest chapters of *Écrits*, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the *I* as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience" (1949), Lacan revises his explication of the mirror stage, which he first posited in a paper delivered in 1936, "for the light it sheds on the formation of the *I* as we experience it in psychoanalysis. It is an experience that leads us to oppose any philosophy directly issuing from the Cogito" (16). As Makaryk propounds, this groundbreaking paper "is the cornerstone of [Lacan's] psychoanalytic theory and is especially important as a critique of Freudian ego psychology, which posits a rational, individual self-consciousness," and thereby, turns into a direct attack on the Cogito, a unified, stable and fixed sense of identity (593).

In this paper, Lacan touches upon the development of the self by dwelling on the image of a mirror and/or another tool or an other, which functions in the same manner. He believes that babies improve a "jubilant assumption of [their] specular image" when they see their own reflections and recognize their images in the mirror starting from the age of six months to the age of the eighteen months (*Écrits* 2). Before this moment of illumination, the baby "has had no clear sense of boundary between itself and its environment, and its sense of its body has been a disunified, messy collections of sensations and impulses" (Davidson et al 6). However, the image reflected in the mirror seems to be whole and unified, and in perceiving his image as such, the baby achieves its first sense of its own existence as an autonomous and self-governing being independent from the world. The body image that he sees in the mirror "is a structuring factor in the formation of the subject's identity, since it is through this image that he achieves his primal identification." (Dor 96). The primary identification of the child with this image prepares the ground for the creation of the "I" and "the formation of the individual by putting an end to the fragmented body image. The development of the sense of being through the mirror image is a complex move from

a fragmentary body image to the structuring of the image as an orthopaedic unity and integrity, and in this way, the infant forms "its primordial sense of self through seeing its reflection in a looking glass" (Eng 111). Lacan puts all these points in a nutshell as follows:

> The *mirror stage* is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation – and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic – and, lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development. Thus, to break out of the circle of the *Innenwelt* into the *Umwelt* generates the inexhaustible quadrature of the ego's verifications. (*Écrits* 18).

It is characterized as a drama since the mirror stage is dependent not on a moment of recognition, but that of misrecognition; "*méconnaissances* that constitute the ego, the illusion of autonomy to which it entrusts itself" (Lacan *Écrits* 19-20). Lacan puts a misrecognition at the heart of recognition as the baby in the mirror is a mirage, an illusion and an image; there is no real self to identify with. Dor avers that "the entire process of this conquest of identity is grounded in the imaginary dimension, in that the child identifies himself through something virtual (the optical image) that is not himself but something through which he nonetheless re-cognizes himself" (97). The mirror stage, then, presents an imaginary recognition and provides the infant with an Ideal-I, "an ideal of narcissistic omnipotence which is a fiction in relation to its total incompetence in reality" (Oliver 43). Lacan suggests that the baby sees in the mirror an image comprised of wholeness, unity and total control, and he identifies with it though in reality, he is devoid of all these characteristics. The ego and the sense of self, thereby, are engendered through this specular act of identification which is what establishes us as human subjects. At the very center of human subjectivity therefore lies a paradoxical relation of identification and alienation for "one needs an image in order to become a 'self,' but that image is always an illusory one, and one's 'self' is therefore always precarious based on an illusion and ultimately, as Lacan puts it, 'fictional'" (6). He states elsewhere:

> The fact is that the total form of the body by which the subject anticipates in a mirage the maturation of his power is given to him only as *Gestalt*, that is to say, in an exteriority in which this form is certainly more constituent than constituted, but in which it appears to him above all in a contrasting size (*un relief de stature*) that fixes it and in a symmetry that inverts it, in contrast with the turbulent movements that the subject feels are animating him. Thus, this *Gestalt* – whose pregnancy should be regarded as bound up with the species, though its motor style remains scarcely recognizable – by these two aspects of its appearance, symbolizes the mental permanence of the *I*, at the same time as it prefigures its alienating destination; it is still pregnant with the correspondences that unite the *I* with the statue in which man projects himself, with the phantoms that dominate him, or with the automaton in which, in an ambiguous relation, the world of his own making tends to find completion. (*Écrits* 17)

The pre-linguistic identification of selfhood takes place when "the infant discovers its identity in a libidinally invested or narcissistic act of imagination and is thereafter constituted by a primordial, eternal lack (*manqué*)" (Makaryk 593). The subject/the body is in pieces, and the existence of the fictional and so-called unified external image and the self's identification with it demonstrate that the I is an other. Lacan comments that, "the subject is no one. It is decomposed in pieces. And it is jammed, sucked in by the image, the deceiving and realized image of the other, or equally by its own specular image. That is where it finds its unity" (*Seminar II* 54). The I/the body in pieces "finds unity in the image of the other, which is its own anticipated image" (54). The perception of the I as disunified, fragmented, fictional and illusionary inflicts a blow on the doctrine of the Cartesian duality by questioning the validity of the Cogito, "I think therefore I am," and "by challenging the principle that subjectivity emanates from the inside out through and all-seeing I/eye" (Eng 111). By contrast, for Lacan, the ego/the I/the sense of self is not created by an internal act but from the outside; from the baby's identification with the external image.

Lacan's defiance of identity finds resonance in the ideas of Derrida who argues that, "an identity is never given, received or attained; only the interminable […] process of identification endures" (28) and in Julia Kristeva, whose concept "subject in progress" takes identity as an incomplete process always in flux and on the go,

causing the nature of identities to be questioned and throwing their validity and reliability into doubt. In the same line, Diana Fuss expounds on the uncertainties around the concept of identity and identifications as follows:

> At the very same time that identification sets into motion the complicated dynamic of recognition and misrecognition that brings a sense of identity into being, it also immediately calls that identity into question. The astonishing capacity of identifications to reverse and disguise themselves, to multiply and contravene one another, to disappear and reappear years later, renders identity profoundly unstable and perpetually open to radical change. Identification is a process that keeps identity at a distance, that prevents identity from ever approximating the status and an ontological given, even as it makes possible an illusion of identity as immediate, secure and totalizable. (2)

The psychic locus in which the ceaseless work-in-progress of identity takes place is that which is called the Imaginary register, the realm of;

> images and identifications, the space where identity is formed, reformed and deformed through the dialectics of identification and alienation, and where we are endlessly reconstituted as subjects in relation to both ourselves and others. It is thus a space of possibility and affirmation, but also of disorientation and confusion. (Davidson et al 7)

The imaginary order, house of the *imagos*, lacks the adequate conditions for self-relation and otherness but includes "relations of similarity, mirroring and homeomorphism" (Beardsworth 37). These relations are indispensable to the formation of the ego and the presence of the structure of narcissism and aggressivity, and "the specific dyad form of these imaginary relations appears as a condition for the maturation of the human being, prior to the entrance into language, and provides the oedipal structure with a coherence it would otherwise lack" (37).

The mirror stage accounts for the manifestation of spatiality and the positioning of the subject and object relations which are required for the oedipal identification to take place in a successful manner as in the imaginary register, no other or object is differentiated, which necessitates the modification of the Imaginary. This modification occurs with the dialectic of desire and entrance into language. "The

entrance into language works against the centrifugal/centripetal force that dominates the ego and introduces the tendency toward absorption of or absorption into otherness, for the discourse of the Other[8] is a fundamental, ineluctable and permanent exposure to exteriority" (Beardsworth 38). The entrance into the Symbolic register, therefore, becomes a necessity as this order "preexisting the subject constituted through entrance into it imposes on the human being both his or her lack-of being and the requirement that the speaking subject take up a relationship to lack, to 'castration'" (39).

At the end of the identificatory phase of the mirror stage comes the Oedipus stage, on which Lacan's dialogue with Freud mostly rest as "this question, more than any other, supplies the key to the apparently heterox reconstructions brought by the disciple to his predecessor's doctrine" (Borch-Jacobsen 268). Lacan's reworking of the Oedipus complex implies his desire to solve the problem of identification, with which Freud was already obsessed to find an answer to and which Lacan sees as a prerequisite to have access to the Symbolic realm. Though initially Lacan perceived the Oedipus complex as the indispensable side of subjectivity and as the key signifier, he has later adopted a surprisingly new approach and started to call it "Freud's dream," a concept "which is initially encountered by Freud in the interpretation of dreams" (Lacan *Seminar VIII* 147). Lacan's reinterpretation of the Oedipus complex as a dream implies that "the theoretical articulation of this complex reveals, in a disguised way, something about Freud's own unconscious desire that simultaneously obscures his vision of the truth at the Oedipal myth" (Van Haute). Lacan believes that this truth is structural and imminent castration of the master, which is a ramification of language. Lacan's continuous return to the question of the Oedipus complex, his constant reworking on it and his repositioning it around language all "indicate

[8] In Lacanian jargon, "other" is signified in two ways so as to differentiate between the imaginary other and the symbolic other. The "other" (lowercase "o") applies to the other in the imaginary register or relates to the ego engendered out of imaginary identifications in the mirror stage. The "Other" (uppercase "o"), however, belongs to the symbolic Other, to the underlying structure that aims to move the so-called unified subject into the realm of language and rules. The "Other" also pertains to human subject with whom the infant identifies, so it is referred to as (m)Other in this case.

Lacan's belief that nothing can be understood in the absence of a reference to it as the cornerstone of psychoanalysis" (Grigg 37).

In his book, "The Ego and The Id[9]" (1923), Freud dwells on the Oedipus Complex, and yet he is unable to escape the phallocentrism emphasis he puts on it:

> At a very early age the little boy develops an object-cathexis for his mother, which originally related to the mother's breast and is the prototype of an object-choice on the anaclitic[10] model [*einer Objektwahl nach dem Anlehnungstypus*]; the boy deals with his father by identifying himself with him. For a time these two relationships proceed side by side, until the boy's sexual wishes in regard to his mother become more intense and his father is perceived as an obstacle to them; from this the Oedipus complex originates. His identification with his father then takes on a hostile colouring and changes into a wish to get rid of his father in order to take his place with his mother. (53)

This canonical definition of the Oedipus complex reveals two traits as suggested by Borch-Jacobsen, "1) The libidinal object- cathexis and identification are imagined as two separate, parallel currents, converging only secondarily, to help form the oedipal triangle. 2) That triangle arises from the object" (269). As the desire for the mother is sustained and fortified, the identification with the father is also strengthened and attains a hostile and rivalrous tone. Shoshana Felman refers to what Freud has suggested earlier as follows:

> Traditionally, the Oedipus complex is understood to mean the literal genesis and the literal objects of man's primordial desire: an incestuous sexual love for the mother and a jealous, murderous impulse toward the father. In this view, what Freud discovered in the Oedipus is a universal answer to the

[9] The abbreviated version of the book *The Ego and the Id* has been employed and referred to as an article.

[10] Freud differentiates between two types in human sexuality identification: anaclictic and narcissistic object choice. Anaclictic object choice includes the child's redirecting her/his libidinal investment in the subject who may resemble a parental figure and may provide them with nonsexual needs such as feeding, caring and protecting. However, in narcissistic object choice, the subject chooses a love object that resembles himself/herself.

> question: What does man unconsciously desire? The answer guarantees a knowledge- psychoanalytic knowledge- of the instinctual content of the human conscious, which can be found everywhere. Any Freudian reading is bound to answer the same meaning, the ultimate signified of human desire: the Oedipus complex. (*Jacques Lacan* 103)

Through the Oedipus complex, desire for the mother, which is devoid of mimetic nature, leads to identification, which is not sexual or erotic, to become ambivalent, and the primary function of this identification is "to maintain the primacy of sexuality, understood as object-desire or libido, at the expense of a mimetic or identificatory definition of desire" (Borch-Jacobsen 269). Freud shuns recognizing the identificatory and mimetic aspects of human sexuality and desire, causing him difficulties in sustaining a finalized, official version of the Oedipus complex. Freud comes to the conclusion that the Oedipus complex is the mechanism, which paradoxically and concurrently both represses and is repressed as it is "precisely what allows the repression (or 'destruction') of the menacing oedipal 'prehistory' by orienting desire towards a heterosexual object (even though it is initially incestuous) and by channeling the ambivalence toward the rival of the same gender" (272).

Freud mentions that one can escape the Oedipus complex by identifying with the oedipal rival, bringing forth the appearance of the ego ideal or the super ego, having the task of repressing the complex. However, Freud's solution to the dissolution of the Oedipus complex demonstrated by the little boy's identification with the father and abandoning the mother and in return, reinforcing his masculinity invokes a dilemma/a predicament for "the child can surmount the preoedipal identification only by reinforcing that same identification and thus by possibly perpetuating or even aggravating its effects" (274). Freud, therefore, fails to find a solution to the problem of identification as the Oedipus complex lacks the normalizing function it illusionarily has been thought to have, making it a problem in itself. The disciple of Freud, Lacan, questions the validity of the Oedipus complex starting with his article "The Repression of Sexuality," in which he proposes the ambivalence of any identification from cannibalistic identification to narcissistic one. Lacan inevitably considers oedipal identification proper to the paternal imago to be ambivalent as well.

Similar to Freud, Lacan states that the oedipal complex not only marks "the high point of infantile sexuality," but also it is "the source of suppression that reduces its images to a latent state until puberty" (*Seminar XXII* 34), opening up a crack that leads to distinct dimensions of reality.

Different from Freud's interpretation of the castrating father imago as being the representation of the father's power and authority, Lacan believes:

> It represents the defence that the narcissistic ego, identified with its mirror-image, opposes to the renewal of the anxiety which tends to unsettle it at the first moments of the Oedipus complex. This crisis is caused less by the eruption of genital desire in the subject than by the object it reactualises, namely the mother. The subject responds to the anxiety this object awakens by reproducing the masochistic rejection through which he overcame his primordial loss, but he does this in accordance with the structure he has acquired, that is to say, in an imaginary localisation of the tendency. (*Seminar XXII* 35)

Lacan, here, expounds on the imaginary creation of the oedipal prohibition and emphasizes the connection between the paternal imago and the ambivalence of the preoedipal identification. Nevertheless, like Freud, Lacan avers that with identification and identificatory processes, the Oedipus complex can be resolved: by identifying with the ego-ideal, the infant can go through a normalization process leading to the psychic amendment of the sexual prematurity. Lacan's novelty is differentiating the repressive super ego from the identificatory ego-ideal whereas in Freud, they are used interchangeably. "Freud simply amalgamated the two functions since the ego-ideal/superego was simultaneously what the child was supposed to identify with (you must be like me) and what the child must not identify with (you have no right to be like me)" (Borch-Jacobsen 276).

Lacan, by contrast, divides the two facets of the oedipal imago and bestows on them distinct functions. While the superego "represses the biologically inadequate object that first sexual maturation proposes to desire," the ego-ideal "brings about an imaginary identification that will orient the [subject's] choice towards the

biologically adequate object when pubertal maturity comes" (Lacan *Seminar XXII* 61). Being aware of Freud's aporia in the resolution of the Oedipus complex, Lacan contemplates this separation so as to solve it and arrive at a logical explanation. In an attempt to evoke an answer to the challenging question, Lacan introduces Lévi-Strauss's notion of the "symbolic" and endeavors to reformulate the Oedipus complex in structural terms, which have been introduced through the distinction between two sorts of identifications: identification with the imaginary phallus and identification with the symbolic phallus and the introduction of the castration complex alleged to be the pivotal force in the dissolution of the Oedipus complex, which will be discussed in the upcoming part.

2.2. The Phallus/ The Name-of-the Father

"The Name-of-the-Father creates the function of the father."
Lacan

From the illusionary pre-oedipal realm of narcissistic identifications giving promises of unity, wholeness and integrity with the mother, the infant moves to the world of the Symbolic, the prerequisite of which is the resolution and finalization of the Oedipus complex, and the imaginary dyad between the child and the mother should be broken as the contrary situation would confine the child to a deadlock of narcissistic identifications with an other, inseparable from the I and create the example of the mythical Narcissus entrapped in his own image, unable to enter the Symbolic, the world of language, culture and law. The access to the Symbolic is only contingent with the intervention of a third party as suggested by Lacan:

> […] the ambiguity and the gap in the imaginary relation require something that maintains a relation, a function and a distance. This is the very meaning of the Oedipus complex. The Oedipus complex means that the imaginary, in itself an incestuous and conflictual relation, is doomed to conflict and ruin. In order for the human being to be able to establish the most natural of relations, that between male and female, a third party has to intervene, one that is the image of something successful, the model of some harmony. This does not go far enough- there has to be a law, a chain, a symbolic order, the intervention of the order of speech, that is of the father. Not the natural father, but what is called the father. The order that prevents the collision and explosion of the

> situation as a whole is founded on the existence of the name of the father. (*Seminar XXII* 96)

The father, the first imposter of the law prohibits the child from seeing his mother as object of desire, thus forbids incest. Hence, disturbed by the existence of libidinal involvement with his mother, the child starts to "recognize in the figure of the father that a wider familial and social network exists of which it is only a part" (Eagleton 165). Shattered by the confrontation that he cannot reside in the Imaginary indefinitely and cherish the oneness with the mother, "the child is pushed out of the realm of the Imaginary into that of the Symbolic, into a system of social structures and meanings, of law, language and regulations," and the father is the embodiment of this new realm aiming to break down the bond between the child and the other through an imminent symbolic/language-based castration of the third term (Hook 63). Castration, Evans puts forward, is defined by Lacan "as a symbolic lack of an imaginary object; castration does not bear on the penis as a real organ but on the imaginary phallus," which is the hidden force, a third term beyond the reach of the child (23).

The phallus, the most controversial concept of Lacan, is "a crypto-market of desire that stands for the lack within which desire emerges" (Azari 22). Malcolm Bowie describes it as "the signifier that holds all signifieds in thrall" (124). Lacan propounds that "for the phallus is a signifier, a signifier whose function, in the intrasubjective economy of the analysis, lifts the veil perhaps from the function it performed in the mysteries. For it is the signifier intended to designate as a whole the effects of the signified, in that the signifier conditions them by its presence as a signifier" (*Écrits* 218). Sherry Turkle also defines the phallus as follows: "for Lacan, it comes to stand even more generally for the kind of desire that can never be satisfied" (56). This marker, inextricably linked with the concept of desire, should undergo Lacan's triadic steps in the Oedipus complex so that it can transform into the signifier of all signifiers upon which all signification rests in relation to the phallus. Kirsten Campbell summarizes the process that a child goes through to reach its position in respect to the phallus as follows, "the child becomes an I and takes up a subject position in

language after the intervention of the Law of the Father in the Oedipus complex. After the resolution of the Oedipus complex, subjectivity is assumed in the Symbolic order, and the subject is sexually differentiated by its relation to the phallus" (61).

In this process of sexuation, Lacan distinguishes three phases in the oedipal dialectic. In the first phase, the child, regardless of its sex, believes that the mother "has" the phallus; therefore, it wants to be the phallus of the mother, and her object of desire. "If the desire of the mother is the phallus, the child wishes to be the phallus in order to satisfy that desire" (Lacan *Écrits* 221). However, the mother's desire is not directed at the child but at the phallus "because it is forbidden to her by the law of the symbolic father, which states: *Thou shalt not keep thy little child-phallus for thyself*" (Borch-Jacobsen 279). The child, nonetheless, identifies with the mother and her object of desire: the phallus. The child in fact identifies with the imaginary phallus as the object of maternal desire is the symbolic phallus. Implicitly correcting Freud, Lacan admits that "the child's first object of identification is not the father, nor the mother, nor even the maternal breast, but the imaginary phallus in which the ego is petrified as the object of desire of the other" (279). This situation causes "a split in desire, for the desire of the child dislocates itself by occupying the other's desire" and leads to *frustration* as "the imaginary father imposes on the child an abstinence from his narcissistic desire so that he can be the phallus for the mother's desire" (Azari 22).

In the second phase, the Oedipus complex starts to resemble that of Freud's, a rivalrous and hostile identification with the father as Lacan suggests that the child disappointedly and traumatically senses that the mother does not have the phallus, which means the child is not the phallus, either. S/he blames the father, the bearer and possessor of the phallus, for depriving the mother of her phallus. "The child wants to *have* the father's phallus but only to return it to the mother and thus to *be* once again her beloved phallus" (Borch-Jacobsen 279). On an imaginary dimension, the child loses its imaginary connection and symbiotic unity as it loses "the real phallus, which is called *privation*, the meaning of not having the phallus: the beginning of the mother/child dialectic of desire" (Azari 22).

How, then, does the child get away with or come to terms with this identificatory rivalry? Lacan answers this with the third phase of the Oedipus complex in which the mother, instead of gratifying the child with the promise that it can be her phallus, yields to the authority of the father, who is the legitimate holder of the phallus and obliges the child to succumb to him. "The father then changes from the depriving and identificatory rival that he was into the legal, symbolic father who forbids the mother to keep her child-phallus for herself and thus forbids the child to identify with the mother's phallus. This is what Lacan calls the 'paternal metaphor'" (Borch-Jacobsen 280). Submitting to the father's demand and authority means that "in the place of the imaginary phallus (understood as the mother's illusory object of desire), there is a 'metaphoric' substitution of a symbolic identification with the phallus as a signifier of the mother's (that is, as the symbol that she lacks)" (280).

The child is, then, forced to abandon its identification with the mother's phallus and to get identified with the father, the beholder of the phallus as a legal symbol, and this identification is what is called the ego-ideal. The child's complying with the authority of the law/the phallic father is named *castration*, bringing forth a degree of normalization and positioning in the Symbolic order.

The Oedipus complex, then, is for Lacan "a means of explaining the child's passage from the narcissism of the pre-verbal, erotic and symbiotic (i.e. Imaginary) relationship with the mother into a properly social existence defined by the structures of language and social law (i.e. Symbolic)" (Hook 75). The repudiation of the mother as an object of desire and the submission of the child to the law are required in the dissolution of the Oedipus complex. The father banishes the child from the phallus; thus, "the phallus as an Imaginary object recedes ever further from possibility, becoming lost, inaccessible, an impossibililty" (75). The child is distanced from the phallus and positioned only in relation to it, and he comes to the realization that "the phallus is not to be directly reached; one cannot consummate it within one's self" (75). It can be asserted that no one has the phallus or is the phallus; these are

"categories of experience within which humans represent themselves to themselves" (Adams 49).

The phallus, at the end of the Oedipus trajectory, reaches a symbolic function, breaking its connections with the Imaginary realm and causing the child to substitute the desire of the mother for the Name-of-the-Father, the operation of prohibition. Lacan has presented the concept of the Name-of-the-Father in his 1953 lecture on the neurotic's individual myth with the aim of differentiating between the real, flesh and blood man and the symbolic father "which he interpreted as the culturally determined regulation of the natural of things" (Nobus 16). The presence of an actual man/father is of no necessity as:

> This Law linked to the male- to the father- is linked not to the literal biological father nor to the person who might literally have interrupted mother-child symbiotic unity, both of which are initially conflated with the Law in an Imaginary confusion between the literal agent and the principle to which he is metaphorically attached. Rather the Law is the principle that declares division in the Name-of-the-Father. (Roof 106)

Bowie explains the Name-of-the-Father as follows: "the Name-of-the-Father is the symbol of an authority at once legislative and punitive. It represented within the Symbolic, that which made the Symbolic possible- all those agencies that placed enduring restrictions on the infant's desire and threatened to punish by castration, infringements of their law" (108). The Name-of-the-Father forces the child to the Symbolic realm, the realm of language, law, rules and regulations, and it represents "an imposed transcendence of natural provisions with a view of a higher order of mental and social functioning" (Nobus 16). Lacan suggests, "it is in the *name of the father* that we must recognize the support of the symbolic function which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law" (*Écrits* 50). By attributing the function of making and imposing law to the father and seeing the Oedipus complex as a substitution of signifiers, Lacan has attempted to move from the essentialist and biological understanding of subjectivity and sexuation to the more flexible one based on language.

2.3. The Question of Desire

"Don't cede on your desire."
Lacan *Seminar VII* 319

Lacan's heavy emphasis on language in the shaping of the self, subjectivity and the external world and in entering the Symbolic order paves the way for his positioning of the term desire in parallel with the language and eventually with the domain of the Other. For Lacan, "the unconscious is the discourse of the Other" (*Écrits* 130), meaning that even unconscious desires veiled and hidden are regulated by the linguistic system and/or the big Other, implying that desire seemingly belongs to one's self. "Desire being a phenomenon of language and there being no such thing as human desire, strictly speaking without language" reveals the truth that desires are shaped in language, which belongs to the other/domain of the Other (Fink *Clinical* 205).

Lacan's concept of *désir*/desire dwells on Freud's *Wunsch*, and yet, Lacan expands his theory by borrowing some of his ideas and at the same time leaving certain ones out. In contrast to Freud, who postulates a world of desire prior to experience and for whom desire preexists knowledge and being, Lacan prioritizes the significance of discourse shaped by knowledge, connecting the man to the world and implies that desire is molded in/by discourse, and discourse cannot articulate desire fully as desire is inexpressible leaving surplus residues. Lacan proposes:

> Within the classical, theoretical perspective, between the subject and object, there is cooptation, *co-naissance*- a play on words retaining all its force, for the theory of knowledge lies at the heart of any discussion of the relation of man to the world. The subject has to place himself in adequation with the thing. In a relation of being to being- the relation of a subjective being, but one that is truly real, of being aware of being, to a being one knows to be. (*Seminar II* 223)

In *Écrits*, too, Lacan mentions that the operation of desire engenders and organizes knowledge. In "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the

Freudian Unconscious" (1960), Lacan focuses on the production of knowledge and the subject's relation to it and comes to the conclusion that desire is bound up with the desire of the Other, and at the juncture opened up, there lies the desire to know. Lacan, thereby, "characterizes the psychoanalytic theory of the relation of the subject to knowledge as a relation of desire" (Campbell 70). For Lacan, desire encompasses the pleasure of knowing, and the pleasure of knowing comes into existence in relation to desire, highlightening that "the desire to know is formed in relation to the lack inherent in desire" (70). Lacan puts forward that "desire is a relation of being to lack. This lack is the lack of being properly speaking. It isn't the lack of this or that, but lack of being whereby being exists. This lack is beyond anything which can represent it. It is only ever represented as a reflection on a veil" (*Seminar II* 223).

Desire, thus, is positioned in connection with the lack, and it delineates the metonymic movement of the lack from signifier to signifier that is rooted in the alienation of the subject's uncovered demands in language as:

> Desire, a function central to all human experience, is the desire for nothing nameable. And at the same time, this desire lies at the origin of every variety of animation. If being were only what it is, there wouldn't even be room to talk about it. Being comes into existence as an exact function of this lack. Being attains a sense of self in relation to being as a function of this lack in the experience of desire. In the pursuit of this beyond, which is nothing, it harks back to the feeling of a being with self-consciousness, which is nothing but its own reflection in the world of things. (Lacan *Seminar II* 223-224)

Desire is the desire of the Other because "the Lacanian subject is above all the subject of language, the subject who speaks" (Boothby 105). As demonstrated earlier, the infant yields to the Other and loses his symbiotic unity with the mother, and yet, turns into one of language's subjects, a subject in language and/or by language. The infant who succumbs to the Other permits the signifier to replace and represent him/her:

$$\frac{\text{Other}}{\text{Child}}$$

The child "coming to be as a divided subject, disappears beneath or behind the signifier S" (Fink *Lacanian* 77):

$$\frac{S}{\$}$$

In her/his struggle with the Other, the child may choose not to submit to the Law of the Other and mutate into a divided subject in language, which can be considered a victory by the child over the Other. Lacan, too, mentions this oxymoronic forced choice in the child's decision of not yielding to the dictations of the Other in expense for the loss of her/his subjectivity, which, however, deters and forecloses the advent of the child as a subject. Therefore, "in Lacan's concept of alienation, the child can be understood to in some sense choose to submit to language to agree to express his or her needs through the distorting medium of straightjacket of language and to allow him or herself to be represented by words," which also houses and discloses desire (50).

The subject inextricably linked with the Other always desires something such as nourishment, power or pleasure from her/his parents, who act as a cause of the infant's physical presence in the world. Their desires act upon the infant throughout her/his life, shaping him/her as a subject in language. The subject is created out of the Other's desire as language is "ridden with desire," and desire is "inconceivable without language, being made of the very stuff of language" (50). Lacan suggests that, "desire always becomes manifest at the joint of speech, where it makes its appearance, its sudden emergence, its surge forwards. Desire emerges just as it becomes embodied in speech" (*Seminar II* 227).

The infant tries to conceive her/his mother's desire always in flux or somebody else's desire. However, s/he fails to do so as the mother's interest and attention can divert, leaving the infant's demands unfulfilled. "The child's unsuccessful attempt to perfectly complement its mother leads to an expulsion of the subject from the position

of wanting-to-be and yet failing-to-be the other's sole object of desire" (Fink *Lacanian* 51). In that way, the infant is inflicted with the position of a loser and left with a void/a gap/a hole, causing alienation, and this alienation can give the subject the possibility of being as "alienation engenders, in a sense, a place in which it is clear that there is, as of yet, no subject: a place where something is conspicuously lacking. *The subject's first guise is this very lack*" (52).

The infant's sense of lack should coincide with that of the mother, and the mother should also display some sign of incompleteness, inadequacy and fallibility for the subject to emerge as a barred subject ($), and should reveal that she is also a desiring but a lacking and alienated subject succumbing to the Law of the Father, and thus turning into the split/barred subject in and by language, which would start the advent of the subject. The barred/split Other/parent stands in front of the child with her/his ambivalent attitude towards what s/he wants and with her/his ambiguous, conflicting and always in flux desire. The infant, hence, captures an anchoring point within the estranged and parted parent through *alienation* since "the subject has lodged his or her lack of being (*manqué-à-être*) in that place where the other was lacking" and struggles to fill in the mOther's lack with his or her own lack/own existing albeit immature self and being through *separation* (Fink *Lacanian* 54). It can be claimed that "the subject tries to excavate, explore, align and conjoin those two lacks, seeking out the precise boundaries of the Other's lack to fill it with him or her self" (54).

Lack and desire are compatible and go hand in hand for Lacan. The infant dedicates a remarkable amount of time and effort to complete the mother's lack, her space of desire, and s/he wishes to turn into everything she desires. Fink suggests that "children set themselves the task of excavating the site of their mother's desire, aligning themselves with her every whim and fancy. Her wish is their command, her desire their demand" (54). The infant's desire is born in subjugation to her desire, which echoes Lacan's dictum "man's desire is the *désir de l'Autre*/ the desire of the Other" (*Écrits* 253). Man not only desires what the Other desires but desires it in a similar manner as if he were an other. However, the attempt to juxtapose the infant

and the mother's desire is a delusive and impassable whim and attempt as the infant is not allowed to take over the niche of the mother's desire, and the two lacks never coincide, leading the subject to be barred from completing the lack of the mother and his own:

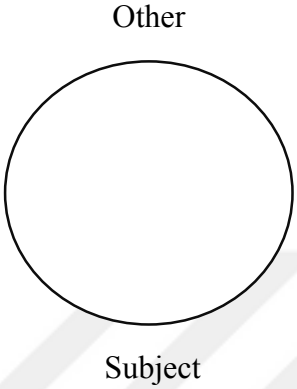

Figure 2.1: The subject and the Other never coincide.

Lacan emphasizes the significance and necessity of the dissolution of the dyad between the mother and the infant through the operations of language and the paternal metaphor which neutralizes the Other's desire since the mother's desire can lead the infant to be engulfed and swallowed:

> The mother's role is her desire. That is of capital importance. Her desire is not something you can bear easily, as if it were a matter of indifference to you. It always leads to problems. The mother is a big crocodile and you find yourself in her mouth. You never know what may set her off suddenly, making those jaws clamp down. That is the mother's desire. (Lacan *Seminar XVII* 129)

Language, in a way, safeguards the child from the implications of this dyadic bond through the substitution of a name for the mother's desire:

$$\frac{\text{Name-of-the-father}}{\text{Mother's desire}}$$

The mother's desire is directed at the father, which gives his name a protective paternal function. The name that replaces the mOther's desire "must become part and parcel of the dialectic movement of signifiers, that is, become displaceable occupying a signifying position that can be filled with a series of different signifiers over time so that the mOther's desire can enact as a complete signifier" (Fink *Lacanian* 57). Lacan calls his symbolic element in the paternal function in different names such as the father's name, the phallus or the signifier of the Other's desire.

$$\frac{\text{Signifier}}{\text{Mother's desire}}$$

The substitution of the mother's desire by the paternal metaphor is implemented only through language. The second signifier (S_2), which is the Name of the Father/the signifier of the Other's desire is inserted, and the mother's desire is transformed into the first signifier (S_1).

$$\frac{S_2}{S_1}$$

The signifier S_2 here represents the Other's desire and thus transforms it into signifiers, which engenders a fracture in the mother-child unity and creates a space for the infant to exert her/his self. Only through language can an infant reconcile the Other's desire and come closer to the advent of her/his subjectification. As suggested by Fink, "the result of this substitution and metaphor is the advent of the subject as such, the subject as no longer just a potentiality, a mere place holder in the symbolic, waiting to be filled out but a desiring subject" (58). Separation brings forward the infant's dissociation from the mOther and expulsion from the domain of the mOther and the Other's desire undertakes a new role: *objet à*.

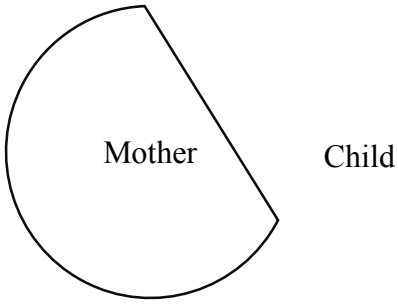

Figure 2.2: The expulsion of the subject from the domain of the mOther (Fink *Lacanian* 58)

The child endeavors to understand the inexplicable residues in the mOther's desire upon which the child's own desire is founded. The Other's desire starts to act like the cause of the infant's desire. Since the cause is based on the desire of the Other, it can take the form of the look or voice of someone else. The cause of the desire is also rooted in the mother's desire, which s/he cannot catch and which is reserved for an other. "Her desire's independence from her child's creates a rift between them, a gap in which her desire, unfathomable to the child, function in a unique way" (Fink *Lacanian* 59).

This rift engenders the advent of the *objet à*, which can be understood "as a *remainder*, produced when that hypothetical unity breaks down, as a last trace of that unity, a last *reminder* thereof. By cleaving to that rem(a)inder, the split subject, though expulsed from the Other, can sustain the illusion of wholeness; by clinging to *objet à*, the subject is able to ignore his or her division" (Fink *Lacanian* 59).

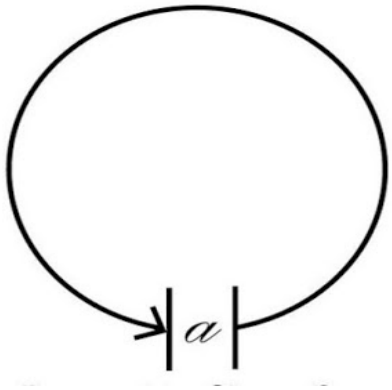

Figure 2.3: The return of the objet *a*: the unattainable object cause or desire. Here, the "a" represents "autre" (other).

In this way, the infant attains a phantasmatic sense of unity, wholeness and integrity. *Objet à*, integrated into the fantasies of the subject, turns into a means, an instrument, a pastime with which s/he plays and manipulates so as to obtain a high level of excitement, pleasure and contentment. The subject shapes the Other's desire in a way that would give the maximum pleasure. However, that feeling of pleasure may transform into horror, disgust or even suffering. The excitement linked with unconscious feeling of pleasure and pain is what is called *jouissance*, which will be broadened in the succeeding part.

2.4. *Jouissance*

"Only your hearts be frolic, for the time
Craves that we taste of naught but *jouissance*."
Robert Greene

In his first public seminar in 1958, Lacan highlighted the gradually established importance of this famous-to-be term *jouissance* and designated it as "the other pole of his earlier concept desire" (*Seminar V* 182). The subsequent twenty years revolved around this opposition, making an already complicated term more complicated, unstable and multiplying by bestowing on it various nuances, which is in parallel with Lacan's style of exposition, "which never aims at producing a single consistent

meaning for each term, but rather at developing different meanings which are often at odds with one another" (Evans 29). Since that inaugural day, the concept of desire, voiced with the dictums such as "Desire is the desire of the Other" or "Desire is lack of being" has been realigned in the opposite direction of this newcomer, *jouissance*.

Sharp and McDowell suggest that *jouissance* "refers to a Lacanian concept of excess pleasure that is nonetheless never reducible simply to pleasure" (139). Matthis also avers that *jouissance* is understood "as an experience or state beyond signification, beyond the phallus", making it an esoteric, multi-layered and dense term (109). Safran, too, comments on Lacan's concept of *jouissance* as an untranslatable term that "represents a particular combination or configuration of life and death, pleasure and pain under pleasure principle" (335). Though different attributions of meaning around the word *jouissance* persist, Lacan stresses in his lecture "Psychoanalysis and Medicine" that *jouissance* is not merely a feeling of pleasure or joy:

> What I call *jouissance*- in the sense in which the body experiences itself- is always in the nature of tension, in the nature of a forcing, of a spending, even of an exploit. Unquestionably, there is *jouissance* at the level at which pain begins to appear, and we know that it is only at this level of pain that a whole dimension of the organism, which would otherwise remain veiled, can be experienced. (in Braunstein 60)

Jouissance, thereby, shelters both desire and pleasure with desire standing at the opposite direction. Braunstein draws attention to the polarity between desire and *jouissance* as such, "if desire is fundamentally lack, lack in being, *jouissance* is positivity, it is a 'something' lived by a body when pleasure stops being pleasure. It is a plus, a sensation that is beyond pleasure" (104). *Jouissance* is not only distinct from desire and pleasure but also distinct from satisfaction, and its function is not satisfaction of a need or demand. Lacan discusses the opacity of *jouissance* and forestalls the discussions generated by taking *jouissance* as the satisfaction of a need or demand by proposing the following:

> The problem involved is that of *jouissance*, because *jouissance* presents itself as buried at the center of a field and has the characteristics of inaccessibility,

> obscurity and opacity; moreover, the field is surrounded by a barrier which makes access to it difficult for the subject to the point of inaccessibility, because *jouissance* appears not purely and simply as the satisfaction of a need, but as the satisfaction of a drive- that term to be understood in the context of the complex theory I have developed on this subject in this seminar.
>
> As you were told last time, the drive as such is something extremely complex… It isn't to be reduced to the complexity of the instinct as understood in the broadest sense, in the sense that relates it to energy. It embodies a historical dimension whose true significance needs to be appreciated by us.
>
> This dimension is to be noted in the insistence that characterizes its appearances; it refers back to something memorable because it was remembered. Remembering, "historicizing," is coextensive with the functioning of the drive in the human psyche. It is there, too, that destruction is registered, that it enters into the register of experience. (*Seminar VII* 209)

The reduction of *jouissance* to the "satisfaction of a drive" would be missing out on the underlying complex theory Lacan attempts to establish in which "the satisfaction proper to *jouissance* is neither the satisfaction of a need nor the satisfaction of a demand. It is also not the satisfaction of any bodily drive but one linked to death drive and thus related to the signifier and to history, a satisfaction that consists of nothing that could be related to any kind of *Befriedigung*[11]" (Braunstein 105).

Lacan parallels the drive in line with the death drive, whose effects can solely be illustrated with respect to a chain of signifiers. Lacan borrows the Freudian drive and interprets it as "a constant force, an unending requirement imposed on the psyche due to its link with the body" (105). The drive is an agency that continuously presses forward upon having found out the path to the lost object- object of desire is closed and prevented; it has no other alternative than pressing forward:

> The drive is *jouissance*, not because it has a calming effect, not because it achieves satisfaction or satiety, but because it builds the historical, it establishes the memorable in an act that is inscribed, in relation to the order of the signifying chain, as a deviation or even a transgression; the drive signals

[11] *Befriedigung* means satisfaction.

> the appearance of a dimension of surprise which is essential to the psychoanalytic act and to the ethical acts that define, in a different way to the place of the subject. (105)

Throughout the chapter "The Deconstruction of the Drive" in *Seminar XI, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1978), Lacan perpetuates the fact that the aim of the drive is to stress the improbability of satisfaction. *Jouissance* is the rift that opens up while transcending the satisfaction since the path of desire, searching the lost object is blocked, and drive is the only thing possible as "the drive does not reach its object in order to obtain satisfaction; rather, the drive traces the object's contour, and on the arch of the way back, it accomplishes its task" (Braunstein 106). For Lacan, therefore, *jouissance* is what the drive addresses/directs at. Lacan renounces the idea that the target of the drive is to achieve a goal and obtain satisfaction by proffering in his paper "The Partial Drive and Its Circuit" that:

> When you entrust someone with a mission, the *aim* is not what he brings back, but the itinerary he must take. The *aim* is the way taken. The French word *but* may be translated by another word in English, *goal*. In archery, the *goal* is not the *but* either, it is not the bird you shoot, it is having scored a hit and thereby attained your *but*. (*Seminar XI* 179)

Here, the *but* or the "goal" do not aim at attaining an object and coming to a conclusion, so they are not in agreement with the satisfaction of an object. They are in agreement with the chain of signifiers. Satisfaction belongs to the pleasure and displeasure principle; yet, *jouissance* of a drive does not belong anywhere as it "will permit of no halting at any position attained," and it is the satisfaction of not an object but a drive: death drive (Lacan *Seminar XVIII* 42). Braunstein summarizes the basis of the opposition between desire and *jouissance* as follows:

> Desire points towards a lost and an absent object; it is lack in being, and the craving for fulfillment in the encounter with the lost object. Its concrete expression is the phantasy. *Jouissance*, on the other hand, does not point to anything nor does it serve any purpose whatsoever; it is an unpredictable experience beyond the pleasure principle different from any (mythical) encounter. The subject finds himself split by the polarity *jouissance*/desire.

> This is why desire, phantasy and pleasure are barriers on the way to *jouissance*. (107)

Jouissance's engenderment starts with the subject's demand and the ideal satisfaction that s/he obtains from the maternal other as an answer to her/his needs. A *jouissance*, unknown to speech and a code only deciphered through the subject's entry into the world of language, is the initial state known as *jouissance* of being, unnamable. The subject, entrapped in the net of language, is appropriated and commanded by the Other, and thus made to enter a world of law, culture and rule, alienating his or her being and substituting *jouissance* of the body with the dictations imposed by the Other. *Jouissance*, hence, is decapitated and rendered possible by passing from the filters of language. The subject realizes with sorrow the improbability of satisfying her/his drives and demand for love, and "the lack results in this condition as an eternally desiring subject, and the sentence he or she will be obliged to serve for life: *jouissance* has to be filtered through discourse" (110).

With the intervention of language and speech, the modalities of *jouissance* take different forms:

> *a*. *Jouissance* in the word, of the speaking being as such, phallic jouissance, subservient to castration, the Law and the Name-of-the-Father,
> *b*. *Jouissance* before the word, experienced in relation to the mother's jouissance, to the proximity of the Thing, a *jouissance* written on the body, but unnamable, mythical, a retroactive creation, impossible for the subject already immersed in speech to objectify and consequently, forever sundered from it, a *jouissance* of being,
> *c*. *Jouissance* beyond the word, beyond the regulation of the Law, and of the phallus, *jouissance* of the Other, feminine *jouissance*, which for the very same reason- lying somewhere beyond speech- is equally impossible to objectify, impossible for the *parlêtre*[12] to articulate. (Braunstein 112)

In his *Seminar XX Encore*, Lacan distinguishes between masculine and feminine *jouissance* and avers that feminine *jouissance* is against that of the phallic, named also the sexual *jouissance,* that "is marked and dominated by the impossibility of

[12] *Parlêtre* means speak-being, the speaking subject.

establishing as such… the One of the relation 'sexual relationship'" (Lacan *Seminar XX* 6-7). Since Lacan equates the One to the unity in the Platonic sense and the unified sense of the men, phallic *jouissance* is an obstacle to such forms of unity for "it is the obstacle owing to which man does not come to enjoy woman's body, precisely because what he enjoys is the jouissance of the organ […]. Jouissance, qua sexual, is phallic. In other words, it is not related to the Other[13] as such" (7-9). The man's experience and the insufficiency and incompatibility of it with feminine *jouissance* poses an obstacle to sexual relationship. Women, according to Lacan, access a specifically feminine *jouissance* "that is beyond the phallus" but men acquire his inscription "through the phallic function" (74)

Women can attain not only phallic/sexual *jouissance* but also a supplementary form of *jouissance* by not being contained by the phallic function as men do: "being not-whole, she has a supplementary *jouissance* compared to what the phallic function designated by way of *jouissance*" (73). However, since speech resides in the Symbolic register and therefore phallic, feminine *jouissance* is impossible to put into words, define or depict. Lacan, in *Encore*, gives examples of mystics such as Hadewijch d'Anvers, Saint John of the Cross and Saint Teresa, implying a connection with God/Godly domain. Lacan asks, "[d]oesn't this *jouissance* that one experiences and knows nothing about put us on the path of existence? And why not interpret one face of the Other the God face as based on feminine *jouissance*?" (77)

The idea of feminine *jouissance* has challenged the phallocentricism of Freud as this *jouissance* is more than the phallic one, transgressing the Symbolic and the subject. In contrast to the feminine *jouissance*, which goes beyond the phallic one, *jouissance* of being mutates into the phallic *jouissance,* which eventually turns into the *jouissance* of the Other. This is possible with castration: "*jouissance* must be refused so that it can be reached on the inverted ladder of the Law of desire" (Lacan *Ècrits* 247). In his *Seminar X Anxiety*, Lacan accentuates anxiety's being on the verge of a passage from the *jouissance* of the subject to the desire of the subject as "anxiety is

[13] Lacan here refers to the Other as the linguistic Other and as the Other sex: woman.

the middle term between desire and *jouissance*, and it stands between the two poles, so there are merely two alternatives which the subject is exposed to and s/he should choose: anxiety or love" (*Seminar X* 164). Lacan believes that "only love allows *jouissance* to condescend to desire" as on the inverted ladder of the Law of desire, *jouissance* is refused, and love is left as the only resort/remedy having the power to mediate between desire and *jouissance* (164).

2.5. Lacanian Love

"Love is a pebble laughing in the sun."
Lacan *Écrits* 423

"The course of love never did run smooth," uttered Shakespeare, echoing the universality of the problem of love, which has confounded the minds of the philosophers since antiquity as the question of love stands at the very center of the philosophical discussions (*Midsummer*[14] Act 1, Scene 1). In his *Seminar XX, Encore,* Lacan mentions a similar line of thought and states that "people have been talking about nothing else but love for a very long time. Need I emphasize the fact that it is at the very heart of philosophical discourse?" (39). The essentialist and humanist understanding of love centers around two recipients, the subject who is the lover, and the object who is the object of the subject's love. Though universal, love is experienced distinctly and uniquely in each experience leading to different definitions and different attempts to clarify a definition. It was thus inevitable for Lacan to dwell on the meaning and formation of love as he discussed this topic in length in his seminars; yet, failed to reach a single unified definition of it, which verifies his points on the dissemination and escape of meaning and the incapability of grasping a finalized understanding of things. Lacan argues that "it is impossible to say anything meaningful or sensible about love" (*Seminar XX* 17) as "the moment one starts to speak about love, one descends into imbecility" (*Seminar VIII* 57). The meaning of love constantly escapes and slips in language like the signifiers with the signifieds, making it a futile attempt to grasp its essence. Nevertheless, Lacan attempts to cast

[14] Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1596) has been abbreviated as *Midsummer*.

light into the concept of love and positions it in both Imaginary and Symbolic registers, which will be elucidated in the subsequent part.

Lacan, in *Encore*, takes love as the impossible and proffers the French name encore meaning "still" or "once again." Yet, Lacan attributes another meaning to "encore" as for him, "encore is the proper name for the gap from which in the other the demand for love starts" (*Seminar XX* 5). In other words, "encore" refers to the disparity in desire between the One and the Other, and love comes into existence in this gap housed in the intersubjective relations. Lacan utters that "[t]o name, in general, is to take stock of what goes before in series. What is always to come will be what one could call the *encore*, which for its part precedes nothing that is not itself… what I am calling the *encore* is the index of the infinite" (*Seminar XX* 27). As love is dependent on this gap and on this index of the infinite, it can never be fully attained but eventually turns into a failure, which necessitates its being on the go and on the play, all the time and thereby guarantees that love is still (*encore*) love but the improbable/the impossible one. Love occurs repeatedly as it fails continuously and demands more love as Lacan propounds that, "[t]he desire of man is the desire of the Other. And that love is a passion which may be the ignorance of this desire, but which nonetheless leaves it its full import. Love for its part demands love. It does not cease it. It still demands it" (*Seminar XX* 5).

Stemming from its constant failure and disappointment as an aborted action, love mutates into trauma. By dwelling on theology and Neo-platonic terminology, Lacan mentions the universalization of the signifier and the oneness, and proffers that the lovers are in demand for oneness/the One on an imaginary domain. However, love is "impotent, though mutual, because it is now aware that it is but the desire to be One, which leads us to the impossibility of establishing the relation between "them-two" (*la relation d'eaux*)" (Lacan *Seminar XX* 6). The impossibility of love creates fractures, ruptures, interruptions, holes and thus aligns love alongside trauma. As averred by Lacan, "the hole, namely, the something that sustains itself all by itself that has no need of something else and which is for philosophy the substance or again

the substance of substances, namely being" (*Seminar XX* 34). Lee, too, proposes that love's formulating holes and eventually equaling trauma stress:

> … the subject's multitudinous relations with the Other in the social realm, thus breaking away from the hegemony of unity and the jouissance of the superego. Because of the impossibility or passive temporality of the intersubjective love relation, the subject continues to reemerge as "the subject who is supposed to know" in Lacanian sense through the accumulation of love interests. (93)

The subject, Madan Sarup asserts, "demands a wholeness, a unity and completion which it imagines the other can bestow on it. … This demand for oneness is a demand for an impossible harmony and complementarity between sexes" (129). The impossibility of love is intertwined with the narcissistic structure of love, and Lacan expounds on love as narcissistic in the Imaginary register as follows:

> Love. I can all the same tell you through a little example, the example of a parakeet that was in love with Picasso. Well then, that could be seen from the way he nibbled on the collar of his shirt and the flaps of his jacket. This parakeet was in effect in love with what is essential to man, namely, his attire. This parakeet was like Descartes for whom men were clothes walking about, if you will allow me. Naturally, it is *pro*, that promises the *maenad*[15], namely, when you take them off. But it is only a myth, a myth that has converged with the bed mentioned earlier. To enjoy a body when there are no more clothes is something that leaves intact the question of what constitutes the One, namely of identification. The parakeet identified with the clothed Picasso.
>
> It is the same for everything involved in love. In other words, the habit loves the monk because it is through it that there all one. In other words, what is under the habit and what we call the body is perhaps only in the whole affair this remainder that I call the little o-object. What holds the image together is a remainder. And what analysis shows is that love in essence is narcissistic that the yarns about the objectal is something whose substance it knows how to expose precisely in what is the remainder in desire, namely its cause, and what sustains it, in its dissatisfaction, indeed its impossibility. (*Seminar XX* 6-7)

[15] In Greek mythology, a maenad is a female disciple of the Greek god of wine, Dionysus.

Lacan recounts the story of Picasso's parakeet to display what love is and to show "the imaginary is the *locus* of love" and "if there is a reflorescence of love from analysis, then it will be via the inter-mediary of the imaginary as locus of love" (Julien 188). As love is dependent on this gap and on this index of the infinite, it can never be fully attained but eventually turns into a failure, which necessitates its being on the go and on the play, all the time and thereby guarantees that love is still (*encore*) love but the improbable/the impossible one. so that two would make one as "love is to make one" (Lacan *Seminar XX* 5). The lover sees his reflection as loved in this image and assumes that he will obtain a narcissistic reciprocity. In *Seminar I*, *Freud's Papers on Technique*, Lacan attempts to reconstruct and rewrite Freud's thoughts to pinpoint some issues such as love, transference and narcissism. Lacan asserts that "love is a phenomenon which takes place on the imaginary level […]" (*Seminar I* 142). Love occurs as a result of the imaginary relations which rest upon the relationships between egos (ideal-ego/ego-ideal) where sameness and difference attain importance. In the formation of the subject, at the level of the Imaginary, the other is perceived as a whole and a unified being the subject desires to identify with. The subject/the ego does not know what is missing in him/her or what s/he desires. Moncayo suggests:

> In her/his blindness, the ego seeks to re-establish an intersubjective *jouissance* of and with the maternal other wherein the ego occupies the place of the *objet a*, cause of the Other's desire. The other, in turn, does not know what they have that the subject wants. They may feel used or engulfed by the *jouissance* of the other. (Moncayo 109)

The subject tries to fill in the void/the emptiness/the nonbeing with love towards the subject with whom s/he can identify with, which is the Freudian idea of love as intrinsically narcissistic and which Lacan later adopts. Lacan explains that the beloved, the object of desire, is the one who *has*/owns something whereas the lover, the subject of desire, is the one who *lacks* something. However, the thing that the beloved has fails to overlap with the thing that the lover has and desires to attain in the beloved, and paradoxically, it is at this juncture that love is born, at the

"conjunction of desire with its object *qua inadequate*" (Lacan *Seminar VIII* 29). Ball details the conflicting relation between the lover and the beloved as follows:

> The very inadequacy of the object, especially the object that owns up to its own inadequacy, its own lack, its essence as lack, means that this object of love can inhabit her/his own subjectivity as a desiring being. Furthermore, on the side of the lover, the emergence of the inadequacy of the object of desire reveals this *love* for what it is, that is to say, in its true status as narcissistic and imaginary in which what is loved in fact pertains more to the *lover's* partial object or *agalma*[16] of his fundamental phantasy than to the essence of the object *per se*. (60)

The object projects the ideal-ego, the image that the ego assumes to lack in her/his own self-image. Since the lack that the ego senses in her/his own image refers to the lost love experience as regards the symbolic mother, Lacan states that "to love is, essentially, the wish to be loved" (*Seminar XI* 253). Moncayo avers that:

> The loss of love experienced in the relationship to the symbolic mother is a necessary loss because the child cannot be the 'be all and end all' of the mother. The lack in the self-image of the child represents the desire of the symbolic mother for the father and for things other than the child. The imaginary mother is the end all and be all for the child as her own imaginary phallus. (103)

Since then, the narcissistic completion of the self must be exposed to the object, the imaginary other who seems to fill in the void in the imaginary realm. Narcissistic self-love becomes completed with the other who is the seemingly missing part in the ego. "This, of course, is a return to the glow of love experienced with the missing

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[16] The *agalma* is an ancient Greek term employed as a gift or a votive offering presented to the Gods to please them. In time, the *agalma* has evolved into an iconic and a beautiful image. Lacan first used this term in his seventh seminar while lecturing on Plato's *Symposium*. Johnston and Malabou contend that "the *agalma* is defined by love; it is the inestimable object of desire that ignites our desire. Relating this to the analytic setting, Lacan proposes that the *agalma* is the treasure that we seek in analysis, the unconscious truth we wish to know" (70). Moncayo further suggests that "the *agalma* is a name for an enlightened mind, a state of being, or a spiritual and/or sexual delight equivalent by metaphor to an ornament or a jewel (102).

maternal other who remains as an absence within the ego. To re-experience this glow, the libido must go through the object, through the imaginary love object" (103). The imaginary love object is the representative of the *objet à* cause of the mother's desire, or the breast/voice of the mother which is the *objet à* cause of the child's desire. Only through the loss of this object because of the desire of the mother for the Other can the object move to the imaginary object of phantasy. This loss engenders a void in the ideal-ego and/or the body image of the child, which s/he must fill in with the love object.

Lacan also mentions love's having a narcissistic structure by declaring that "it's one's own ego that one loved in love, one's own ego made real on the imaginary level" (*Seminar I* 142). In the imaginary register, love is aroused through the subject's identification with an ideal ego[17], the image that "the human being only sees his form materialized, whole, the mirage of himself, outside of himself" (134). The subject desires to identify with the image that s/he sees from outside, in the image of the other to feel whole and unified. The mother, in the mirror stage, is the subject the infant tries to identify with as she responds to her/his needs and thereby realizing the image of an other in total control with her self and her image. As in the case of the infant-mother relationship, the lover desires the beloved thanks to the traits that s/he has and which the subject considers idealized. Renato Salecl comments on this romantic identification as follows:

> What is at work in falling in love is the recognition of the narcissistic image that forms the substance of the ideal ego. When we fall in love, we position the person who is the object of our love in the place of the ideal ego. We love this person because of the perfection we have striven to reach for our own ego. However, it is not only that the subject loves in the other the image he or she would like to inhabit him or herself. ("I Can't Love You" 187)

[17] Lacan differentiates between the ideal ego and the ego-ideal. For him, the ideal ego represents the idealized self-image of the subject, and it is rooted in the specular image of the mirror stage, thereby positioned in the Imaginary register. The ego-ideal, however, is the agency, the big Other or the signifier that functions as ideal and organizes the subject's position in the symbolic order.

Like Narcissus's falling in love with his own image and his entrapment in this image, the subject loves not only its own image but also the image's being reflected in the other. Paradoxically, the subject does not own anything but the imaginary and illusionary identifications of the ego and the desire to be unified like the other: the subject is a terrain of void/gap, and the lover has nothing to offer to the beloved. Love is nothing as it depends on emptiness and "implicates the other to whom the lover 'gives' in a limited sense 'nothing.'" (Alvis 104). Lacan's sentence starting with "love is giving something one doesn't have" is expanded by Slavoj Žižek as he adds "to someone who doesn't want it" to highlight the nothingness one has when it comes to love (*Parallax* 355). The hollowness of love and its signification as lack makes love a kind of a mirage/an illusion and as Lacan states "as a specular image, love is essentially deception" (*Seminar XI* 268). It is deceptive because "the subject tries to induce the Other into a mirage relation in which he convinces him of being worthy of love" (Lacan *Seminar XI* 267). The subject gives what s/he does not have, the phallus, to the beloved: "love is directed not at what the love-object has but at what he lacks at the nothing beyond him. The object is valued insofar as it comes in the place of that lack" (Lacan *Seminar IV* 89).

Love, as can be seen, is an imaginary phenomenon, which cannot come into being without speech/the symbolic side of language. In order to make love functional and realizable and to move it beyond scopophilic narcissism, the subject must reformulate her/his narcissistic relation into the laws, rules and restrictions of the symbolic order. As can be seen from the chart below, in Lacanian theorem, love is positioned at the juncture of both the Imaginary and Symbolic registers; it is purely imaginary but has effects in the Symbolic:

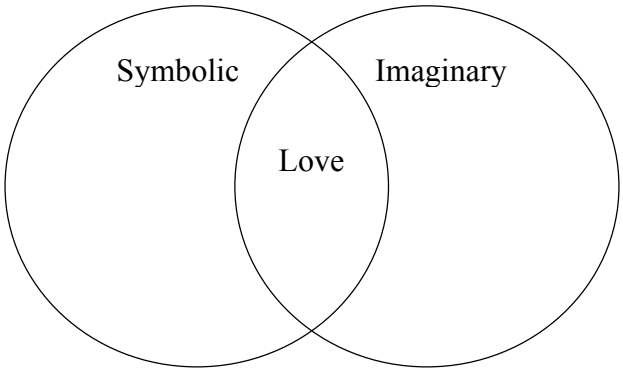

Figure 2.4: Positioning of Love in Lacanian Registers

Lacan, too, points out the indispensability of language in the realization of love by declaring that:

> A creature needs some reference to the beyond of language, to a pact, to a commitment which constitutes him, strictly speaking, as an other, a reference included in the general or, to be more exact, universal system of interhuman symbols. No love can be functionally realisable in the human community, save by means of a specific pact, which, whatever the form it takes, always tends to become isolated off into a specific function, at one and the same time within language and outside of it. That is what we call the function of the sacred, which is beyond the imaginary relation. (*Seminar I* 174)

Love is initially inflamed in the Imaginary register, but it needs the symbolic function of language so as to be elucidated as love since "there is *nothing* at the heart of love, and … love is only made of the signifiers of those who speak" (Wolf 31). Love becomes love only if it is "addressed to another," and "the place from where its signifier comes is located in the other. This Other is the other of and as language that does not correspond to the image" (36). Lacan also mentions the necessity of the Symbolic register for the notions to acquire meaning. As the Symbolic order is that what gives meaning to the reality as it is the organizing principle of the reality, things make sense when said out loud there. Demandante suggests that "there is no love outside of speech and non-speaking beings do not love. Love arises from the subject

of the signifier and since a subject of the signifier is a lacking subject, love arises out of the subject from this fundamental split" (111). Love springs from the psyche of the subject- lacking, parted and disunified. As the ego tries to complete the gap opened up by the unrequited love/loss of love experienced in relation to the maternal other on the Imaginary level, and as the specular image/the ideal ego cannot succeed in compensating the lack, the child takes shelter in the name of the father as the ideal and imaginary other who may succeed in revitalizing the lost unity. As averred by Moncayo, "now, the object of desire will be reached through the inverted ladder of the Law. Loving the father and being loved by the father will come to signify a love of values, ideas, society etc.." (104)

In the domain of love, the desire for the father turns into a love of ego-ideals. Lacan expands on the ego-ideal: "the *Ichideal*, the ego-ideal, is the other as speaking, the other insofar as he has a symbolic relation to me [*moi*]. Symbolic exchange is what links human beings to each other, that is, it is speech and it makes it possible to identify the subject" (*Seminar I* 142). The imaginary father separates the subject from the jouissance of the Other and the desire of the mother and "helps the subject relinquish imaginary ties under the archaic pleasure principle and replace them with preliminary symbolic ties under the reality principle" (Moncayo 119). The imaginary love of the ideal ego turns into the symbolic love of the ego-ideal. This transformation and bringing love beyond the Imaginary is rendered possible through speech:

> I will only remark that love, to the extent that it is one of the three lines of division in which the subject is engaged when he realizes himself symbolically in speech, hoes in on the being of the other. Without speech, inasmuch as it affirms being, all there is *Verliebtheit*[18], imaginary fascination, but there is no love. There is inflicted love, but not the active gift of love. (Lacan *Seminar I* 276-7)

Demandante suggests that "the introduction of speech to love makes it possible to differentiate the imaginary fascination between egos in narcissistic love from the ego ideal in love as symbolic" (112). The ideal-ego is the ramification of the imaginary

[18] *Verliebtheit* means infatuation.

identification with the other, but the ego-ideal is the symbolic other based on symbolic identification. "Thus, love as imaginary is love for what a subject wants to see in the other while love as symbolic is the ideal image that the symbolic structure has imbued within the subject" (112). It is through the operations of language that imaginary love moves closer to being and being active. Lacan suggests that "now, learn to distinguish love as an imaginary passion from the active gift which it constitutes on the symbolic order. Love, the love of person who desires to be loved, is essentially an attempt to capture the other in oneself, in oneself as object" (*Seminar I* 276). Desire, therefore, is in essence the desire of the Other, and this is how love is born:

> Because if desire at its root, in its essence is the desire of the Other, it is here properly speaking that there lies the mainspring of the birth of love, if love is what happens in this object towards whom we stretch out our hands by our own desire and who, at the moment that it breaks into flame, allows there to appear for an instant this response, this other hand, the one which stretches out towards you as his desire. (Lacan *Seminar I* 176).

When voiced by/in language, love mutates into a demand for love, a demand to fill in the void, to reach a unity of the self, to attain a satisfaction from the Other. From the passive status, love turns into an active one as it continuously demands satisfaction from the other and desires to be loved for everything s/he has:

> He demands to be loved as far as the complete subversion of the subject into a particularity can go, and into whatever may be most opaque, most unthinkable in this particularity. One wants to be loved for everything - not only for one's ego, as Descartes says, but for the colour of one's hair, for one's idiosyncracies, for one's weaknesses, for everything. (*Seminar I* 276)

Lacan concludes his ideas on love by disagreeing with the common belief that one can find the incomplete part in him/her and become one through love, and he remarks that there is no such thing as the one as love is based on nothingness, a mirage depended on self-image and self-love. The idea of being/having one is infeasible: "[t]he One everyone talks about all the time is, first of all a mirage of the One you

believe yourself to be. Not to say that that is the whole horizon. There are as many Ones as you like- they are characterized by the fact that none of them resemble any of the others in any way" (Lacan *Seminar XX* 47). In Lacanian theorem, love eventually gives way to the problem of identification, and the question of oneness turns into an impossibility and impasse.

2.6. Problematization of Structuralist Lacan

Lacan's work before 1950, the theory that he developed after the 1950s by borrowing from structuralism and his subsequent disengagement from Freud and structuralist thought encompass Lacanian epistemology and characterize him as a trajectory figure oscillating between structuralism and poststructuralism and as a controversial figure in the domain of psychoanalysis. Though Lacan's influence on (post-) feminism and other disciplines is indisputable, his structuralist and poststructuralist sides are constantly criticized and contested. Despite his delineation of the production of subjectivity through signification, his emphasis of the yoke of the phallus reduces gendered subjectivity to phallic deadlock and male domination, leaving women with no other alternatives and no way out.

However, in this dissertation, I will attempt to subvert Lacan's construction of a universal and dehistoricized subject that is limited by existing structures of language and define the female body, silenced and muted, not as a lack and/or as the collateral extension of the male body but as a site for the challenging of the patriarchal power relations and as a potential for symbolic and representational defiance. I will, furthermore, employ and then subvert the key tools of Lacan, which have been elucidated in this chapter by calling forth and appropriating a post-Lacanian look into the plays. This will pave the way for the possibility of engendering a feminine space and exposing the phallogocentric loopholes of Lacanian epistemology.

CHAPTER 3

LOCHHEAD'S SUBVERSION OF *MEDEA*

"& just when our maiden had got
good & used to her isolation,
stopped daily expecting to be rescued,
had come almost to love her tower,
along comes This Prince
with absolutely
all the wrong answers."
"Repunzstiltskin"
Liz Lochhead

This chapter aims to discuss Lochhead's rewriting and re-visioning of the classical myth *Medea* against the background of Lacanian conceptual tools such as narcissistic love, phallic other and the Law of the Father, which will also include an attempt to read Lacan subversively. As Lochhead hinges her plays on the phallocentric myths which offer a closed/binaristic reading, a suffocating/constraining survival niche for women and an incomplete/underestimated representation of marginalized language in the patriarchal/dominant discourse, she reconstructs them in a revolutionary way by granting misfit women their long forgotten authentic selves and voice and by foregrounding the subdued language, Scottish. Initially, Lochhead's reconstruction of the myth, *Medea*, and its divergences from the original plays will be demonstrated so as to prepare the ground for further discussions from a post-Lacanian vantage point.

3.1. The Reconstruction of Euripides' *Medea*

This part discusses the display of Lochhead's reemployment of the myth *Medea* through the reconfiguration of the feminine by rewriting the chorus and portraying Medea as the iconoclast of the female archetype and by integrating Scottish diction into the play. To be able to discuss the play in a Lacanian frame, it would be better first to discuss the distinctions between Euripides' *Medea* and Lochhead's *Medea*,

which will lay the base for further analyses and elucidate Lochhead's adoption of language as an ideological mechanism.

In *Medea*, Lochhead takes a well-known text apart and reassembles it under a new light, in a more poetically strong version, and transforms a classic tragedy into a modern feminist text and a cry/a defiance/a protest coming from the borders of women drawn by men. Lochhead states in the foreword of the play that, she "simply used Euripides' *Medea* as a complete structural template. Then let go" (vi). Her letting go means juxtaposing both feminine and Scottish elements in her adapted version to save the classic text from the yoke of the conventional, restrictive and mainstream understanding. Lochhead states that "my language is female-colored as well as Scottish colored" (in Christianson and Lumsden 44), and her employment of her language as a political tool makes her "drawn to plots that focus on gender, political, ethnic or national relationship, often blurring and subverting easy categories and such binary oppositions as male/female, master/servant, Scottish/English" (Corbett 83), and this part embarks on revealing Lochhead's overturning of these categories.

3.1.1 The Reconfiguration of the Feminine

Lochhead's first defiance of the classical understanding of the tragedy and myth, and attempt to retell Euripides' *Medea* in a new light comes from her maintenance of the sex and function of the chorus existing in Euripides' version, yet altering its homogeneous and undiversified status. Incorporating women from all walks of life into the chorus and making it "CHORUS OF WOMEN of all times, all ages, classes and professions" (Lochhead *Medea* 7) instead of Euripides' Chorus of Corinthian women, Lochhead diversifies the essence of the chorus and reinvents its function as it leads to questioning whether Medea's grief can be grasped and shown empathy by different women coming from different strata of the society and history. Not only devastated by her husband Jason's betrayal and his plan to marry King Kreon's daughter, Glauke, but also furious at learning the existent situation the latest, Medea

repels her anger and grief in front of a sympathetic but anger-ridden and not consoling female chorus.

Upon hearing Medea's piercing cry and heartbreaking lamentations, Euripides' Chorus of Corinthian women appears and starts to enact the conformist and conciliatory views women have been coded with throughout the ages to avoid conflicts and clashes and to suppress their reproved feelings of anger, grief and sadness. Euripides' chorus implicitly reflects the values and judgments of Greek society embracing the conventional attitudes of the male supremacy and desires to control and soothe Medea's fury so as to deter her from acting on her dark, hidden and must-be-repressed plans of vengeance that would strengthen her position as the powerful antipole of the male and move her outside the borders drawn, appropriated and perpetuated by the patriarchy. Medea's execution of her vengeance and enactment of her clandestine plans would lead to a metaphorical protest, which the chorus wants to hinder. In contrast to the seemingly friendly and understanding chorus of Euripides, Lochhead's chorus, on the surface, echoes feminist underpinnings and forms a female solidarity by creating a bond with Medea through naming her as "sister:"

> CHORUS.
> we are sorry for your sorrow sister
> is that how they cry in Kolchis Medea? (Lochhead *Medea* 7)

Rather than embracing a passive stance and consoling Medea to lessen her fury, Lochhead's chorus forms sisterhood and female solidarity, which will supposedly fight against the male oppression and end the two-faceted and suppressive treatment of women, it invites Medea to fight and to declare war upon those who have made her wretched. The chorus repudiates Medea's wish for death as it is a sign of weakness and acceptance of her fate, which would position her in a passive state. The chorus, however, urges her to stand up against her fate and take her revenge as when she achieves this, her love for Jason, which is her one and only connection with her adulterous husband and with the weaker part in Medea, will diminish and eventually

disappear. The chorus identifies itself with Medea and feels her anger and sadness through their shared gender, "initially prioritizing womanhood alone, distinct from class or nationality, as sufficient to comprehend her grief" (Craig 44). Womanhood is the refuge Medea can reside in to overcome the predicament she has and the umbrella which will protect her from the ramifications of the adultery and help her overcome it. Medea refers to her situation with Jason as "sex war," and the members of the chorus who are powerful, influential, proud and decisive women varying in their marital status [as they are married women, widows, divorced mistresses and wives,] call themselves "survivors of the sex war." "No virgins here" disavows the projection of the male desire and phantasy; the chorus purposefully challenges the conventional understanding of gender and sex, and adopts an allegedly rebellious and unconventional one (which will be overthrown by Lochhead) through the formation of female solidarity and a common history against the backdrop of their shared background and experience:

CHORUS
we were not born yesterday
we are all survivors of the sex war
married women widows divorced
mistresses wives no virgins here
marriage over? Shame that's the end of it
so get on with it (Lochhead *Medea* 7-8)

Euripides' chorus also attempts to form female solidarity albeit on a phallocentric ground. In contrast to the insubordinate and ardent chorus of Lochhead averring to resist and fight against the male supremacy, Euripides' chorus intends to soothe Medea's fury and hinder her plans to sustain the order and uniformity. Medea's cries coming *from inside*- a room- closed and invisible to the audience are the silent expression of the sexist and gender suppressions enacted by the dominant subjects who dominate, repress and impose their dictions on the others to make them aligned with the patriarchy and the status quo. The chorus engenders a common background around this cry as it belongs to all the women and manifests itself in different experiences of different women.

Euripides' chorus wishing for a reconciliation with Jason and implicitly urging Medea to reach a compromise is replaced by Lochhead's chorus disdaining such a demand. Euripides' orthodox and conformist chorus sides with Jason, the adulterous husband who abandons Medea for a younger and more powerful one, and in a way, justifies his deed by calling his arguments reasonable, aligning him in the stronger leg of the binary opposition which includes the ongoing designation of men as the rational and logical, and the woman as the irrational and illogical. Jason considers Medea's rage exaggerated and implausible as his aim in marrying the King's daughter is to guarantee his sons' future. Though in Lochhead's *Medea*, Medea and Jason are said to own two sons and a daughter, Euripides' Medea and Jason have two sons in which case Jason refrains from mentioning the girl or worrying about her future. As the daughter is no successor of Jason's heritage and lacks the potential to maintain his dynasty, her future is of no importance; thereby, she is not existent or a subject per se. Jason rationalizes his decision to part with Medea as follows:

> JASON: I remarried
> so we might prosper and live in the comfort
> we deserve, surrounded by true friends.
> If I should have more sons, they'll be
> brothers to ours, not rivals. (Euripides 54)

Initially, the ironic tone of the chorus of Lochhead disposes of the patriarchal perspective hidden in Jason's remarks and presents a realistic and critical picture of the impasse Medea, as a woman, is thrown into and strives to arouse feelings of empathy on her behalf until Medea's decision to murder her children. The chorus at first symbolizes the suppressed voice of the women made mute and speechless, and becomes a liberated area where women may attain a chance to rewrite their stories, which will be subverted through the evolution the chorus undergoes from being a supporter of Medea to an opponent upon Medea's decisiveness to carry out the act of infanticide. Euripides' chorus in *Medea*, however, is inevitably entrapped and remains barren in its representation and impersonation of the women and their

conditions and cannot escape the binaristic understanding engendered out of the male domination for its implicit favoring the male over the female.

Strengthening the feminine side of the play through the integration of the resistant and opposed female chorus encompassing women from different ages, professions and times is revealed to be illusionary and hence overthrown by the subversion of the stereotypical and binaristic perception of the female archetype. This female archetype revolves around the passive positioning of the women, labels them with the derogatory terms and assigns roles of an obedient wife, a submissive daughter or an altruistic mother. Through the characterization of Medea, who disavows the role of a compliant wife by repudiating Jason's relocation of her as the secondary woman and instead preferring the exile, Lochhead refuses to assign the role of a compassionate mother in the traditional sense on Medea by making her apply the act of infanticide. Marianna Pugliese analyzes the readaptation of the original plot of the play in terms of infanticide and differentiates Lochhead's reframing as follows: "[i]n Euripides' tragedy, infanticide was treated as principally a cruel act of revenge, and only secondarily as an act of love towards children, while the twentieth century re-readings working in the shadow of feminist theory often regard it as an act of kindness and solicitude" (vii). Lochhead rewrites the myth of motherhood, an extension of the female archetype through the application of infanticide, a horrid and cold-blooded act of vengeance. Motherhood and infanticide cannot exist together, and Euripides' version defines Medea as the monstrous mother; yet, Lochhead's Medea is transformed into the loving mother of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, who sacrifices her children to protect them from the impending dangers of a horrifying future lurking ahead. The difficulty of exerting such an act provides a fresh angle in the representation of Medea as a heartless and cold-hearted mother and inverts the ongoing classical positioning of her motherhood and self.

The myth of Medea can be traced back to the plays of various playwrights who have interpreted Medea's character and deeds from a restrictive and confining angle: Euripides has designated and labelled Medea as the literary prototype of a merciless

and monstrous mother, Seneca has been overwhelmed by the supernatural dimension of the witch from Colchis preparing potions and practicing magic, and the writers coming after these classical writers have also been influenced by the story of Medea and astounded by her unusual nature:

> These *topoi*, which, respectively, represent the figure of the woman in love, devastated by the overwhelming power of eros; the demoniac figure linked to the superhuman dimension of witchcraft and magic; and the barbaric foreigner from the distant East who arrives in a strange and hostile land, were the basic themes of the myth, which became frames of cultural reference. (Pugliese 13)

All the cast aside labels and denominations to fix women's fluid essence, stigmatize their selves and ostracize them lead to a deeper isolation and exclusion. The frame of reference engraved on tailor-made roles find their resonance in engenderment and characterization of the myth of Medea, who has been made other because of her exotic, foreign and distinct background, feared for her supernatural and out of ordinary dimension and condemned by her unconventional mothering. The highly valued function of a woman as a mother has been problematized and challenged by Medea in Lochhead's version. She differs from Euripides' Medea as the motive behind Medea's infanticide is believed to be Medea's urge to attack Jason through his own children.

Killing the children, in the traditional analyses, is thought to guarantee the destruction of Jason's line of descent and the maintenance of his dynasty as he would be left with no heirs to sustain his name, "symbolically interrupting his happy life by a vicarious substitution that satisfies her desire for vengeance" (Pugliese 13). The mother diverts all the anger, rage and sadness that he feels for the father into the children and employs them as the means to cause suffering in the person who has made her suffer. Pugliese avers that many interpretations suggest that Medea's "hatred for the man who has betrayed and abandoned her is directed at the child who is the physical embodiment of the fruit of the union and is, for the mother, certainly a less fearsome antagonist" (Pugliese 13). Medea desires to dispossess Jason of the right of the

children and reclaim the ownership of the children all alone, and thereby, rupturing the bond between the father and the children excluding the father figure. Precluding the father from the scene, Medea forms an exclusive relationship between her children and her self, which is strengthened by the killing act as "the all-absorbing bond between them is re-established through the symbolic return of the child to the maternal womb; […] the mother's reappropriation of her children happens at the paradoxical price of their death" (Pugliese 14).

The reduction of the women to the stereotypical and fixed identities is objected by the twentieth century readings combining feminism, post-modernism and psychoanalysis, and degrading of Medea and her identity-self to the myth of the murderous mother and excluding her other positive sides such as her cleverness, wit and otherness have fixed the characterization of Medea whose character and story are recounted through deceptive images rooted in the male culture. The rewritings of the modern playwrights including Lochhead have attempted to illuminate the untold and hidden aspects of Medea and to redeem her from the fixation, stigmatization and solitude she is forced to live with. Lochhead subverts the act of infanticide as "the killing of a child by a mother was, and remains, the subversive gesture *par excellence* in relation to the norm and reality expected by the collective imagination; in doing it, the person concerned, the mother, as woman re-confirms her abjectness *par excellence*" (Pugliese 15). Lochhead grants Medea another place where she is protected from the prejudices, blame and labels of a mere murderess, and she is restored to her dignity. Lochhead, hence, recovers Medea and establishes her as a social and mythical subject devoid of antagonistic and confining appellations.

Lochhead initially challenges the female archetype, the encodings of male-dominated vision of womanhood and motherhood. The mother archetype manifests itself in the realm of earth, nature and sky as in the representation of the mother earth, Gaia, Kali and Cybele. Throughout history, the mother archetype, embodied mostly in the presentation of Holy Mary and Virgin-martyrs, is associated with the positive attributes such as warmth, nurture and affection and has become the symbol of what

is fair, beautiful and unearthly, contrasted with the in-flux character of the female, impossible to immobilize and fix, and supportive of change and transformation:

> The positive elemental character of the female … a nature that generates and nourishes, protects and warms, deriving from the most immediate human experience- what we can see in relation between mother and children- is flanked by the elemental negative character of the female, more hidden and less evident, that derives from an inner experience, secret and unconscious, yet equally significant in construction of the female Archetype. (Pugliese 21)

Medea repudiates performing the mother archetype, self-sacrificing, nurturing and affectionate in the traditional sense, and chooses the more difficult path: chooses saving her children through killing. Medea justifies her horrendous act by stating that she desires to protect her children from the inevitable destiny of their parents ambushing ahead and enforced by the gendered roles: they would either turn into victims- the female one or the perpetrators- the male ones:

> MEDEA
> then I can't say it do it then
> I'll kill the children must
> to save them
> shall I let my sweet boys become cruel men like their father?
> shall I let my daughter grow up to womanhood
> and this world's mercy? never!
> I'll kill you first my darlings
> then when I've done for Jason utterly I'll die happy (Lochhead *Medea* 29)

Medea posits that the motive behind the infanticide she plans to perform is not merely to save her children from being victims of the order that condemns her to a life of exile, exclusion and displacement. It is blended with another motive: revenge. Medea appraises the significance of the position of the children as they are not only prospective bearers of suffering inflicted on them by gendered conflicts but also representatives of Jason's dynasty and his hope for a prosperous future. Being cognizant of the power/potential of their children, Medea conspires to preclude her husband's future political ambitions through the destruction of her own children and tries to detach the umbilical cord of their relationship, which is the children and to

cut their identification for good, which would jeopardize all the political and power-related plans of Jason. With her idiosyncratic act, Medea attempts to shock and perplex not only the society but also Jason who exclude, isolate and belittle her. They both refuse to give her the symbolic recognition and gratification that she needs in order to survive as a cultured human being and to earn a place in the paternal society. She, therefore, wants Jason to suffer on both a political and personal level even if it means swallowing herself in pain. Medea, in a way, wants to show how far a wronged woman/a broken mother can go and display the limits that she might transgress when done wrong.

Resembling Jason to the wolf, the chorus expects Medea to play the role of docile sheep and sacrifice herself for her children, enact and perpetuate the expected roles appropriated by the established order. Yet, Lochhead forsakes the mythological, historical and social equation of the mother to the submissive sheep, disavows the divine aspect attributed to Medea in the original version and reframes Medea's motives as in Euripides' version, Medea owns an endless desire for a glorious reputation whereas in Lochhead's version, Medea is involved with amending the children's future and punishing Jason. The chorus, however, fails in forming empathy with Medea and accepting "her maternal fear of raising children to perpetuate similar male-female gender roles" (Craig 45). The chorus, which has been initially portrayed to take side with Medea and bid her hope to overcome the difficult situation she is in through female solidarity and invitation for revenge, gradually mutates into the long-criticized hidden voice of covert patriarchy and dissents with Medea as it prioritizes motherhood over sisterhood. The chorus negates and erases Medea as an eradicator of the bond of sisterhood and a disobedient advice seeker. Paraskevova, too, comments on the chorus's turning back on as such:

> The Chorus's role could also be interpreted from the perspective of the Kristevan split in the motherly or the borderline between nature and culture and of her own flesh, which contradicts the social norm of motherhood. Thus, Lochhead attacks two of the established conventional feminist clichés: sisterhood between women (a recurring theme in her poetry described as 'clyping'), and the social image of women as natural mothers, opposing the

> patriarchal perception of women as the biologically reproductive source and thus keepers and breeders of cultural re- productivity. For that reason, Lochhead's Medea turns into the protesting voice against women's objectification by the dominant culture and shows how gender is constructed by social and cultural practices. (105)

Medea's motivation for infanticide stems from her inability to guarantee a safe future for her children in a patriarchal society ridden with tailor-made gender labeling and roles. Craig avers:

> Medea's motivation represents a deeply developed understanding of gender dynamics that the chorus, despite its wealth of feminine experiences ranging across history, cannot process. Like them, Medea does understand how maternal sacrifice should be enacted, but refuses to perform her role, knowing that it will lead to future female suffering for her daughters and enable her sons to become tyrants. Instead, the children become the innocent casualties of the matrimonial fracas, dispatched in a pre-emptive act. (48)

The chorus is horrified of Medea's decisiveness to murder her own children, misses the rationale behind her act and positions her outside the borders of motherhood and the nurturing and self-sacrificing mother archetype. Medea breaks the circle that has existed for years and performs an unnatural act. The chorus prioritizes the grief infanticide bestows on man and women as something worse than disease, war and even death:

> CHORUS
> you are stone you're iron
> your heart is nothing human
> sex makes birth makes death
> but here is a broken circle
> here is nothing natural (Lochhead *Medea* 44)

The female chorus elaborates on undermined social roles, biological necessities and identities and mentions disturbed and broken circles. The chorus is defied with the biological and confining role and understanding of the mother/motherhood and considers Medea an unnatural and cruel being. Medea expends and amplifies her

subversion of motherhood, her undermining of the dominant cultural perception of women presented through the established images and labeling of the chorus and her contribution to the monstrous image by killing another woman/mother-to-be Glauke. Murdering the child in the womb is a further blasphemy and attack on the institution of motherhood. Lochhead's Medea, hence, "breaks not only the natural circle of birth and death but defies the biological instinct of the mother as attributive (the maternal), which subverts the mythological image of Medea as a sorceress and the ritualistic perception of women's sexuality as totemic" (Paraskevova 118).

Medea, thereby, mutates into a subversive figure, renounces performing the female archetype which necessitates motherhood to be spiritual and glorifying, discards all the associations related with the great mother and attempts to protect her children through a riotous and acrimonious act- infanticide. She murders her children de facto to save them. Medea achieves her aim as she both saves her children from a devastating future and inflicts pain on her adulterous husband. The initially understanding chorus acts "as a keeper of the social morals and a mirror for Medea as the cultural outside" as the play progresses, and Medea performs the act of infanticide (108). Repudiating following in the footsteps of the chorus, Medea transgresses the broad picture of the psyche of the women represented by the chorus coming from different places, ages and professions, and refuses to perpetuate the notion of motherhood attributed with restrictive and confining meanings. Lochhead rewrites the myth of Medea, displays the unknown parts of her story by granting readers a fresh angle to analyze her acts and positions her in the defiant and subversive line. Medea defiantly cherishes her revenge and completes her role as the iconoclast of the female archetype.

3.1.2. The Integration of Scottish Diction

Other than juxtaposing the feminine aspect through the employment of the feminine chorus and the portrayal of Medea as a subversive figure, Lochhead also rewrites the myth of Medea by means of engendering characters speaking the Scottish language

as “Medea is not only a married woman and mother but also a foreign woman and full of knowledge and determination, cunning woman who threatens the phallic/citizenship body” (105). Though in Euripides’ *Medea*, which is a translation, all the characters speak standard English, Lochhead alters the focus and makes Medea and Corinthian opponents talk different languages, “what Lochhead terms ‘patrician English’ and Scots respectively” (Lochhead *Medea* vi). Medea comes from a different Symbolic order, so she speaks the language of that very order, not that of Corinth. Medea is thereby not recognized/given recognition by the Corinthians as she is an extra-linguistic element that they cannot decipher and find her threatening to the integrity of their living space/order and the Law that maintains that order. In order to demonstrate the misfit condition of Medea and subvert the binaristic organization that drives forward the pushed aside Scottish, Lochhead self-consciously experiments with language and reconstructs the already famous and mainstream myth. She grants Scottish voice to the Corinthians and a heavily accented English to Medea, an East European refugee, an exotic outsider and a mistrusted intruder. Lochhead’s reconstruction and adaptation of *Medea* makes it a play about an outsider, and the revenge she takes on the society that belittles and rejects her.

Blending both the feminist and nationalistic aspects into her readapted version of Medea, Lochhead attempts to foreground the underestimated aspects of women and Scotland, and aims to return those halves to them through her drama as language is fundamental in creating alternative realities and in giving voice to the liminal and peripheral voices positioned far from the center and the dominant discourse. Pugliese, too, suggests that:

> The historical drama, in fact, became the way through which the long ignored national culture was eventually asserted and distinguished from English or British cultures and through which Scotland could proudly demonstrate that a separate history exists. The importance of growing from their own roots and the fact that Scotland might someday give its own contribution to the world drama by cherishing its own national peculiarities, language included, can thus be finally and strongly assented. (81)

Lochhead opens up her play with the stage directions and sets the scene for revisiting Medea in a Scottish setting, "[t]*he people of this country all have Scots accents; their language varies from Scots to Scots-English- from time to time and from character to character and particular emotional state of character*" (Lochhead *Medea* 3) whereas Euripides' *Medea* starts with one-sentence stage direction, *"*[e]*nter Nurse from the house*" (Euripides 37). Even from the very beginning, Lochhead's foregrounding the Scottish language and moving the English language backwards reflect her agenda to restore Scotland to its long-forgotten and repressed cultural aspect, and "in so doing, the Scots language, which had so long been given less dignity and importance than English started to assert its power and range and to affirm itself as a proper target language," causing Scottish speech to reemerge "as an artistically viable language" (Pugliese 81). This political discourse is acted out by the male cast, initiated by King Kreon and Jason and later perpetuated by the Manservant. Together with the Nurse, who also belongs to the Scottish society, they engender a hierarchical power structure and class category in the Scottish context, signified linguistically by the integration of distinct Scots and English.

The Nurse appears first, speaking in Scottish diction and representing the working class and lamenting Medea's fate. The Nurse displays all the sacrifices Medea has made for Jason, apprehends Medea's marginalized position and predicament in a distinct land and regrets the things she has done for love. The Nurse, native of the land of Corinth, speaks the language of the dominant discourse, which Lochhead fictionalizes as Scottish, and though a slave in an inferior position to Medea, the Nurse identifies herself as the Other with Medea, comments on her impasse and questions her situation. The Nurse's continual questioning in Lochhead's *Medea* moves her to an active position different from that of Euripides as in Euripides' version, the Nurse has a conformist and confining attitude stemming from her degraded position. In Lochhead's *Medea,* the Nurse is transformed into a questioning subject, employing the questioning structure "why?" repeatedly (3).

In Euripides' *Medea*, the Nurse lacks the questioning tone, refrains from questioning the injustice that has happened to a woman, merely narrates the events and laments weakly on the injustice caused by a man. Depicted as a passive character solely witnessing events happen and narrating them without questioning Medea's marginalization and falling from grace, the Nurse, in Euripides' *Medea*, does not have a voice and thereby fails to act as an independent subject as she has been suppressed because of her status as a slave. However, Lochhead's Nurse has a more subjective and questioning stance for she comments on the events and does not abstain from stating her personal remarks.

Lochhead, like Euripides, portrays the play around the topic of otherness, which is reflected in the eponymous heroine's marginalized language, English. Though the other characters speak Scottish, Medea speaks English, and thus alienated through her language. This long-lasting otherness and marginalization contribute to Medea's realization of her vengeful plans as her "tense cross-cultural relations with her adoptive society climax in an orgy of revenge" (Corbett 30). Medea is cognizant of her status as an outsider and of the impossibility of completely fitting in the society. Euripides' Medea comments on her marginalization with a less emotional, a more cold-hearted and rational stance:

> MEDEA: Because I'm an outsider I know this better than most,
> and have worked hard to fit in,
> but not, like some, I hope,
> in a prideful or aggressive way— (Euripides 44)

Lochhead's Medea, however, has long been stigmatised and transformed into an alienated figure through her liminal background. She has been despised, left alone, labelled as strange and/or snob and criticized for her peculiar habits. In contrast to Euripides' Medea who comprehends her situation as an alien being living in a faraway land but not being discriminated intensely, Lochhead's Medea attacks the discriminatory labeling as "strange, standoffish and snob" and complains about her secondary status in the more powerful land (Lochhead *Medea* 9). Medea takes Jason's adultery to be the result of her exterior and disparate background and blames

him for ignoring her role in their victory. Jason, however, belittles her help and degrades her role in his story by denouncing, "let's not exaggerate your role in my story" (19). Jason discredits and scorns all the sacrifices Medea has made and the betrayal she has ventured for his goodness. Not only does he underestimate Medea's courageous and love-ridden treacherous acts but also demotes the civilization she belongs to the weaker and insignificant leg of the binary oppositions:

> JASON
> excuse me I'd say you got more than gave quite frankly
> dragged from the backwoods to civilization
> from brutish pigswill chaos to sweet law and reason
> to this place where Gods help them they've made
> much of you (Lochhead *Medea* 19)

Jason positions Medea's homeland in direct opposition to Greek civilization and defines it as barbarian, brutish, chaotic and lawless and Greek as lawful, civilized and reasonable. The binaristic understanding of civilizations and the categorization of the people living there as weak/powerful, passive/active and unreasonable/reasonable are perpetuated and appropriated by one of the male representatives of the patriarchy, Jason. By employing the discriminatory language, Jason alienates Medea further, contributes to her otherness and marginalization and accelerates the execution of her avenging plans.

Lochhead's reconstruction of Euripides' *Medea* and rewriting of the myth of Medea reverberate the predicament of the downtrodden and oppressed beings made secondary and offer an alternative to their realities. Lochhead achieves this in *Medea* through the fusion of the remaking of the feminine and the Scottish diction, which have been ignored and treated as subservient. The perception of the Scottish language rendered subsidiary to the English is challenged by Lochhead as in her play, she foregrounds the Scottish language through the demotion of English to the secondary/othered position and through the highlighting of Scottish as the dominant language, and she, in this way, problematizes the issues of the self and Otherness

through the characterization of Medea and the Nurse and overthrows the restrictive and fixed depiction of them.

3.2. Medea: A Challenge to Logocentricism

"The crueltee of thee, queen Medea,
Thy litel children hanging by the hals
For thy Jason, that was of love so fals!"
"Man of Law's Tale"
Geoffrey Chaucer

This section aims to explore Lochhead's urge and desire to engender an alternative reading of reality and her own dramatic strategies distant from the operations and imperatives of patriarchy in *Medea*, against the background of Lacanian theorem. The discussions concerning the phallogocentricism of Lacan, stemming from his emphasis on the role of the Symbolic, the realm of the words/the Law, which constrains all the women and the feminine to the boundaries of the Symbolic, revolves around Lacanian concepts such as desire/*object a*, love, phallic mother and narcissistic aggression. Medea, with her iconoclastic and transgressive nature, challenges the patriarchal discourse embodied by Jason and Kreon, defies their decrees and perpetuates acting on her desire. Lochhead's dramatic language becomes a subversive and ideological tool by discarding the labeling Medea is subject to and the positioning she is thrown into. Moved away from the domain of the symbols and the word, Medea approaches the world of images through the act of infanticide and rises out of the ashes of the Symbolic register she has cast a blow on. She engenders a disjunctive feminine niche/space in which she can exist as a woman- not as a mother.

"Poor Jason who has gone off to conquer the Golden Fleece of happiness- he does not recognize Medea!" states Lacan and lays bare the core of the tragedy of the Medusan like phallic heroine of Lochhead's play *Medea* (Lacan *Ècrits* 762). Originally a goddess but in the land of Jason, a sorcerer, a witch, an alien and an impossible woman of the patriarchally coded myth whose existence is not recognized,

the barbaric woman of Colchis, Medea brings forth the subversive potential of desire and *jouissance*, which emerges with the act of infanticide; in the process, approaches the uncharted realms of the feminine act. Medea, with her transgressive act of infanticide, fits into Lacanian concept of the authentic act, the thought of which has been raised in the "Tragedy" section of *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (1986). Lacan differentiates between the authentic act and the customary one on the basis of the magnitude of their effects; "as 'act', such a gesture is differentiated from the mere violence insofar as it restructures the framework of the symbolic networks that organizes subjectivity, and in so doing ensures that the individual is forever changed in the act" (Coulthard 39). *Žižek* also comments on the authentic act: "[f]or Lacan, there is no ethical act proper without taking the risk of… a momentary 'suspension of the big Other,' of the socio-symbolic network that guarantees the subject's identity: an authentic act occurs only when the subject risks a gesture that is no longer 'covered up' by the big Other" (in Vighi *Žižek* 133).

Medea's murdering her children transgresses the mere act of killing but assumes the role of a subversive undertaking to break the supremacy of signifiers as "[t]he subject is nothing other than what slides in a chain of signifiers, whether he knows which signifier he is the effect of or not. That effect-the subject- is the intermediary effect between what characterizes a signifier and another signifier, namely, the fact that each of them is an element" (Lacan *Seminar XX* 50). After the act of the murder, the connection between the signifiers is broken as a result of which "all words are useless, and she exists once and of all from the register or the reign, of the signifier" (Miller 19). Medea finds herself in the void of self-destructive negativity and subjectivity. Medea's act interferes in the Symbolic order and defers the symbolic implications as it reconstructs and refictionalizes what is (im)possible. "Because radical acts cannot be separated from subjectivity, Medea's act is one of self-erasure and subjective orientation as well" (Coulthard 40) as "her whole self is in the act" (Miller 19), which leads to an irreversible change in her self. In a way, Borromean knot in her world is dissociated as the logic and the signifiers of the Father and the Symbolic become dysfunctional.

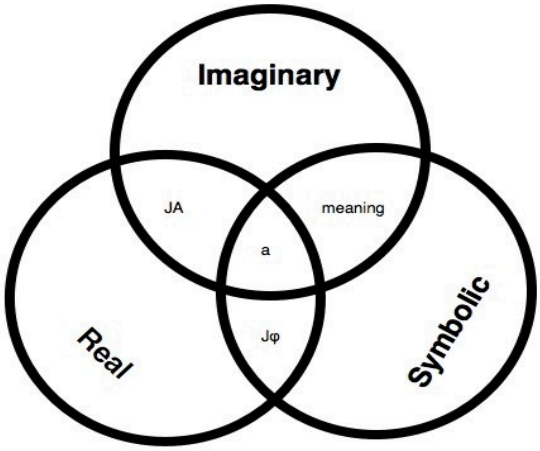

Figure 3.1: Lacan's Borromean Knot *(Jouissance of the Other at the intersection of the Imaginary and the Real and phallic jouissance between the Real and the Symbolic.)*

Lacan's Barromean knot is composed of the intertwined rings which symbolize the titular three orders, and it is the expression of "this infernal trinity of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real" (Lacan Seminar XXII 93). The knot of the Imaginary is consistent and unbreakable (78), the Symbolic, however, can be written as a signifier for it concerns the world of the signifiers and can create a hole (94), and the Real is "strictly unthinkable" (7). Lacan avers that "the subject is what is determined by the figure in question, determined, not that in any way he is the double of it, but that it is by the squeezing of the knot, of what in the knot determines the triple points from the fact of the tightening of the knot that the subject is conditioned" (122)

Medea, however, in a sense hinders the operation of the Symbolic register as it is and forces its reconfiguration of what is considered impossible and its transformation into the possible by incorporating her whole mind, psyche and ego into the ethical act, which is confounding, murderous and extreme. Dissociated from the Symbolic order of the big Other with its blunt and daring refusal of it, the authentic ethical act is eradicative and devastating as the norms of the ethical are suspended, reconsidered and reorganized. With the enactment of the Lacanian authentic act and with self-relating exercise of violence, which challenges the domain of the paternal metaphor,

Medea chooses to remain true to her "self" and desire leading to the unleashing of the destructive *jouissance* and eventually alters the symbolic dimension of the situation. She moves from the Symbolic to the Imaginary and falls into the narcissistic aggression, which will be explored further in the upcoming part.

Medea's defiance and refusal of the authority, the extension and implication of which is her father who stands for the Law and the Symbolic register, can be traced back to her Colchis days. Though Medea has already been configured by the language of the dominant discourse and entered the world of the law and signifiers in her father's land, she, even from the very beginning, repudiates and does not acknowledge the authority of her f/Father. Favoring the world of senses, implicated by her fame for preparing elixirs and potions, over the world of reason, Medea hints at an impending challenge to the Symbolic register she temporarily resides in and an imminent reversal of the expected roles of a submissive and an obedient daughter.

With the arrival of Jason, Medea chooses to disconnect the familial and symbolic ties that bond her to the realm of the Symbolic. Medea's renunciation of her own land/family for love and her preference for a new one necessitate the reconfiguration of a different cultural register in Lacanian sense. In order to survive, Medea needs to fictionalize her position in alignment with the community she has come to live, get integrated into the patriarchal order of Corinth, succumb to the yoke of the dominant discourse represented by Jason and King Kreon in an alien land and eventually enter the preexisting phallogocentric Symbolic register. Having moved into the position of "a fawning exile/a foreigner" implicated by her alien language, English, Medea is compelled to enter the language of the dominant discourse, Scottish. Language as "a house of Being" in Heideggerian sense is more than a mere instrument of communication or signifying process stemming from the fact that human beings dwell in language (Lochhead *Medea* 2). "In other words, the man who is born into existence deals first with language; this is a given. He is even caught in it before his birth" (Lacan *L'Express* May 1957). Human condition and existence of the man as a subject depend on "the imperative of the Word as law that has shaped him in its

image" (*Ècrits* 78). Language adds a new dimension to the reality of human condition "in that it is not only man who speaks, but in man and through man *it* speaks (*ça parle*), that his nature is woven by effects in which is to be found the structure of language, of which he becomes the material, and that therefore there resounds in him, beyond what could be conceived of by a psychology of ideas, the relation of speech" (217).

As the subject is shaped in and through language, as man acquires meaning and deciphers the realities bestowed on him and attains the place spared for him in a discourse merely through language, Medea is segregated, alienated, marginalized and attacked by the residents of another Symbolic register as she is an extra-linguistic element for Corinthians. Medea is a threatening outsider; thus, she cannot be given recognition and symbolic narcissistic gratification. This is revealed through in her following lines to the Chorus:

> MEDEA
>
> Ladies of all time ladies of this place
> And others I'm here now
> I know you've thought me strange 'standoffish' 'a snob'
> You've said of me not understanding my shyness
> My coolness merely masked my terror of being snubbed
> No one loves a foreigner
> Everyone despises anyone the least bit different
> 'see how she ties her scarf' 'that hair outlandish'
> you walked by my house with eyes averted
> turned your nose up at my household's cooking smells
> 'why can't she be a bit more like us?'
> say you Greeks who bitch about other Greeks
> for not being Greeks from Corinth! (Lochhead *Medea* 9)

Medea attempts to mediate between her past and her present, to close up the gap between them, and she yearns for prospective transcendence of her roots which would provide her with a sense of coherence in the new land. Initially,

> Medea (as a symbol of the sacred alogos) is located beyond the dialect of polarization, beyond the logos where is not the opposite of Jason but a force

> that does not need teleology in order to exist. However, the logos and the telos need her for their own, to determine their origin, and separate themselves from the very site of (in)difference. (Ravetto 235)

To this end, Medea undergoes the process of yielding the dominion and necessities of the process of civilization and enculturation. This process aims to create sameness out of difference after she has been objectified because of her help to Jason to steal the Golden fleece and displaced from her land Colchis. The domination of the logos, as suggested by Irigaray, "stems from its power to reduce all others to the economy of the same (patriarchal)" ("This Sex" 74). The effect and strength of the logos hinge upon the binaristic organization, a process of differentiating and othering enacted by the patriarchal and hegemonic discourses so as to perpetuate and legitimize their own power and dominance over the distinct ones. The same, guaranteeing the maintenance of the order is prefigured as Greek and male in *Medea*, and requires the negative counterpart of non-Greek and female in order not to interfere in the smooth running of the patriarchal Symbolic register. Medea turns her back on her family and land by stealing the fleece for the sake of Jason and in a way, rips her father of the symbolic source of power. She transgresses the limits of the first logic of the signifiers as she detaches the bond between the father-the daughter and discards the anticipated roles attributed to this familial tie. Medea does not recognize the authority of the f/Father and intensifies the magnitude of the blow she has cast on the patriarchal representative of the family, her father, by killing his seed, her brother Aysptus, whose dismemberment discloses the potential maintenance of the dynasty and the perpetuation of the mechanisms of hegemony. Medea is a transgressor holding the potential that she can do the same thing- transgress the repressive, limiting and illusionary authority of the Symbolic discourse- again. Reconstructed and repositioned as a figure of rupture and loophole through her unexpected and treacherous act in the Symbolic patriarchal world and thwarting the authority of the oedipal father and symbolically killing him leading to the realization of the unconscious oedipal fantasy, Medea fuses with Jason, initiates the onset of the sexual engagement/economy of a couple, ensures Jason's connection to her with unbroken

and invisible ties yet to be overthrown, and paves the way for gendering and sexualizing of herself and for connecting to Jason with the imaginary ties of love:

> MEDEA
> I was never a woman at all until I met my man!
> maiden Medea my father's daughter was a creature
> who did not know she was born she knew such
> sweet freedom!
> if it is a struggle in a bed or behind a bush engenders us
> then it's when we fall in love that genders us
> Jason I am a woman now! (Lochhead *Medea* 9-10)

To expound on *love* and its imaginary connections and identifications, Lacan gives the example of Picasso's parakeet which has seemed to identify with Picasso's attire. Lacan believes that the parakeet in fact identifies with the image of Picasso clothed, and this identification takes place on the imaginary level. Lacan then concludes that the imaginary is the site of love, and love has "a fundamentally narcissistic structure" as it is "a phenomenon which takes place on the imaginary level, and which provides a veritable subduction of the symbolic […]. That's what love is. It's one's own ego made real on the imaginary level" (*Seminar I* 142). Like the parakeet that identifies with the image of Picasso, the lover connects to and identifies with the image of the other, and s/he sees her/his reflection as reverberated in this image and expects to have narcissistic reciprocity. The subject is in search of love and demands it as love validates her/his ego and provides the subject with the promise of filling her/his lack. The possibility of filling in the hole in her/his self and psyche comes with the union of two distinct individuals, which Lacan designates as the One by uttering, "there is such a thing as/something of the One" (*Seminar XX* 6). However, Lacan's formulation of the One and the probability of reaching a unity between sexes is non-existent. Wolf, too, interprets Lacanian understanding of the One as follows, "[t]his one, in Lacanian sense, is not the One of addition, of adding up two jouissance of a woman and a man, but the One of the signifier. The One of the sexual relation between the two sexes does not exist and cannot be written in so far as ex-istence is a symbolic category, so the only one to put it this way, is the one of signifier" (5).

In the love relations, the Imaginary becomes the locus of love, and like the parakeet that seems to be in love and identified with the image of Picasso, the subject/the lover identifies with the image of the other/the loved one on the imaginary domain. The lover expects a narcissistic gratification and reciprocity from the other, who is perceived as a whole and unified being, and who is bestowed on with the prospects of filling in the gap/void the subjects have and for presenting her/him what is missing in her/him or what s/he desires. The other, hence, projects the ideal ego- the image that the subject presumes to lack in her/his own self and image. The imaginary love object, thereby, emerges as the embodiment or replacement of the *objet a* cause of the child's desire. The loss of the *objet a* caused by the desire of the mother for the Other engenders a void in the ideal ego, which the subject struggles to complete with the love object.

Thus, in the imaginary register, love is triggered/comes into existence by means of the subject's identification with the ideal ego/the image which is the unified and whole mirage of the subject when eyed afar. The mother in the mirror stage is the image that provides the infant with the sense of wholeness and integrity and unity and that the subject attempts to identify with. Similar to the mother-infant relationship, the lover positions the beloved/the other in the place of the ideal ego, and desires and loves this other as it grants the lover the promise of integrity and the sense of completeness in her/his ego. Yet, what the subject endeavors to attain is the illusionary and the imaginary identifications of the ego and the desire, turning the subject into the realm of void/gap and fragmentation as the lover is devoid of the things the subject demands and desires de facto.

In accordance with Lacan's theory of love as a failure/encore, love as trauma is manifested through the psychic states of narcissism, and the love relationship between Medea and Jason is positioned in a circle of failure and eventually of terror. Medea takes Jason as her ideal-ego/imaginary other, and she desires to attain completion with Jason as her projected image. By relinquishing her familial ties, dissecting her brother and dispatching her father's symbolic power, Medea, with her

original self, continuously demands Jason's love. Though Jason has provided Medea with illusionary love bonds and deceptive unity as Medea has bestowed on him power, his *objet a*, cause of desire, he later fails to project the image that she desires as the love object. Medea positions Jason in the place of the ideal ego that has the possibility of providing her with wholeness and unity, and loves him as he holds the promise of reflecting back her image as integrated and complete, thereby contributing to and feeding the narcissistic side of her ego and validating her own existence.

However, Jason forestalls projecting her image back at her and repudiates perpetuating the role of the ideal ego as he gets immersed in a new love-power relationship with Glauke. Denied the narcissistic reciprocity and gratification, Medea embarks on engendering a new image of herself, which is destructive and aggressive. Love is disallowed and forestalled, and the incomplete love Medea experiences is laden with fragmentation, holes and fractures, making love a failure. Salecl avers that "the immersion into sadness or even self-injury often happens when the woman loses love because of the nature of feminine jouissance that one finds in women a specific call to elective love, which cannot resolve the discord between phallic and feminine jouissance" ("Love" 94). Medea is unable to mediate between phallic and feminine *jouissance* as the former revolves around the universal signifier, the phallus, and reduces women to the phallic/masculine dimensions by excluding the non-phallic part of the feminine *jouissance*, which is the *jouissance* that is more than the phallic one as it is "beyond the phallus" and that cannot be verbalized and depicted with its supplementary and surplus value (Lacan *Seminar XX* 74). When having Jason's love, Medea experienced phallic/sexual *jouissance*: however, upon the annihilation of love relation with Jason, Medea moves to the domain of the feminine and starts to experience the feminine *jouissance* only.

Medea loses love, causing the destruction of the ideal ego image that hides and veils the Other. Also, she loses her narcissistic and imaginary identification/gratification, and thus, she loses a part of herself since in the love relationship she forms, a woman is always the Other, the Other to herself. In the light of these, Lacan contends that:

> Love will leave her. Then alone with her otherness, but at least the other that love erects can label her with a lover's name, as Juliette is eternalized by Romeo, Iseult by Tristram and Beatrice by Dante, we can deduce from this fact that, for a woman, the loss of love exceeds the phallic dimension to which Freud reduced it. For what she loses in losing love is herself, but as an Other. (Lacan *Ècrits* 107)

Lacanian paradigm of gender and sexuality requires the dissolution and resolution of the Oedipal crisis and the intervention of a third party in the mother-infant dyad: the Law/the Name of the Father as Lacan believes that sexual identity is acquired from identification with the Other and integration into language, and subjectivity is attained with the experience of alienation that occurs in the encounter with the Other. Lacan's Oedipal structure can be described as "the obligation every child is under to submit his or her sexuality to certain restrictions and to the laws of organization and exchange within a sexually differentiated group, and in this way, find her or his place within that society" (Lemaire 81). The infant comes to an understanding and acceptance of the sexual rules in a society transmitted by what Lacan calls the Symbolic order, meaning the order of Law, language, cultural rules, norms and conventions and mediating between non-verbal domain- the Imaginary and the Real. Lacan traces the source of sexual identity in a pre-oedipal period and bases identity on desire and Law as identity is constructed out of identifications and images developed in relation to desire and submission to the Law of the Other.

The infant is born into the world of the predetermined signifiers/language/the Symbolic order that is established by her/his parents, provided with a name in the society's norms and language and granted with the desires of the parents, especially the mother's desire which will shape the infant substantially on the road to self-alienating subjectivity. In order for the infant to become a subject, Lacan proposes, a space or a lack needs to open up, for which the mother will be responsible as she creates this lack by displaying the infant that she herself is a subject per se, lacking and desiring. Understanding the lack of the mother, the infant attempts to fill the hole and complete the lack by turning into that which the mother desires. The infant's subjectivity, thereby, is dependent on an alienation engendered by the encounter with

an other. The subject comes to an understanding of and learns to desire through mimicking the (m)other's desire and constituting her/his desire in line with hers. Lacan positions the source of desire as a lack in the Other as "desire is always what is inscribed as a repercussion of the articulation of language at the level of the Other," (Lacan *My Teaching* 38). Because desire is constructed by language, and "desire is the desire of the Other," as desire belongs not to the desiring subject but to the Other as the locus of signifiers, it is inexpiable, "excentric and insatiable." (Lacan "Translator's Note" *Seminar XI* viii).

However, the dyadic relationship between the infant and the mother cannot be sustained in the society as the infant fails to fulfill the mother's desire (entirely) because of the intervention of a third term, which Lacan calls the Name-of-the-Father or the paternal metaphor. Cherishing the wholeness with the (m)Other who becomes the center of the infant's identification and functions as the mirror image, the infant has to face the interference of any other third person, imposing a prohibiting force on her/his unified sense of self with the mother and arousing an awakening in her/him regarding the illusionary unity with the mother. Lacan avers that the father does not necessarily have to be an actual biological father but an authority figure that represents the law and hinders the "asocial positioning of the child in a relationship of plenitude with the mother that requires nothing external to sustain it" (Lindheim 84). The paternal metaphor unsettles the infant's unison and congruous yet illusionary vision of an impeccable unity with the mother, alluding to the fact that the mother's desire is beyond the reach of the child and urges her/him to take a position out and look for other acceptable ways of articulating her/his desire. "This refusal to allow the imaginary perfect unity of the mother-child dyad, this denial to the child of a hypothetical wholeness and the pure pleasure or satisfaction it entails, represents the castration that Lacan considers the lot of each and every subject" (85).

The loss of the hypothetical wholeness between the mother and the infant opens up a hole, a lack and a sense that something has been lost and removed from the infant. This sense of loss frames the infant as lacking and thereby desirous. The infant

represses the pain inflicted by the separation and internalizes the phallic signifier, the residue of which is the birth of desire, "a structural inadequacy in the human subject which drives individuals to strive forever, to seek new ways to compensate for the elemental loss of psychic illusion of unity" (Ragland-Sullivan 8). The lost object is *objet a*, which is inexplicable and yet which owns a significant function of being the cause of the object's desire. Lacan proffers that it can take many forms as seen in the example of a gaze, voice or breast. Rather than the individual, *objet a* initiates desire as "the subject begins to desire a particular individual based on the individual's possession of the particular 'object a' that sets the subject's desire in motion" (Lindheim 85). *Objet a* resides mainly in the realm of fantasy as the lost object never existed, and because of that, there is no possibility of finding an absolute object that can bring absolute pleasure to the subject. The infant strives throughout her/his life to attain the lost feeling of unity and integrity, and attempts to revive it in people, language, material goods, love or belief systems, all of which play a substitutive role in regaining the lost feeling and object into the chain of the signifiers of desire.

As averred by Van Pelt, "desire is the price of admission to the symbolic order; for Lacan, the subject's dues are never fully paid" (92). Because of that, individuals seek to restore the pre-oedipal dyadic sense of wholeness and regain a pre-enculturated/pre-Symbolic self, which is realized only temporarily with *jouissance*, the lost feeling of satisfaction or pleasure. *Objet a* comes into existence at the moment of the loss, provides the subject with a temporary pleasure and gives the illusionary feeling of wholeness.

Lacan also dwells on the engenderment of subjectivity and construction of the subject in relation to her/his relationship to *objet a* which represents her/his subject position. Experiencing subjectivity as a self-alienating confrontation with the Other manifesting itself as language, as law and as desire, the subject attempts to establish and follow her/his desire in what Lacan calls fundamental fantasy. The masculine subject when confronted with the lack both in himself and in the Other desires in a phantasmic way to complete the lack in the subject. Lindheim proposes that:

> Seeking to veil the fact of castration, he strives to possess the "objet a" that, when obtained, will provide him with the wholeness as subject he so craves. Struggling to deny the importance of the Other to his desire, and thereby providing his own self-reliance, the masculine subject attempts to remove from the Other all significance beyond the role as vessel for "objet a." In other words, he desires his partner not *qua* person but only *qua* objet a. (86)

The masculine subject's desire, however, is impossible to realize as the subject cannot refrain from getting attached to the Other though he does whatever he can to deny the significance of the Other.

Lacan suggests that the feminine subject, in contrast, embraces and cherishes an unsatisfied desire. Her confrontation with castration causes her to remedy the lack that she sees in the Other. Tied to the desire of the Other and desiring to be desired, the feminine subject endeavors to figure out what desire of the Other is and transforms herself into that specific *objet a* that will complete the Other and fulfill his desire. However, desire is desire only if it is kept unsatisfied since it is dependent on a lack, on something elusive and quick-silver like. The feminine subject, therefore, is in a paradoxical situation as she is stuck between her willingness to construct herself as the cause of the Other's desire and her abstinence from satisfying the desire of the Other since satisfaction would correspond to the perish of desire. In order to maintain her position as a desired object, the feminine subject should engage the desire of the Other alive and unfulfilled as the worst thing one can employ on desire is to attempt to satisfy it. Desire is carved out in the space where the other is believed to lack; therefore, the gap cracked open must be left ajar in order to grant the subject the space to desire:

> One can see how a sexual relationship occupies this closed field of desire and plays out its fate there. This is because it is the field designed for the production of the enigma that this relationship gives rise to in the subject by doubly "signifying" it to him: the return of the demand it gives rise to, in the form of a demand concerning the subject of need; and the ambiguity presented concerning the Other in question in the proof of love that is demanded. The gap constituted by this enigma avers [affirms] what determines it, namely, to put it as simply and clearly as possible, that for each of the partners in the

> relationship, both the subject and the Other, it is not enough to be subjects of need or objects of love – they must hold the place of the cause of desire.
>
> This truth lies at the heart of all the defects found in the psychoanalytic field regarding sexual life. It also constitutes the condition of the subject's happiness there. (Lacan *Ècrits*, 690-692)

Lacan implies that the core of the relationships is/should be the insatiability of desire and the ability to perpetuate desire as it safeguards against the trap of satisfaction, "for desire is a defense, a defense against going beyond a limit in *jouissance*" (*Ècrits* 825), and "desire, indeed, is there to persist as desire, not as anything else" (Leader 108). Desire, thereby, does not exist to be satisfied, but exists to maintain desire alive and at play, and it should not be understood as a thing/a feeling/a sense that means something but as a means of resisting meaning, "That desire should be determined by an act of signification does not at all give us its meaning in any complete sense. It may be that desire is a by-product, if I can express myself in this way, of this act of signification" (Lacan *Seminar V* 2)

Lacanian theorem, hence, provides an insight into Medea's construction of herself as the cause of Jason's desire and of Jason as her object of desire and her eventual move to the destructive feminine desire which finalizes in the act of infanticide. At first, Medea's desire operates in alignment with the realization of masculine desire as she endeavors to be the object that triggers Jason's desire and keep it in a constant pay, and to this end, she performs her role as a submissive and docile mother/wife submitting to the Symbolic order/the Law. In order to render herself desirable, Medea positions her desire in connection with Jason's desire, and she addresses the narcissism of masculine desire but manipulates it to her advantage so that she can be the eternal cause of his desire. However, after Jason's betrayal, Medea's desire is moved to the realm of feminine desire as she attempts to conjure herself up as distinct from the other woman, Glauke and as far away from the established notions concerning the concept of woman and mother.

For Lacan, to be a subject is to desire, so Medea's story of desire starts with the arrival of Jason in her land to seek the Golden fleece. As Medea falls in love with Jason, she disconnects the dyadic ties between herself and her father and turns her back on the Symbolic realm of the Father. Medea moves from the world of language, law and symbols of her native land, Colchis, to another world of Symbolic order, Corinth. To this end, Medea is disengaged from her familial and oedipal connections and thus left in the void of incompleteness and lack. Her desire to fill in this lack and hole emerges, and she internalizes the phallic signifier and identifies with Jason, who has not only paternal significance but also lover implications. Fictionalizing Jason as the/her object of desire that returns the sense of wholeness she has lost and sacrificed and as the substitute that fills in the gap/lack in her psyche and unconscious opened up after the dissolution of the elysian dyad, Medea is now ready to enter the Symbolic order/the Law/the Word, the representative of which is Jason, to act upon and accept its dictates and necessities to have a place alongside her lover in the Symbolic order.

Medea is hereby engendered as the other of the man and gendered by her desire, which fixates her in the sexual economy of patriarchy and makes her succumb to and accept the position of self-negation as the other in the land of sameness. Medea's desire manifests itself in her dissociation and disengagement from her native land- the land of her father. By cutting the umbilical cord connecting her to her family, Medea undergoes the process of individuation of the self, which is characterized by the desire to be owned and desired by Jason and by the desire to be his object of desire, *objet a*. However, Medea's quest to fill in the lack she has through Jason and to fill in the lack that Jason has is of no success as Lochhead compresses the periphery, the liminal and the marginal into the dominant Western discourse through the erotization of the Western male figure, unraveling and unleashing desire of the female, yet eventually paving the way for "a vision that leads to the annihilation of the sacred and ultimately of the object of desire itself" (Ravetto 238). The process of engenderment and the emergence of desire, thereby, "appear as not a loss of wholeness, but a mutilation of natural passions- a mutilation of the self and the

reduction of that very self to the opposite of the desired object that has power over the self, since it possesses what the self lacks" (238)

When gazed at from the point of the Corinthians, Medea is constructed and perceived as the symbol of the periphery, another territory and realm. Thus, she needs to enter the domain of the male by being the concubine to the ideology and hegemonic dictations of the dominant discourse and the patriarchal ideology. Following the necessities of the feminine desire, Medea attempts to understand what her lover wants/lacks so that she can perform the ways of capturing his desire and become her object of desire. Masculine subjects have imaginary identifications with his partner and engender an imaginary and fantasized portrayal of her so that she can remedy the lack he has. "Constructing an idealized version of her, he holds her up as a double of himself […] The woman becomes a projection to reinforce the image the man has of himself" (Lindheim 99). Medea, thereby, begins performing distinct roles required for her entrance into the Law of which Jason is a part so as to reflect his power back at himself and strengthen his image, the first of which starts in Colchris where she has sacrificed her familial ties, her past and her self and made concessions to satisfy Jason's desire and to mirror his image:

MEDEA
first things first I saved your life
and everybody knows it each Greek that sailed with you
the whole caboodle who crewed the valiant Argo
knows it without my magic
you could not have yoked the fiery bulls
in the field of death nor sown the dragons' teeth
except I killed the serpent whose loathsome coils
looped the Golden Fleece
and who was its guardian who never slept
I killed it I made you Jason!
betrayed my own father my royal line
ran mad for you after you to Iolcus Pelias' place
more passion then than sense
I killed King Pelias to keep you secure
killed him by tricking his loving daughters
to unwitting patricide
horror and another royal house destroyed

so I did then now so! (Liz Lochhead *Medea* 17-18)

Medea, to be the cause of Jason's desire, has forfeited many significant things including her royal lineage, her family and the illusionary wholeness she has experienced in the linguistic/patriarchal realm she has forsaken. After arriving in Jason's land, Medea perpetuates attaining tailored-made roles which would gratify Jason's lack and complete his hole by providing him with a temporary sense of wholeness and by being *objet a* to him. The dual role of adhering to Jason's desire manifests itself in the satisfaction of her own lack by being *objet a* to him and submitting to the realm of the law/rules/language where Jason dwells in. Medea's mere access to the phallogocentric domain is by impersonating the subsidiary and secondary positions and by taking up the othered, peripherized and liminalized spaces for Jason's sake: woman as the sexual other and foreigner as the cultural/social other. However, the center of Medea's pre-symbolic world is smashed on the way to her obligatory entrance into the patriarchal Symbolic order and leaving her wander aimlessly on a quick-silver like ground. The only anchoring point that controls Medea's repressed violence that lurks in the bushes, that stabilizes her wandering mind, provides her with an illusionary center and hinders her exposal of the meaninglessness of the Word is her love and desire for Jason. Love and desire to desire/desire to be desired hold the gates of Medea's suppressed anger and violence sprung out of the sacrifices she has made for Jason and engendered out of the lost ties of her pre-gendered self.

Medea's otherness is veiled under a simulacrum and semblance as she represses her othering sides by performing on the role of an obedient Greek wife and mother looking after her house and kids and reflecting back the image of the man by functioning as the magnifying glass. Medea, to this end, is demanded to submit to the sameness of the patriarchal Symbolic order and the paternal metaphor, and yet treated as the xenon and the other woman in return. This moves her to the realm of nothingness and meaninglessness and causes her not to embrace the Symbolic order and take roots there. "Being a waste product as they [women] are, they do not achieve the enunciatory process of the discourse of History but remain its servants deprived

of self (as same) alienated in this system of discourse as in their master and finding some hint of their own self, […] a You or a He, who speaks" (Irigaray *Marine*[19] 139).

Medea, with her seemingly submissive position stemming from her love and desire for Jason perpetuates the power of the phallus and its symbolic significance as the locus of power and meaning, functions as a means of legitimizing and guaranteeing the phallic power and an instrument to appease Jason's desire. Also, Medea attributes another meaning to her existence as the perpetuator of the patriarchy by reproducing the extensions and duplications of the father's/the man's image- children- who will one day maintain the status quo and sustain the running of the hegemony. However, Jason feels free to act in a way that may bring power to him, and he "privileges his own monumental placement within the 'regime of fathers' as the direct heir to the throne over the love for his narcissistic reproductions" (Ravetto 242). With his decision to abandon Medea, Jason not only dismantles his family and confines them to a life of exile- though Medea is already in exile, away from her homeland and family- but also desexualizes her by repudiating her bed and relegating her from the position of the cause of his desire. For Jason, power is *objet a*, and power is represented initially by Medea as she has helped her attain the Golden fleece, the sole embodiment of power and later by Glauke, who is the daughter of the King and thereby holds the potential of laying "the world of power" in front of Jason.

As what Medea can offer to Jason is depleted, Jason finds another cause to satisfy his desire and obtain the *objet a*: Glauke. Glauke leads to an uncontrollable downfall in Medea who loses her sole means of being the cause of desire for someone and of satisfying the lack and completing the gap in the Other, which would give her a temporary sense of unity and wholeness. Jason's fictionalizing Glauke as his new means of reaching power not only displaces Medea of her place but also rips her of her position of being the phallus to a male, which would give meaning to her

[19] Luce Irigaray's book *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche* has been abbreviated as *Marine*.

existence. Moreover, it deterritorializes her as she resides in the Symbolic order as collateral to Jason.

Jason's repudiation of Medea and preference for Glauke stems from his insatiable hunger/desire for power even at the expense of his family and children and his quest for another cause of desire as desire should be kept in motion in order to label it as desire. Having made many sacrifices and played distinct roles so as to fulfill Jason's desire, Medea cannot maintain her status as the eternal cause of Jason's desire and is replaced by Glauke. As a result of her deportation, Medea is expelled from the Symbolic order and assumes a position outside the patriarchal symbolic order, positioning herself in the boundaries of a non-symbolic territory and causing her to be entrapped in the gap between the Imaginary and the Symbolic. Yet, she has no home to return to as she has scattered her pre-linguistic wholeness for Jason, and she gradually regresses into the Imaginary, precipitated by King Kreon's, the ultimate embodiment of the patriarchy and the Law in *Medea*, employment of his authority and banishment of Medea, the abject, from his city-state:

> KREON
> then to hear my decree I banish you
> take your bairns and away you go
> right now far from our borders
> I make the laws and execute them
>
> MEDEA
> I am in the worst of the storm and battered by it
> I'm all alone it's all over for me
> no harbour no haven
> not a cave to shelter in (Lochhead *Medea* 11)

Her dismissal from the logocentric domain regardless of what she has done to fulfill Jason's desire, perpetuate the established order and guarantee its power by succumbing to it and by playing the role of a docile wife and mother fails and thereby evokes a protest and revolt in her. The existence of feminine subjects depends on their attempts to be what the Other lacks and to remedy this lack by means of being the everlasting cause of the Other's desire. However, when the Other deserts the

woman by discharging her from the position of the igniter of desire, the woman faces the lack/hole she has illusorily covered, and hereby her existence as a subject is put in jeopardy. This causes the fragmentation and disintegration of the hard-to-find sense of being, unity and wholeness, and this is what happens to Medea. The threat of dissolution of her sense of being and integrity lays bare the potential destructiveness in her and discloses her phallic nature pertaining to her self as a mother and as a woman.

As stated above, even before the act of transgressive infanticide, with her mere existence, Medea seems to evacuate the underlying mechanisms of the self-proclaimed patriarchal power and threatens the stability of the Symbolic order for as the other, she is expected to engender the periphery and attain a marginalized position so as to give meaning to the patriarchy and reconstruct it as the center. However, Medea denounces the centrality of the patriarchy by her existence as the phallic woman/mother repudiating the labeling, necessities and dictates of the Symbolic order. She also unveils its constructedness by cherishing the maternal absence that Lacan proffers through transforming it to the maternal presence body and soul, and by engendering a liminal feminine space paving the way for her individuality and success of attaining a self in the suffocating environment of restrictive hegemony.

Lacan comments on the reality of the unconscious not "as an ambiguity of acts, future knowledge that is already known not to be known, but lacunae, with rupture inscribed in a certain lack" (Lacan *Seminar XI* 30), which stems from maternal absence, the onset of be-ing as the infant enters into the realm of Law and language and experiences a traumatic disintegration from the maternal locus causing the loss of the archaic mother. The infant's loss of maternal presence is aggravated by the father's prohibiting a return to the maternal realm, as a result of which the child loses:

> [t]he experience of wholeness, the sense of being one with the mother. The pain of this loss results in a primary repression that on the one hand buries the memory of the relationship to the archaic mother in the unconscious, and on the other hand, catapults the infant into the symbolic realm of meaningful

> discourse in order to fulfill its desire to reestablish a relation with an other. This desire can never be satisfied. (Cornell 660)

Lacan negates the maternal presence through the notion of the phallic mother/the sacrifice of the relationship between the mother and the infant and through the degendering the archaic mother by making her a phallic mother. For Lacan, the phallus is the privileged signifier that provides the individual with an illusionary and a false sense of unity and wholeness. Lacan suggests that the phallus does not equate with the penis though he cannot totally escape this equation in his work, causing the erasure of the maternal presence, contributed further by associating woman with the notion of castration. Though Lacan's analysis of castration saves it from the biological limitations, refictionalizes and retells it in terms of linguistic and symbolic ways, he cannot get away with the pitfall of characterizing women in terms of absence.

Lacan positions "woman" as a sign under erasure by uttering that "*The* woman can only be written with *The* crossed through. There is no such thing as *The* woman, where the definite article stands for the universal. There is no such thing as *The* woman since of her essence- having already risked the term, why think twice about it?- of her essence, she is not all" (*Seminar XX* 144). Though the repudiation of unity and the discard of the universals such as the feminine as a universal term may seem to be contributory to feminism, which questions "the register of absolute fixity of the category of woman," Lacan's insight into the acquisition of female subjectivity turns into an impasse as his analysis dictates a depleted and sterile subject position on women's maternal being in the world (Rose in Waugh 60). Lacan claims that during the oedipal phase, the little girl desires not the mother but the phallus and puts it in the position of the missing object of desire, never to be recovered and reclaimed. The introduction of the Name-of-the father into the world of the little girl and the entrance into the Symbolic order make it possible for the girl to break the mother-infant dyadic relationship, which would lead to the formation of the Oedipal triangle and the realization of the girl's relationship with her mother.

Meredith explicates that "the child's first experience of desire triggers the process of language and symbolization; the desire for the lost maternal body is, for Lacan, necessarily connected to the realization that can stand in for objects" (45). Hence, women's sexuality cannot be separated from the phallocentric symbolic order that produces and construes it, "[t]hat the woman should be inscribed in an order of exchange of which she is the object, is what makes for the fundamentally conflictual, and I would say, insoluble character of her position: the symbolic order literally *submerges* her, it transcends her" (Lacan in Meredith 45). Lacan, hereby, confines female subjectivity to a straitjacket as he implies that one cannot turn into a speaking subject without entering the symbolic order and thereby succumbing to the Law of the Father. For Lacan, the Symbolic register regulates the individual subjectivities, and it is constitutional and by its own nature phallic as Lacan hinges the realization of subjectivity on the submission to the Law of the Father. It is also homogeneous as Lacan "subsumes many diverse and contradictory signifying practices under the monolithic and all-pervasive symbolic order" (Meredith 47). The existence of a monolithic, powerful and devouring Symbolic order imprisons the gendered subject in historical fixity, which forestalls the discussions over hegemonic and/or counter-hegemonic discourses and alternative standpoints. Julia Kristeva, too, confirms Lacanian analysis as a failed de-essentialism attempt and states that one is caught "in a profound structural mechanism concerning the casting of sexual difference […] in the West, and [we] can't do much about it" ("Chinese" 257).

Lacan focuses on the absence of women as he proffers that they do not exist and adds a negativity to the presence of women. Lacan proffers in *Encore* that:

> A man is nothing other than a signifier. A woman seeks out a man under the heading of signifier. A man seeks out a woman under the heading- this is going to appear curious to you- under the title of what is only situated from discourse, since if what I am tackling is true, namely, that the woman is not-all, there is something that in her escapes discourse. (*Seminar XX* 86-7)

Lacan takes sexual difference as a matter of perspective and believes that through an act of love, the masculine point of view, embedded in phallic *jouissance*, can be

altered into the feminine point of view leading to feminine *jouissance*. Lacan states that "[o]n one side, jouissance is marked by the hole that does not leave it any other way than that of phallic jouissance. On the other side, can something be attained that would tell us how, what until now was nothing but a fault (faille), gap in *jouissance* could be realized?" (Lacan *Seminar XX* 8). The hole/the empty reserve opened up by *jouissance* is phallic, and thus marks the account of sexuality with the improbability of seeing women nothing other than a castrated phallic woman/mother. The perception of woman and mother as shaped by absence confines them to a *jouissance* no other than the phallic one.

However, as suggested by Kristeva, "if the mother were not, that is, if she were not phallic, then every speaker would be led to conceive of its Being in relation to some void, a nothingness asymmetrically opposed to this Being, a permanent threat against first its mastery and ultimately its stability" ("Motherhood" 238). In depicting Medea as the phallic woman/mother, who is the object of every psyche's secret fear and the deepest desire and who is the symbol of the absolute power of the female as self-governing and self-sufficient beings, Lochhead challenges the Lacanian understanding of woman as absence. Since through her presence, Medea evokes fear and reveals collective anxieties in regard to the power of women and what they can achieve. Medea is, in a sense, the re-embodiment of the phallic mother of antiquity, who represents "the conflation, compaction and concretion of all the most primitive fears and desires of hegemonic heterosexist white bourgeois patriarchy" (Ian 7). When Kreon comes to visit Medea to tell his decree of banishment, she cunningly demands some time to prepare and act on her vengeance plans. However, Kreon hesitates as he confesses that he fears Medea and implies her devouring and phallic nature:

KREON
frankly I'm feart of you why no?
feart you hurt my daughter why no?
you're a clever quine and cunning
malice is your middle name
and your man threw you oot who'd blame him?
I've heard you dared to threaten us

no just the groom but the bride and me the king
you'd do it too Medea
I believe it so it's in self defence
nothing personal I have to hunt yoı
rather that then clap you like a pussycat the now
then too late hear your tigress growl

MEDEA
I've heard this before
I'm oppressed by my reputation
the evil one the witch the clever woman
don't educate your daughters Kreon!

[…]

but a clever woman
fie it is to fly in the face of nature
an abomination (Lochhead *Medea* 11-12)

The nurse also implies the phallic nature of Medea by revealing her fear of even approaching her as she is destructive and devouring:

NURSE
I'm in terror even to approach her
I know her
her cunning her spells her power
how far she'll go and I'm feart o her
more even than I fear for her
she nurses her rage
like a lioness suckling her last living cub
claws at me bull glares
would gore me gash me
I'm anathema
that blank stare (Lochhead *Medea* 8)

The Nurse likens Medea to a lioness capable of ripping and devouring those who approach her and thereby highlights her motherhood in tandem with its phallic nature. The phallic mother can be interpreted as "the infant's fear of an all-powerful, primal or pre-oedipal mother as the projection onto the mother of the child's own sadistic aggression towards her" (McAuley 249). The phallic mother has also narcissistic implications as the mother "who projects their [her] own needs onto the child and

aggressively claims the infant as phallus for themselves [herself], rather than as in the idealized 'good' mother fantasy, subordinating themselves [herself] to his needs and the authority of the father" (250). Initially, when she has wholeness with Jason through love and desire, Medea has engendered and positioned herself on the side of being the phallus to fill in the lack her desire has given way to. However, with the betrayal, Medea has refictionalized her existence as the owner of the phallus and as the indicator of desire, which re-creates her as the phallic woman in the Symbolic order, leading to her ungendering herself by killing her children and ultimately disposing of all the labels and roles insinuated by her positioning. Medea can own the children to the full extent merely with the act of murder as this is the only way of cutting the symbolic ties between Jason and the children for food. After Jason learns Medea's horrific acts, he laments his fate and curses Medea. Yet, as Medea is not in the same Symbolic order where language and words matter as Jason after murdering her children, Jason's cursing and lamentation through words cannot touch and wound her. Medea is in the liminal space she has created where she is untouchable, inaccessible and unattainable:

> JASON
> you have put yourself beyond all pity
> I wish you dead to touch you
> even with my sword's tip would disgust me
>
> MEDEA
> nothing you do to me can touch me now
> we're out of reach beyond you (Lochhead *Medea* 45)

Jason has failed to recognize the illusionary merge of Medea into the Symbolic order and the so-called false image of her as a submissive and docile member of the Law and the Word who complies with the requisites and imperatives of the patriarchal Symbolic order and perpetuates the established and prefabricated hegemonic order. As a response to Jason's disillusionment, Medea frankly accepts all the phallic labeling which has othered and marginalized her. She proudly comes to terms with the image of the phallic woman/mother, first devouring her children and then the man/the husband/the representative of the Law:

JASON
I must have been mad was mad for you
I did not know you
I know you now!

MEDEA
tigress? fury? harpy? witch? she wolf?
monster? yes, I am!
for I have torn out your heart and devoured it. (Lochhead *Medea* 45)

Medea's clandestine and long-hidden phallic nature manifests itself in Jason's preference for another woman, his abandonment and eventually her prospective exile. Having betrayed her family for Jason, only to be betrayed later, Medea finds herself in the abyss of negativity, and she feels lonely, disillusioned and rejected. Medea encounters lack in Jason's absence, loses the assigned position of being a mother and wife and ungenders herself by performing the sin of infanticide. Medea has only one object of love, and when she loses this object of love, she transgresses the expectations of patriarchy and disregards the adjustments and sacrifices she has made to have a place in the Symbolic order. Her dilemma revolves around her positioning on the border between the patriarchal Symbolic order and the Imaginary as she cannot attain a stable place and align herself in these registers, and thus conduces her to prepare vengeance plans.

The paradoxical nature of subjectivity demands Medea to make a choice between accepting marginalization, yielding the loss, living in it and inhabiting the position of the lack OR get over the loss by performing violence to inhabit the position of the void and self-negativity and eventually come to suppress Jason's power and negate his betrayal. The act of violence and cold-blooded plan of vengeance offer the emancipation from a certain symbolic predicament which "lies in resorting to an act of violence whose aim is to break the disavowed libidinal attachment that sustains the subject's double-bind to a given symbolic configuration, while also exposing the very inconsistency of the power edifice itself" (Vighi 65). What is considered cruelty is indeed the structure that is required to act on her desire and maintain her self. Medea performs the horrifying murder by suppressing the knowledge that these

children are her own; she merely aims to disconnect the libidinal attachment that connects her to Jason and traverse the libidinally invested fantasy of the relationship/wholeness by attaining "the explosive surplus of enjoyment that structures her attachment to them," and by endorsing the traumatic dimension of *jouissance*. (66)

Medea's act subverting the phallic logic is an expression of the other non-phallic side of feminine *jouissance*. Until Jason's betrayal, Medea's actions have been inscribed in the logic of the phallus as she has identified with her husband by making him dissolve into her ego. However, after Jason's abandonment, Medea is left with unbearable void and fragmentation as her identification with her ideal-ego, Jason, is shattered. "It is in the Other that the subject is constituted as ideal, that he has to regulate the completion of what comes as ego, or ideal ego- which is not the ego ideal- that is to say, to constitute himself in his imaginary reality" (*Seminar XI* 144). The constituted identity occurs at the level of Lacanian mirror stage and demonstrates an identification that projects the image of the other on the ego. Symbolic identification, in contrast, causes an ego ideal, "which marks an end to the barred subject along the whole loop of the Lacanian graph of desire […]" (Elbeshlawy 122). As suggested by *Žižek*:

> Imaginary identification is identification with the image in which we appear likeable to ourselves, with the image representing what "what we would like to be," and symbolic identification [is] identification with the very place *from where* we are being observed, *from where* we look at ourselves so that we appear to ourselves likeable, worthy of love. (*Sublime Objects* 105)

The idea of murdering her children appears in the context of the void Medea is left with, transforming the phallic *jouissance* she has experienced with Jason when she has loved him to the idea of the murderous act, to the non-phallic part of the feminine *jouissance*.

Lacan differentiates between phallic *jouissance*, *jouissance* of the Other[20] and the feminine one, the Other *jouissance* in that the former is the same for everyone and revolves around the same universal signifier, the phallus, and the latter has no reference point of a/the universal signifier like the phallus as it is singular. In *Encore*, Lacan positions feminine *jouissance* against the phallic/sexual *jouissance* and expands on it as a kind of *jouissance*, which is marked by the improbability of forming Oneness in a sexual relationship. Lacan's employing the term "One" bears in itself Platonic myth of the lover's unity in the *Symposium* and the unified view of the subject in philosophy. Lacan states that phallic *jouissance* is perceived as a barrier to the abovementioned unities. Feminine *jouissance*, in contrast, diverges from masculine, phallic or sexual *jouissance* in terms of its relation to the Other, the other sex. For Lacan, feminine *jouissance* is a specific *jouissance* type that is "beyond the phallus" (74). Women can attain and enjoy both phallic/sexual *jouissance* and a subsidiary kind of *jouissance* as being incomplete/not whole/inchoate, they have an access to a supplementary/surplus *jouissance*.

In Medea's case, the emergence of the feminine *jouissance* coincides with the thought of murder. Up to that time, Medea has had imaginary identification with Jason, enjoying phallic *jouissance*. However, when Jason leaves her for another woman, Medea is confronted with the void, which is the sign of the Other and which transforms the nature of the feminine *jouissance*. Medea, thereby, transgresses what is possible, feasible and acceptable, and reaches a dimension that is designated by Lacan's concept of feminine *jouissance* blended with destructive elements as Medea's desire for vengeance "aims for something more, where the psycho-economic dimension of exchange, law, balance, *ratio* and justice is rendered invalid

[20] Lacan elucidates that "[e]veryone knows that I put forward, in order to explain the functions of this discourse, the use of a certain number of letters. Very specifically, to rewrite them, to rewrite them on the board, the little o, that I call object but which all the same is nothing but a letter. The Capital O, that I make function in what only took on a written form from the proposal, is a production of logical mathematics, or mathematical logic, however you want to state it: This capital O, I did not make just any old thing of it: by it, I designate what is first of all a locus, a place. I said *the locus of the Other*, designated as such by a letter" (*Seminar XX* 79).

and trumped. Accordingly, the dimension of self-preservation loses its meaning, and radical hyperbole, outdoing oneself, overstepping oneself- becomes the authentic mode of *selfhood*" (Lehmann 112).

The authentic mode of selfhood emerges with the fact that Medea cannot endure the fragmentation caused by Jason's absence as his love bestowed on her a sense of wholeness, which she has lost now. When Medea cannot have narcissistic gratification, revealed and provided merely through and/or in love, she regresses into narcissistic aggression. She slowly moves from the Symbolic to the Imaginary, and her only connection to Jason, to the Symbolic, is her children, metonymic extensions of the father figure. As proffered by Julia Kristeva, "the pitiful power of the femme (within the patriarchy) be it drive or murder, is in fact unleashed only with the help of masculine degradation or bankruptcy, the bankruptcy of the father and his manly authority" (*Powers* 169). Humiliated and degraded by Jason's leave, Medea breaks the last tie between her and Jason by means of murder. "This killing of the maternal instinct reflects the absolute emptiness of desire and the self-negation or self-mutilation necessary to return to a lost self," and displays the most influential subversive threat to the stability and integrity of the symbolic power (Ravetto 245). Medea's transgression signifies the extermination of the male fantasy of unity and integrity and the dismemberment and fragmentation of the maternal body, which precipitates the collapse of the Symbolic order.

Medea lays bare the bankruptcy of the Law and the Word as Jason disconnects the motherly/the wifely tie that connects Medea to the Symbolic order, and she displays the fact that:

> The patriarchal system is a system of seduction, physical and material appropriation of otherness and ultimately of laws that only serve to exclude (the other from the self and their own sacred otherness) or decree the exile of the now disempowered other. Just as Jason exiles Medea from the family and its Symbolic order, Kreon exiles Medea from the city-state and its political order. (Ravetto 243)

Jason's treachery and corruption pushes Medea to the boundaries of the Symbolic order and moves her to the position of the abject. Jason's position within the Symbolic order is recognized and ensured only if he can exclude Medea from the order he desires to perpetuate by labeling and constructing her as the abject. Medea's dissociation from the patriarchal discourse is imperative, or Jason would be demanded to enter the domain of the abject. Medea is at the crossroads of the Symbolic and the Imaginary; however, Medea cannot make the sacrifices required by the patriarchal Symbolic order and refuses to be exiled. She inverts the boundary of the order and cherishes the chaos of the abject and the disorder:

> JASON
> it's not the first time you waste yourself
> I've seen it often
> the way you will let your tongue run away with you
> when a low profile meek words acceptance of the status quo
> would have been the way to keep your home
>
> […]
>
> you make it hard for me I've always done my best
> to calm him down persuade him you should stay
> I could have crept back to you in secret would have
> but you can't keep it zipped you will talk treason
> court your own banishment (Lochhead *Medea* 16-17).

Upon Medea's repudiation of abandoning the city-state, and challenging the dictates of the patriarchy, Jason can no longer maintain a stable place in the Symbolic order and maintain law. Jason fails in the task of abjecting the unwanted, the unacceptable and the impossible and causes her to act on her ego as a source of narcissistic aggression.

Lacan's paper titled "Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis (1984)" traces the root of aggression in the narcissistic structure of the ego by hinging this proposition on the Hegelian master-slave dialectic concerning the intersubjective framework of the desire for recognition and by depending it on the trio of the ego, the love object and

the other people. In this paper, Lacan expounds in five theses the nature of aggressivity as it manifests itself by means of psychoanalytic experience. The first three theses dwell on the general principles in which aggressivity is exposed. The biggest part of the paper is devoted to thesis four, which connects aggressivity to Lacan's theory of the mirror stage engendering a narcissistic ego structure, which rests on primary identification.

Lacan states that "[a]ggressivity is the correlative tendency of a mode of identification that we call narcissistic and which determines the formal structure of man's ego and of the register of entities characteristic of his world" (*Ècrits* 16). Lacan designates narcissism as an erotic attachment to the specular image, which regulates the primary identification through which the ego comes into being in the mirror stage:

> [T]he term primary narcissism, by which analytic doctrine designates the libidinal investment characteristic of that moment, reveals in those who invented it the most profound awareness of semantic latencies. But it also throws light on the dynamic opposition between this libido and the sexual libido, which the first analysts tried to define when they invoked destructive and, indeed, death instincts, in order to explain the evident connection between the narcissistic libido and the alienating function of the *I*, the aggressivity it releases in any relation to the other, even in a relation involving the most Samaritan of aid. (Lacan *Ècrits* 4)

The core of narcissism, hence, depends on both eroticism and aggressivity: it is erotic as the subject identifies with the Gestalt[21]/the image, and it is aggressive as the unity of the specular image is contrasted with the disunity of the subject's real body, and thereby threatens the illusionary wholeness s/he has with disintegration and fragmentation. The desire to desire and to be desired is intertwined with a kind of aggressive relativity, "inherent comparisons between the self, an idealized self and

[21] Gestalt is a German word with the meaning of an organized pattern or figure that implies a beyond/a transcendence and thus exceeds the totality of its parts. For Lacan, the imago/the body image that the infant identifies with in the mirror stage is Gestalt as the infant notices not only its physicality but also significance.

others- which awakens the aggressivity of narcissism, self-love" (Lavin 90). Lacan finds the fundamental of the term he calls "aggressive relativity" in the phenomenon of transitivism[22] in which the child identifies with the image of the other and desires what the other desires out of competition and admiration. Lacan mentions young children's recognition of their mirror images either in the mirror or in the mirroring presence of other children, which they perceive to be a whole and which contributes to the physical unity of their later development. The child, therefore, identifies with the image of her/his unified body through the identification with the image of an other.

Dwelling on Hegel's dialectical move from nature to society, Lacan states that the ego is socially structured and mentions the "normal transitivism" of children who cry when they see their friends fall or who when striking others say they themselves have been beaten, which demonstrates the fact that the transitive imaginary ego operates on the borrowed and perceived feelings and passions (Lacan *Ècrits* 19). This brings Lacan to the topic of aggressive relativity as he attaches aggressivity to the ego structure by uttering that "the triad of others, the ego and the object is developed from aggressive competitiveness" (19). The ego is intertwined with aggressive relativity and thereby it cannot be isolated from its perceived identity which sometimes may lead to aggressive moments, "when the subject denies himself and when he charges the other," and "becomes confused" (20). This paranoid and confusing standing is the core of all egos.

As the ego is rooted in the mirrored, borrowed and reflected identification, the imago of the primary identification has the potential of returning to its original fragmented state. Aggressivity and narcissism, extensions of the mirroring, thereby, are

[22] Transitivism, a psychological concept first put forward by Charlotte Bühler, refers to a kind of identification which is seen in small children. With transitivism, the child identifies with another child in a way that reflects and reverses her/his own image. When a child hits another child, s/he can claim that it was the other child who actually hit him/her. In his essay on the mirror stage, Lacan mentions Bühler's remarks on transitivism in children, which "illustrates the confusion of ego and other which is inherent in imaginary identification" (Evans 216).

significant in the engenderment of subjectivity, and they are the precursors which would create the normalizing/secondary identifications. "While primary identifications spring from an intrapsychic rivalry and is, thus, inevitably alienating, Oedipal identification transcends the rivalrous aggressivity that was necessary for primary identification" (Van Pelt 31).

Lacan propounds that the desire of the subject is the desire of the other, and the ego identifies with the desire of the other, so initiates an aggressive rivalry over the object of desire/the desire of the other. Dwelling on Hegelian idea of recognition, Lacan interprets this rivalry as a need for recognition:

> At first, before language, desire exists solely in the single plane of the imaginary relation of the specular stage, projected, alienated in the other. The tension it provokes is then deprived of an outcome. That is to say it has no other outcome- Hegel teaches us this- than the destruction of the other. The subject's desire can only be confirmed in this relation through a competition through an absolute rivalry with the other, in view of the object towards which it is directed. And each time we get close, in a given subject, to this primitive alienation, the most radical aggression arises- the desire for the disappearance of the other. (*Seminar I* 170)

The aggression targeted at the other is thereby at the essence of the *moi*[23] as it is revealed through the infant's narcissistic identifications with distinct images. Lacan believes these identifications to be of erotic relation in which "the human individual takes upon himself an image that alienates him from himself, that are to be found the energy and the form on which this organization of the passions that he will call his ego is based" (*Ècrits* 21).

Aggressivity, for Lacan, is infused into the process of the ego development through identification with images, and it awakens the desire of the subject to be the cause object of the other's desire. Aggressivity, on the one hand, is an indispensable part of

[23] *Moi* is the French term for ego. (Lacan *Ècrits* 67)

the psychic process of the engenderment of the narcissistic ego; on the other hand, it "breaches the margin of libidinal self-investment as it falls on the fringe of self-destruction" (Mills 101). In "Remarks on Psychic Causality (1946)," Lacan conceives the term "narcissistic suicidal aggression" to delineate the fact that the erotic-aggressive character of the narcissistic captivation with the specular image can drive the subject to self-destruction the myth of Narcissus[24] exposes as well (Lacan *Ècrits* 187). The emergence of the narcissistic suicidal aggression during the formation of the ego that Lacan mentions stems from "the alienated and lethal assault of the imago that unleashes a violence on the subject to the point of self-extinction" (101). As aggressivity implicating destruction, fragmentation and dismemberment is intertwined into the constitution of the ego, the subject, who is faced with losing the chance to be the sole object of desire to the Other and with alienation, demonstrates a more intensified and aggravated state of aggressivity to compensate for the lack left with the discard from the position of the igniter of desire in the Other.

The primary identification includes a unifying effect that connects the infantile image of the fragmented body with the sense of wholeness. When the sense of wholeness and the unity of this identification are challenged by the arrival of a rival, that is the image of rivaling with an other, which causes the decline of the subject's cry for recognition, aggression arises. Thus "the imaginary of bodily fragmentation is the inverse of the Gestalt of the unifying ego and thereby, aggression is held in correlative tension with narcissism" (Muller 51).

The intrasubjective relation of desire between Jason and Medea accords to the framework of the narcissistic identification that is hinged upon both aggressivity and eroticism as suggested by Lacan. Medea's narcissistic identification with Jason is erotic as she has an erotic attachment to Jason who is the specular image/the Gestalt for Medea. Medea fictionalizes him as her object of desire and desires to be the cause

[24] Like his predecessor Freud, Lacan also employs the Greek myth of Narcissus, who falls in love with his own image, to touch upon the subject's identification and narcissism as an indicative force in the engenderment and development of the ego.

of his object of desire. The bearing of Medea's identification as aggressive appears when the unity with the specular image, Jason, is jeopardized with the threat of dismemberment and fragmentation brought by an aggressive rivalry over the object of desire/being the object of desire. Medea's state of transitivism in which she identifies with the Gestalt and attempts to desire the thing(s) the Other desires leads to an aggressive relativity, which triggers a rivalry/a competition over the desired other. When Jason transposes Glauke into his new object cause of desire, Medea cannot obtain narcissistic gratification which is satisfied through the illusionary wholeness she has with Jason, loses her chance of remedying the lack in Jason and eventually falls into the trap of aggressivity. She fabricates Glauke as her rival interfering with her identification, ripping her of the sense of unity and hindering the recognition she desperately needs to exert herself as a subject.

Glauke's visit to Medea is the encounter of the replaced/old cause of object of desire with the new one as suggested by the Nurse:

> NURSE
> and Medea left to rot
> among the spylte and wastit love she's stuck wi
> she's chucked out like
> an old coat that nae langer fits him (Lochhead *Medea* 3)

Medea confronts with the woman who takes over her position and breaks off the primary narcissistic identification he has been enjoying with Jason, which is the desire to be unified and one with the ideal image/the ideal ego like Narcissus's desire to be united with his projected image in the water. Since Medea cannot attain the ideal image and identify with it, her ego deteriorates, as a result of which she loses the anchoring point that keeps her aggressivity in hold. Glauke's provocative talk aggravates her retrograde situation and incites Medea to act on her lurking aggressivity and phallic nature:

> GLAUKE
> they say you are a witch but I don't believe it

MEDEA
believe it you bit of thistledown
one breath and I could blow
an allergen an irritant like you away

GLAUKE
I don't think so I'm no some lightweight
bit of fluff he loves me I did not plan it
I never wanted my happiness should hurt another woman
do you know how much it hurts me
my happiness should hurt another woman?
but if a man no longer loved me wanted freedom
he could have it
I'd be too proud to try and keep him (23-24)

With her bold standing and assertive utterances, Glauke confirms Medea's being discarded from the position of a lover/an *objet a* to the position of nothingness/void. She affirms the irreversible disengagement caused by her loss of narcissistic identification with Jason, which in return leads to the emergence of aggressivity to reobtain the lost sense of integrity and recognition and to compensate for the shame she experiences. In the opening scene of the play, the Nurse perceives the regression Medea experiences and senses the ramifications of this regression as an irrecoverable change and a loss of a part of her ego in Medea. Medea's scopic fantasy of being recognized by the gaze of the (m)Other and existing merely in relation to an imaginary gaze is impeded, putting Medea's existence and self in jeopardy and leaves her hanging between the boundaries of the Imaginary and the Symbolic. The Nurse mentions the transformation Medea experiences and the empty look she has acquired, having lost the battle of desire, recognition and being *objet a* to Glauke:

NURSE
nae wonder Medea winna be comforted shivers
stinks of fear canna eat
canna sleep greets till she can greet nae mair
stares at the cauld grunn greets again greets sair
try soothing her she's a stone
in kindness leave her be she rolls in her rags
claws at hersel keening
too late she screams remorse for a faither loast
a land abandoned the betrayals

she made for Jason who faur waur betrays her noo
too late too late she learns she should
have clung to what she had
the children- she looks on them with empty eyes
as if they're nothing to her (3-4)

Jason leaves Medea and disconnects the male gaze cast upon her, which is essential for her as she needs that gaze in order to engender an identification. Instead of Medea, Jason fictionalizes and constructs Glauke as the new object of the male gaze, and Medea loses her position to Glauke. Medea's empty look turns into the embodiment of the gaze as the reawakening of the object in the subject's discard from the phantasmatic scene of desire. Medea, however, refuses to turn into the fetishized and victimized previous holder of the male gaze but acts on her pleasure and desire by carrying out the death of her rival. Medea's rage builds as her identification disconnects. The Nurse, too, becomes aware of the impending act of aggressivity lurking behind the veil of motherhood:

NURSE
I shut my eyes and see Medea
creepan through the labyrinthine palace
follying her hatred like a thread
I dream of a dagger thrust in yon double bed
skewering the lovers the gither
I see the skailt blood of Kreon the king

she's capable of anything (4)

As Medea is displaced and discarded, she forfeits the right to wholeness and narcissistic gratification which paves the way for aggressivity leading to the murder of the rival and the murder of the children. Lochhead positions Medea far away from the constrictions and labeling of the phallogocentric understanding which expect women to act on their motherly instincts and duties. This is challenged and overthrown by Medea's decision to sacrifice what is important to her to act on her desire and to defy the phallic function with her non-phallic adherence to the feminine side of the phallus. For mothers, children have a phallic extension and have a phallic nature, and they are the *objets a* making them doubly precious. In the junction opened

by her standing as a woman and as a mother, Medea chooses "the woman" and pursues the act of a real woman similar to the example of the wife of André Gide, which Lacan mentions: married to Madeline, Gide had relationships with different men and made the mistake of telling his wife that he was in love with one of these men. Enraged, Madeline burnt all the letters, which were highly precious not only to Gide but also to her. This act of aggressivity can be interpreted as "the sign of the rage that only the most intolerable betrayal can provoke" (Morel 143). The hole created by Gide's betrayal was so deep, destructive and intense that Madeline did not hesitate to destroy what was valuable both to her and to Gide, "tearing out of him this doubling of himself that his letters represented" (144).

Medea's aggressivity is also directed at destroying what is the most precious to Jason, which is at the same time precious to her. By eradicating the *objet a*- the children- for Jason and ripping him of the privilege of having the phallus, Medea challenges the phallic function, acts on her feminine desire and perpetuates her position as an exceptional woman and a marginal mother rather than adhering to the yoke of the Symbolic order demanding a docile and a submissive mother figure and a woman character. Medea transgresses the silence attributed to women as she repudiates attaining the liminal position reserved for the women, which expects them to remain silent and suppressed by the member(s) of the patriarchal discourse.

In her paper, "Woman and Madness: The Critical Phallacy" (1975), Shoshana Felman, too, discusses the phallacy of reading women's madness as the inscrutable other, outside the domain of the other and in the space where reason and language dissolve. Felman sets a major problem at this point:

> How can one speak from the place of other? How can the woman be thought about outside the masculine/feminine framework, other than as opposed to man, without being subordinated to a primordial masculine model? How can madness, in a similar way, be conceived outside of its dichotomous opposition to sanity, without being subjugated to reason? How can difference as such be thought out as non-subordinate to identity? (4)

By employing a critical rereading of Balzac's *Adieu*, Felman argues that the madness of the heroine is excluded from the critical readings of the text as it remains outside the domain of the logic and the definite, causing the silencing of woman and the heroine specifically. Felman declares, "women as such are associated both with madness and with silence whereas men are identified with prerogatives of discourse and of reason" (7). Medea is also expected to act on silence and come to terms with Jason's decree to abandon Corinth and leave her children behind without lifting up her voice. However, Medea is no ordinary woman as she chooses not to act on silence but to act on her self. She renounces giving up on her desire and revenge. As suggested by Reenkola, Medea has been traumatized and identifies with the aggressor and traumatizes the husband and children: "as her mental state changes, she evolves from an anguished and helpless female supplicant before Kreon and Jason into a masculinized avenger," defeminized and thereby targeting all her aggression into the perpetrators of the murder of her authentic self (53).

Initially a woman who has been feminized and turned into a "woman" by Jason's love and a mother who has given seeds for the perpetuation of the patriarchal order represented by Jason, Medea has been in accordance with the dictations and imperatives of the discourse she has come to live. Yet, after she has been discarded, displaced and replaced by Jason's prospective wife and lost her chance of residing in the preexisting order for which she violated the authority of her father and detached from her origins and roots, Medea mutates into the epitome of a transgressor and an iconoclast. She shatters the power and authority of the representatives of the Symbolic order, evacuates the implications of the terms "daughter" and "mother," cuts off the logic of the signifiers and makes them dysfunctional through the perpetuation and tenacity of pursuing and acting on her desire.

By way of conclusion, this chapter attempted to offer a post-Lacanian reading of the play at hand, which is made possible by Lochhead's engenderment of an alternative feminine discourse and a new dramatic language. The trajectory and formation of a progressive counter hegemonic discourse and the implementation of post-Lacanian

thinking have been possible through two lenses: firstly, through Lochhead's reconceptualization and reconstruction of Euripides' *Medea* by rewriting peculiar aspects of the play in the light of the feminine, which poses a challenge to the original work. Lochhead's reconfiguration of the feminine by means of recreating the chorus as feminine and Medea as the iconoclast of the female archetype and of integrating the Scottish diction into the play have challenged the linear and phallocentrically oriented mindset, and formulated a space in which the liminal/the marginal/the peripheral are foregrounded and granted voice as can be observed in the example of the female and the Scottish language. Secondly, the argument consulted certain Lacanian conceptual tools and yet exposed the loopholes in his theory by reversing the focalization. Lacan nullifies the category of the subject and attempts to disclose the processes s/he undergoes in order to be constituted as a subject. However, Lacan needs to depend the formation of subjectivity and the subject on a structure, for which he proposes the Symbolic order and hence reduces the specificities and individuality of the subject to the conjectured universality of linguistics and predicates the formation of the subject on the separation from the mother and the requisite and compulsory entry into the domain of the father and the Law. Medea, with her transgressive nature, challenges and thwarts the authority of the f/Father, and withstands the necessity of existing in the Symbolic as a subject adjacent to the patriarchal discourse as she goes beyond the boundaries of the Symbolic by executing infanticide and discarding all the labels the patriarchy has cast upon her. Medea chooses to remain true to her self, desire and womanliness: she chooses to be/remain a woman instead of a/the mother that the patriarchy decrees.

I accept that from a different vantage point, Medea's act can be interpreted as an act of cruelty as she kills her children without blinking an eye; thus, her act cannot be tolerated. When looked at from another point of view, Medea may not even deserve a tolerant attempt to understand her/her act/her predicament. Or when looked on a neutral ground, if a man did what Medea has done- killed his offspring, feminist readings would not offer a reading as they have offered to Medea. He would not be talked of highly but criticized severely as his act would be defined as inhumane,

diabolic and cold. A male Medea would be ripped off her identity as a parent as she would be thought of not deserving such a “holy” title. If Jason committed the act of infanticide, he would be called a villain, and his act would not be labeled as an “ethical act.” However, I believe that the play does not glorify what Medea does to her children but dramatizes a hypothetical situation just to provide another vantage point to look at the issue of motherhood. Then, the play makes more sense if we take it as a form of reversed anthropology.

CHAPTER 4

LOCHHEAD'S REVISION OF *THEBANS*

"Oh saying it was one thing
but when it came to writing it
in black and white
the way it had to be said
was as if you were posh, grown-up,
male, English and dead."
"Kidspoem/Bairnsang"
Liz Lochhead

4.1. The Reconfiguration of Sophocles's *Thebans Plays* and Euripides' *Phoenician Women*

This chapter aims to discuss Lochhead's rewriting of Sophocles's *Thebans Plays* and Euripides' *Phoenician Women* and how she creates her own feminized version of the myth. Like *Medea*, Lochhead attempts to recreate a classical myth, *Oedipus* this time by transforming the patriarchal gaze to the feminine through Jokasta whose voice has risen to unveil and tell her repressed story and by demystifying Oedipus, the excavator of knowledge and the representative of patriarchy through the chorus and the blind prophet Tiresias.

Lochhead's approach to the Greek tragedies and adaptations rest on "the idea of contemporisation and reflection on the local cultural identity with central emphasis on language and performance in mind" and "domestication of the classical texts by frequently faithfully preserving the original story, characters or plot, but not the language" (Paraskevova 98). *Thebans*, in a similar fashion, reworks a well-known myth structure and revisits the Thebes kingdom, bringing family tragedies and political conflicts as presented by Sophocles and Euripides together.

It weaves Lochhead's employment of irony, parody, metaphor and metatheatricality into the play. Lochhead's intertextuality hinges upon mainly *Thebans Plays* (*Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus* and *Antigone*) by Sophocles and *Phoenician Women* by Euripides and also carries the effects of *Seven Against Thebes* by Aeschylus. The first part of the play called "Oedipus" hangs upon the events happening in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, and the second part, "Jokasta/Antigone," juxtaposes Euripides' *Phoenician Women* and Sophocles' *Antigone* with the addition of the interlude of Jokasta borrowed from different pieces of work.

In recreating the myth of Oedipus, Lochhead dwells on the conflation of the various plays into a single play as her position as an adapter, not as a translator, paves the way for the probability of wondering freely among the distinct myths and selecting the best versions of those that fit into her purpose. The play conjoins the story of Oedipus, the king with the stories of the women, underestimated and subdued, and foregrounds their stories. It sets aside Oedipus' fate, notably in the second part which revolves around Jokasta and Antigone, which makes Lochhead's play different from those of the classical playwrights'. By calling attention to the stories of the women in the play, Lochhead achieves altering the patriarchal gaze to the feminine by the rising voice of Jokasta. Demystification of Oedipus, who has been depicted as a god-like figure in the original play(s), is managed through his political relations with the people of Thebes and inverted and ironized communication with Tiresias, the blind prophet.

Lochhead intensifies the structure and the theme of her adapted play through the reduction of different stories into one single play, thus she engenders space for the transformation and improvement of the identities which are incomplete and in flux in *Thebans*. The integration of *Phoenician Women* by Euripides makes the play more versatile and contributes to change the two-dimensionality of the female characters forged by the restrictive and confining mindset and cultural image by granting them a space to express their unveiled stories.

Jokasta is exposed to the destructive effects of the society in which she lives, and this manifests itself in the body politics as her body- her motherhood- becomes a site on which the politics of gender and sexuality are acted and written. In contrast to the male normative body that seems phallic and impenetrable, Jokasta's symbolizes a feminine one, penetrable, incomplete and fragile. Lochhead does not fully grant an individuation to thwart the conventional feminine labeling and restructure gender signifiers such as motherhood and womanhood as she has done with Medea. Jokasta does not repudiate motherly love or motherhood; contrarily, through adapting her motherhood, which has been muted in the original play, and later acting as a mediator between her sons caught up in a political strife, Jokasta metamorphoses into a unifying element. She becomes the center of the play when the plot of the play starts to crack. In contrast to Jokasta that commits suicide in Sophocles' version, Lochhead makes her survive and tell her story.

In Part I, the reader witnesses Jokasta's story of leaving her son to death, and this gives insight into her feelings as a woman and a mother, which have been disregarded:

JOKASTA: […]
we had a son
Laius ripped him
not three days old yet ripped him from my
breast
oh I love him still as if it was yesterday

my husband Laius ripped my baby from my breast
pinned his ankles together and abandoned him
out on the open moor to die
I wept tears and milk- […] (16)

The hysterical repetition of the words "ripped him from my breast" echoes the transgression of the motherhood and the enforced split of the child-mother bond enacted by a male authority figure oppressing both the child and the mother. The invasion of her body manifests itself in the material products of her body: tears and milk associated with motherhood. The production of milk and its perception as a

signifier for motherhood are problematized by the feminist theory as it affirms the boundaries of motherhood "which keeps sex/gender or racial systems in place" (Boyce-Davies 106). The production of milk objectifies the female body; yet, Lochhead turns this signifier of motherhood and womanhood into the signifier of lack and loss. In Sophocles' version, Jocasta[25]'s traumatized and wounded feelings are left unpresented as there is an acceptance of the execution of fate by a more powerful and dominant figure:

> JOCASTA: As for the child,
> It was not yet 3 days old, when he cast it out
> (By other hands, not his) with riveted ankles
> To perish on the empty mountain-side. (Sophocles *Thebans* 45)

Distanced from her position as a mother, Jocasta is an onlooker on the terrible event happening to her, and she is unable to resist as she is silenced and rendered mute. The internalization of the execution of the order is reflected in the detachment of Jocasta from her identity as a mother. Sophocles' Jocasta is a passive recipient/an onlooker of the events shaped by some other forces, and she does not choose to resist. Jocasta conforms to the established norms of the patriarchal society and follows the order dictated by her husband, and thereby loses her status as a mother. Bartky proffers that "women internalize the panoptic gaze of the male connoisseur. As a result, women live their bodies as seen by the patriarchal Other" (in Buzzanell). Jocasta, similarly, internalizes the Other's gaze and fails to exert her self and uniqueness as a separate/individual being but becomes numb to her self, her experience of motherhood and womanhood.

Evocative of *Phoenician Women* by Euripides, Jokasta is alive in Part 2 of the play titled "Jokasta/Antigone," and she addresses the reader, tells her/their story not from the Other's gaze but from the female gaze. Though "not individualized as the conventional female figure who rejects gender signifiers of reproduction and

[25] In Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, Jokasta, the name of the queen in Lochhead's *Thebans*, is referred to as Jocasta.

motherhood" in direct contrast to Medea, the iconoclast of those ingrained/constructed notions, Jokasta is granted a chance/a space to voice her story and what she has gone through (Paraskevova 135):

> JOKASTA: I am *Jokasta*
>
> married to old man Laius when I was
> hardly older than a child myself this child here
> had no children to him
> though nightly he battered
> at the door of my small shut womb
> *a barren union*
> which maddened King Laius (Lochhead *Thebans* 32-33)

The childlessness is assumed to cause sadness, which eventually leads to a tragic and an unhappy marriage. Yet, Lochhead, through Jokasta, refuses to turn infertility into a negative character trait as Jokasta merely focuses on Laius' anger and disappointment upon having no child, not hers. Lochhead, in a way, challenges the manipulation of the motherhood as she opens up a new kind of space/language in which she acknowledges the space of motherhood and different extensions of it in different women and in their different experiences.

The portrayal of Jokasta as an individualized female figure and her image as such is perpetuated until her new marriage to Oedipus, causing her subjugation and oppression as "her speech/act is completely oppressed and silenced by the speech and acts of Oedipus, who is another colonized body (allegedly 'foreign') brought to its degradation and expelled in self-exile" (Paraskevova 135). Lochhead, however, desires to give a voice though a flimsy one to Jokasta by making her react to Oedipus' remarks on self-knowledge and truth through her contemporized point of view stripped of religious and dogmatic beliefs and through her portrayal of being dubious and skeptical towards prophecy and calling them "charlatans" and "self-deceivers" (Lochhead *Thebans* 16). Jokasta challenges the knowledge that prophets are alleged to have by labelling them as untrustworthy and equating the word prophet with charlatan, self-deceiver and seer, and she, thereby, ironizes the cultural appropriation

and acceptance of prophets as rational and logical beings. In Sophocles' version, Jocasta also asks Oedipus to come to his senses and ignore the prophecy and prophets; however, the idea is communicated less vehemently with an emphasis on man and his mortal status:

> JOCASTA: Oedipus, forget all this. Listen to me:
> No mortal can practice the art of prophecy; no man can see the future. (Sophocles *Thebans* 55)

In her play, Lochhead blends black humor, irony and cynical remarks with her observations of political and familial issues. Lochhead problematizes and evacuates the implications of the terms such as truth/lie and knowledge/non-knowledge to thwart the negative image of the women as irrational and senseless beings and the men as rational and sensible ones. Ignoring Jokasta's insistence on renouncing interrogating the root of the plague, Oedipus mocks her for her irrationality calling himself "the excavator of old secrets" (Lochhead *Thebans* 24). Lochhead, however, mocks Oedipus' attempt to discover a divine connection in his ephemeral status and problematizes the phallic fixation with truth.

As the truth unveils, Oedipus is faced with Corinthians as he owes an answer to his folk. In her realization of the gradually appearing truth, Jokasta is in anguish, writhing in her appalled internalized outbursts, silent to both Oedipus and Corinthians. About this scene which is missing in the original play, Paraskevova suggests that "this is a typical device for inserting the female voice as discarded/abjected from the male cultural space, unseen and unheard in its internalized agony" (139). In Sophocles' version, the feminine voice cannot penetrate into the phallic/male/dominant one and fails to disturb it. Lochhead's Jokasta, however, attempts to save the man/the child she loves through her inaudibility, which she acts on stage but no one hears her. Her inaudibility turns into the voice of resistance, but an active one. Though Jokasta is portrayed as the silenced colonized female, she achieves subverting the phallic discourse with the help of her physical and verbal actions and affirms the power of muteness cast upon women for ages by converting it into the language of resistance.

Lochhead's contemporary version of the myth of Oedipus opens up with the speech of Oedipus addressing his people and attempting to learn the reason behind their gathering in front of the palace for the chorus desires to express the plight of the common people suffering under the rule of the royal albeit dysfunctional family. In the original play, Oedipus speaks to the Priest who serves as an envoy calling him "My lord and King" (Sophocles *Thebans* 26). This is replaced by Oedipus talking directly to the Chorus, calling him by his name "Oedipus" or "Oedipus our King-elect" (Lochhead *Thebans* 4), which implies democracy and openness, uninterrupted and unmediated relation and connection with his people. Lochhead's choice of words while making Oedipus speak with words such as citizens, banners, slogans, chanting and protesting are all implications of democracy and democratic policies. Oedipus states that he favors unmediated relations rather than talking through a filter, a messenger:

> OEDIPUS: I do not hide behind doors or diplomats
> I am here in person I am listening (Lochhead *Thebans* 3)

Yet, Lochhead undermines these implied and so-called democratic relations and egalitarian attempts by dealing with the issues in mock seriousness as Oedipus is portrayed as a character assuming himself to be above the common people and to have divine connections. Oedipus' speech reveals his arrogance and hubris as he continuously emphasizes the fact that he is the King, having the ultimate power, and that he is capable of anything. Lochhead's chorus, however, disturbs Oedipus' divine and god-like delusional assumptions by ironically reminding him of the fact that he is not a god or has no godly connections but he is an ordinary man merely with the status of a king:

> CHORUS: […]
> and we come to you because you are not a god
> Oedipus but a man Oedipus
> Oedipus our King our liberator
> the man who freed us
> who by man made logic or divine inspiration
> banished from Theban gates the Sphinx

[…]

Oedipus our King-elect our savior save us
Once more save your children
for without Thebans what is Thebes? (Lochhead *Thebans* 4)

Controverting, challenging and demystifying Oedipus' deific status, the Chorus achieves engendering an ironic stance and problematizing the probability of holding the reins of power. Lochhead's parody of Oedipus' continuous bragging about himself is perpetuated through the subversion of epic qualities in irony and mock seriousness in the characterization of Tiresias, the blind seer and "a poetic presence, bearing resemblance to La Corbie and the Monster image in *Medea*; her function is partially that of the Chorus in the classical Greek plays" (Paraskevova 140). In her position as "an omnipresent, mythic figure," Tiresias "creates a structural coherence and a psychological insight into the prevailing unhealthy conditions in the world," or in a broken family (Dwivedi 141). While displaying the dysfunctional aspects hidden in a family drama, Tiresias performs on the characteristics of ambivalence and androgyny. In Lochhead's stage performance, she acts as a half-naked and blind woman prophet, and her sight constitutes a central role in the play as it alters the course of the events. Yet, she attains and preserves the role of a silent onlooker/spectator, not that of the savior or active participant to resolve the tied drama. Tiresias, as the plot progresses, turns into the Sphinx with her talk in an enigmatic way and her constraint on Oedipus to solve the riddle(s) she proposes.

As Oedipus calls himself "the excavator of old secrets," he initially demands that Tiresias tell him what he sees (Lochhead *Thebans* 24). However, Tiresias refuses to take an active part in their unsolvable dilemma and hasten tragedy as she wants Oedipus to unravel the truth himself. When Tiresias' disavowal to lay bare the truth makes Oedipus angry, she starts to curse her through the labels "charlatan" and "seller of his soul" (11). Oedipus also mentions and foregrounds his success of defeating the Sphinx through his wit to attack and undermine Tiresias' prophecy skills as Oedipus, not Tiresias has solved the riddle and saved the common folk:

OEDIPUS: did you see the answer to the Sphinx's riddle?
who saved the city? I!
this man with no need of altars birds or
omens
this man saved the city with nothing but his
native wit
this man knew the answer man!
and this man says
false seer you have gone too far

do you know who I am? (Lochhead *Thebans* 11)

Oedipus' hubris and conceit and over enthusiasm for self-knowledge leads Tiresias to mock his very much praised wit and ability to solve the riddles and evacuate the effectiveness of his intellect:

TIRESIAS: […]
this is the day you will be born at last
and this the day you'll die
OEDIPUS: another riddle
TIRESIAS: solve this one
OEDIPUS: mock all you want that's the skill
that made me King (Lochhead *Thebans* 12)

As averred by Paraskevova, Lochhead "turns the prophet's skill to foresee into a game of self-mockery, as in her version, Tiresias can see that only the truth but also actions and thoughts of Oedipus" (140). Tiresias plays with Oedipus' wit, prophecy skills and blindness to truth though he states ironically that he is after truth. Lochhead's employment of irony and handling the problematic issues in mock seriousness makes her contemporized play different from the original play(s).

By way of conclusion, by shifting the gaze in Sophocles' *Oedipus* by juxtaposing the interlude taking place in Euripides' *Phoenician Women* and making Jokasta alive, Lochhead attempts to engender a female gaze and evoke the untold story of one of the main woman characters in the play whose voice has been muted under the male representatives of patriarchy. Lochhead bestows on Jokasta the power of challenging Oedipus' obsession with self-truth and of problematizing the binaristic framework

associating rationality with the male domain and irrationality with the female one as in the play, women are the ones who are rational, sensible and seers of the truth, and men are the ones who are blind and deaf to the truth. Other than shifting the patriarchal gaze through the rising voice of Jokasta, Lochhead also reconstructs and envisages the blind prophet by bestowing on him an androgynous and ambivalent nature and the Chorus by designing it in a more egalitarian way. Tiresias defies Oedipus' mythical skills of solving the riddles and his highly praised wit and intellect with her ironical stance. The Chorus, in the same way, demystifies Oedipus, who assumes himself to be equal to divine beings and to have a deified status by continuously reminding him of the fact that he is not a god but a man, who needs the people of Thebes to rule. Lochhead achieves rewriting the myth of Oedipus by giving voice to the female figure, Jokasta, who has suffered under the oppression of the male figures and by incorporating a fresh angle to the characterization of the Chorus and Tiresias who have been originally portrayed in accordance with the conformist society. They are granted a challenging and questioning presence, which leads to the demystification of Oedipus.

4.2. *Thebans*: Edifice of Tragedies

Discussing how Lochhead departs from the Greek version of the Oedipus myth has prepared the ground for a post-Lacanian discussion of the play as her departures carry the play onto a more subversive plane. This section intends to offer a post-Lacanian discussion of *Thebans* through the tragedy of the most outstanding and puzzling characters of the myth at issue: Antigone and Oedipus.

Lacan's depoliticizing of Antigone by denoting her deed and choice as the implication of "pure desire" is challenged by the premises of Irigaray, Butler and Žižek, who have interpreted the demise of Antigone with an attempt to (re-)politicize her. Transgressing the Lacanian pitfall of reducing Antigone's desire to an irrational and dangerous potential leading to her death and of withdrawing Antigone from the political realm, this part aims at reconstituting Lochhead's Antigone as a political and subversive figure disrupting the dynamics of the hegemonic discourse and exposing

its loopholes. When it comes to the tragedy of Oedipus, his quest for an origin and a "thing" to fill in his lack and his gradual loss of his narcissistic omnipotence will be discussed in the light of Lacanian theorem.

4.2.1. Tragedy of Antigone

"We are women, that's all.
Physically weaker-
And barred from any political
Influence.
How can we fight against the institutionalized strength
Of the male sex?"
"Antigone"
Sophocles

"I was born to join in love, not hate-
that's my nature."
"Antigone"
Sophocles

Antigone is/has always been an excessive figure, a pivotal pinnacle of tragedy in philosophical, ethical, political and aesthetic discourses, the grandeur of whom has been recognized and appreciated by many thinkers. On Antigone's supremacy, Hegel states that "among all the fine creations of the ancient and the modern world- and I am acquainted with pretty nearly everything in such a class- Antigone is […] in my judgement the most excellent and satisfying work of art" (322). Lacan, too, reveals his fascination with Antigone: "[t]hough Antigone represents a turning point in ethics" and unveils "the line of sight that defines desire," it is "Antigone herself who fascinates us, Antigone in her unbearable splendor" (*Seminar VII* 247).

Where does Antigone's "unbearable splendor" come from? Why does she continue to fascinate humans? Luce Irigaray attempts to answer these questions by asserting that Antigone is (still) relatable to other women since she struggles and suffers as a woman: "[h]er [Antigone's] example is always worth reflecting upon as a historical figure and as an identity and identification for many girls and women living today. For this reflection, we must abstract Antigone from the seductive, reductive

discourses and listen to what she has to say about government of the polis, its order and its laws" (*Speculum*, 70). Butler, however, opposes Irigaray's assertion by highlighting the problematic and unresolved representative function of Antigone, which might be a probable reason for her incessant splendor as she barely embodies the normativity engrained in the dominant discourse:

> But can Antigone herself be made into a representative for a certain kind of feminist politics, if Antigone's own representative function is itself in crisis? As I hope to show in what follows, she hardly represents the normative principles of kinship, steeped as she is in incestuous legacies that confound her position within kinship. And she hardly represents a feminism that might in any way be unimplicated in the very power that it opposes. (Butler *Antigone's Claim* 2)

William Robert, too, focuses on the unyielding nature of Antigone and retorts that her splendor emanates from her persistent resistance:

> She [Antigone] resists. She resists domination or incorporation, categorization or explanation. She resists, for example, civil law by disregarding Creon's edict forbidding Polyneices' burial. She also resists traditional lines of genealogy as a child of incest. In these and other ways, Antigone resists description in the traditional terms of occidental philosophy, religion, aesthetics, ethics, and politics—in her own time and in contemporary settings. (413)

In the remainder of this chapter, the focus will be on the discussions which would search for an answer for Antigone's grandeur by juxtaposing views on feminism, psychoanalysis and politics that would challenge one another. Lacan's view against the Hegelian interpretation of Antigone's myth to escape the humanistic understanding Hegel has been entrapped in is challenged and attacked by the writings of his student, the feminist and the psychoanalyst Luce Irigaray. She sees Lacan's interpretation as an extension of the phallocentric understanding of psychoanalysis and launches an assault on the repressive gender politics of the dominant establishment. Judith Butler, in a similar vein, repudiates not only Hegel's positioning of the conflict between Antigone and Creon in the socio-symbolic order but also

Lacan's perception of Antigone as a figure transgressing the symbolic order by enouncing that Lacan's symbolic is "purely abstract and distinct from the social" and that Antigone thwarts the existent symbolic order by attaining an unoccupiable position in the public sphere and by parodying the language of the dominant discourse and shatters it from inside. Slovaj Žižek, however, focuses on a more political reading of Antigone and puts forward that Antigone breaks away with the symbolic and acts on/sticks to her desire, which leads to the possibility of initiating a new social order. All of these contrasting and subsidiary readings of Antigone will be expounded on in the following part, and I will come up with my own conclusive views revolving around the idea that Antigone is a more explicitly politicized psychoanalytic sexual subject.

Judith Butler, in her *Antigone's Claim*, addresses the question posited by George Steiner, which would also engage the minds of the thinkers who attempt to uncover the myth of Antigone: "what would have happened if psychoanalysis were to have taken Antigone rather than Oedipus as its point of departure?" (57). The discussions in the post-Freudian domain attempts to provide an answer to Steiner's question: if psychoanalysis had taken Antigone as its point of departure rather than Oedipus, a more politicized sexual subject and subjectivity would have come into being. As suggested by Cecilia Sjöholm, "it is not by chance that the figure of Antigone has become central to various discussions in feminism, political theory and ethics which are critical of psychoanalysis, or at least of the Oedipal paradigm. Antigone is more political and topical than Oedipus" (24).

Antigone's biggest dilemma and mishap stem from her confrontation with the embodiment of Law and the ultimate representation of the symbolic order/the patriarchal dominant discourse, Creon, who may also be taken as a substitute father figure for Antigone as her relation with her biological father Oedipus is hinged on complicated and incestuous kinship relations carving a brother out of a father. Antigone's confrontation with Creon is perceived as the dramatization of the disparity and the clash between law and ethics, and the Law of the father and the

ethical conscience. Hegel depends his interpretation of the conflict between these figures on two extensions of justice concerning different forms of ethics: the former concerned with Antigone, perceived as pre-political and dependent on the unwritten law of the gods and the latter associated with Creon and thought of as political and based on the institution of the law. Hegel takes this conflict as internal to the socio-symbolic order and positions Antigone and Creon on the two opposite ends of the binaristic organization: state versus family and the legal order versus the ethical conscience. For Hegel, Antigone's final act- her suicide- is a reconciliation between the pre-political underpinnings of ethical limitations and the political formal implementation of the law. Antigone's tragedy "could be seen as a dramatization of a metaphysical and historical progression that will see the unconditional call of justice sublimated into the legal principles of a state. The conflict is fully resolved with the actualization of eternal justice, achieved in a state that establishes a universal rule of law" (Swiffen 18).

Lacan, in his *Seminar VII- Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, discusses the fate and tragedy of Antigone and opens up his discussion with the following introductory remarks:

> I am not the one who has decreed that *Antigone* is to be a turning point in the field that interests us, namely, ethics. People have been aware of that for a long time. And even those who haven't realized this are not unaware of the fact that there are scholarly debates on the topic. Is there anyone who doesn't evoke *Antigone* whenever there is a question of a law that causes conflict in us even though it is acknowledged by the community to be a just law? (*Seminar VII* 243)

To inaugurate his discussion on Antigone's confusing position, Lacan positions Antigone at the very center of an ethical and political discussion/thought. However, Lacan's usage of the words ethics and politics creates a slippage in the language, which leads to the crack of a gap and an impasse between the ethics and politics of psychoanalysis on which this reading will be grounded. Lacan's abstraction of the fields of ethics is a revolt against the traditional view of ethics starting from Aristotle to Freud as Lacan on the way to the deconstruction of the ethical thought submits inadvertently to the manipulation of the ethical and political discourse.

The depoliticizing act of Lacan starts with the question he posits, "What does one find in the Antigone? First of all, one finds Antigone," and thereby places her in the foreground of the play and making her the one and only dramatic figure, which causes the marginalization of other protagonists, specifically Creon, another extremely significant knot to be unknotted in the play (*Seminar VII* 250). Leonard suggests that "in the Lacanian version, it will precisely be the *desire* of Antigone, outside the political context of a struggle of law and authority with Creon, which will provide the basis of Lacan's elaboration of the ethical programme of psychoanalysis" (137). Lacan focuses on and encounters *merely* Antigone, her desire and her tragedy and fails to include "theatre" and the "politics" of the state as he skips the "play" in the real sense.

Lacan targets at critiquing the Hegelian dialectical reading of Antigone and at marking a distinct departure from this Hegelian reading as in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel's interpretation of Antigone is based on the conflict between the family and the state, the ethics and the politics, and the individual and the society, and thus entrapped in the binaristic organization. Hegel repudiates bestowing on Antigone a full ethical consciousness that intends to arrive at the universal. This means Antigone is deprived of owning the chance of accessing and entering the political domain and attaining a political identity alongside Creon. In contrast to Hegel, Lacan has a distinct point of departure as his agenda is to pursue what he calls "le pur désir/pure desire" and a transgressive *jouissance* in Antigone, which lead to her demolition and ultimately her demise. Lacan's premise collides with the morality of the Hegelian reading as it hints at saving the text from the boundaries of the restrictive, dialectical and closed reading of Hegel that perceives the confrontation between Antigone and Creon to have emanated from Antigone's anomalous and unorthodox kinship relations. Lacan disparately postulates:

> In effect, *Antigone* reveals to us the line of sight that defines desire. This line of sight that defines desire. This sight focuses on an image that possesses a mystery which up till now has never been articulated, since it forces you to close your eyes at the very moment you look at it. Yet that image is at the centre of tragedy, since it is the fascinating image of Antigone herself. We all

> know very well that over and beyond the dialogue and the moralizing arguments, it is Antigone herself who fascinates us, Antigone in her unbearable splendor. She has a quality which both attracts us and startles us in the sense of intimidates us; this terrible self-willed disturbs us. (*Seminar VII* 247)

At first sight, critics are captivated by Antigone's "defiance, her courage, her inflexibility and intransigence, the way she is an allegory of the struggle of the individual against the state, of the feminine, the private and the family against the public and masculine-dominated civic duties" (Freeland 148), but for Lacan, Antigone's beauty, her unbearable splendor is that which is fascinating and enchanting. Deducing from the well-known story something much more than a morality tale, Lacan emphasizes nothing but her beauty. "Not the physical beauty of a pretty face, it is the staggering, swift and undefeatable radiance of her desire, a desire that brings an entire city to the brink of ruin, that is Lacan's focus" (Freeland 148).

Beyond the moralizing arguments and accounts, Lacan urges the readers to separate his ethics from the preceding moral discourse, "we are now in a position to be able to discuss the text of *Antigone* with a view to finding something other than a lesson in morality" and adds that "it is in connection with this power of attraction that we should look for the true sense, the true mystery, the true significance of tragedy" (*Seminar VII* 292- 247). Lacan suggests going beyond the famous "conflict between the two divided powers of ethical substance," the question of family and country (in Shepherdson 55). Lacan, as can be seen, desires to disengage his ethics from morality and in the gap created, he wishes to locate Antigone's *beauty* and pure desire. Loraux opposes Lacan's wish to consign Antigone a position/a role afar from the limits of the state, the society and the play:

> Assigning to Antigone this position beyond the limit, Lacan knows or wants us to suppose- and he gets pleasure from not pointing it out directly- is tantamount to forbidding any return to Antigone *and* Creon, a couple which is Hegelian, for sure, but *not purely* Hegelian. Lacan is only concerned with Antigone and prefers to exile the all too human Creon from tragedy- from

> Antigone's tragedy. It's beautiful. But this would mean that one would have to stop reading the tragedy at the moment of the heroine's exit from the stage, or at the very least before the arrival of the messenger so one could ignore the second passion of the *Antigone,* that of Creon, where the name of Antigone is not once spoken. (in Leonard 139)

Thus, Loraux avers that Antigone's absence from the text would distort the narrative and make Lacan's reading for his ethics problematic as Lacan's premise is contingent on the assurance between ethics and aesthetics in Antigone's *Até* [26]:

> The violent illumination, the glow of beauty, coincides with the moment of transgression or of realization of Antigone's *Até,* which is the characteristic that I have chiefly insisted on and which introduced us to the exemplary function of Antigone's problem in allowing us to determine the function of certain effects. It is in that direction that a certain relationship to a beyond of the central field is established for us, but it is also that which prevents us from seeing its true nature, that which dazzles us and separates us from its true function. (*Seminar VII* 281)

Lacan is impressed with Antigone's beauty of choice, a beauty that cannot be demoted to any specific goodness. "For Lacan, it is the beauty of Antigone's choice of a Good beyond all recognizable goods, beyond the pleasure principle, that gives her character its monumental status, and makes her a model for an ethics of creation rather than conformity" (Miller, Paul Allen 1). Lacan purports further:

> The beauty effect is a blindness effect. Something else is going on on the other side that cannot be observed. In effect, Antigone herself has been declaring from the beginning: "I am dead and I desire death." When Antigone depicts herself as Niobe becoming petrified, what is she identifying herself with, if it isn't that inanimate condition in which Freud taught us to recognize the form in which the death instinct is manifested? An illustration of the death instinct is what we find here. (*Seminar VII* 281)

By means of her beauty, Antigone "incarnates a cathartic and purging effect"

[26] *Até* means destiny.

(Sjöholm 101), and Lacan is fascinated with Antigone's fascination with her death/her poetic self-sacrifice. Being both pure and excessive at the same time, Antigone's unyielding desire is "the pure and simple desire of death as such" (Lacan *Seminar XII* 282). In order to locate Antigone's choice in the Lacanian ethics, Antigone must be disengaged from any relations with Creon and the conflict that happened between Antigone and Creon, between two opposite principles demanding equal justice, must be abolished. There must be merely the relation between Antigone and Polyneikes and Antigone's burning desire for her brother.

However, Hegel interprets this relation between Antigone and Polyneikes not in terms of desire/pure desire but in terms of the dialectical relation between human and divine laws, and puts sexual difference into the basis of the moral thought:

> The loss of the brother is therefore irreparable to the sister and her duty towards him is the highest […] The brother is the member of the Family in whom Spirit becomes an individuality which turns towards another sphere, and passes over into the consciousness of universality […] He passes from the divine law, in whose sphere he lived, over to the human law. But the sister becomes, or the wife remains, the guardian of the divine law. In this way, the two sexes overcome their (merely) natural being and appear in ethical significance, as diverse beings who share between two distinctions belonging to ethical substance. (275)

For Hegel, what is in jeopardy is the relation and interdependency between the laws of the gods and the laws of the polis but Lacan's reading removes this ethical framework and pious reading offered by Hegel. Unlike Hegel who necessitates the firm and the fixed ethical brother-sister relationship between Antigone and Polyneikes and perceives Antigone to be the embodiment of a pious ethical sister, Lacan claims that Antigone reasserts her existence by not ceding on her desire and burying her brother Polyneikes without any thoughts of morality and ethics in her mind. Lacan propounds:

> Antigone invokes no other right than that one, a right that emerges in the

> language of the ineffaceable character of what is - ineffaceable, that is, from the moment when the emergent signifier freezes it like a fixed object in spite of the flood of possible transformations. What is, is, and it is to this, to this surface, that the unshakeable, unyielding position of Antigone is fixed. (*Seminar VII* 279)

In Lacan's interpretation, Antigone's choice to not abandon her brother and bury him turns into the ultimate ethical act merely because it is devoid of any moral and ethical logic. But does Lacan's Antigone reverberate any aspects of Hegelian Antigone? Hegel's Antigone is dispossessed of the opportunity to make an ethical choice and understand the moral discourse; however, "in Lacan, it is the absolutist, tautologous, self-referential nature of Antigone's motivation- a motivation without motive- which is precisely what makes it an ethics" (Leonard 142). Lacan comments on the lack of motive in Antigone's action:

> Because he is abandoned to the dogs and the birds and will end his appearance on earth in impurity, with his scattered limbs an offence to heaven and earth, it can be seen that Antigone's position represents the radical limit that affirms the unique value of his being without reference to any content, to whatever good or evil Polyneices may have done, or whatever he may be subjected to. (*Seminar VII* 279)

But Lacan does not forget to add a linguistic aspect to Antigone's motivation without a motive and connect it to the realm of signifiers, symbols and language:

> The unique value involved is essentially that of language. Outside of language it is inconceivable, and the being of him who has lived cannot be detached from all he bears with him in the nature of good and evil, of destiny, of consequences for others, or of feelings for himself. That purity, that separation of being from the characteristics of the historical drama he has lived through, is precisely the limit or the *ex nihilo* to which Antigone is attached. It is nothing more than the break that the very presence of language inaugurates in the life of man. (*Seminar VII* 279)

Lacan asserts that Antigone's unyielding desire to bury Polyneikes stems from the uniqueness of him not subject to any general principles or laws. For Lacan, what he calls the Real or *das Ding*- the Thing- in him is what makes Antigone continue her

act decisively. The Thing is perceived by the infant in the Other/in the name of the Other/in the linguistic subject, and it is beyond symbolization. Lacan suggests that "it is the (im)possibility of recuperating this unsymbolizable primordial otherness in the Other that animates the subject's *erôs* and its uncanny symptomatic compulsion to repeat" (Sharpe 5). Therefore, it can be nothing other than the name Polyneikes that Antigone desires to preserve or underneath and beyond the name, Antigone intends to reach the peculiar Thing and the singular uniqueness in him that name/naming gives way to:

> […] this brother is something unique. And it is this alone which motivates [her] to oppose [Creon's] edicts.
>
> Antigone invokes no other right than that one, a right that emerges in the language of the ineffaceable character of what is- ineffaceable, that is, from the moment when the emergent signifier freezes it like a fixed object in spite of the flood of possible transformations. What is, is, and it is to this, to this surface, that the unshakeable, unyielding position of Antigone is fixed.
>
> (Lacan *Seminar VII* 279)

Antigone's relationship with Polyneikes, in the Lacanian ethical context, returns to the question of language, discourse and the fragmentation of the self and the psyche upon entering the symbolic. The interlocked relationship between language and the politics and ethics of Antigone has aroused interest in the discussions of many classicists, who have attempted to display how the discourse of justice is undermined in the savage rhetoric of Antigone and Creon, and how political and familial responsibilities are deciphered in the dialogues between Creon and Haemon. However, as suggested by Leonard,

> Lacan's rejection of the Hegelian dialectic, of any kind of dialogue between Creon and Antigone, indeed of any context for Antigone's discourse, makes a vision of Sophoclean drama where language rebounds in a self-referential echoing with no connection to social and political debate. Lacan's "Antigone sans théâtre" is precisely on Antigone removed from the politics of drama. (143)

As Lacan's ethics of psychoanalysis is founded on pure desire, Lacan's discourse, dislodged from any social and ideological contexts and aiming at attaining a pure and content-free ethics, evokes the discourse of structuralism and makes his reading vulnerable and susceptible to distinct ideological interpretations and political manipulation. Lacan's wish to engender a discourse of pure desire is barely free of politics though he struggles a lot to distance Antigone from the moral domain and depoliticize her by disconnecting her from any dialectical relationship with Creon. Antigone's incessant desire to bury her brother and to embrace death as a result of this unyielding act also represents the repudiation of normative patriarchal structures:

> Not only does Antigone as a woman stand up to the authority of her *kyrios* Creon, but her decision to die also denies generational continuity through her marriage to Haemon. Simultaneously the daughter and sister of her father, Antigone rejects the possibility of a return to normative genealogy by choosing her brother above her husband. (Leonard 144)

The critic Guyomard, too, supports the paradoxical aspect of the Lacanian reading as such, "[a] paradox emerges. The Lacanian eulogy of Antigone is the application of his theory of desire […] but it is also at the same time a hidden eulogy of incest. Is the pure desire which Antigone personifies an incestuous one? Is its very purity the sign of incest?" (in Leonard 144). Lacan is caught up in the net of the Hegelian thought though he initially attempts to transgress the Hegelian dialectical reading. Lacan finds a pure desire in Antigone's choice to bury her brother, but he appears to repeat the Hegelian kind of brother-sister kinship by ignoring the peculiar oddity of Antigone's relation to her brother. Perceiving Antigone to be the embodiment and representative of pure desire, Lacan connects it to the female desire:

> The text alludes to the fact that the desire of the mother is the origin of everything. The desire of the mother is the founding desire of the whole structure, the one that brought into the world the unique offspring that are Eteocles, Polynices, Antigone and Ismene; but it is also a criminal desire. Thus at the origin of tragedy and of humanism we find once again an impasse that is the same as Hamlet's, except strangely enough it is even more radical. (*Seminar VII* 283)

Lacan implies the impure orientation in Antigone's desire for her brother, and yet ascribes all of these impure and negative perceptions to the mother: the mother stands out as a creator and as a destroyer. While laying the burden and all the responsibility on Jokasta's shoulders and implicitly blames her incestuous act with her son-husband Oedipus, Lacan in a way purifies Oedipus and exculpates him of the responsibility for his incestuous act. Antigone's pure desire has a mirror image and is put in direct opposition to the impure desire of her mother, Jokasta. Antigone's sisterly, pure and sexless desire is paralleled with the incestuous, impure, erotic and destructive desire of Jokasta. Leonard further comments on Lacan's morality free ethics as such:

> Lacan's amoral ethics is nevertheless predicated on a surprisingly traditional sexual morality. His formulation of a contentless ethics, then, could not be more disingenuous. When Lacan exiles politics and morality in the name of anti-humanism, it is only to return to the most pernicious and exclusionary rhetorics of humanist discourse. The pure desire of Antigone is complicit with the most traditional of humanist fantasies. *Man* remains very much at the centre of Lacan's world. (147)

Lacan concludes his reading of Antigone by asserting that Antigone's pure desire leads to her demolition as the symbolic, represented by Creon who is the representative of the Law of the father, refuses to excuse Antigone of her deprecatory act and forces her to search for an alternative reality to survive, which turns out to be transgressing this very order in which she resides rather than to conform to the authority and edict of Creon. Lacan interprets Antigone's choice/act in the following terms:

> The fruit of the incestuous union has split into two brothers, one of whom represents power and the other crime. There is no one to assume the crime and the validity of crime apart from Antigone.
>
> Between the two of them, Antigone chooses to be purely and simply the guardian of the being of the criminal as such. No doubt things could have been resolved if the social body had been willing to pardon, to forget and cover over everything with the same funeral rites. It is because the community refuses this that Antigone is required to sacrifice her own being in order to maintain that essential being which is the family *Atè,* and that is the theme or true axis on which the whole tragedy turns.

> Antigone perpetuates, eternalizes, immortalizes that *Atè*. (Lacan *Seminar VII* 283)

Lacan retains Antigone as a representative of women who sacrifice their own desire and their own being so as to maintain the essential being of her own family- its destructive misfortune or *Até* as the society/the symbolic refuses to accommodate Antigone's desire and demands her to submit to the dictations and edict of the Law of the Father, which Antigone repudiates vehemently. Surprisingly, Lacan here does not blame the illogical demands and underlying mechanisms of the symbolic order which forbids Antigone to bury her brother but urges her to leave him unburied, and he does not desire to dissolve the patriarchal organization that can make such claims. Instead, he reaches the conclusion that Antigone would not have chosen self-annihilation if the social body had pardoned her act, which again reveals Lacan's privilege of the symbolic order as incontestable and untouchable and his entrapment in the structuralist and phallogocentric understanding. Though Lacan's premise is to attempt to defy the Hegelian thought and save the text from the yoke of dialectical understanding, Lacan cannot fulfill his agenda as Antigone has been depoliticized and her potential destructiveness and subversive desire have been connected to the family *Até* and transmuted into the loyal obedience of the dutiful daughter.

By way of conclusion, it can be asserted that Lacan's interpretation of Antigone as a transgressive figure renouncing ceding on her desire and accepting the lurking death is problematic and illusionary, and casts doubt on the political implications of Lacanian ethics of psychoanalysis. Luce Irigaray challenges and thwarts the political absence and impasse at the heart of Lacanian ethics and aims to repoliticize Antigone by putting politics to the center of psychoanalysis. Irigaray calls into question the phallogocentric understanding Lacan cannot escape and unveils the hidden ideologies that the Lacanian reading hides.

The inbetween position of Antigone stuck in the phallocentric Hegelian and Lacanian readings has been the target of Irigaray's psychoanalytic and deconstructionist project. Antigone as a figure misconstrued and misapprehended shows up in

Speculum of the Other Woman and *Thinking the Difference*. Irigaray's criticism of the Hegelian Antigone paves the way for the criticism of Lacan's *Ethics of Psychoanalysis* as these readings include apolitical and depoliticized view of Antigone against which Irigaray's theorem is grounded.

In *Thinking the Difference*, Irigaray explicitly connects Antigone's predicament to the present situation of the women who have been banished and excluded from the political realm and erased from the civic domain, as a result of which the roles of the women have been demoted to the familial and domestic arena, "[w]ith regard to civil rights and responsibilities, I would like to return once again to the character of Antigone, because of her relevance to our present situation, and also because she is used today to diminish women's role and political responsibility" (Thinking 67). Irigaray continues with Antigone and interprets the classical and restrictive interpretations attributed to Antigone's act and self-willed destruction:

> According to the most frequent interpretations- mythical, metaphorical and ahistorical interpretations, as well as those that denote an eternal feminine- Antigone is a young woman who opposes political power, despising governors and governments. Antigone is a sort of young anarchist, on a first-name basis with the Lord, whose divine enthusiasm leads her to anticipate her own death rather than to assume her share of responsibility in the here and now, and thus also in the order of the polis. Antigone wants to destroy civil order for the sake of a rather suicidal familial and religious pathos, which only her innocent, virginal youth can excuse or perhaps even make attractive. (*Thinking* 68)

Irigaray dwells on Hegel's persistence in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* that women are "the irony in the life of the community"- "necessary to sustain the realms of public and human but suppressed in these realms" (in McBean 39). Antigone performs the duties attributed to women, burying, honoring and memorializing the dead/her brother, which at the same time paradoxically causes her to be sentenced to death-in-life kind of life and a living burial. Antigone's duties as a woman demanded by the patriarchy are the mediums causing her fall and the loss of her membership in the community. In contrast to Hegel and Lacan, Irigaray's reading opens up and offers an alternative for Antigone's denied position by the preexistent dominant readings.

McBean suggests further that Antigone's "defiance and standpoint are erased in the play as being without warrant- despite its essential place in preserving the community" and argues "her standpoint continues to be erased long after by philosophers who describe Antigone as acting apolitically and anarchic" (39). However, Irigaray claims that:

> Antigone is nothing like that. She is young, true. But she is neither an anarchist nor suicidal, nor unconcerned with governing […] It suits a great many people to say that women are not in government because they do not want to govern. But Antigone governs as far as she is permitted. (*Thinking* 68)

Irigaray critiques Hegel's assertion that Antigone's burial of her brother is a departure from the public realm and favoring of the realm of the family, and in this way, the fulfillment of familial, ethical duty, which is embodied as a unique and distinct responsibility of a woman, is achieved. This act, however, positions Antigone outside the political domain and denies Antigone an ethical consciousness; in the Hegelian reading, though Antigone performs an ethical act, she is incapable of knowing it. Irigaray believes that Hegel's notion of ethical consciousness is inextricably linked with his notion of material sexual body in which "… the male is the active principle as the female remains in her undeveloped unity, she constitutes the principle of conception" (Hegel *Hegel's Philosophy* 175). Irigaray, thereby, intends to display the naturalizing discourse that surrounds Hegel's ethical-political thinking. The Hegelian interpretation positions women on the side of nature and thereby afar from the civic realm underlying an ideological depth beneath the notion of "nature." Hegel alleges that "Antigone does not attain to *consciousness* of [what is the ethical], or to the objective existence of it because the law of the Family is an implicit, inner essence which is not exposed to the daylight of consciousness, but remains an inner feeling" (in Oliver 45). In contrast to the Hegelian naturalistic claims, Irigaray reveals:

> We must go back to the decisive ethical moment which saw the blow struck producing a wound that no discourse has closed simply […] A dark potentiality that has always been on the watch comes suddenly into play when the deed is done: it catches the consciousness of self in the act - the act of also

> being, or having the *unconsciousness* which remains alien to it but yet plays a major role in the decision consciousness takes. Thus the public offender who has killed turns out to be the father, and the queen who he has wedded is the mother. But the purest fault is that committed by the ethical consciousness, which knew in advance what law and power it was disobeying - that is to say, necessarily, the fault committed by femininity. For if the ethical essence in its divine, unconscious, female side remains obscure, its prescriptions on the human, masculine, communal side are exposed to full light. *And nothing here can excuse the crime or minimise the punishment*. And in its burial, in its decline to ineffectiveness and pure pathos, the feminine must recognise the full measure of its guilt. (*Speculum* 222)

Hegel locates the female/the feminine/the woman in the niche of the unconscious and the guilt and identifies them with the subversive acts detrimental to the integrity of the society/the polis by transmuting the universals to the individual and by appropriating them to their own ends:

> Since the community only gets an existence through its interference with the happiness of the Family, and by dissolving [individual] self-consciousness into the universal, it creates for itself in what it suppresses and what is at the same time essential to it an internal enemy- womankind in general. Womankind- the ever-lasting irony of the community *(die ewige Ironie des Gemeinwesen)*- changes by intrigue the universal end of government into the private end, transforms the universal act into a work of some particular individual, and perverts the universal property of the state into a possession and ornament for the Family. (in Oliver 48)

Leonard, thereby, purports that:

> It is in violating the laws of the community that Antigone is pushed to its margins, and yet her very action of rebellion is supposed to be unconscious and, therefore, one would assume, beyond responsibility to the law. Antigone's action is, thus, doubly marginalised by *the polis*- its other, both as an a-political *and* as an *anti*-political action. For Hegel, woman combines within her this double and utterly inconsistent threat. Irigaray, on the other hand, wants to repoliticise Antigone's choice by bringing it precisely back into the realm of the conscious, of the civic. (149)

Irigaray interprets Hegelian reading as an attempt to detach and exclude Antigone from the symbolic and depoliticize her by denying her a space/a voice and repudiating her individuality. Irigaray questions the embedded symbolic order in this tragedy and

illustrates the significance of "the necessity to create a symbolic order for women that will not only subtend their civil rights, but will also call for a new conception of the civic realm, one that takes account of sexual identity" (Chanter 125).

When Irigaray challenges the Hegelian thought, she, in a way, challenges the Lacanian one too since Lacan fails to attain an anti-Hegelianism in his reading of Antigone though he has designated this aim as his agenda. Configuring Antigone into the spokeswoman of the unconscious ethics of psychoanalysis and a representative of a/anti political ethics, Antigone affirms the very dialectic he has planned to thwart, making "Lacan's anti-humanism remain utterly steeped in the humanist conception of political man" (Leonard 150). Lacan erases Antigone's female agency as in the phenomenal world and in the world of his symbolic, women are denied an agency of their own. The roles of mother and/or wife are cast upon women as they are demoted to the two ends of a limited speculum. In Antigone, these two positions in the Symbolic order are attributed to two characters: Jokasta, a wife and a mother to Oedipus, and Ismene, who- according to Irigaray- "in her weakness, her fear, her submissive obedience, her tears, madness, hysteria" is overly feminized and turns into a caricaturized version of the phenomenal woman, "*the woman of sang blanc/semblant*" (in Battersby 114). Battersby proffers that, "[u]sing Lacan to posit something that is covered over- a 'real' that escapes the realm of the symbolic that is structured round the transcendental phallus- using Hegel to posit woman's tie with blood as a subversion within the structures of patrilineality. Irigaray thus sets Hegel and Lacan to destroy each other" (114)

Irigaray opposes the erasure of Antigone from the realm of the politics by Lacan because for Lacan, Antigone is the representation of an ethics of pure desire and her burial of her brother hides in itself a motivation without a motive. Leonard claims that Irigaray highlights the political bias of Hegel and Lacan, and concludes that "Antigone's exclusion from the political is not self-willed exile but is rather the result of the prejudice of her readers from Hegel to Lacan and beyond" (122). Irigaray further claims that the reason behind Hegel and Lacan's not recognizing Antigone as

a political figure and a citizen is that Antigone denounces the male-oriented dominant exemplary of citizenship and incites the readers to rethink and reinterpret the politics of women's inclusion as "a way of articulating what it means to be/become woman in clear distinction to masculine accounts of what it means to be a subject" (in McBean 40).

In opposition to the arguments of Hegel and Lacan to establish Antigone as a woman devoid of political implications, Irigaray urges the readers to listen to what Antigone says as reading between the lines uncovers something political about Antigone and her choice/act. Antigone engenders her own value system and "will choose to die a virgin, unwedded to any man rather than sacrifice the ties of blood" and thereby epitomizes a political alternative to the law of the father/the edict and the perverse laws of Creon as "the voice, the accomplice of the people, the slaves, those who only whisper their revolt against their masters secretly" (Irigaray "Hegel" 318). Irigaray believes that the reason why Antigone is interpreted as an anarchist and suicidal and why Hegel and Lacan fail to read the burial scene as a reflection of the fulfilment of citizenship action is that Antigone embodies an innovative, an unread and an untold side of feminist citizenship- the "not yet." Remaining outside the dominant discourse, Antigone's act is nonsensical in political and public terms, and hence, for Irigaray, it represents "the need to redefine the objective content of civil rights as they apply to men and women- since the neutral individual is nothing but a cultural fiction" (*Thinking* 75). Attaining an outsider status, occupying the "not-yet" status and inhabiting an unoccupiable space, Antigone speaks from a place that is unknown to the general public; therefore, she cannot be heard and her act cannot be given meaning to, making Antigone identified with a depoliticized self. Irigaray, thereby, analyzes the impasse of the ethics and the politics of Antigone by dwelling on the Hegelian and Lacanian readings that fall short of their premises and that depoliticize Antigone by precluding her from the political and civic sphere. Irigaray achieves raising questions about the politics of *Antigone* and suggests a feminine political subjectivity that would emancipate Antigone from the binaristic and repressive patriarchal

readings and give meaning to her willful destruction and demise: Antigone would not have died for nothing.

Judith Butler, in *Antigone's Claim*, takes Hegel and Lacan as her point of departure like Irigaray has done, and contests their views regarding kinship, symbolic and normative sexuality. As mentioned above, for Lacan, both subjectivity and sexuality are constructed when the infant submits to the laws of the language governed by the Symbolic order, and the engenderment of sexuality and subjectivity occurs in the Oedipal phase of development central to the development of sexuality and acquisition of language. Lacan is concerned about how the sexed body is signified in language, and he engenders the term phallus, which is the privileged signifier in the symbolic order and which gains meaning merely in relation to other signifiers. Lacan, thus, mentions the acquisition of sexed subjectivity (being female or male) and connects this to the status of either being or having the phallus; the former is associated with being female whereas the latter is related to being male. The phallus hence is the term that separates the sexes, and the relation to the phallus stems from the dissolution of the Oedipus complex. In the Lacanian theorem, the infant's submission to the Law of the Father/name-of-the father forestalls the infant's incestuous desires and situates him/her in the "normal" sexuality. The infant, thereby, renounces the incestuous desires that he holds for the mother and yields to the paternal law against incest. "The law of the father is thus the threshold between nature and culture according to which the individual is prohibited from having sexual relations with those 'named' as 'kin'" (Lloyd 89).

Dwelling on Levi-Strauss, Lacan interprets the incest taboo as the universal law that initiates culture and hence establishes the symbolic. Lacan, in a classic structuralist way, perceives it as the organizing principle and the definitive structure. Butler, however, critiques the ahistoric symbolic and the idea of the Law of the Father as Lacan takes this law as engendering sexuality, culture and society. Butler attacks Lacan on the point of his fictionalizing the Symbolic as a realm that cannot be contested and disputed as Lacan positions any form of resistance that has the power

and potential of litigating the paternal law outside the symbolic order, in the Imaginary. The Imaginary is the realm of images- conscious or unconscious/ recognized or imagined- that finds its equivalence in Kristeva's semiotic and Freud's pre-oedipal. The Imaginary can disturb the symbolic but it cannot change or transform it, which means "the terms of paternal law are left unchallenged and the idea of paternal law as binding and irreversible is also left unopposed. This failure to challenge the paternal law results in compulsory heterosexuality being left as an idea(l)" (Lloyd 92).

Butler asserts that though feminists construct the Imaginary as a niche of feminist resistance towards the symbolic, they do nothing but "reconstitute sexually differentiated and hierarchized 'separate spheres' and leave unanswered the 'dynamic by which the symbolic reiterates its power" (*Bodies* 106). For Butler, the one and only means of disturbing and modifying the symbolic order fairly is to subvert it from within. By elaborating on the arguments Michel Foucault offers in *The History of Sexuality* regarding the *repressive hypothesis*[27], Butler intends to dislocate Lacan's Law. Foucault expounds on how in Victorian times, sex was a taboo contingent on incessant prohibitions, and though it was prohibited extensively, the prohibitions and repressive mechanisms failed to suppress and silence it. Surprisingly and paradoxically, it produced a more vehement interest in this taboo subject. Butler, then, infers that the Law, including the paternal one, may produce the desires it is supposed to suppress. As Lloyd suggests, "instead of being merely prohibitive, it [the law] is, in fact, constitutive of sexes, genders and sexualities. The law, in other words, gives rise to endless cultural possibilities not just one, and the patriarchal law is no different. The reason for this is that the law is iterable[28]" (92).

[27] *Repressive hypothesis* supposes that throughout the European history, there was a move from a society where sex and sexuality were freely expressed to the one where the talks on these issues were suppressed and prohibited. Foucault believes that Western society repressed talks on sex and sexuality from 17th to the mid-20th century because of the rise of capitalism and bourgeois society.

[28] Iterability is the regular and definite repetition of cultural norms, which is observed by other people and imitated.

This means that the paternal authority enforces a law and, in Lacanian language, names the subject but this authority is not the originator or creator of the law. The authority figure solely performs/cites a preexistent body of law and thereby reconstitutes it. Butler believes that the recitation and repetition of the law also cause the "possibility of its own failure" as it involves the subversive potential to disrupt and thwart the law (*Bodies* 108). Butler reaches the conclusion that the conjectures of the symbolic can be objected to, and the position of the sexed bodies can be challenged. The law, too, can be challenged from within, turned upside down causing the symbolic order to be transformed and altered as well. The iterability of the Law helps Butler to challenge the Lacanian understanding of the symbolic as contestable and open to distinct possibilities and interpretations, which paves the way for Butler's contestation of the Lacanian reading of *Antigone* and argumentation against the structuralist and psychoanalytic assumptions about kinship in *Antigone's Claim*.

Antigone's Claim opens up with a thought-provoking question: "Why have the preceding readings of Antigone been so apolitical?" and holds Hegel and Lacan responsible for the depoliticized perception of Antigone as given in the following statements:

> What struck me first was the way in which Antigone has been read by Hegel and Lacan and also by the way in which she has been taken up by Luce Irigaray and others not as a political figure, one whose defiant speech has political implications, but rather as one who articulates a prepolitical opposition to politics, representing kinship as the sphere that conditions the possibility of politics without ever entering into it. (*Antigone's Claim* 2)

Butler's first target is Hegel who has restricted Antigone to the sphere of kinship and Creon to the sphere of politics and hence established a direct opposite/binary between them as "Antigone comes to represent kinship and its dissolution, and Creon comes to represent an emergent ethical order and state authority based on principles of universality" (*Antigone's Claim* 2). Lacan cannot escape the structuralist

presuppositions, either. In Butler's view, Lacan's symbolic which Antigone transgresses is abstract and distinguishable from the social:

> Lacan provides a reading of Antigone in his *Seminar VII* in which she is understood to border the spheres of the imaginary and the symbolic and where she is understood, in fact, to figure the inauguration of the symbolic, the sphere of laws and norms that govern the accession to speech and speakability. This regulation takes place precisely through instantiating certain kin relations as symbolic norms. As symbolic, these norms are not precisely social, and in this way Lacan departs from Hegel, we might say, by making a certain idealized notion of kinship into a presupposition of cultural intelligibility. At the same time Lacan continues a certain Hegelian legacy by separating that idealized sphere of kinship, the symbolic, from the sphere of the social. (*Antigone's Claim* 3)

Butler starts her critique with Hegel who considers Antigone to be outside the polis/the politics and sets her as the representative of the familial values in contrast to the state and its necessities. Though Hegel takes Antigone's deeds to oppose those of Creon's, Butler disagrees with the supposition by stating that "*the two acts mirror rather than oppose one another*" (*Antigone's Claim* 25). Butler opposes putting Antigone and Creon in opposite directions and on contrasted terms as they are interconnected:

> Indeed, Sophocles' text makes clear that the two are metaphorically implicated in one another in ways that suggest that there is, in fact, no simple opposition between the two. Moreover, to the extent that the two figures, Creon and Antigone, are chiasmically related, it appears that there is no easy separation between the two and that Antigone's power, to the extent that she still wields it for us, has to do not only with how kinship makes its claim within the language of the state but with the social deformation of both idealized kinship and political sovereignty that emerges as a consequence of her act. (*Antigone's Claim* 6)

Butler mentions that Antigone acts like a mirror reflecting and yet deflecting Creon's authority as when Antigone performs in his very language, she mutates into a parodying and subversive figure. In talking to Creon, Antigone becomes manly, and in being talked to, Creon is ripped off his manliness and left unmanned. Butler

suggests that Antigone's deed is ambivalent from the very beginning, not only her unyielding choice and act to bury her brother by violating Creon's edict and summons her death, but also the verbal acts that she employs when she responds to Creon's questions and defies his authority. Antigone desires to act in language making her depart from her being as Butler believes that "her act is never fully her act, and though she uses language to claim her deed, to assert 'manly' and defiant autonym, she can perform that act only through embodying the norms of the power she opposes" (*Antigone's Claim* 10). Antigone's voicing the language of the representative of the patriarchy and thereby challenging his power and authority with the help of her parodying and performative language can be heard/seen in Antigone's confrontation with Creon and her vehement defiance to his law:

KREON enough!
Antigone look at me
is this true?

ANTIGONE yes

KREON Antigone
you knew tell me you did not understand
that I had forbidden it when you buried this body

ANTIGONE yes I knew of course I knew
you made yourself very clear Uncle Kreon

KREON it was decided by your only brother Eteokles
I promised him

ANTIGONE a promise to do a wrong thing isn't binding

KREON admit it was only right to throw it to the dogs

ANTIGONE no neither lawful nor just

KREON yes a traitor to his own

ANTIGONE and for that
he paid the penalty of the gods already
his death
death for the wrong of seeking his rights?

KREON you heard me yet you still dared to disobey

ANTIGONE yes I had to
it wasn't the law of the gods or of the dead
it was nothing to me

I obey eternal laws
oh I knew full well that I would die for it
I will die one day with or without your law
or you proclaiming it and the sooner the better
a sweet blessing when it does come death
how could it not be? I'll bear it

the only unbearable thing
was to leave my brother my mother's son
rotting unburied

you think me a fool for
honoring the eternal dead
and breaking the foolish foolish law
of an impious mortal fool?

tell me which of the gods have I offended?
what god's law have I broken?
none
kreon's law not any god's
if Kreon is right gods punish me now
but if he is wrong
gods punish and scourge this sacrilege called
Kreon (Lochhead *Thebans* 69-70)

Why is Kreon so obsessed with Polyneikes, with a dead man who does not have the physical presence to come and relegate him from his position? Why is he so hard on Antigone, who desires to bury her brother and refuses to leave his body unburied? Why cannot he let it go and excuse Antigone? The reason for his obstinate insistence is that Polyneikes problematizes death. Though he dies in a literal sense and thus nonexistent physically, he does not die symbolically, which Kreon cannot handle and tolerate. Polyneikes is moved to a symbolic position in which he still continues challenging his authority and power through his sister Antigone's will to bury him though it means objecting to Kreon's edict and confronting death. It is not for the divineness of kinship that Antigone faces death but for the essence and symbolic

value of Polyneikes that she does what she does.

In line with this, Butler, too, propounds that "Antigone hardly represents the sanctity of kinship. For it is for her brother or at least in his name that she is willing to defy the law" (*Antigone's Claim* 9):

> Antigone comes, then, to act in ways that are called manly not only because she acts in defiance of the law but also because she assumes the voice of the law in committing the act against the law. She not only does the deed, refusing to obey the edict, but she also does it again by refusing to deny that she has done it, thus appropriating the rhetoric of agency from Creon himself.
>
> […]
>
> She asserts herself through appropriating the voice of the other, the one to whom she is opposed; thus her autonomy is gained through the appropriation of the authoritative voice of the one she resists, an appropriation that has within it traces of a simultaneous refusal and assimilation of that very authority. (*Antigone's Claim* 11)

Butler then proceeds to the puzzling kinship relations in *Antigone* and avers that Antigone rarely calls her brother Polyneikes by his name but refers to him as brother, which is in an incestuous family like hers has multiple functions. Butler suggests:

> When she claims that she acts according to a law that gives her most precious brother precedence, and she appears to mean "Polyneices" by that description, she means more than she intends, for that brother could be Oedipus and it could be Eteocles, and there is nothing in the nomenclature of kinship that can successfully restrict its scope of referentiality to the single person, Polyneices. (*Antigone's Claim* 77)
>
> Antigone says "brother," but does she mean "father"? […] This equivocation at the site of the kinship term signals a decidedly postoedipal dilemma, one in which kin positions tend to slide into one another, in which Antigone is the brother, the brother is the father, and in which psychically, linguistically, this is true regardless of whether they are dead or alive; for anyone living in this slide of identifications, their fate will be an uncertain one, living within death, dying within life. (*Antigone's Claim* 67)

Indeed, Antigone does not confirm kinship relations; in contrast, she transgresses them by having incestuous feelings for Polyneikes, and her peculiar affection and love for nobody albeit for him. While talking to Ismene, Antigone talks in a way that discloses her feelings for her brother by using words such as "my loving body" and "his sweet corpse" that have loving connotations:

> ANTIGONE […]
> I will bury him I Antigone
> his sister happy to die for it
> to lay my loving body next to his sweet corpse
> (Lochhead *Thebans* 61)

Having deciphered the Hegelian thought, Butler moves to the Lacanian reading and interprets it to have failed to fulfill its allegedly opposite position against Hegel's reading. For Lacan, Antigone is the embodiment of "pure desire"/"ethics of desire" as she repudiates ceding on her desire, and this understanding reduces Antigone to a figure driven merely by her desire and removed from the political arena. By excluding Antigone from the symbolic and therefore from the political realm, Lacan inevitably puts her against Creon, who is the male/patriarchal representative of the state and the Law. In this way, Lacan falls back to the trap of the Hegelian reading which he planned to thwart.

In Butler's reading of the Lacanian interpretation, Antigone is attracted to Polyneikes's pure being in a symbolic way. Butler denotes that "Lacan's reading of Antigone […] suggests that there is a certain ideality to kinship and that Antigone offers us access to this symbolic position. It is not the content of the brother that she loves but his 'pure being,' an ideality of being that belongs to symbolic positions" (*Antigone's Claim* 29). Polyneikes exists at a symbolic level, and Antigone loves the symbolic brother, who resides in the symbolic order, not the brother or the person in reality. As can be seen, the symbolic laws of kinship offered by Lacan are idealized forms that are never actualized in the real actual society. For Butler, Lacanian symbolic order is defined:

> [...] in terms of a conception of linguistic structures that are irreducible to the social forms that language takes or that, according to structuralist terms, might be said to establish the universal conditions under which the sociality [...] becomes possible. This move paves the way for the consequential distinction between symbolic and social accounts of kinship [...] The Lacanian view insists that there is an ideal and unconscious demand made upon social life irreducible to socially legible causes and effects [...] The symbolic is precisely what sets limits to any and all utopian efforts to reconfigure and relieve kinship relations at some distance from the Oedipal scene. (*Antigone's Claim* 20)

The Law of the Father, the name-of-the father and the structure of kinship that demand the incest taboo and that are the fundamentals of the symbolic are the points that Antigone challenges with her quick-silver like, ambiguous and incestuous nature that makes her impossible to be shaped and put into normative structures, "Antigone refuses to allow her love for her brother to become assimilated to a symbolic order that requires the communicability of the sign. By remaining on the side of the incommunicable sign, the unwritten law, she refuses to submit her love to the chain of signification, that life of substitutability that language inaugurates" (*Antigone's Claim* 52). Antigone is no conformist like her sister Ismene who remains on the side of the symbolic order and complies to the edicts and the dictations of the patriarchal dominant discourse so as to stay integrated to the Law and not lose her status as a perpetuator of the law. Antigone, in contrast, is an adversary and a rule-breaker that challenges the structure of the society and the law "for she does not conform to the symbolic law and she does not prefigure a final restitution of the law. Though entangled in the terms of kinship, she is at the same time outside those norms" (*Antigone's Claim* 71-2). Her crime dangles from the kinship line she descends from and emanates from a paternal position that is already established on the overtly incestuous act that is the origin of her existence and creation.

Not only does Antigone disaccord the symbolic order but also consciously favors her brother over her prospective husband, rebuffing to conclude the oedipal drama by producing a heterosexual closure. Antigone accepts the gradual approach of death,

replaces it with Haemon and indeed favors it over him:

ANTIGONE death
won't you dance at my wedding?
death
will you marry me?

CHORUS death
this maiden courts you and croons to you

ANTIGONE death
with no-one left to mourn me
death
with no one to miss me
death with no one to kiss me
kiss me and cover me drown me
death

(Lochhead *Thebans* 78)

Butler puts forward that "[s]he does seem to reinstitute heterosexuality by refusing to do what is necessary to stay alive for Haemon, by refusing to become a mother or a wife, by scandalizing the public with her wavering gender, by embracing death as her bridal chamber and identifying her tomb as a deep dug home" (91). Antigone chooses death over "normativities that might have saved her" (*Antigone's Claim* 6). Her daring death exposes the loopholes and weakness in the paternal law as the law fails to bring Antigone to her knees to give up on her desire and accept a heterosexual "normal" position. As a result, the Law that Lacan perceives to be uninhabitable and incontestable is destabilized and congealed by Antigone's act and revealed to be vulnerable and susceptible to loopholes. As averred by Sarah de Sanctis, "Antigone's claim does not take place outside the Symbolic- which, for Butler, is not transcendental as Lacan posits and represents instead the hypostatization of a historically and culturally particular social order but precisely within its terms" (5). Antigone's claim is a claim for the alternative feminine laws that are not recognized by the ingrained symbolic order. For Butler, Antigone displays the limitations of the Law by employing the very same language that belongs to the symbolic order, and though Lacan claims that Antigone goes beyond the symbolic order, Butler alleges that she defies it from within, which is challenged and expounded on by the reading

of Slavoj Žižek.

By drawing on Lacanian psychoanalysis and appropriating it by bringing sociological and political aspects and implications to it, Slovak Žižek employs and refers to Antigone in almost all of his work and focuses on mostly feminine desire and Act. The Act, also referred to as an ethical act or authentic act, is a fundamental concept in Žižek's thought system to be able to comprehend the political and ethical implications his work bears in itself. For Žižek, "an act accomplishes what, within the given symbolic universe, appears to be 'impossible,' yet it changes its conditions so that it creates retroactively the conditions of its own possibility" ("Class"121). Žižek creates some examples to display the Act as a rupture that alters the reality to which it is attached to. Antigone's insistence to bury her brother by defying the authority of Creon and opening a crack in the law is an exemplary of an authentic act that entails "a logic of striking at oneself, of sacrificing what one treasures most in order to go beyond the limits of the Law, to act without the guarantee of an Other" (Kunkle 1). Thus, "the authentic Act is to be distinguished from both the hysterical acting out staged for an Other, and the psychotic *passage à l'acte,* and act of meaningless destruction that suspends the Other" (Kunkle 2).

As the origin of the Act is itself, it seems frantic and atrocious by the standards of the social symbolic order but when the Act is acted, it refictionalizes what is considered to be ethical or unethical/ logical or illogical/ sane or mad. As Žižek avers:

> The act is therefore not "abyssal" in the sense of an irrational gesture that eludes all rational criteria; it can and should be judged by universal rational criteria, the point is only that it changes (re-creates) the very criteria by which it should be judged… it does more than intervene in reality in the sense of "having actual consequences"- it redefines what counts as reality. (*Did Somebody?* [29] 169)

[29] Slovaj Žižek's book *Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism?* will be abbreviated as *Did Somebody?* henceforth.

It is true that an Act changes what is considered to be reality but it also exposes how reality is constructed and incomplete. "That is, at its fundamental, an Act reveals a deadlock or inconsistency at the core of the socio-symbolic order; it exposes how reality is split from within" (Kunkle 2). As put by Žižek, "an act disturbs the symbolic field into which it intervenes not out of nowhere but precisely from the standpoint of this inherent impossibility, stumbling block, which is hidden, disavowed structuring principle" ("Class" 125). Žižek's Act paradoxically dwells on Hegelian "negation of negation" and Lacanian feminine sexuation; "that is, an Act does not pose itself against a master-signifier or work in opposition to a symbolic order because it exists totally within it; yet, once decided, it reveals how this order is not-all, incomplete; it opens up the void for which the symbolic stands" (Kunkle 11).

Žižek gives the example of Antigone to illustrate what he means by the Act and attempts to find a motive behind her motive to bury her brother. Žižek returns to Lacan's reading in *Seminar VII* in which Antigone's act is thought to be authentic as she reconfigures desire and the Good away from Creon's law. Žižek, however, positions Antigone's act within the logic of the male/masculine ethics, not outside the Symbolic. Žižek draws parallelism between two other woman figures in literature: Medea in Greek tragedy and Sethe in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. Both of these women sacrifice their cause for nothing tangible, so they commit an authentic Act when they perform infanticide: Medea to desolate her adulterous husband Jason's invaluable thing and Sethe to save her children from slavery.

Similar to Lacan, Žižek, too, believes that the death drive is the underlying principle in an authentic Act, detaching it from the positive connotations and moving it to a more negative category: "it offers a way for the subject to break out of the limits of Being; it opens the gap of negativity, of a void prior to its being filled in" (Kunkle 4). Antigone, thereby, turns into a subject who interrupts the political domain with her "No" to Creon's edict. Her "No" is not an opposition or a transgression against an Other but it opens up a territory away from the dominant patriarchal discourse for the authentic and political Act. Antigone's self-annihilation, for Žižek, is explainable as

she desires to be a subject, and in order to so, she needs to act and hereby creates a rupture in the symbolic order, which is merely possible by annihilating subjectivities. Žižek posits, "the act involves a kind of temporary eclipse, *aphanisis* of the subject […] by means of it, I put at stake everything, including myself, my symbolic identity; the act is therefore always a 'crime,' 'a transgression' namely of the limit of the symbolic community to which I belong" (*Enjoy*[30] 51). "An authentic act then means freely to assume what is imposed on us […] subjectification is thus strictly correlative to experiencing oneself as an object" (Žižek *Looking* 64).

So, what does Antigone do? Antigone becomes inhumane, Žižek suggests, in the sense that she perceives herself as an object and embraces passivity. The law of the Father, the incest taboo and the kinship structure are imposed on Antigone, which Lacan presumes to be the foundation of the Symbolic order. As suggested by Butler, Antigone iterates and performs on the Law by employing the very same language that at the same time challenges her and demotes her to the position of an object, and in this way, Antigone moves away from the dictations of the hegemonic discourse and frees herself from the necessities of the patriarchal norms. Butler avers that Antigone never leaves or/and transgresses the Symbolic as Lacan has proposed, but remains in it and challenges it from within. Žižek suggests that Antigone accepts the fate imposed on her as if it was her own choice, acts on it and perpetuate *Até*.

Antigone's embrace of her *Até* challenges the natural order and forces nature to start *ex nihilo*, which has a radical and defiant power. By transgressing the symbolic, Antigone becomes The Thing. "The Thing is Pure Being but not in the sense that Butler attributes to it. Antigone does not long for the 'ideal brother.' What The Thing stands for is the individual, the irreplaceable, the value of Being as such, regardless of its content: something that because of its uniqueness, cannot be exchanged in the symbolic order" (Žižek *Enjoy* 92). Antigone mutates into a possibility/a space when she breaks with the social norms and acts and opens up the probability of establishing

[30] Žižek's book *Enjoy Your Symptom! Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out* will be abbreviated as *Enjoy* henceforth.

a new social order as "in order to create a new social order, one must act and defy the symbolic and follow her/his desire at the cost of anything" since "an Act is not only a gesture that does the impossible but an intervention into the social reality that changes the very coordinates of what is perceived to be possible; it is not simply beyond good, it redefines what counts as good" (Žižek *Did Somebody?* 167). De Sanctis concludes Žižek's reading of Antigone in the following way: "Antigone is inhuman, she goes beyond the limits of the symbolic, and by breaking with the big Other, she opens up the possibility of a new order" and adds that "Žižek's psychoanalytical reading is in fact very much politically freighted, fulfilling Butler's wish to have Antigone returned to the sphere of politics" (8)

It can be stated that Antigone in the end reaches the same point in both Butler and Žižek's readings as for Butler, Antigone is a parodic figure who transgresses the authoritative operations and politics by performing subversive acts such as appropriating Kreon's language, speaking in the public sphere exclusive to men and in a way usurping his place. By employing such insurgent acts, Antigone discloses the loopholes and weakness in the Law and calls for the need to reconstruct and reconfigure the Law. For Žižek, too, Antigone acts, performs on authentic act feminine and driven by death, challenges the Law and displays its vulnerability and contradiction, engendering a space and lighting a spark to establish a new social order. Kunkle delineates that "what Žižek's theorizing of the Act offers us is a way to conceive of the impossible as possible, to see that reality is incomplete and split from within, that there is another world to construct" (5). Both Butler and Žižek hence attempt to transcend and save the text from the dialectical, structuralist and depoliticized readings of Hegel and Lacan and to bring Antigone to the political sphere and turn her into the revolutionary figure *par excellence*.

Taking everything into consideration, Antigone can be suggested to be a subversive figure as she disobeys the King, the representative of God in this world and distinguishes between God and King as she refuses to follow the edicts and dictations of an intermediator, who misuses his power to make his citizens comply to his man-

made laws and to retain them in the Symbolic order. However, Antigone has autonomy and agency, and she disobeys Kreon the father and challenges his authority and power. Not only does Antigone challenge Kreon's authority and make his Laws susceptible to defiance, but also she indirectly castrates him as the death of his son Haemon destroys the phallic symbol and patrilineal descent. Antigone also evacuates and nullifies the "father image" since Kreon is no longer a father: not a biological father to his son as he is nonexistent now, and not a symbolic/patriarchal father to his citizens as Antigone has exposed the loopholes in his hegemonic order and shown its weakness at the cost of sacrificing herself. Antigone has refused to give up on her desire, which is burying her brother Polyneikes, though her desire is transgressive and destructive. By reconstructing the myth of Antigone, Lochhead revitalizes the presence of a woman, worthy of mentioning and remembering, and with the power of her feminine and effectual language, she achieves making her doubly defiant and insurgent, and Antigone turns into the embodiment of a strong woman, who is not afraid of subverting the hegemonic patriarchal discourse and challenging its representative by asserting her autonomy and agency and continues to be an exemplary figure for those whose voice has been muted, who has been displaced, misplaced and demanded to cede on their desire(s).

For Lacan, symbolic law cannot be demoted to social norms, which are the order of regulation, and thereby, it is easy to separate the symbolic from the social. This, however, is not as smooth as suggested by Lacan. There are some situations in which more than one woman function as the mother or more than one man function as the father, which causes the dispersion of the place of the father or the mother, and blurring the lines between the symbolic and the social. There can also be other situations in which the roles of the daughter or wife in the Symbolic may not overlap with the roles of those in the social. Lacan's insistence that the symbolic position of the father stays the same despite the changes in the position/function of the father at the level of the social does not hold true. "The very attempt to preserve the formality of the empty categories 'mother' and 'father' as distinct from the human beings who actually perform paternal and maternal roles is susceptible to critique" paving the way for the denouncement of the fact that the symbolic functions at a transcendental

level, which attributes the position/status of empty signifier to the structural positions in the social (Chanter 93). When the status of fathers and mothers is different from those who have been traditionally associated with these roles, the categories are reconfigured, and the meaning and the function of the symbolic positions are altered.

The Lacanian symbolic, as the structure of the Word, favors certain structures, positions and kinships at the expense of others, and Lacan detaches the Symbolic from the social and defining the former with universality. Because of that, the Symbolic avails itself of inquiry, becomes immune to questioning or criticizing and starts to act as a law. Questioning the structure and the function of the Symbolic is considered forbidden. However, it is impossible to fully separate the Symbolic from the normative social regulations. The Symbolic is not "an idealized precondition of the social, but itself constituted in and through the various sediments that make up the spectrum of social relations" (Chanter 91). The Symbolic is the aggregate of social practices and thereby the distinction between the Symbolic and the social is not as rigid as Lacan avers. Lochhead's Antigone, too, blurs the lines between the Symbolic and the social and problematizes the rupture between these: she is in the Symbolic but not in the social.

I agree with the Butlerian premise that Antigone "exposes the socially contingent character of kinship," and yet, I want to draw attention to Antigone's claim's relating merely to Polyneikes, not to the other brother. Antigone desires to establish Polyneikes as *only* a brother, not as a mutual participant of a potential incestuous union. She symbolically detaches herself from a family precedent, that includes reproducing one's own sibling. In this way, Antigone returns the incest taboo that Oedipus has transgressed and stands for the law. At first, she deviates from the law as she is outside the law because of her status as a child of incest, but then, she invokes the law that she has displaced earlier. By burying her brother, she differentiates herself from being the daughter and potential participant of an incestuous relationship. With her act/choice of burial, Antigone turns into an other, different from her previous self and labels which have been cast upon her for the sin of her

parents. Antigone does not perpetuate the oedipal pattern but prefers to return the law Oedipus has transgressed. Antigone acts on her own terms, according to her own decision, and in this way, she accepts the deed of Oedipus but only to differentiate herself from her father and the implications and ramifications of his act.

With the act of the bold burial against the decrees of Kreon, Antigone is no longer the fruit of an incestuous union, no longer the daughter of the sinful Oedipus. She changes both the status/identity of Polyneikes by labelling him as *only* a brother and of her own status/identity as the product of incest. Antigone mutates into an agent who reapplies the prohibition that Oedipus has violated. Chanter, too, suggests that "Antigone seems to be made to a representative of the law precisely in contesting her status as an aberration to the prohibition of incest; she makes herself into such a representative by clarifying that her brother is only her brother" (94). Antigone transgresses the Law but her transgression with her existence and her act also has the effect of strengthening the Law. She symbolically accedes to the Law she has previously displaced. By burying her brother, she stays in the Symbolic. However, Antigone is not in the social as she defends a kinship that is not wanted by the social, a kinship that is the precondition for the intelligibility of the social norms and that has an equation in the Symbolic. Though Antigone is in the Symbolic, she is excluded from the social as her desire to honor her brother and her favoring of kinship over her own life, though this ultimately reinforces the Law, rips off her from her right to live. She is forced to make a choice: either she would stay in the Symbolic, obey the dictations of the paternal discourse and has the ramifications of her obedience in the social, in her image/position as an obedient daughter and wife, or she would bury her brother, which indirectly reinforces the Law and makes her stay in the Symbolic, not transgress it but her act would cause her banishment from the social realm. Though Antigone has a place in the Symbolic, she cannot position her existence and self in the social as the social disallows accommodating her because of her defiance and her choice and repudiates attributing the roles of a daughter and a wife to her.

With her claim and choice, Antigone not only reverses Oedipus's transgression and restore the Law but also opens up new possibilities. By acting independently on her own terms, Antigone challenges the exclusion of women from the political arena. She acts as a free woman in a situation that concerns the royal members and the king, raises her voice and refuses the political silence that is enforced on her. She, in a way, demands a future that is not entrapped in old principles but has a place for women as well though this means sacrificing her self and calling for her demise.

4.2.2. Tragedy of Oedipus

"Oedipus might have already had a complex,
but certainly, not the one which he was to give his name."
Jacques Lacan

4.2.2.1. Lack and The Question of "Mother" and "Origin" in *Thebans*

In the lectures delivered in the 1950s and 1960s and especially in his seminar "The Other Side of Psychoanalysis," Lacan casts doubt on the Oedipus complex: he does not term it as the Oedipal myth but prefers to call it the Freudian myth, "the latest born myth in history" (*Écrits* 317). Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, too, criticize the Oedipus complex in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972) and demote it to "the familial complex"/familial myth (181). Roland Barthes proposes that one cannot think of myth as an archaic and a timeless narrative, recognizes the historicity of the myth(s) and recommends everyone to be aware of the constructedness of these prevailing myths. By averring the constructedness of the myths, Barthes "problematizes the ahistorical concepts of the myth of origin and the origin of myth:" (Irvine 118) "ancient or not, mythology can only have an historical foundation, for myth is a type of speech chosen by history: it cannot possibly evolve from the nature of things" (Barthes 28).

As Lacan develops and alters his theories of processes one goes through to evolve into an individual and attain her/his subjectivity, he reconfigures some of his concepts

such as the mother's role. Lacan is cognizant of the significance of the "mother" in the formation of subjectivities and of sexuation. Thereby, Lacan associates the trajectory of the mother, also referred to as the maternal object, with his ideas and theorem on the initiation and engenderment of the human psyche. However, as suggested by Shuli Barzilai, "the basic itinerary of the mother in Lacan's work is that the other is first conceived of as fully present, than as almost absent, and finally after a period of occlusion, she returns under the aegis of the phallus" (2).

In *Critical Texts* (1988), Lacan displays that separation of the baby from the mother at birth and weaning process are extremely significant to the psychic development. The weaning complex or the subsequent disconnection from the mother is at the origins of castration. Thornmann asserts that "the mother is at the origin of Lacan's theorization of the origin of the subject," and this origin "signifies both the mother as the origin/the creator, and as the origin of the subject and subjectivity" (Web). However, in the altered vision of Lacan in time, "the mother is eliminated in the account of origins in the mirror stage and maligned in the repression that constitutes the paternal metaphor; that is, in Lacan's rereading of the Oedipus complex" (Thornmann Web). In his seminar "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychanalytic Experience" (1949), Lacan introduces the concept of the mirror stage and elaborates on it as a stage in which origin now turns into autogenesis for "the function of I" stems from the reflected image of the body and an identification with a specular Other. The mirror stage is "the encounter with a specular counterpart that precipitates the bipolarity of identification in the subject" (Barzilai 2). However, in this theorization, the mother and her role is belittled and eliminated for the paternal identification as Lacan suggests "the mirror is the mother of the ego. But the mother is not in the mirror," which suggests that the formation of the ego is not necessarily linked with the maternal, and yet the mother is there/has a function to lead the infant into the Symbolic (in Barzilai 4).

Lacan, during the mid 1950s, reconfigures the role of the mother when he starts to talk about the Oedipus complex and introduces the function of the paternal metaphor.

After disconnecting the idyllic dyad with the mother, the infant is confronted with a lack, which is substituted by the name-of-the father, and thus loses the desire of the mother and yet develops her/his own desire and mutates into a human being- fragmented though- by attaining subjectivity. Barzilai puts forwards that the mother:

> [A]ppears as the one who instills in the child a desire to be the phallus that she desires and thereby completely to fill her lack. However, insofar as the mother indicates her dependency on and subordination to the Name-of-the father, she fulfills her mediatory role in the Symbolic order. Her mediation, which assumes a prior acknowledgement of the paternal metaphor (also called the phallic signifier and paternal function) is deemed necessary for the child's libidinal normalization (2).

The mother orients the infant into the symbolic, and in order to mediate and move the infant into the Symbolic, the realm of the signifiers/culture/law, there is an underlying notion in Lacanian theorem that the mother must be repudiated. Not only specifically in Lacan's writings but also in the psychoanalytic discourse, the belief that the mother is paradoxically both desirable and dangerous prevails. The probable danger existent in the infant-mother dyad is discussed largely in Lacan's *Seminars*. Lacan mentions the move from the pre-linguistic imaginary, the mirror stage in which the infant experiences wholeness with the mother and s/he is unaware of the sexual differences to the Symbolic and to the term of the Name-of-the-Father vital for the signification to run smoothly. If the signifier of the Name-of-the-Father is foreclosed, Lacan avers that psychosis will emerge. Kristeva recuperates Lacan's accounts and claims that with no paternal signifier to hold on to, the infant might yield to the horrors of "abjection" and be imprisoned in "the fantasy of disappearing back into the mother" (Sayers 454). Thus, Lacan believes that the Oedipal drama should be resolved with the intrusion of the paternal figure/the paternal metaphor, and the mother must be transcended so as for the infant to integrate into the realm of the Symbolic.

While embracing Lacan's radical account of subjectivity and his ideas on the development of a sexual identity as a result of identification, some feminists are not at ease with Lacan's positioning of the mother as a mute being. Grosz asserts that

"while providing arguably the most sophisticated and convincing account of subjectivity, psychoanalysis itself is nevertheless phallocentric in its perspectives, methods and assumptions" (3). In Lacan's theorization, like his predecessor Freud, the process of oedipalization is hinged upon the fallacy of perceiving the mother as "an object of desire" that must be relinquished. For Lacan, as the feminine is positioned outside the realm of the symbolic, the mother-child dyad must remain forever banished to the area of the subversive. Jones suggests that "although both authors (Freud and Lacan) make the progressive move of assigning a cultural explanation for the development of gender difference, there is a theoretical poverty at the heart of both of these accounts" (456). Depending on the castration complex exclusively and the female desire of the phallus to enlighten the female oedipalization, Freud and Lacan, position the masculine as the norm and women as the representatives of what is different. Irigaray puts forward that the entrapped and closed accounts of Freud and Lacan degrade the oedipalized female to "a man minus the possibility of (re)presenting oneself as a man=normal woman" (*Speculum* 827). The relegation of the female to a half and incompleteness may stem from the urge to conceal:

> [A] struggle between paternal and maternal power (the "successful" outcome in the oedipal struggle to disengage from the mother) [which] belies the victor's claim that the loser, the mother, is too dangerous and powerful to coexist with. Rather, it would seem that the evocation of women's danger is an age-old myth which legitimates her subordination. (Benjamin 156)

Though Lacan alleges that the phallus is merely a signifier and an arbitrary object of desire that determines the sexes and moves the infant from the Imaginary into the Symbolic, he takes the phallus as "the ultimate signification object which appears when all the veils are lifted" and suggests that what is left of a woman when the veils are lifted is Medusa, woman's castrated genitals, incomplete, half and terrifying to the female (*Les Formations* 152). Thus, the phallus is indeed laden with a significant role in designating the language and culture, and reinforcing the norms of the patriarchy, and there should be something/an Other that must intervene in the mother-infant dyad in order to save the infant from the peril of facing danger. Since men

reside in the Symbolic and can speak the language in/of this realm, they also talk for women by silencing them. The major criticism towards Lacan's accounts then is that Lacan's theory positions the women and the mother as an object, not as a subject in the Symbolic as men do.

Liz Lochhead takes on the myth of Sophocles's *Oedipus*, the tale of the illegitimate desire that has fascinated Freud to the extent that he has made a universal theory out of it to expound on the human psycho-sexual development. This captured Lacan's attention when he criticized certain aspects of the Oedipal development and reconfigured it. Lochhead's *Thebans* is a reconstruction of the Oedipal myth that puts the male desire at the center and precludes the mother/the desire of the mother and the female. Lochhead's remake of the myth of Oedipus revolves around the story of an incestuous maternal desire that paves the way for the reinscription of the feminine. Oedipus is the protagonist of the classical myth: a son who kills his father, marries her father, fathers his brothers and sisters, suffers the consequences of his incestuous crime and is ultimately redeemed by unveiling the truth behind his identity. Oedipus has always been read as a drama that displays the subject's quest for self-realization and for attainment of full human consciousness. The play not only functions as the pillar of Western drama, but also as Peter Rudnytsky avers "functions as the very foundational text for western humanism at large" as man desires to attain knowledge and truth (71). Power states that "when the protagonist of the human drama is configured as the desiring Son, the effect is to theorize the subject as male and subjectivity as a process which demands the renunciation of Mother as a means to selfhood" (71). In Sophocles's version, Jocasta, as the object of the taboo/incestuous desire, must die in order that Oedipus can be redeemed by transformation and redemption. Lacan also suggests that the dyadic bond between the mother and the infant must be relinquished in the name of identification with the father/the paternal metaphor, necessary for normative psycho-sexual development and for the entry into the Symbolic order. Lochhead's reconstruction of the myth in feminized terms- not killing Jocasta but giving her a voice to narrate her own story and past- may and should be thought of as a challenge to a humanistic attempt and Lacanian theorem

with its phallogocentric psychoanalytic discourse, dependent upon the abandonment and repression of the mother in favor of the son.

In the second part of Lochhead's *Thebans*, Jokasta reappears not dead but alive to tell the repressed side of her story and to turn into a conciliatory figure and take an active role in mediating between her two sons, Eteokles and Polyneikes who are on the verge of war. The repression of the maternal and the silencing of Jokasta are prerequisites for male subjectivity to come into being, and it also serves as a foundation for the Lacanian discourse which necessitates the abdication of the desire of the mother and the denial of her existence in order to be able to gain ground in the hegemonic Symbolic order. However, Lochhead's Jokasta refuses to be muted and asserts her self and existence by speaking out her own story. Lochhead alters the plot of the original text to give maternal space to Jokasta and to rewrite the text through feminine lenses. Jokasta's voice that has been suppressed and muted in Sophocles's *Oedipus* threatens the very foundations of the dominant order as she deciphers the vulnerability and weak points of the authority figures like her previous husband and king, Laius, who has been associated with the negative traits such as rape and infertility which is normally attributed to women. Jokasta also blames him for ripping off her son Oedipus from her and sees him as the cause of all this tragedy and suffering. Lochhead resurrects Sophocles's dead Jokasta and bestows on her dramatic and textual authority and voice, and in this way, she takes the position of a feminine/maternal subject who disrupts the laws that contain her as well.

When the play starts, the reader encounters Oedipus the King who "has mastered the sphinx's test or truth and assumes the position of the master in this way. He is the one who knows and is capable of uniting society and protecting it against danger with his knowledge" (Geyskens and Van Haute 130). Having solved the riddle of the sphinx and hence reached the truth, Oedipus desires to repeat the same cycle and save Thebes from the plague by solving another riddle and in this way protecting his status as the holder of the truth without knowing that the truth he is expected to unveil would direct at himself and destroy him eventually. "The excavator of the truth" as Oedipus names

himself and the big boaster of this feature of him is ironically incognizant of the most important secret in his life (Lochhead *Thebans* 24).

Until Oedipus leaves Corinth, which he has thought to be his home and Merope and Polybus his parents in order not to be caught up in the net of the oracle that decrees he would kill his father and marry his mother, he has been in the Symbolic of that particular order. However, when Oedipus abandons his roots and disconnects his supposedly familial and historical ties in order to escape his doom, he encounters his real father, Lauis, at the crossroads and kills him. The death of the father who symbolizes the Law not only causes Oedipus to become the king of Thebans but also leads him to gradually regress into the Imaginary. By usurping the father's authority and power and replacing him, Oedipus cherishes his marriage to his mother/wife Jokasta and enjoys the wholeness and integrity they have together. When his people demand that he should help them save the country from plague, Oedipus starts to pursue the source of the problem and solve it. During his efforts to reach the truth and save his people, Oedipus confronts a lack and a gap in his personal history, and the suspicious and conflictive witness stories urge him further to dive deeper into his past. While trying to excavate the truth, Oedipus realizes the fact that he has a void/a lack in his psyche which he has covered with his illusionary wholeness and unity with the mother, and this wholeness has been disrupted by another demand of truth concerning his origins. Oedipus desires to fill this lack with "a thing," and return to the unity he cherishes with Jokasta; this thing is the truth about the murderer of the previous king turned out to be his real father and the truth about his own origins. Lacan avers that, "[t]he truth has been set aside. What does that mean? Is it so as to leave the field open to what will remain in the way back for Oedipus because the truth will re-emerge for him, and this because he wanted once again to intervene, in the presence of a misfortune that is twice as great this time […]" (*Seminar XVII* 156).

Oedipus, with his incessant urge to reach the truth and fill in the void that would give him a sense of wholeness, intervenes and precipitates uncovering the truth that has

been hidden for so long. Oedipus consults Tiresias, the blind prophet who teases Oedipus with his lack of organic and historical roots to Thebes:

> TIRESIAS you don't know where you live
> or who shares your bed
> you don't know who your parents are
> or how their curse will hunt you out of Thebes
> (Lochhead *Thebans* 11)

Without any roots to cling to, Oedipus is deprived of an origin, a starting point to connect his personal, historical and familial life story, which deepens the gap in his ego and motivates him further to seek the truth. Though Jokasta begs him to stop searching for the murderer, Oedipus insists on unraveling the truth:

> JOKASTA stop Oedipus shut up all of you
> Oedipus forget all this ignore it
> no sense in
> digging up what's past and best forgotten
>
> OEDIPUS I'm close to finding out who I am and you-
> I have to know
> I must find out the truth
> I will know who and what I am (Lochhead *Thebans* 23-4)

When Oedipus learns the truth about his origins, he in a way erects:

> [A] culturally significant story in the place of an absence- the absence of his own identity within the social and historical order of the city he has come to rule, and the absence of a single coherent narrative to account for his presence within that city. Oedipus has come to fill the paternal function through illegitimate means and the only way for him to justify his position is to invent a plausible fiction simultaneously to mask his lack of cultural antecedent and to account for how he got into his current position. (Dipiero 39)

By killing his father, Oedipus also kills the Law/the Father, usurps his place, fills the paternal function and at the same time regresses into the Imaginary from the Symbolic. Then, he marries his mother, Jokasta and regains the lost wholeness and feels unified. Yet, Oedipus lacks an anchoring point to connect him to Thebes he

comes to rule; therefore, there should be a retrospective story to connect him to his roots and to the people of Thebes. Dipiero suggests that:

> Oedipus's story is significant in its production of a tale designed specifically to cover over an original absence- in this case- Oedipus's lack of identity within a particular history and culture. His construction of an originary conflict, even-or perhaps especially- one about which he has no certain memory, casts the event itself as subsequent to its interpretation. That is because Oedipus's story needs to have a point and because the tragedy about him has to be tragic, he must have killed his father, or else there is no reason to tell the tale. (39)

Oedipus with his seeing eyes cannot/does not see the truth until a Theban exposes it to him. The desire to know and to reach the truth in order to complete the void that the formation of human subjectivity causes brings Oedipus's story to a closure. The story of Oedipus "reveals the truth about desire, then, but it is not the sexually aggressive masculine desire that Freud believed he found. The desire operating in this work is the desire for coherence; it is the desire to fill the yawning void …" (Dipiero 39-40). The desire to know, reach the truth and fill in the gap concerning his origins eventually causes Oedipus to lose his narcissistic omnipotence that he has when he was the King, the owner of truth, the husband to his wife and the father to his children, which will be discussed in the subsequent part.

4.2.2.2. Narcissistic Omnipotence

> "To have dismantled love in order to become capable of a greater loving. To have dismantled one's self in order finally to be alone and meet the true double at the other end of the line. A clandestine passenger on a motionless voyage."
>
> *Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus*

Dwelling on Freud's exposition of the tie between narcissism and scopophilic drive, "in which the subject's own body is the object of scopophilia," Lacan theorizes the mirror stage, which is "the paradigmatic moment of identification with a Gestalt of unity and control, the foundational convergence of self-idealization and identification" to depend on his discussions on the question of identification and

narcissism (Koustinoudi 89) (Bonnigal-Katz 147). Lacan imagines this stage to be engendered by encounters between an infant and a mirroring image, and the infant identifies with the image in the mirror as identification is inevitable, and the infant is predestined to do so. Accordingly, Lacan proposes that "one cannot stress too strongly the irreducible character of the narcissistic structure … the narcissistic moment in the subject is to be found in all the genetic phases of the individual, in all the degrees of human accomplishment in the person" (*Écrits* 19). Lacan's characterization of narcissism as the natural and inescapable state of the human being is repelled and criticized by some critics with the counter argument that it is an/only one aspect of human development, not necessarily its sole or unavoidable destination.

The image/imago/Gestalt that the infant sees in the mirror is a totalized and unified view in direct contrast with the infant's fragmented, premature and incomplete bodily/motor capabilities. Lacan suggests that "the image is a symbolic matrix in which the 'I' is precipitated in a primordial form" (*Écrits* 2). For Lacan, this "I" emerges alone "before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject" (2). As the image provides the infant with an illusionary sense of wholeness, the rudimentary infant comes to accept and assume this specular image. Lacan, thereby, believes that the ego is characterized by and constructed on misrecognition (*méconnaissance*) in the mirror stage as the infant recognizes itself with an illusionary image leading to the eventual misrecognition of himself/herself. The mirror stage provides the infant with an Ideal-ego, an ideal of narcissistic omnipotence that is, as a matter of fact, a fiction regarding the incompetence of the body in reality. The discrepancy between the bodily mirror image of totality and integrity, and the infant's perception of fragmentation and inadequacy creates alienation. The mirror image then "symbolizes the mental permanence of the I, and at the same time […] it prefigures its alienating destination" (2). David Macey suggests:

> While the very young child lives in a state of auto-eroticism (which precedes the differentiation of the ego), narcissism induces a sense of self by supplying a perceptive image, a psychical contrast that exists in parallel to the real body.

> Narcissism underpins the jubilation of the mirror phase, but it also generates a degree of alienation; the ego is from the outset an ego-ideal or an ideal image of narcissistic omnipotence and therefore a self-estranged subject. (75)

The alienation and self-estrangement of the infant stems from the paradoxical side of the "I" and the identification process based on the encounter with an illusionary mirror image. This "I" is paradoxical as it is both fictional and the most authentic side of mental life. The "I" is fictional because it consists of "a succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body image to a form of totality" (*Écrits* 3). That is; the totality of the body is constructed out of a succession of fantasy images. However, it is also real as it is the only real moment of existence that it can experience and cherish before the impending alienation that it will confront. After that very moment, the subject will need to deal with "dialectical syntheses by which he must resolve as I his discordance with his own reality" (2). In parallel with the discrepancy the "I" encounters between its own reality and its fictionalized mirror image, "lacking an other who is truly outside for comparison and reliable control, any narcissist faces a painful, persistent dilemma of the relation of image and reality" (Flax 93).

The Lacanian split between the wholeness of the mirror image and the inner fragmented self is a narcissist one "as for any narcissist, the relation between the primary I and anyone it cannot recognize in the mirror precipitates a 'struggle to death'" (Flax 94). Lacan also presumes that the preoedipal period is precultural albeit not social or interactive, so the mother's existence is for and foremost for the infant "as extensions of their own bodies, as sources of frustration or satisfaction of their needs" (95). Therefore, the infant desires to attain instant and punctual gratification of its needs or extreme frustration if the demands are not met, which is parallel with the Lacanian premise of narcissism. The infant demands an unconditional and enduring state, and when its demands are not catered to, and when the experience of absence or lack comes out, the harmonious symbiotic unity is disrupted and ruptured, and the infant is thrown into an existential crisis. Flax suggests that this stems from the fact that "the experience of lack punctures narcissistic grandiosity, the infant is

not self-sufficient and cannot exist in a universe without others, the image is not all" (94-5).

Though Lacan correlates this experience of lack with the intervention of language, it actually occurs before the infant's entry into language and her/his acquisition of language to speak, which makes Lacan's (m)other and Other mingled and reduces the narcissistic wound the infant experiences to the domain of language. It is like "a narcissist would rather be split because the impersonal operation of language than by her/his dependence on actual other" (95). Employing language to demand something makes the infant realize that s/he is not whole and thereby experiences lack.

Lacan displays the narcissist's dilemma, paradox and inbetweenness in the following way, "[d]emand cancels out (*aufhebt*) the particularity of anything which might be granted by transmuting it into a proof of love and the very satisfactions of need which it obtains are degraded (*sich erniedright*) as being no more than a crushing of the demand for love" (Minsky 275). Narcissism, on the one hand, cannot endure dependence on an other rather than their own self and considers such a dependence as a blow to their narcissistic omnipotence and a threat to their unity and integrity. They, on the other hand, desires to see an other as a mirroring image and identify with him/her to complete their self and attain wholeness. "These intense ambivalences and contradictory wishes render narcissists unable to experience interpersonal relations as a reciprocal rather than a zero sum game in which one person's gain is invariably the other's loss" (Flax 95). Human relations are "to be articulated, of course, as circular between the subject and the other- from the subject called the Other, to the subject of that which he has himself seen appear in the field of the Other, from the other coming back. This process is circular, but of its nature, without reciprocity. *Because* it is circular, it is dissymmetrical" (Lacan *Seminar XI* 207).

Thus, Lacan regards the narcissistic dilemma to be an ontological truth about human nature and ignores to take it as a consequence of his understanding of "demand."

Human beings are fragmented, split and alienated as they need to express their needs in language and address an other who exists independent of them. Yet, Lacan does not attribute human splitting to the effects of dependency on an other but prefers to attribute it to language.

Oedipus's narcissistic entity is a panoptical creation that rises from the specular concurrence of self-idealization and identification, which is the result of primary narcissism, "yielding a persistent and unmournable narcissistic formation that maternal omnipotence or plenitude crucially mediates […]" (Bonnigal-Katz 149). Bonnigal-Katz further avers that "this mediation not only operates via primary identification, it is also featured through the active involvement of the idealizing maternal gaze that effectively relays the specular gaze, incidentally sanctioning the frozen perfection of narcissistic mirage" (Bonnigal-Katz 149). Jokasta, the owner of the maternal gaze, provides Oedipus with the paralyzing and appalling narcissistic omnipotence as they share a symbiotic unity that gives Oedipus a sense of wholeness after his regression into the Imaginary with the murder of the biological and symbolic father Laius. While symbolizing the Law after usurping the authority, power and place of Laius, Oedipus also embodies the Law of the father. Paradoxically, he also defies the Law, unconsciously with his relation to his mother/wife Jokasta. Oedipus has narcissistic gratification with Jokasta in the Imaginary as Jokasta acts as a mirroring image that endows him with totality and integrity, paving the way for his attainment of narcissistic omnipotence.

Oedipus's relationship with Jokasta initially reflects a positive narcissism, the aim of which is to reach unity and oneness. Oedipus does not abject the maternal body but cherishes the unified sense of his being as the primary narcissism and its constitutive omnipotence satisfy him. Akhtar describes narcissistic object relations:

> [A]s characterized by omnipotence, preponderance of identification and defenses against any recognition of separateness between self and the object. The narcissist's omnipotence is manifest in his ruthless use of others with concomitant denial of any dependence on them since its recognition implies vulnerability to love, separation and envy of what others have to offer. By

> introjective identification, the desirable aspects of others are claimed as belonging to himself; by projective identification, undesirable aspects of the self are deposited into others. (62)

As a king, and as a husband/child enjoying his narcissistic gratification with his wife/mother Jokasta, Oedipus has full access to narcissistic omnipotence, boasts about his power, knowledge and potentiality, and even blames Tiresias and Kreon for conspiring against him. In his imaginary world, he maintains an idealized self-image and anyone interfering with this is attributed to the domain of negativity. When the lack concerning his parental and familial origin comes into being, Oedipus pursues to learn the truth to fill in the lack. When he learns the truth concerning his patricide and incestuous act, he proceeds gradually to the state of negative narcissism, which is at the service of death drive, striving disintegration and dissolution and struggling to have a return to an inorganic state. Oedipus takes "a narcissistic wound" and is "reminded of his paradise lost, and in contrast to this earlier narcissistic omnipotence, he has a searing sense of inadequacy and insignificance, a feeling that can be compared to shame, shame that the ego feels …" (Adamson 314).

After the revelation of truth, Oedipus feels an overwhelming shame and guilt for his incompleteness and fragmented self, disconnecting the imaginary identification with the mother, emanating from his breaking away from the narcissistic gratification and facing the threat of losing narcissistic omnipotence that would give him a sense of wholeness. Oedipus desires to break the bond and the idyllic symbiotic unity with his mother Jokasta, so he applies self-inflicted castration onto himself, castrates himself by pricking his eyes, and in this way, he detaches from the gaze, scopophilic and specular experience that is necessary for the formation of self and for the continuation of a unified understanding of self. With the act of self-inflicted castration, Oedipus leaves the Imaginary and reenters the Symbolic. Laden with shame and guilt, Oedipus eventually yields to the unwritten laws of the Symbolic order which takes incest as a cultural taboo and sees it as the initiation of culture and takes ground in this hegemonic order by perpetuating the dictations and norms of the patriarchal organization.

This chapter has explored Lochhead's refashioning of the Oedipus myth in *Thebans* by engendering a new dramatic discourse in which the female domain is appropriated as a space in which the marginalized characters are liberated from the oppressive hegemonic discourse and granted a space to raise their muted voice and narrate their stories. In this way, Lochhead has provided the reader with a fresh angle to view the classical and original myth from the perspective of the liminal and the peripheral. The discussion of the theories and ideas of the thinkers such as Butler, Irigaray and Žižek has conduced to going beyond some of Lacan's structuralist and patriarchal premises and thereby opened a space in which the female has been positioned afar from the Symbolic which Lacan seems to favor and take as the inevitable destination of a cultured subject.

CHAPTER 5

LOCHHEAD'S RECONSTRUCTION OF HISTORY IN *MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS GOT HER HEAD CHOPPED OFF*

"Don't
Let history frame you
in a pretty lie."
Liz Lochhead

"I think my country is women"
Liz Lochhead

5.1. "Twa Queens. Wan Green Island:" Rewriting and Subversion of the Historic

This chapter aims to analyze Liz Lochhead's deconstruction and reconstruction of the historical in *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* through the questioning of the categories of nation and gender. Lochhead borrows the real characters that she employs in her play, Mary and Elizabeth, from history, unveils the hidden elements of their political lives inextricably linked with their personal lives and questions being a woman in a man-driven political strife and a male dominated political arena. Aligning feminist issues with nationalistic ones, Lochhead attempts to lay bare the restrictive categorizations associated with nations and reveals the constructedness and elusiveness of the historic.

The urge to reconstruct the historical involves the attempt to deconstruct and later subvert the narratives ingrained in the collective unconscious of a group of people sharing a common history. As the nationalist context involves the interplay of distinct communities interacting with each other and asserting their own peculiarities, history and origins on one another, it becomes inevitable that the sustainability of the narratives in and through time determines the impact and efficacy of the nationalistic agendas perpetuated by historical records, extensions and reflections of the collective

psyche. The documentation of history and historical accounts is influential in nation building as suggested by Benedict Anderson, "all profound changes in consciousness, by their very nature, bring with them characteristic amnesias. Out of such oblivions, in specific historical circumstances, spring narratives" (208).

The liability of the concept of identity not only of modern persons but also of nations towards amnesia averts the effects of mere remembrance and favors the power of narrations "because it [identity] cannot be 'remembered,'" so it "must be narrated" (208). However, the selective employment and appropriation of certain narrations by the dominant discourse/the dominant power holder to its/his own end problematizes the reliability and validity of such political discourses and evokes the creation and exertion of alternative realities and counter hegemonic discourses. Gonzàles proffers that "if this resignification adjusts to circumstantial needs within the legitimacy of official discourse, the transmission of collective meaning can obviously be altered by the interference of counter narratives" (144). Liz Lochhead's postmodern version of the iconastic queens, Elizabeth I and Mary Stuart, is such an attempt to engender a counter alternative and an alternative niche to accommodate the classic story of the political, nationalistic and religious strife between the two woman rulers.

The mythologizing depiction of Mary Stuart, Mary Queen of Scots, has an elusive place in Scotland's history as her story is narrated on the plane of different layers of constructed truths told through distinct labeling, stereotypical definitions and prejudiced views. In her introduction to the play, Lochhead, too, mentions different versions of the myth carrying the inevitable coded cultural biases: "the Catholic Mary is certainly a martyr and almost a saint and the Proddy version of Mary veers between limp victim and politically inept nymphomaniac devil-woman who almost scuppered Our Glorious Revolution" (Lochhead *Mary* 68).

Vacillating between the definitive and keen identity markers of good and evil, Mary Stuart has been endowed with distinct cultural and historical in-flux identities residing on a constructed slippery terrain and appropriating her life as a myth to

accommodate and construct the truth from merely one perspective and engrave it into one single fixed reality. Having no stable hallmark of identity, "the icon has been assigned various antithetic identities born out of clear political agendas to either warn against women's wickedness or represent the religious/nationalist oppressions of the groups that claimed revenge of her death at Protestant/English hands" (Gonzàles 144). Lochhead, however, attacks the monolithism of the determined roles tailored for women and the truths in 1980's Scotland even if they belong to the royal class and attempts to lay bare the existence of cultural bias as a part accountable for the conflicts in the nation. Lochhead "deconstructs the mythology associated with Catholic Mary and Protestant Elizabeth, and, again, finds disturbing parallels between the demands made of women in the play, and in the past, and the prejudices that still limit" (Scullion 120). Through the dramatization of these well-known historical women, whose lives are thought to be public assets and property, Lochhead strives to "explore the possibility of women living independently from men" and from the restrictive society limiting their potential (Dix 209). Robert Crawford, too, emphasizes the plight of women fighting against the confining power mechanisms and the hardship of existing as an individual in such a world: "the play highlights how difficult it is for a woman to identify with the ideals of independence in a world where the odds- in terms of national and gender politics alike seem weighted against her" (213). In such an impasse, Lochhead "links Mary and Elizabeth together as women forced to work against their patriarchal societies" (Koren-Deutsch 427) and displays their untold and unvoiced stories by "re-presenting the hegemonic myths of Scottish national identity, deconstructing both legitimate history and popular culture and activating metaphors of playing, acting, story-telling, performing …" (Scullion 120). Lochhead, thereby, disrupts the one-sidedness of the classical myth of Mary and Elizabeth, and provides an alternative space to discuss the nationalistic and feminist issues from a fresh angle.

Aligning the feminist praxis with nationalistic concerns, Lochhead, via her play, constitutes an alternate space to expose the preclusion of gender and nation, which is echoed by Reizbaum, too:

> Mary and Elizabeth are presented as personally and historically trapped: the former is remembered for her sexual exploits and her infamous death […]. The latter as a powerful ruler, albeit a sexual curiosity. What is new here is Lochhead's dramatic proposition that these figures are united, not by political defeat and conquest and not by gender alone, but by a re-vision of the interplay among their roles as women, heads of state, and defenders of the faith. Lochhead involved the historical linkage of cultural marginalization, gender and religion, but she disrupts the essentialist fiction by suggesting it is a loss of autonomy that joins them. (in Lawrence 182)

Lochhead's overt engagement with feminist and nationalistic concerns, aligning gender and national identities on a familiar ground and attempt to link the representation of women with the representation of the nation- Scotland- have contributed to the deconstruction and reconstruction of the historical, which will be discussed in the upcoming part.

Written to commemorate the four hundredth anniversary of Mary Queen of Scots' decapitation at the hand of her cousin Elizabeth implies the creation of a rather interesting albeit perplexing production by Lochhead and paves the way for the upcoming discussions concerning nation as it "represents a modern attempt at rewriting the official history in the context of a current debate about the then current state of affairs between Scotland and England" (Kostic 105). Lochhead herself characterizes her play as "a metaphor for the Scots today" (Varty 162) and expounds: "Mary, Queen of Scots … is quite a difficult thing to write about without being corny or romantic. It's really about Scotland, more about the present than the past, how these myths of the past have carried on into the present malaise of Scotland today" (in Wilson 9).

When Margaret Thatcher got back in power for the third time in June 1987, it was a huge disappointment to the majority of the Scottish, who voted against the Tories including Lochhead. In her introduction to the play, Lochhead refuses the relevance of Elizabeth I to Thatcher and states, "Margaret Thatcher is not Queen Elizabeth the First, but questions of women and power- and how to hold on to it- are always there as we consider either icon. There was at that time a real sense of frustration in

Scotland, a need for us to tell our own stories and find our own language to tell it in" (Lochhead *Mary* 71). The then present political plight of Scotland upon Thatcher's reelection provides an insight into the issue of nationalism and creates the ground for its affiliation with the previous renowned rulers, which is inevitable in the discussions revolving around Scottish history. The historical framework of Mary's political life started with her claim to the English throne as the granddaughter of Henry VII. In her desire to overtake the throne and convert the already existent Protestantism into Catholicism, Mary was supported by the French Catholics devotedly. Famous for her beauty and infamous for her sexual transgressions and hectic personal life, Mary was condemned and marginalized by the Scots and even blamed for plotting against her second husband, Henry Stuart, the father of the prospective king, James VI of Scotland. When deposed and exiled, Queen Elizabeth gave her a shelter to reside in and yet treated her as an unwelcome guest held in house arrest throughout the 19 years spent in England. Unable to curb her inclination to conspire against Elizabeth, Mary is ultimately accused of treason and beheaded in 1587. However, "her overwhelming beauty and dignified conduct at the gallows gave rise to the legends of Mary, Queen of Scots" (Lopicic 130).

Lochhead is cognizant of the versatility and inconstancy of the national myth of Mary, leading to stereotypical representations of obscure and derogatory characterizations. From the very start, Lochhead implicitly warns the readers against the ingrained representation of the historical figures by borrowing the title, *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, from a nursery rhyme and employing parodic tools to defy and invert the historical realities. As suggested by Gonzàles, "the play shows how the space liberated by parody, with the intentional distance it keeps from the imitated object, can echo- repeat and distort but also make audible- the way collective texts are appropriated and resignified to serve different political purposes" (144). Endeavoring to denaturalize the accurateness of history and historical representations, parodic structures such as humor and grotesque operate as "fundamental subtexts in the questioning of Scottish tradition through the polysemic myth of the sixteenth century queen" (Gonzàles 145).

The play starts with a challenge on England and the English linguistically, and signals the upcoming discussions revolving around nationalism as it refuses to follow standard English. The first utterance is "Country: Scotland. What is it like?" but "Country: Scotland. Whit like is it?" The interweaving of nationalism into the play stems inevitably from Lochhead's position as a Scots: "I tried to write about two queens. The nationalism went along with it. I can't not be Scottish," making Scottishness an indispensable aspect of the play, which is reflected in its language, "a synthetic Scots" "which draws on the different accents of various regions of Scotland to create one unified stage language that nonetheless echoes the sound of old Scotland" (Koren-Deutsch 429). Refusing to employ the standard and mainstream English, Lochhead's language encompasses heightened rhythms, idioms of Scots speech and distinct registers, resonating Scottish distinctiveness and independence. Though criticized for not being intelligible as the language of the play is Scottish, Lochhead decisively emphasizes the necessity of employing Scots in the play by asserting that, "this can't be made into Mary Queen of Surbiton. If people can't hear what's being said, I suggest that they're not listening" (in Crawford 208).

The opening of the play with an introduction is reminiscent of the style of Greek plays; yet, the reader is introduced to the character of La Corbie, the crow-like narrator of the play defined as "an interesting, ragged and ambiguous character" (Lochhead *Mary* 5) "acting as its chorus and sometimes as its conscience" (Koren-Deutsch 427) and replacing the main role of the traditional Greek theatre of echoing the voice of the common people and reflecting the social, political and cultural values. In contrast to the chorus trying to form an objective stance, La Corbie wears the cloth of subjectivity and thus mutates into a partial and an unreliable representative of the events happening around her. Despite and/or for her subjectivity, La Corbie plays a significant role in the play, which is defined by Lochhead as "the spirit of Scotland" since she is at the very core of the play through her use of different discourses leading to the representation of a problematic but a versatile Scotland. "La Corbie works as an unreliable chorus who, instead of representing the voice of the community or judging the action according to social standards, involves the audience in the creation

of meaning as the performance proceeds, transgressing the way ideology is traditionally transmitted" (Gonzàles 145).

La Corbie discursively and gradually constructs Scotland and Scottish history and identity with the help of the power of words and her status as the omniscient narrator, which turns into "a dialogic monologue" as her introduction of the first scene of the play displays her view of Scotland (Gonzàles 145). La Corbie turns the wheel of fortune and invites the reader to meet her peculiar and subjective view of Scotland:

> CORBIE: Country: Scotland. Whit like is it?
> It's a peatbag, it's a daurk forest.
> It's a cauldron o lye, a saltpan or a coal mine.
> If you're gey lucky it's bonny, bricht bere meadow or a park o kye.
> Or mibbe… it's a field o stanes.
> It's a tenement or a merchant's ha.
> It's a hure hoose or a humble cot. Princes Streer or Paddy's Merkit.
> It's a fistful o fish or a pickle o oatmeal.
> It's a queen's banquet o roast meats and junkets.
> It depends. It depends… (Lochhead *Mary* 77)

The fragmentary and stereotypical portrayal of Scotland portrayed through scattered references to the peculiar segments of the country leads to subjective characterization merged under the name of the female narrator, La Corbie- the national bird of the different nations. Capable of expressing herself in three languages- English, Scots and French- La Corbie embraces the polyphonic and multiple representations of the events by not sticking to merely one language and thereby cherishes the Bakhtinian dialogism. "Linguistic transition from one language to another play with referentiality in such a way that her identity- Scottish national identity- directs to an emphatic 'moi,' the sign of an authoritarian but multiple self that will be questioned throughout the play" (Gonzàles 146). Lochhead's reconstruction of classed/national subject through language manifests itself at the border where self and other are dissolved, blurred and transgressed, causing the subject to be positioned in a contested and fluid space. "From its outset, the drama cackles a complex note of

Scottish difference" as La Corbie's opening speech "refuses to define Scotland in any single and reductive way" (Crawford 208-209). It incorporates disparate and disunited version of Scotland as it is defined as urban and rural, rich and poor, common and aristocratic concurrently. Crawford avers that Lochhead's is;

> a nation whose temporal boundaries are seen as extending far beyond that late sixteenth century when the play is notionally set. Edinburgh's Princes Street had not been built then, while the bargain-basement stalls of Glasgow's inner-city Paddy's Market come from Lochhead's own childhood rather than from the time of Mary Queen of Scots. (209)

La Corbie's utterance, "[i]t depends, it depends" displays the discursive reception of Scottishness and Scottish identity, and illustrates them to be dependent on subjectivity and point of view. La Corbie, the partial spirit of Scotland, speaks in sixteenth century Scots, and turns into a messenger carrying the torch of the past into the present and the voice of the past echoing in the present. In the play's Scotland, there is unrest and uneasiness arising from its adherence to its proud past "nostalgia" and yet its incapability of moving on and progressing:

> Ah dinna ken whit like *your* Scotland is. Here's mines.
> National flower: the thistle.
> National pastime: nostalgia.
> National weather: smirr, haar, drizzle, snaw!
> National bird: the crow, the corbie, la corbeille, le corbeau, moi! (Lochhead *Mary* 77)

Though the play demonstrates the multiplicity and in-flux notion of the Scottish redeemed from one-sidedness and cherishes it through La Corbie's speech bringing the wind of past with its musical Scots, it also critiques the nation's yearning for a far-gone and depleted past and reluctance to advance.

Oscillating between poetry and prose, Scots and English, La Corbie's inauguration speech "makes use of less of end-rhymes than of rhymes and chimes concealed within the lines" and:

> [i]t winks toward the old Scots ballad 'The Twa Corbies,' incorporated later into the play; but it takes the French for crow- 'le corbeau'- and regenders as the female sounding Scots-French 'La Corbie,' producing an androgynous 'ambiguous creature' who presents a Scotland both bleak and dangerous …, insinuating the imminent violence Mary will experience. (Crawford 210)

La Corbie's description converges in the juxtaposition of a balladic past and a depleted past with a focus on the present events and locations such as "road accidents:"

> CORBIE:
>
> How me? Eh? Eh? Eh? Voice like a choked laugh. Ragbad o a burd in ma black duds aw angles and elbows and broken oxter feathers, black beady een in ma executioner's hood. No braw, but Ah think Ah hae a sort of black glamour?
> Do I no put ye in mind of a skating minister, or on the other fit, the parish priest, the durty beast?
> My nest's a rickle o sticks.
> I live on lamb's eyes and road accidents.
> Oh, see, after the battle, after the battle, man, it's pure feast- ma eyes are ower big even for my belly, in lean years o peace, my belly thinks my throat's been cut. (Lochhead *Mary* 78)

Lochhead not only bases her play on the significance of discursiveness and subjectivity but also centers her narrative in relevance with another country, England. La Corbie sets the background for the upcoming misfortune(s) with a lengthy introduction, intertwining the fate of the two nations together:

> CORBIE: […]
>
> Once upon a time there were twa queens on the wan green island, and the wan green island was split intae two kingdoms. But no equal kingdoms, naebody in their richt mind would insist on that.
>
> For the northern kingdom was cauld and sma. And the people were low-statured and ignorant and feart o their lords and poor? They were starving! And their queen was beautiful and tall and fair and… Frenchified.
>
> The other kingdom in the island was large, and prosperous, with wheat and barley and fat kye in the fields o her yeoman fermers, and wool in her looms, and beer in her barrels and, at the mouth of her greatest river, a great port, a

> glistening city that sucked all wealth to its centre- which was a palace and a court of a queen. She was a cousin, a clever cousin, a wee bit aulder, and mibbe no sae braw as the queen, but a queen nevertheless. (Lochhead *Mary* 78)

With La Corbie's definitive and constraining depiction of the countries, Lochhead illustrates the binaristic farce on which the oppositions of order/chaos, intellect/ignorance and beauty/ugliness are based. England is defined with the terms resonating order, prosperity and intellect paralleling with and strengthened by Elizabeth's personal traits as such whereas Scotland is represented with the weaker and more negative characteristics such as chaos, poverty and ignorance contributing to the problematic status of Scotland, epitomized by the French ruler, Mary renowned for her beauty albeit condemned for her foreignness.

The initial perpetuation of the binary oppositions order/chaos, active/passive, weak/strong or colonizer/colonized and the subsequent subversion of them become the structuring principle of the play, which is transmuted into England/Scotland dichotomy where the negative features are attributed to the weaker leg, Scotland. La Corbie introduces the main characters Elizabeth, speaking in the mainstream, very patrician posh English and Mary, speaking Scottish in an accented French way, and forthwith, the English/Scottish split and rivalry are set, strengthening the conflict and unrest.

Lochhead purports the indisputable influence of language through the portrayal of not only La Corbie but also Mary and Elizabeth as the appropriation and integration of a variety of registers ranging from working-class to patrician/standard English help laying bare the assumptions and core values of a peculiar culture and displaying stereotypes, hierarchies and prejudice revealed in the linguistic space engendered during the production of language. Employing the multiplicity of registers through her characters especially La Corbie and Mary mirrors the class, gender and even geographical divisions ingrained in Scotland and England, which Lochhead attempts to expose and subvert. The subversion of the division in the play is actualized through

the transnational characterization of England/Scotland oppositions represented through Mary's polyphonic and versatile speech:

> *Mary, when she speaks has a unique voice. She's a Frenchwoman speaking totally fluently, Braid Scots vocabulary and all, in Scots, not English- but with a French Accent.*
>
> *Elizabeth has a robust, and almost parodic version of slightly antique (think forties black-and-white films), very patrician PR.* (Lochhead *Mary* 76).

Mary's rich language blended with Scots and French frustrates the readers and fails to satisfy their expectations since they cannot figure out how to categorize Mary under the nationalistic labeling such as mere Scots or English. Her heavily Franchised Scots voice is difficult for the reader to follow and comprehend, and her difference destabilizes the steadfast ground which definitive and constraining nationalistic discourses are hinged upon. Gonzàles, too, contends that:

> Mary Stuart, a multicultural sign where historical antithetic narrations converge, becomes then the sign where any totalizing discourse is subverted; the space where difference of Scottish national identity reveals the inconsistency of a hierarchically-constructed otherness, but within Scotland and as regards its relations with other communities. (146)

Lochhead subverts the previously established binaristic system delineated by La Corbie's opening speech through Mary's unfixed, fluid and quicksilver like identity renouncing to be categorized and similarized. Lochhead questions the constructedness of the past and its impact on the present as the reception of the past is inextricably linked with the interpretation of the present so that the new identities can be created and integrated into the dominant discourse and into the norms. However, the historical and chronological narrations of the myth of Mary Stuart are inverted by Lochhead's centralizing of the unknown aspects of Mary's story and by directing the attention at her uniqueness. Her uniqueness arises from her transformation into a multicultural niche disavowing categorization, limitation, integrity and concord. Lochhead's drama, hereby, turns steadily into "the text of a

plural nation with mobile hierarchies that intertwine in Mary Stuart's mythic and unfixed identity" (Gonzàles 147).

La Corbie's performative function of bridging the nation's historical times and introducing the characters in her peculiar and unauthorized way by cracking her whip or snapping her fingers impudently contests the reliability and validity of Scotland's history. La Corbie treats the characters as animals and performs burlesque and parody elements, which contributes to the denaturalization of history as the reader is dissociated from the seriousness of the historical events and focuses on their unexpected representations. Other than using La Corbie as the distancing and alienating means, Lochhead also juxtaposes anachronistic devices such as a bowler hat, paper planes and a typewriter into the play, which engenders a denaturalizing effect in the reader, and eventually challenges and disputes the legitimacy of the cultural myths in history building. Phyllis Rackin underlines the significant role anachronism plays in engendering an estrangement effect:

> Anachronism is built into the entire project of history-making since the historian always constructs the past in retrospect, imposing the shapes of contemporary interests and desires on the relics of a former age … in a form that enforces the temporal separation between past historical events and present historiographic representation. (94-95)

Anachronism, thereby, recapitulates the notion of fabrication and creation of normative reality by creating a distance between the historical events and the reader. Lochhead's text, which is the amalgamation of irony and anachronism, "brings an interstice- between multiple pasts and presents- where the coherence of historical records is under constant attack and where Scottish cultural identity experiences transformation," peculiar to all the cultural groups (Gonzàles 147).

Renouncing stigmatization and fixation, cultural identities are located in the realm of transformation/becoming along with being, abiding in the junction of both the past and the future, disavowing existing merely in the present and hence exceeding the categorization of time, place and history. Stuart, in the same line of thinking, asserts

that “cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous play of history, culture and power” (435). The constant reconstruction of identities transcends the restoration and recapture of the past, which guarantees the integration of the selves into the present. Identities turn into the name given to how one sees, positions and fictionalizes himself/herself in the fictions of the past.

The versatility and distinct positioning of identities are revealed in the play “by the constant interchangeability of the characters who, as representation of stereotypical roles in the history of nation, adopt opposing identities that transcend national, class and religious borders” (Gonzàles 147). The identities of the characters, Elizabeth and Mary, are portrayed as not autonomous but dependent upon the exchange between countries and the monarchs ruling them. Constructed as object of the male gaze and as the subject of the rule of England and Scotland, Elizabeth and Mary invert the hierarchical categorizations and nationalistic labeling by enacting the cross-casting that involves each queen playing the role of the maid to the other queen, causing their identities to be on the go, unfixed and not continuous.

Mary becomes Marian, and Elizabeth Bessie, thereby changing the focus from being a queen to being a maid and challenging the fixation of the identities and overthrowing the hierarchical structures with a theatrical status inversion. “This denaturalizing strategy is particularly relevant as we notice that commuting pairs usually invert hierarchies as in Mary and Elizabeth’s relationship, where both queens transcend contemporary representations of power between Scotland and England” (Gonzàles 148). The double-casting connects Elizabeth to Mary “showing them as subordinate at any time in the physical presence of the other, and directing the relationship of the monarch to her ideological other” (Morrissy 198).

The first casting transformation happens in the part titled “Queen and Maids” with the androgynous narrator, La Corbie, who manipulates the scene with her speech

stating, "Ony queen has an army o' ladies and maids," and thereby drawing attention to the existence of different selves in one's identity. She seals the identity as the juncture of collective agents:

> That she juist snaps her fingers tae summon.
> And yet… I ask you, when a queen a queen
> And when's a queen juist a wummin?
> CORBIE *snaps her fingers,* ELIZABETH *bobs a curtsy, immediately becoming* BESSIE. (Lochhead *Mary* 82-83)

The inauguration of the scene of double casting inverts the hierarchical power structure as Elizabeth, the queen who is curtseyed by the maids, is portrayed as bowing a curtsey and thus transforming into the maid, Bessie. In a parallel fashion, La Corbie triggers the opposite transformation by declaring:

> *And with another snap of her fingers: all change, and* BESSIE *is* ELIZABETH*, proud queen, preening, as MARY becomes, in that instant, modest and wary* MARIAN*,* ELIZABETH*'s gentlewoman*. (Lochhead *Mary* 84)

Elizabeth, the queen who prioritizes her nation over her personal life and indulges a sexuality outside marriage is transformed into Bessie, the sexual maid. Mary following her desire mutates into Marian, the socially accepted gentlewoman. Lochhead's establishment of binary oppositions between Scotland and England and attributing the negative aspects associated with the weaker leg of the traditional oppositional system to Scotland and portraying Scotland as the colonized and England as the colonizer is challenged through the transformation the queens experience. "This difference between the maids seems to suggest a collapsing of the colonizer/colonized binary with sexually active/passive binary in that Bessie is the colonized and wild Scottish woman, and Marian in contrast is sexually active" (Morrissy 199). The maids, perceived as the personification of the suppressed aspects of the monarchs, fluctuates the fixed and clear-cut boundaries of nationalism, blends it with sexual aspects and subverts the categorical and established representations of the nations, the epitomes of which are the queens.

In *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, Lochhead aims at deconstructing the historic and the historical myth built around the two queens, Elizabeth and Mary by displaying the unfixed nature of history and nation, the representatives of which are the queens themselves. Initially establishing opposition between England and Scotland/Elizabeth and Mary and later inverting them, Lochhead achieves delineating the loopholes in the restrictive and derogatory labeling associated with people and nation. Lochhead negotiates the inversion with her portrayal of versatile and multi-layered characters specifically La Corbie and Mary, speaking different languages and cherishing polyphony rather than adhering to one-sideness, which both frustrates the readers and opens a new perspective in their apprehension. Mary, the queen condemned and labeled with unfavorable and demeaning terms emerges as a cultural and historical space that resists categorization and prejudice. La Corbie, too, with her many-sided position, assumes the role of creating a distancing effect. She raises awareness in the reader by performing in a paradoxical and an ironical way moving away from the position of a traditional narrator towards an unreliable and subjective one. The double-casting and transformation of the characters with La Corbie's snapping her finger also overturns the hierarchical power structure as the queens Elizabeth and Mary transpose into the opposing ruler's maid: Bessie and Marian. This implies the indeterminate and evasive roles that are bestowed on people through power. Lochhead, hereby, calls attention to the constructedness of nations diverted from each other on the basis of their differences and reverses them by changing her characters into fluid beings and creating a survival niche in their peculiarities and uniqueness.

In her play, Lochhead evacuates the implications of the term "nation" by delineating how evasive this term is as it is constructed around the nationalistic markers and hinged upon a binaristic organization deliberately categorizing and diverging nations and casting labels on them. Along with nationalistic concerns, Lochhead also dwells on feminist issues and undertakes the challenging task of unraveling how femininity was constructed on the expectations of the patriarchy and limitations applied by the sole representatives of that patriarchy: men owning power.

The depiction of the English queen Elizabeth with the words associated with order and prosperity, her alignment with the country that she rules and her attainment of masculine behavior align feminist concerns along with nationalistic ones and shows how England, like Elizabeth, is treated as masculine in its relation with its colonies. The depiction of Mary, however, fails to form the picture of a powerful monarch. She is a queen known infamously and primarily for her sexual advancement and physical beauty but ignored in the political arena as she lacks the essential qualities such as intellect to survive in power war and unitary power to unite the nation. In contrast, she divides the nation as a foreigner and disturbs the integrity of the kingdom. Other than dwelling on a historical and political representation of history, Lochhead focuses on the personal aspect of gender performances accepted and practiced by the queens.

Lochhead attempts to pursue and realize the "herstory" project in the representations of the queens by allocating space to performing gender. Elizabeth's intentional masculinization, wearing men's clothes on stage and enacting male behaviors represents the dissolution of the female in the diabolic political strife and scheming. Lochhead's portrayal of Elizabeth in masculine terms clashes with her French opposite Mary, who embodies the other side of the game of power attaining a more conventional feminine attitude and using her femininity and her sexuality to survive in the Machiavellian game of thrones. These strategies are the ways the two queens employ to escape the patriarchal trap they have been thrown into and to transgress the patriarchal authority they have been surrounded with, which eventually creates and precipitates the ongoing conflict between Elizabeth and Mary.

The enduring influence of the patriarchy and patriarchal figures is obvious in the lives of these two women. It is impossible to curb and erase these effects which display themselves in their exclusion from the male sphere and in the corruption of the female principles. Elizabeth's performing masculine codes of conduct to survive in the dominant discourse and to maintain her status causes her to "get absorbed in the destructive masculine prototype even reinforcing its cruelty by practicing cunning political opportunism she gradually takes pleasure in" (Kostic 109). Elizabeth, unlike

her rival cousin Mary, puts her patriotic duty in the limelight, performs her roles as the queen and even sacrifices the love of her life, Leicester, in the political game. Mary, however, challenges the patriarchal ideology by exerting unchaste and promiscuous woman characteristics and following the model of a sinful woman, having a tendency to cherish forbidden sexuality and transgress the expected obedient and virtuous woman stereotype. In the process, she mutates into the embodiment of the sinful body to be controlled, jeopardizing the integrity of the patriarchal mechanisms.

Other than distributing distinct gender roles to her queens and thus unraveling the performative nature of gender through the representatives of nation, Lochhead also recreates the Biblical story, the murder of John the Baptist, by rewriting the roles through gender exchange so as to highlight the existence of versatile interpretations of Christian mythology: "to reveal the instability of identities and the role of the narrative and the performative to fix the meanings attached to the self" (Gonzàles 149). In Lochhead's recreation of the story, the gender roles are inverted as she destabilizes the gender markers by assigning Mary's husband, Darnley, the role of Salome. This implies the diminutive role of masculine conduct in a woman's political life. Mary is assigned the role of Herod, unable to escape Salome's scheme of killing John the Baptist. The prophet is performed by Riccio, Mary's favorite Catholic advisor but perceived as a foreign obstacle by the Members, the nobles of the play, who hide behind the collectivism created by the power of a group, commit distinct political crimes wearing the mask of collectivism, and thus hinder individuality and maintain the destructive power of the dominant discourse and the status quo. However, Lochhead, in her recreation of the myth, refuses to hide the names of the Scottish nobles, responsible for the killing of the advisor and names the murderers as such:

> CORBIE:
> There's Ruthven and Morton and Lindsay and Lethington,
> Ormiston, Brunstane, Haughton and Lochlinnie,
> There's Kerr o Fa'donside, Scott and Yair and Elpinstone,
> There's Ballantin and Douglas

There's Ruthven and Morton… (Lochhead *Mary* 126).

Lochhead, in this way, aims to amend the historical injustice triggered and perpetuated by the dominant discourse which demand the loss of individuality and maintenance of collectivity, thereby strengthening the underlying patriarchal mechanisms.

In the last scene of the play, Lochhead juxtaposes feminist and nationalist issues through recreating the historical decapitation of Mary by transforming the characters into 20th century children. Echoing what has been bestowed on them, the children play the game of violence, fear and aggression, perpetuating the discriminative and othering patterns they have been born into. The dominant figure of the game Wee Betty dominates and bullies Marie and encourages the other children to make fun of her. As Gonzàles asserts, this scene is reminiscent of "the influence of English discourse in the fragmentation of Scottish identity as well as symmetrical discursive relations between England and Scotland, Wee Bettie is hence a symbol of the internalization of English supremacy and Marie's pursuit acts as a metaphor for the atrocities Scottish society has committed against itself, transcending victimizing depictions of English oppression" (152).

La Corbie seals the play as the last commenter by voicing the chorus part of a repetitive children's song which gives its name to the title, "Mary Queen of Scots got her head chopped off. Mary Queen of Scots got her… head… chopped… off!" (Lochhead *Mary* 142), and she, in this way, underpins the inseparability of the past and the present and the repetitive patterns that destroy the modern political practices, which must be shunned. Lochhead's employment of this children's song also functions as a warning for the future generations to escape the mistakes of their ancestors and as a suggestion for them to participate in the recreation of the Scottish identity and in the saving of their culture from the dominion of the stronger dominant English/British party.

In addition to her attempt to transgress the limitative depictions of nations, Lochhead also desires to go beyond the restrictive gender markers cast upon her woman characters by renouncing portraying her characters as entrapped in the definitive characterizations and binaristic understanding and by making them survive in the male dominated political arena; Elizabeth through her masculine and castrating presence and Mary through her peculiar femininity and unorthodox sexuality. Acting on the performative nature of identity, Elizabeth and Mary succeed in surpassing the expected gender roles and turning into queens challenging the dominant patriarchal discourse and endangering the integrity of the political masculine body.

5.2. History in Flesh and Bones in *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*

This part aims to provide a post-Lacanian reading of Lochhead's *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* by taking Mary Queen of Scots as a threat to the Symbolic/the hegemonic discourse/the status quo, Elizabeth as a masculine/phallic mother to her nation and eventually Mary and Elizabeth as mirroring images. The Lacanian theorem is challenged and undermined with the fluid, polymorphous and on-the-flux nature of Mary who contests the dictations and decrees of the patriarchal society by not ceding on her feminine desire and refusing to be aligned in the boundaries drawn by the Law. Elizabeth, in contrast, transgresses her sex and gender paradigm by performing on masculinity and repudiating femininity, prefers to suppress her womanliness considered to be an impotency in the reign of the nation and thus turns into a masculine/phallic queen who becomes the embodiment of the Symbolic order. Being in direct contrast to each other, Elizabeth and Mary act like mirroring images, and Mary is considered to be a threat to the regime of Elizabeth. The annihilation of Mary is imperative for the formation of the coherent ego of Elizabeth. Both queens contest the patriarchal dicta that challenge women in the power relations by not giving them voice and space, and they achieve opening up a new space and dramatic discourse in which they can follow their aims and desires.

"In my end is my beginning."
Mary Stuart

The remake and reconstruction of Mary Queen of Scots by Lochhead intends to reconstruct the forestalled story of her life time and cherish all the omnipresent negative binary oppositions granted to her. A dark, lustrous and lascivious queen and a bad mother positioned in direct opposition to the chaste Elizabeth, who is the representative of the integrity of Britain and the childless mother to her people, Mary evokes emotional and symbolic possibilities with her atemporal, boundless and fluid identity. She stands "as subversive imagination's magnet, an alternative to Elizabeth, and to the forms of cultural and individual identity that a strikingly literary love of the virgin queen helped to create" (Lewis 63). However, what does it take to become an alternative to an all-powerful queen? The answer is being a threat to patriarchal stability, a disruptive force challenging the integrity of the Symbolic order and a femme fatale perpetuating her overt sexuality and eventually penalized with the phallic castration. Dominant discourse repudiates accommodating Mary, a marginalized and liminal figure, not only because of her Catholic faith posing a threat to the growing Reformation movement, but also because of her gender causing the male figures' continual attempt to render her powerless and exert their dominance over her. However, as Lochhead's reconfiguration of Mary's story demonstrates, Mary succeeds in disrupting the hegemonic status quo by sticking to her feminine desire and turning into a projection of male phantasies and fears. A new alternative dramatic discourse is opened up, and there, Mary cherishes an unsignified otherness and becomes an excess to the phallic structure like the Sirens[31], the extension of the traumatic Real, the unknowable and feminine other.

Lacan's employment of words with phallic resonances while attempting to shed light on the socialization of the human subject and grounding his theorem on the acculturalization of that very subject by means of her/his entry into the Symbolic order makes this process the ramification of the story of not nurture, love and

[31] In Greek mythology, the Sirens were beautiful albeit dangerous creatures that enticed the sailors to destruction with their irresistible and enchanting singing.

confidence but of jealousy, competitiveness and aggressivity. Having inserted the ideas of Ferdinand de Saussure and Sigmund Freud- that is language and sexuality- into his theorem and combined them with the ideas of being and existence, Lacan reached a point where the male and male voice have been privileged over the female one and where he has displaced the feminine from the realm of the speaking and located it in the realm of the non-speaking/the muted. Though claimed to have stripped his theories from the biological and deterministic roots of Freudian notions, Lacan's point of destination is no different from that of Freud as his ideas still echo the male dominance over the female by favoring the Symbolic order/the Law and thereby reinforcing the genderization of the master and slave dialectic.

In Lacan's thought system, woman cannot "be;" that is, cannot exist as women are solely the indicator of difference in relation to the male. As the sign of difference, women are excluded from accessing and obtaining subjecthood and subjectness; her existence is collateral to the existence of the masculine subject as the Other. Thus, Lacan's theory is entrapped in being the monologic verbalization and enunciation of the masculine as the feminine is silenced, muted, liminalized and marginalized as the site of plurality and polyphony, as the subversion of the patriarchal/Symbolic Order and as the extension of the real that resists symbolization.

For Lacan, the male subject is *everything*, and to demonstrate and confirm this, like Freud, Lacan has engendered a specular system that is based on the scopophilic and voyeuristic understanding that privileges vision, seeing and the gaze. Lacan believes that the infant discovers her/his mother's lack through looking and seeing, and s/he reaches the conclusion that her/his mother is incomplete, rudimentary and *less* in relation to the man owning the phallus. The mother is defined by her lack of phallus/power and the infant has reduced her to the degree of insignificance merely by seeing- without letting her exert her personality and individuality. The mother, to this end, is ripped off a chance of being an individual/a subject of her own but confined to the position of an object by the decree of the scopophilic gaze.

When a woman performs an act that is outside the boundaries of the Symbolic order and afar from the lines drawn for her and insists on perpetuating it, her act is labeled as subversive. She is perceived as a threat to the stability and integrity of the hegemonic discourse that has its rigid dynamics and thereby repudiates accommodating any subject or any act that has the slightest chance of disturbing the long-standing patriarchal order. Patriarchy, thus, has its own way of assimilating any subversive gestures and acts into the mainstream and the accepted realm where these potentially threatening forces become destabilized and naturalized, and becomes compatible with the Law. Mary Stuart's in-flux sexuality, and frisky and amorous nature can be interpreted as a subversive strategy that is an extension of a woman's marginalized position and utilized to thwart, challenge and destabilize the abiding and definitive conjectures and postulates that paternal ontology is hinged upon.

The overthrown and disempowered queen of Scots holds an immense amount of sexual and temporal power, and thereby mutates into a cult status that relies on the fetishization of the female body. Dwelling on the postulate of Engels, for Irigaray and other (post-)feminist philosophers "woman is the symbol of economic exchange and bonding in patriarchal society," and therefore, similar to an object that can be exhibited, traded and exchanged. It has been believed that women's desirability is highly significant (Colvin 152). Mary Stuart, with her fetishized female body, turns into the object of the potential exchange and the object of the male and patriarchal gaze that attempts to entrap her in the masculinist perception, especially by John Knox, the misogynistic representative of the hegemonic society and the embodiment of the male gaze. Mary Stuart, however, succeeds in exposing and undermining the voyeuristic gaze by refusing to comply with the tailor-made roles expected from her both as a woman and as a regnant queen. She repels and deflects the scopophilic and specular male gaze, engenders and intensifies "anxiety" on the behalf of the men around her as her lack of phallus brings forth castration anxiety in the presumed owner(s) of the phallus.

Knox, in 1555, published a pamphlet titled *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* and warned the members of the patriarchal society against the dangers a female ruler can bring forth:

> A woman sitting in judgement, or riding from Parliament in the middest of men, having the royall crowne upon her head, the sworde and scepter borne before her, in signe that the administration of justice was in her power: I am assuredlie persuaded, I say, that suche a sight shulde so astonishe them (the classics), that they shuld judge the whole worlde to be transformed into Amazones, and that countrie, as poetes do feyn was made of the companyons of Ulisses, that albeit the outward form of men remained, yet shuld they judge that their hartes were changed from the wisdom, understanding and courage of men, to the foolishe fondnes and cowardice of women. (in Curbet 138)

Humiliating women by calling them foolish and coward, and fearing the transformation of patriarchy into matriarchy, the best representative of which is the Amazones, Knox spreads hatred, spite and acrimony against female rule, specifically against Mary Queen of Scots. Lochhead recreates the scene of the meeting of Knox and Mary by highlightening the nondecremental misogynism of the embodiment of the paternal society and male vision/philosophy:

> KNOX: I, John Knox, do preach the evangel of Jesus Christ Crucified, by repentance and faith. Moved by my God and in humble obedience to Him wha is abune us aw, I hae been commandit to blaw the first blast o the trumpet against the monstrous regiment o women, an abomination against nature and before God; and to disclose unto this, my realm, the vanity and iniquity of papistical religion and all its pestilent manifestations in Sodom priesthooses and poxetten nunneries. (Lochhead *Mary* 86)
>
> […]
>
> MARY: You raised up a part of this nation- ma subjects- against ma mither, and against me, their prince, anointed by God. You hae written a treasonous treatise o a book against ma just authority. You have been the cause of great sedition and greater slaughter in England-
> KNOX: By the richt worshipping of God, men learn from their hearts to obey their princes.
> MARY: But ye think that I hae nae just authority?

> KNOX: Your Majesty, if this realm finds no inconveniency in the regiment o a woman, then that which they approve I shall not further disallow. (Lochhead *Mary* 87)

Challenging the authority of female rule openly and devaluing her supremacy, Knox trusts the steady bedrock and frigidity of the Symbolic order in which he resides as the embodiment of the paternal and religious Law. He attempts to disgrace Mary's nature, silence her voice and undermine her authority. However, his attempts to realign Mary in the Symbolic order, to assimilate her into the dictations of the hegemonic discourse and to shape her accordingly are subverted and deviated by Mary's persistent attitude of holding to her religious orientation and her sexual, amorous and feminine desire:

> MARY: … Maister Knox, because I am by nature douce, and queyet, dinna think I hae nae convictions or beliefs locked in ma silent heart- though I dae not *trumpet* them abroad.
> KNOX: Well! If I did blaw the first blast of the trumpet, madam, against the monstrous regiment o women- this blast was neither against your person or your regiment, but against that bloody Jezebel o England!
>
> […]
>
> MARY: Yet, will I in my realm and in ma heart silently defend the Kirk o Rome. And I will marry wha I please. Ye will grant to me guid tolerance- as I hae *aye* granted to you and your Reformit Kirk.
> KNOX: Madam, I shall never be seduced by the Siren song o Toleration. I fear you dinnae understaun this country ye are queen o.
> KNOX *goes to bow out, having said enough. But-*
> MARY: Nevertheless, I will marry wha I please! (Lochhead *Mary* 89)

Resembling Mary's enticing talk, decisive attitude and unprecedented beauty to the Sirens, the extension of the Real, which is the extra-linguistic realm beyond the Symbolic and the primordial and external dimension of experience, Knox sees Mary as a threat. He casts his male gaze onto her with the aim of objectifying and demystifying her as she represents Otherness and thus must be reduced to a restrictive gender/sex role. Otherwise, Mary would have the possibility of threatening the

authority, law and order of the phallogocentric understanding. As suggested by Pollock:

> In the dichotomous phallic constructions of sexual difference, there is the One and its Other. The phallocentric Symbolic doesn't comprehend the possibility of competing or complementary Symbolic or Imaginary systems in which phallicism and another sexual difference from (rather than of) the feminine could coexist. Phallicism installs an asymmetrical masculine and feminine binary in such a way that the feminine is created as a structuring, asemic negative- Other and Thing, which however, as a result of such an exclusion as founding trauma, unsignifiable Real, produces a permanent menace or potential to the Symbolic order because it also exceeds that mere, primordially repressed negativity, and always promises an as-yet-unsignified otherness of its excess to the phallic. (25)

Knox's perpetuation of the male domineering view and enactment of the male gaze on Mary emanates from his fear of a symbolic emasculation of patriarchy, which depends on a unitary religious, military and patriarchal success and which he represents. If the whole empire depends on the decrees of a woman whose judgment Knox does not rely on, the future of the whole empire and the stability of the patriarchal order, hegemonic discourse and status quo may be jeopardized and decentered. Mary's mobile nature, and glamorous feminine desire/sexuality she refuses to cede on aggravates Knox's castration anxiety as the effeminization of the empire would bring forth a metaphoric castration and an eventual and inevitable downfall of the empire.

Knox does not see Mary as the phallic substitute of a *king* but merely as a threat since her sexuality and her reception as *femme fatale* project not only Knox's fear but also clandestine desire and admiration. Mulvey avers that castration anxiety is alleviated by either fetishistic scopophilia in which female characters are over-valued and idolized or sadistic voyeurism where they are ultimately demystified by being saved, devalued and punished (35). Knox prefers the latter so as to hide his covert admiration for her physical attractiveness and overt sexuality by disgracing and dishonoring her with the help of deprecatory words:

> KNOX: Why should the pleasi face o a gentlewoman affray me? I hae lookit in the faces o many angry men and no been afraid, no above measure.
>
> […]
>
> KNOX: She's only a silly spilte wee French lassie, Bothwell.
> BOTHWELL: Only a silly spilte wee French lassie wha could cowp the kirk and cut your heid aff, John Knox.
> KNOX: She's only a queen.
> BOTHWELL: (*as they begin to exit.)* And what's a queen?
> KNOX: Just a silly, spilte wee lassie. (*Mary* 103)

In contrast to Elizabeth, who performs on gender and engenders a projection of an all-powerful phallic queen, the owner of the phallus, the holder of power and the sacrificer of her prospective lineage for the sake of her country and her people, Mary chooses living her feminine desire, cherishing open sexuality, having different husbands, bearing children and thus preferring to be a woman of her own nature and a mother of her own children. Mary has been blemished as evil and decided to be destroyed as she repudiates the dictations of the status quo that aim to limit her sexuality and destabilize her multiplicity and fluidity. She has no place in the Lacanian Symbolic order.

The first blow of the patriarchal society blended with religious bigotry would be to separate Mary from Bothwell by labeling her as the "hoor," seize her infant son, rip her off her crown and eventually lock her in a castle in the middle of an island. (Lochhead *Mary* 132). Displaced and dismissed from one/the Symbolic order into which she refuses to get integrated and to yield as it means losing her subjectivity, individuality and feminine desire, Mary is penalized by being entrapped in an isolated castle with no hope of salvation. She spends nineteen long years in the carefully chosen secluded area where she is confined to an inadvertent submission as she lacks the conditions to challenge the authority and power of the Law with her body sentenced and psyche tortured. Her burning feminine desire is kept in her body with this confinement, and her subversive heterodox and incongruous orientations are intended to be restrained in this way.

Though imprisoned and constrained, Mary still continues to pose a challenge to the Elizabethan regimen. Therefore, she needs to be penalized with a physical death that would diminish her symbolic influence that disturbs, lingers and hovers on the dynamics of the status quo. Otherwise, she will continue to undermine and weaken the pedestals and the plenitude of the Symbolic order what she symbolically represents. Mary undercuts and empties the inside of the ingrained terms such as power and femininity, and defies the notion that these are mutually exclusive. Mary was, thereby, punished both with a corporal death and a metaphoric/symbolic castration: when her head was chopped off with the patriarchal guillotine.

The last scene of the play, "Jock Tamson's Bairns," attains significance as the historical characters are stripped of their historicity and transformed into the twentieth-century children playing miming childhood games. The abrupt transformation of the scene occurs right after Elizabeth has decided to execute Mary. Instead of seeing the actual beheading, the timeline suddenly alters, and the characters start to play on a playground in the 1950's Scotland. Lochhead's aim of creating such a scene is to display the unabiding prejudice and bigotry in the nation since it merely changes shape and passes onto the next generation(s). The children perform the execution of Mary Stuart as it is commanded by Wee Bettie, and sing the well-known children song, "Mary Queen of Scots got her head chopped off. Mary Queen of Scots got her head chopped off!" which gives its name to the title of the play. Upon the execution of Mary, Wee Betty continues mocking Mary's reputed beauty and appearance:

> WEE BETTY: (*mock-tearful*).
> And her wee dug…
> Oh, her lovely wee dug…
>
> Her lovely wee dug wi the big brown eyes that loved her *sooooo* much…
>
> Comes scooshing oot fae under her crimson skirts where it has been hiding—
>
> Ant skites aboot among the blood-rid *blood*, barking and shiting itself!
> (Lochhead *Mary* 141)

The execution of Mary not only symbolizes the metaphoric death of Scotland's culture represented by her outcast and marginalized position but also a metaphoric castration of a subject/a woman who stands up against the decrees of the paternal order and refuses to be aligned in the Symbolic order. Recognizing the immense amount of feminine power/desire she has that would imperil the integrity and sustainability of the Law, Mary's presence and the truth concerning her identity are mediated and attempted to be repressed with the very weapons that produce, regulate and suppress truth. Mary's unyielding standpoint and multiplicity are contrasted with the fixity of Elizabeth. Queen Elizabeth belongs to a firm signifying chain in which a sign/signifier has merely one significance/signified. Mary, in contrast, resides in the system of meaning in which signifiers have many meanings/attributions/signifieds, as a result of which she blurs the stable ground on which the patriarchy rests against, and puzzles and confounds the minds of her subjects. Mary disturbs the symbolic fixity of Elizabethan/patriarchal order and taunts its continuing economy of desire. She, thereby, is castigated with a symbolic castration, which paradoxically and posthumously reinforces her ongoing position as a menace to the erotic and patriarchal order of the Elizabethan state. Mary transgresses the boundaries of the Law and achieves engendering a space in which she eludes from all the labels, dictations and necessities of the phallocentric understanding merely to be who she is: Mary Stuart. Lochhead succeeds in realizing what she has intended to succeed while reconstructing and envisioning Mary's story: she engrosses her story in a new dramatic discourse, restores her femininity, womanliness with dignity to her and saves her from being situated in the weaker/negative leg of the binaristic organization.

"I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman,
but I have the heart and stomach of a king."
Queen Elizabeth I

Whereas Mary Queen of Scots is a challenger of patriarchal society and a threat to the perpetuation of the ingrained and all-powerful Law Queen Elizabeth is the potent owner of a/the dominant place in that very phallogocentric Symbolic by appropriating

and performing on masculinity, repressing her femininity and womanliness and being the holder of the phallus/phallic power.

Patriarchy, as a discursive formation and a nebulous set of discursive strings and acts, renders sex, sexuality and gender apprehensible, and fictionalizes human beings within a sex and gender economy. Patriarchy should not be labelled as a static and transhistorical monolith but a lively and changing structure that adapts to the social, historical, economical and cultural conditions and that "produces gendered subjectivity within an order of rank and precedence that establishes not only the privileging of men over women, but also the privileging of some men over others …" (Buchbinder 69). In order to signal the difference between power and sex, patriarchy is vested around a symbol, the phallus, which is the abstract representation of male strength and domination which Lacan favors clandestinely in his writings. Lacanian psychoanalysis is mainly criticized for its covert favoring of the phallus and the Symbolic over the Imaginary and for its granting woman-mother conditional entry into the Symbolic order that would mean the relinquishment of their individuality and subjectivity, and the exposure to the expectation of infinite allegiance to the Law and its ramifications. Irigaray, with her deconstruction of Lacanian psychoanalysis, attempts to realign woman-mother in the Symbolic and refute the Lacanian postulate that the body of woman-mother is either a lack within the Symbolic/the social or an excess or a surplus outside it. In other words, in Lacanian theorem, the woman-mother is a fluid entity that cannot be integrated into the patriarchal economy and thereby hovers at the periphery of the paternal as a being associated with reproductive functions and sensual labels. In her deciphering of the Lacanian theorem, Irigaray first attempts to deconstruct the Platonic allegory of the cave[32] when she questions the root of Western metaphysics and the binaristic organization. Platonic

[32] Platonic myth of the cave: In the seventh book of the *Republic*, Plato resembled the ordinary subject to a man sitting in a cave and looking at a wall. On the wall, he sees nothing but the shadows of ideas/forms reflected behind his back. Plato likened the philosopher to a man who has left the cave and gone into the real world of the Forms. When he comes back, he may distinguish the shades less as he has been blinded by the light outside; but he is the sole person who knows reality, and he organizes his life accordingly.

representation targets at detaching the subject from the earth and making him closer to the Sun, which is the grip of origin. The platonic understanding, in this way, forms a hierarchical and binaristic distinction between the realm of the forms and the realm of the senses. The dichotomy of the form and senses, thus, is a significant partition point between the masculine and feminine subject in the Western discourse.

Irigaray believes that in Platonic representation, vision and seeing are favored and privileged over the other senses, and they are associated with knowledge and truth. Plato, then, detaches the alliance between the Logos and Eros, preferring the overcoming of the Logos over the Eros, the masculine over the feminine. Irigaray highlights the incorporeal nature of Western metaphysics and reveals the dichotomizing process in which the Western subjectivity is formulated. As the Western discourse depends on the supremacy of the visual and solid forms with clear-cut boundaries, the woman-mother, devoid of a proper form to define herself, is associated with indeterminacy and characterized by blurry and undefinable terms. The body of the woman-mother indeed accepts and confirms this allegation with its lack of the wanted form, definitive boundaries and a sexual organ to show itself. Because of this, their bodies are designated as a lack/a hole, acting as a rupture in the Western phallogocentric economy of solids. Tahmasebi, too, purports that:

> The maternal body is forever excluded from the symbolic social, with no access of discourse except through the phallic system of representation which is based on solid mechanism. … The symbolic phallus exhibits a profound tendency to privilege rational, abstract form over other senses. As a result, the subject's resignation to the law of the father is, by its definition, the triumph of the solid over the fluid, and of the principle of constancy over contiguity; it is the triumph of rationality. (176)

Irigaray, thereby, claims that the body of the woman-mother is a remainder, fluid that withstands symbolization and disrupts the phallic discourses. Irigaray believes that woman-mother cannot exist in a phallocentric discourse as her absence as a desiring subject is needed for the perpetuation of the social order that aims at transcendence, and the physicality of the woman-mother jeopardizes this transcendence as she is the pre-discursive reality and a potential threat to the sustainability of the order. By

engendering a new feminine discourse and a new feminine language that refuse to privilege sight and representation in clear-cut forms and that give voice to the women, the body of the female can be brought to the Symbolic.

However, Lochhead's Queen Elizabeth refuses to be positioned in the alternative female discourse that Irigaray attempts to form, a discourse with the promise of returning the woman-mother to the realm of pre-oedipal desire and with the probability of engendering a feminine niche in which the phallus, sight/vision and the realm of the solids are not privileged. Though a woman and a potential mother, whose maternal body is forever excluded from the Symbolic and associated with a lack, Elizabeth finds a way to mediate her phallic desire to own infinite power in the paternal discourse by ceding on her feminine desire and performing on masculinity, and thereby turning into the phallic/symbolic mother for her people.

To attain a place, make herself acceptable to her people and maintain her powerful status as a queen by eradicating the disadvantages of being a woman in a hegemonic discourse yielding power merely to the embodiment of the Symbolic order- the men, Elizabeth sides with patriarchy. She becomes the ardent follower and practitioner of its dynamics and working mechanisms. She gives up on her femininity for the sake of being the owner of the patriarchal power: the representative of the Law and the holder of considerable economic, political, social and symbolic power. As suggested by Buchbinder, "in order to maintain her position to a culture which conferred power chiefly upon men, [she] employed a number of strategies designed either to appropriate power under the sign of monarchy itself, or else to erase as far as possible signs of her own femininity and thus to assert her claim to masculine power" (70).
The narrative discourse of Queen Elizabeth includes a fallen, decapitated and castrated mother by the Symbolic order and an absent but overly present father figure confirming Lacan's premise that the absent or dead father always has a lingering effect and presence on the subject. Heath, too, avers that "mother and infant are two, that is one, the imaginary possibility of a unity; the third, the father makes two, assures the phallus as term of division in each individual subject" (67). Henry VII's

symbolic and phallic stance and atrocious acts such as decapitating his wives engenders castration anxiety in Elizabeth and enforces her to identify with her phallic father, not with her castrated mother. Therefore, she ends up being the metonymic extension of his phallic father and struggles hard to evade the fate of her mother. She tries to remain on the throne by benefitting and manipulating patriarchal economy to her advantage and eventually obtaining a phallic value.

In the play, Elizabeth dreams about her ever-present father and her absent/erased mother with a doll in her hands, which symbolizes her. The doll's head falls off implying that she is castrated like her mother most likely by her father, the paternal figure:

> ELIZABETH *is alone, lying down, asleep, dreaming. She rolls over, moaning and murmuring, then wakes up with a scream—*
>
> ELIZABETH: Robert!
> *Awake, sobbing and crying. Enter* MARIAN, *running.*
> MARIAN: Bad dreams. Bad dreams again. Your Majesty, hush…
> ELIZABETH: Mum was… Dad was… Dad was there, I was only tiny and… my… dolly's head… fell off. Then it changed the way it does in dreams and Leicester, well, we were just two little children playing in the woods, but I knew the way you do that it was really I and my Robert and… then long empty corridors I was all alone and a crown rolling…
> *She cries again.* (Lochhead *Mary* 91)

This scene reveals the Queen's anxiety to undergo a physical but symbolic castration if ripped off her power and losing her status as a powerful queen, who now is not the phallus to the epitome of the Law but a queen who owns the phallus and incites fear, awe and respect in the logocentric society. Douglas utters that "women rulers in patriarchal patrimonialism were anomalies, and as such likely to be coded as polluting or actively threatening as sources of unwelcome ambiguity and instability in the categories of rule" (122). Elizabeth eludes her ambiguities, in-flux nature and feminine desire. She forestalls following her heart, love and desire:

> ELIZABETH: I told him! I said, "Leicester, if I married you and we lay down together as King and Queen, then we should wake as plain Mister and Mistress Dudley. The Nation would not have it."
>
> …
>
> What shall it profit a woman if she can rule a whole kingdom but cannot quell her own rebellious heart?
>
> Robert, you were more dangerous to me than a thousand, thousand Northern Catholics, poised and armed. I am not proud I love me- but I am proud that, loving him, still I would not him master me. (Lochhead *Mary* 92)

Elizabeth chooses reign over love/power over desire, and decides to rule as a virgin queen/a symbolic mother, trying to bridge up the gap caused by her sex and gender. Traub connects Elizabeth's refusal to marry to power relations: "Elizabeth's marriageability attest […] was not the body upon which power was anointed but the body over which power was contested" (69). She mediates between her physical and mortal body as a woman and her body politics, immortal and invulnerable, and decides to act on the latter. In this way, she is not contained by the phallic discourse and the Symbolic order which characterizes her as a lack, an inchoate being and a collateral entity to the male. Instead, she transgresses them by being (integrated into) the phallic discourse.

In a similar vein, Montrose notes that "her astute manipulation of virginal phallic maternal and paternal metaphors transformed the phallic liability of her gender to advantage for nearly half a century" (in Traub 69). Elizabeth perceives that she would not be welcomed by the already-existent paternal Law. Therefore, she appropriates, alters and plays with it by employing her undervalued gender to her advantage, mutating into a secular Virgin Mary married to the nation and into a phallic mother having her people as her children.

Elizabeth invests her maternity in her political rather than in her natural body, and her desire to wield phallic power causes her to evolve gradually into her father's kingly identity. This, according to Marcus, "allowed her finally to become free of it,

to discard his effacement of her sex, his overbearing concern for the Tudor succession, his notion that royal authority had to be validated through the production of a masculine heir" (in Traub 70). In Elizabeth's ascendancy, the equation of masculinity and rule is verified and strengthened. Traub states:

> As an aging "grotesque" body and as the "virginal mother" … Queen Elizabeth acts simultaneously as inciter of male anxiety and model for its compensatory mediation. Indeed, her manipulation of gender and sexual ideologies share with Shakespeare, Freud and Lacan the pervasive circularity of phallocentric representation: not only is power constitutive of gender and sexuality, but so too are gender and sexuality constitutive of power. (70)

Elizabeth's manipulation and appropriation of gender and sexuality earn her power in the phallocentric discourse, which signals that it is neither monolithic nor impenetrable as it fictionalizes its own exclusions and inclusions. Queen Elizabeth constructs her own identity and chooses to have a place in the phallic discourse and to side with the paternal metaphor. She engenders her own space of power and delineates a realm of the Logos, boundaries and limitations. Elizabeth's reconstruction project crests when she completes the cycle of transforming into her phallic father by beheading her cousin Mary Stuart as Henry VIII has beheaded her mother and other women earlier. The decapitation of Mary implies a symbolic/metaphorical castration of a peripheral and liminal figure and a marginalized woman who repudiates being integrated into and complying with the decrees of the Law, and exposes the loopholes and dynamics of the status quo. Plotting against her cousin as she is fearful of losing her dominance and power, Elizabeth seals the death warrant of Mary and permits the realization of her execution, which means eradicating a potential threat to the integrity of the nation:

> *With steely determination—*
>
> ELIZABETH: My subjects love me! I am the Virgin Queen! I love my good cousin Queen Mary and will continue to keep her my most honoured quest in all luxury in the lavish hospitality of my proudest castle. For her own safety.
>
> And my so-called "wise advisers" would have to trick me before I would consent to sign a warrant for her death.

> Would have to trick me. Trick me. Trick me!
>
> *Her manic repetitions increase in volume, turn into obvious instructions. Thus summoned,* ADVISERS *reappear by her side complete with a document. Without looking at it or them, she signs it. One of these absolutely impassive* ADVISERS *blots it, picks it up and blows on the signature*. (Lochhead *Mary* 134)

It can be concluded that while Mary, with her symbolic contest against the patriarchal decrees and her fluid and polymorphous identity, never renounces her feminine desire and submits to the yoke of the Law though it means being castrated/beheaded, Elizabeth follows a different path: first submits to the Law, guarantees her place and strengthens her reign by ceding on her desire and love and then performs on masculinity and refuses femininity. Lochhead's Elizabeth blurs the demarcation of sex and gender and appropriates them to her own advantage, which paves the way for her transformation into a phallic/a kingly figure/a metonymic extension of an autocratic and castigating father and into a creator of a new space of power. Lochhead positions Queen Elizabeth in direct opposition to Mary Queen of Scots and makes them act like mirror images. As Talbot in "The Other Queen" suggests:

> This one [Mary] is quicksilver: she is all fire and light. A queen who wants to hold her lands needs to be more of the earth. A queen who hopes to survive the hatred that all men naturally have for women who contradict God's law and set themselves up as leaders has to be a queen like a rock, a thing of the earth. My own queen is rooted in her power. She is a Tudor with all their mortal appetites and earthly greed. My queen Elizabeth is a most solid being, as earthly as a man. But this is a queen who is all air and angels. She is a queen of fire and smoke. (Gregory 55)

This chapter has scrutinized Lochhead's reconstruction of history through rupturing the binary organization constructed around the two queens, Mary and Elizabeth, representing Scotland and England respectively through the chorus-like narrator of the play-La Corbie, her employment of alienation effect and the cross-dressing of the characters inverting the power hierarchy and subverting the binaristic understanding. After dwelling on the demystification of Lochhead's historical realities and displaying the presence of multiple truths in historical perception, a post-Lacanian

discussion is integrated into the analysis of the play with Mary's inversion of the Lacanian Symbolic with her compelling nature and Elizabeth's applying a phallic-based strategy to earn a place in that very order and to become a phallic mother to her people and nation perpetuating her dynasty and regiment and reinforcing her power and authority. Lochhead shows the readers the presence of an alternative discourse in the so-called well-known stories of historical woman figures and alternative truths away from the one-sided, linear and monolithic system of the hegemony. Stripped off their flesh and blood, Mary and Elizabeth, distinctively and on their own terms, mutate into an image/an idea/a spark that triggers the emergence of a new kind of discourse: Mary, as a woman, triggering a feminine one, and Elizabeth, by abnegating her womanliness and motherhood, triggering a masculine/phallic one.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study attempted to analyze Liz Lochhead's *Medea*, *Thebans* and *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Chopped Off* against the background of the theoretical perspective of Lacanian epistemology and yet with a subversive reading of his key concepts. The main argument of this dissertation is that Lochhead defies and reworks the patriarchal and hegemonic epistemological categories in her plays, and offers, as an alternative, a space of existence and signification to women. Her gradual engenderment of the alternative feminine space in her work bestows acknowledgement on women's reactions to the social and empirical reality, which paves the way for challenging the established and fixed notions of patriarchy. In her plays, Lochhead sides with the alternative truths rather than mainstream and established ones. There is a search for the stories of the liminal and marginal figures, which is in parallel with her doubly marginalized position, a woman and a Scots living in a patriarchal English society. To contest this binaristic and phallogocentric organization, Lochhead, as a literary figure, revisits the European myths and history, undermines and reconstructs them from a feminine and Scottish angle, which is provided by her decentred and fluid language.

Lochhead's mastery of language crosses with Lacan's appraisal and positioning of language at the centre of subjectivity and subjectification. What Lochhead attempts to do in her plays coincides with the reason why I have chosen Lacanian epistemology as the theoretical framework. Lochhead's aim is to engender a new dramatic discourse and a new space of signification where she grants women the semantic space to exert their existence, voice and truths. She also tries to approach the question of women from an ontological and epistemological point of view. To this end, she pursues the origin of the category of woman in Western seminal texts and offers alternative vantage points and a reworking of patriarchal discourse. Her departure point is discourse, discursive practices and the extent to which one can re-shape this

discourse. Lacan's theorem, which is hinged upon discourse/symbolic, provides new insights into her work.

Though Lacan's groundbreaking theories on subject, subjectivity and subjectification shed light on the aspects left in the dark concerning these topics, problematize the conventional perception of language and ultimately challenge the Cartesian ego of a stable identity, he cannot escape phallocentricism stemming from his overvaluation of the phallus and the Symbolic. Lacan's inbetweenness between structuralism and poststructuralism is reflected in this study, yet with a focus on the contestation of his structuralist side. His favoring of the Symbolic and seeing it as the prerequisite on the way to acculturalization leave no space for women and confine them to the yoke of the male dominated/patriarchal obligations and limitations. Lochhead, with her liminal position as a woman and as a Scots, attempts to uncover the underlying patriarchal mechanisms that restrict women's voice and stories and struggles to appropriate the ingrained categories through the lens of a feminine standpoint. The previous studies on Lochhead's plays focused on either feminist or nationalistic concerns; however, in this study, I juxtaposed these two agendas on a unifying ground in a post-Lacanian perspective as Lochhead's aim of engendering a new womanly/feminine dramatic discourse and reconstructing an alternative reality would be left incomplete without unifying these equally important domains.

In order to prepare the ground to discuss Lochhead's chosen plays on a wider scale, I initially provided a contextualization of Scottish dramaturgy and demonstrated how the existence of a Scottish Renaissance and its subsequent implications challenged and shattered the concept of one/unified Scotland. The political and historical oscillation from the 19th to 21st century induced the emergence of new playwrights and triggered the already existing ones to awaken, rediscover and reconstruct Scotland, eventually turning it into a polymorphous country. The linear and monolithic literature foregrounding one single language was redefined and started to include the long forgotten voice of Gaelic people, women and other muted voices. The launch of the New National Theatre of Scotland (NTS) (1999) sparked off the

production and revival of many works ranging from James Bridie's *The Anatomist* (1930) to Daniel Greig's *The Speculator* (1999). These playwrights and many more to come attempted to reach a reconstructed world view and reflect a new Scotland on both nationalistic and individual level. In addition to the playwrights aiming to depict a revived Scotland, the footsteps of some women playwrights such as Joan Ure, Marcella Evarists, Sue Glover and Liz Lochhead were started to be heard. Similar to the nationalistic agenda aiming to voice the liminalized figures in a nationalistic context, the women playwrights demanded a revised feminine version of the historical space, which had suppressed women and muted their voices, stories and selves. Liz Lochhead is among these revolutionary playwrights as she is the natural creator of historical space and myths, and she experiments with alternative ways of demonstrating history and myths, and saves them from the hegemony of male influences.

After providing a contextualization of the Scottish dramaturgy, I discussed how myths are engendered and how history is discursively constructed by dwelling on distinct theories, proposed to explore their points of origin. In order to display the constructedness of the myths, I explicated the externalist theories represented by Max Müller, Sir James Frazer and Branislow Malinowski, who connected the existence of the myths to an external cause and then the internalist ones represented by Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, who included the psyche in the genesis of the myths. All these theories signal the constructedness of the myths and their entrapment in the binaristic framework, positioning men and man-made stories at the center of the dominant discourse and excluding women from the sight. With the aim of showing the constructedness of history, I referred to Michel Foucault's denouncement of linearity and acceptance of discontinuities in history, and Hayden White's emplotment, and reached the conclusion that history is/can be distorted, altered and appropriated with the subjective accounts of mainly men, and it abstains from including women and their stories in its natural flow. Feminist revisionists, like Lochhead, however, struggle to change this perception, re-vision myths and history, and change the doom of the women written by the male.

Since this dissertation employs Lacanian epistemology as its theoretical framework, I later explained in detail the Lacanian conceptions of the Law of the Father, paternal metaphor, desire, *jouissance* and love with an attempt to pave the way for further development of this study's argument which is hinged on the reconstruction of myths and history in Lochhead's three plays. The in-depth analysis of the Lacanian theorem provided a better basis for the discussions on the plays and constructed the foundation through which a post-Lacanian reading provided. In order to be able to analyze the category of women and how this category comes into being in relation to the category of men, I first followed Lacanian trajectory by bearing in mind the phallocentric perspective and later I looked at his key tools but from a subversive and a subordinate/an alternative vantage point.

Lacan's three interlocking areas, subjectivity, sexuality and language, were explored in the theoretical framework part. The formation of *I* in the mirror stage was discussed to show how Lacan perceives the emergence of the ego. For Lacan, the development of the self is grounded in the identification with an other, and Lacan proposes that the infant identifies with the image reflected in the mirror, which it perceives to be whole and unified. The primary identification of the infant with the mirror image prepares the ground for the creation of the *I*. The explication of the theoretical framework was followed by the discussion of Lochhead's three plays within this framework. The first play that was analyzed from a post-Lacanian perspective is *Medea*. I initially followed a comparative analysis of Euripides' *Medea* and Lochhead's *Medea* to demonstrate how Lochhead has reconstructed the play and what the divergences from the original play are. Lochhead's rewriting of the original story from a feminine standpoint is achieved by the reconfiguration of the feminine that includes the feminine chorus and depicts Medea as an iconoclast of the female archetype. Lochhead also integrated Scottish diction into the play and foregrounded the Scottish, which is considered subsidiary to English. After the comparison of Lochhead's *Medea* with the original play, I moved to the post-Lacanian analysis and examined the play in terms of love, desire and *objet à*, phallic mother, *jouissance* and narcissistic aggression. In this section, I explored Lochhead's urge to create an

alternative reality and her own dramatic strategies in *Medea*, which she has positioned afar from the prerequisites of the patriarchy, against the backdrop of Lacanian theorem. Lacan's most criticized aspect, his phallocentricism stemming from his emphasis on the paternal metaphor, the realm of the words and the Law, was challenged and subverted by the transgressive and iconoclastic nature of Medea. Medea undermines and defies the decrees of the representatives of the patriarchal order, Jason and Kreon, perpetuates exerting and following her desire and ultimately detaches herself from all the labels she is subject to and the positioning she is confined to. Medea detaches from the world of the symbols and the word, and approaches the world of images through the act of infanticide. Medea turns into an alternative feminine space/niche where she can exist as a "woman"- not as a "mother" as expected by the society. This chapter concludes that the Symbolic not only entraps women like Medea but also men like Jason as he also suffers under the imperatives, dictations and decrees of the patriarchal order. As Jason fails to have acted on the claims of the Symbolic, to have excluded the abject- Medea and to have mediated between his wife and lover, he has been aligned alongside the marginal and penalized on both a personal level by losing his children and a political level by losing the prospective power he has been planning to obtain.

The second play that was discussed in this study is *Thebans*. Lochhead's rewriting of Sophocles's *Theban Plays* and Euripides' *Phoenician Women* and engendering her own feminized version of the myth are achieved by shifting the patriarchal gaze to the feminine through Jokasta and by demystifying Oedipus, the representative of patriarchy. After displaying Lochhead's reconstruction and remake of the Oedipus myth and her divergences from the original work, I moved to the post-Lacanian reading of the play by focusing on the tragedies of the two prominent figures of the play: Antigone and Oedipus. Lacan's depoliticization of Antigone by labelling her act/choice as the ramification of "pure desire" is contested and subverted by the premises of Irigaray, Butler and Žižek, who have interpreted the demise of Antigone with the aim of (re-)politicizing her. Resting on the ideas of these writers, this part transgressed the Lacanian pitfall of reducing Antigone's desire to a mere irrational

and dangerous impulse and potential, and of eliminating her from the political arena and reconstituted Antigone as a political and subversive figure disturbing the underlying dynamics of the hegemonic discourse and unveiling its loopholes. After this, this part also discussed that Oedipus's quest for an origin and desire to discover a/the "thing" to complete his lack brings forward the loss of narcissistic omnipotence and precipitates his demise and fall.

After *Thebans*, Lochhead's last play *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* was discussed by dwelling on Lochhead's deconstruction and reconstruction of the historic and her questioning of nation and gender. Lochhead uncovers the hidden elements of the political and personal lives of Mary and Elizabeth, and questions being a woman in the male dominated political realm. After revealing Lochhead's critique of the constructedness of history, I provided a post-Lacanian reading of the play at hand. In the play, Mary is perceived as a threat to the Lacanian Symbolic/the hegemonic discourse/the status quo, and Elizabeth is seen as a masculine/phallic mother to her nation. The fluid and polymorphous nature of Mary, who contests the dictations and decrees of the patriarchal society by following her feminine desire and by repudiating being aligned in the Symbolic, challenges the Lacanian theorem, exposes its loopholes and mutilates its integrity. Elizabeth, in contrast, goes beyond her sex and gender paradigm by performing masculinity and refusing femininity, prefers to suppress her womanliness to earn a place in the royal reign and thereby mutates into a masculine/phallic queen, who becomes the embodiment of the Symbolic. Standing in direct contrast with one another, Elizabeth and Mary act like mirroring images. Though the path that they have followed is different, both Mary and Elizabeth defy the patriarchal edicts that challenge women in the power relations of the political strife, and they open up a new space, a survival niche and a dramatic discourse in which they can cherish their existence by not ceding on their desires and aims, but by holding on to them more fiercely.

In this dissertation, Lochhead's three plays are discussed from a subversive Lacanian vantage point. The study has come to the conclusion that language can be employed

and appropriated as a political and an ideological tool to create realities and return the muted and suppressed voice of women to them. Lochhead has opened up a new space of signification and subjectivity, thus aimed to transform the patriarchal discourse. By transforming the discourse, she has aimed to engender a new space of existence where women can assert their side of the truth and raise their voices that cannot be heard because of the domineering voices that reside in the phallogocentric discourse. Lochhead has also aestheticized this truth in her plays, and while aestheticizing it, she has read the category of "the woman" on a new ontological and epistemological ground. Lochhead has traced the depiction of the woman back to the seminal texts in Western literature and demanded to know more about this category: Does woman exist in seminal texts? What or who is this category? Can it be depicted away from a phallocentric point? Her re-reading the seminal texts and thereby reshaping the discourse pave the way for the engenderment of an alternative feminine universe, an alternative version to the patriarchal discourse. Lochhead creates a different realm in her plays and succeeds in showing the possibility of engendering a polyphonic world that can include the voices of the marginalized/liminalized. The previous epistemological categories are renounced and subverted in her plays, and the traditional binary oppositions are dissolved. Lochhead, with the power of her dramatic language, has achieved representing what (post-) feminists have been attempting to delineate: she has broken the yoke of the patriarchy and mutated into the voice of "the woman" she has been tracing.

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APPENDICES

A. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Yakut Tütüncüoğlu, Özge
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EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MA	METU, English Literature	2011
BS	METU, English Language Teaching	2008
Minor	METU, Psychology	2008
High School	Tunceli Anatolian Teacher Training High School	2004

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2012-	METU Department of Basic English	English Instructor
2011-2012	TOBB ETÜ, Prep School	C Level Coordinator
2004- 2012	TOBB ETÜ, Prep School	English Instructor

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Beginner German

CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PUBLICATIONS

1. **15th METU British Novelists Conference: Angela Carter and Her Works.** "'Black Venus': Smashing the Myth of Baudelaire and Traces of Past." Middle East Technical University, Ankara: December, 2007.
2. **17th METU British Novelists Conference: Hanif Kureishi and His Works.** "The Disruption of Bestowed Identity and the Quest for a New One in the Novel *The Buddha of Suburbia*." Middle East Technical University, Ankara: December, 2009.
3. **6th International IDEA Conference.** "Butlerian Performativity in *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit*". Istanbul Kültür University, Istanbul: April, 2011.
4. **13th International Cultural Studies Symposium.** "Transgression and Subversion of Categories in *Written on the Body*". Ege University, İzmir: May, 2011.
5. Birlik, Nurten and Özge Yakut. **Batı Kültürü ve Edebiyatları Araştırmaları Sempozyumu (BAKEA).** "Coleridge's Utopian Pantisocracy." Pamukkale University, Denizli: October, 2011.
6. **Self, Selves and Sexualities Symposium.** "Cixous's *écriture feminine* in *Written on the Body* by Jeanette Winterson." Dublin City University, Dublin: March, 2012.
7. **Post-Graduate Student Conference on English Literature and Translation Studies.** "The Nervous Conditions of Women in *Nervous Conditions* (1988) by Tsitsi Dangarembga." Çankaya University, Ankara: May, 2012.

B. TURKISH SUMMARY/ TÜRKÇE ÖZET

LIZ LOCHHEAD'İN OYUNLARINDA HEGEMONİK SÖYLEMLERİN REDDİ, ÇARPITILMASI VE YIKILMASI

Bu çalışma Liz Lochhead'in *Medea*, *Thebans* ve *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* oyunlarını Lacancı epitemelojik teori bağlamında analiz etmeyi, ancak bunu Lacan'ın ana kavramlarını tersinden okuyarak yapmayı hedeflemiştir. Bu tezin ana argümanı, Lochhead'in oyunlarında ataerkil ve egemen epistemolojik kategorilere başkaldırması ve bu kategorileri yeniden çalışarak kadınlara alternatif bir var olma alanı sunmasıdır. Lochhead'in oyunlarında alternatif feminen alanı yavaş yavaş oluşturması kadınların sosyal ve ampirik gerçekliğe tepkilerine bir nevi onay vermektedir ve bu var olan ve yerleşmiş ataerkil kavramların sorgulanmasının yolunu açmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacıyla bağlantılı olarak, Lochhead'in üç oyunu incelenmiş olup, gerçeklikler yaratmak ve kadınların susturulan ve bastırılan seslerini onlara geri vermek için dilin politik ve ideolojik bir araç olarak kullanılıp özelleştirilebileceği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Lochhead, oyunlarında ana akım ve yerleşmiş doğrular yerine alternatif doğruların tarafını tutmaktadır, ki bu, ataerkil İngiliz toplumunda yaşamakta olan bir kadın ve İskoç olarak sahip olduğu iki yönden marjinal pozisyonuyla paralel bir tutumdur. İkili ve fallus merkezci organizasyonlarla mücadele edebilmek için Lochhead, edebi bir figür olarak, Avrupa'ya ait mitleri ve tarihi yeniden değerlendirmekte, merkezsiz ve akışkan dilinin ona sağladığı feminen ve İskoç bakış açısıyla onların temelini çürüterek ve zayıflatarak yeniden kurgulamaktadır.

Lochhead'in dildeki hakimiyeti, Lacan'ın dile fazlasıyla değer verip onu öznellik ve öznelleşmenin temeline yerleştirmesiyle bağdaşlaşmaktadır. Lochhead'in oyunlarında yapmaya çalıştığı şey ile, teorik çerçeve olarak Lacancı epistemoloji seçme nedenim denk düşmektedir. Lochhead'in amacı kadınlara varlıklarını, seslerini

ve gerçekliklerini duyurabileceği, ortaya koyabileceği yeni bir dramatik söylem ve yeni bir ifade alanı oluşturmaktır. Ayrıca, kadın sorunsalına ontolojik ve epistemolojik bakış açısıyla yaklaşmaya çabalamaktadır. Bu sebeple, kadın kategorisinin izini Batı'ya ait son derece önemli metinlerde sürmekte, alternatif bakış açıları ve ataerkil söylemin yeniden değerlendirmesini önermektedir. Lochhead'in çıkış noktası söylem, söylemsel uygulamalar ve söylemin ne dereceye kadar yeniden şekillendirilebileceğidir. Lacan'ın söyleme/sembolik'e dayanan teorisi Lochhead'in oyunlarına yeni bakış açıları kazandırıp ışık tutmaktadır.

Lacan'ın özne, öznellik ve öznelleşme üzerine çığır açan teorilerinin bu konularla alakalı karanlıkta kalmış noktalara ışık tutmasına, geleneksel dil algısını sorunsallaştırmasına ve değişmez kimliğin ikilikçi (Cartesian) benliğini sorgulamasına rağmen, Lacan Fallus'a ve Sembolik'e verdiği gereğinden fazla değerden kaynaklanan fallus merkezcilikten kaçamamaktadır. Lacan'ın önerdiği teorilerde bu kavramları sürekli vurgulaması ve kadına ait birçok alternatif doğrunun önüne koyması, (post-) feministlerin Lacan'ı şiddetle eleştirmesine yol açmıştır. Lacan'ın yapısalcılık ve postyapısalcılık arasında kalmışlığı bu çalışmaya yansıtıldıysa da, onun yapısalcı tarafının reddi vurgulanmıştır. Maskülen Sembolik'in tarafını tutması ve kültürleşme yolunda onu önkoşul olarak görmesi kadınlara alan bırakmamaktadır ve onları erkek egemen/ataerkil zorunlulukların ve sınırlamaların boyunduruğuna mahkûm etmektedir. Lochhead, kadın ve İskoç olan eşikteki pozisyonuyla, kadınların seslerini ve hikayelerini sınırlayan ataerkil mekanizmaları açığa çıkarmaya çabalamakta ve yerleşmiş kategorileri feminen bakış açısıyla uyarlamayı hedeflemektedir. Lochhead'in oyunları üzerinde yapılan çalışmalar, ya feminist ya da ulusçu meselelere odaklanmıştır. Ancak bu çalışmada, Lochhead'in yeni bir kadınsı/feminen dramatik söylem yaratma ve alternatif gerçekliği yeniden inşa etme amacı aynı derecede önemli bu iki noktayı birleştirmeden eksik kalacağı için, bu çalışma bu iki gündemi post-Lacancı bir perspektifte ve birleştirici bir zeminde yan yana getirilmiştir.

Lochhead'i seçme nedenim onun popülist ana akım dramatik yorumlamaları aşan kendine özgü ve kadınsı bir okuma önermesinden ve böylelikle merkezdeki söylemlere oyunları sayesinde karşı çıkmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Birçok farklı yazar ve eleştirmen Lochhead'i ve oyunlarını toplumsal cinsiyet ve kültürel kimlik bağlamında incelemiş ve yorumlamıştır. Lochhead'in oyunları genellikle toplumsal cinsiyet sorunları (Scullion (2000), Varty (1993), Harvie (1999) ve Horvat (1999)) ve ulusalcı bakış açısıyla (Stevenson (1996), Brown (2000) ve Cole (2007)) analiz edilmiştir. Fakat, bu analizler Lochhead'in İskoç dramasının gelişmesindeki çığır açıcı rolünü tam anlamıyla göstermemiş ve yansıtmamıştır. Sözü edilen çalışmalar Lochhead'in sabit olmayan pozisyonunu ve duruşunu yalnızca bir noktaya bağlama hatasına düşmüştür ki bu, Lochhead'in uyarlamalarında yapmaya çalıştığı alternatif dünyaların kapısını açma ve gerçeklerin alternatif yönlerini gösterme amacıyla bağdaşmamaktadır. Lochhead'in oyunları onu İskoç olarak değil de İngiliz olarak kurgulayan ve böylece kimliğinin önemli bir parçası olan ulus kavramından onu koparan Anglo-Amerikan düzlemde incelenmiştir. Bazı yazarlar Lochhead'in ulusalcı söyleme ve kültüre ses vermedeki başarısının boyutlarını anlamak için onun oyunlarını yalnızca bu yönden incelemişlerdir. Fakat bu sefer de feminist yönü bir kenara atılmış ve bu incelemelere dahil edilmemiştir. Görüldüğü gibi önceki çalışmalarda ya ulusalcı ya da feminist kaygılar içeren, genellikle politik ve tematik bakış açısıyla incelemeler yapılmıştır. Ancak bu iki noktayı birleştirmeyi başaramamışlardır. Lochhead'in uyarlamaları, ulusu ve cinsiyeti yüzünden iki misli marjinalleştirilen İskoç kadın bir yazarın sesini içerdiğinden, bu tez iki farklı kimliğe birleştirici bir düzlemde yaklaşmayı planlamıştır. Post-Lacancı bir bakış açısıyla Lochhead'in feminist ve ulusalcı özelliklerini bütünleştirmeyi amaçlaması ve Lochhead'in başından beri oyunlarında yapmaya çalıştığı alternatif bir gerçeklik kurgulama amacı, bu tezi önceki tezlerden farklı kılmakta ve Lochhead'i tematik, ana akım ve merkez-odaklı yorumlamalardan ayırmaktadır.

Lochhead'in seçili oyunlarını daha geniş bir ölçekte tartışabilmek için, öncelikle İskoç dramaturjisi incelenmiş ve İskoç Rönesansı'nın var oluşunun ve sonraki olası sonuçlarının bir/birleşmiş İskoç algısını sorguladığı ve yok ettiği öne sürülmüştür.

19. yy'dan 21. yy'a kadar olan politik ve tarihi dalgalanmalar yeni oyun yazarlarının ortaya çıkmasını sağlayıp, halihazırda var olan yazarların da aydınlanma yaşamasına, İskoçya'yı yeniden keşfedip inşa etmesine ve nihayetinde onu çok biçimli bir ülkeye dönüştürmesine olanak sağlamıştır. Bu politik ve tarihi dalgalanmalar, yeni oyun yazarlarının ortaya çıkışının ve var olan yazarların İskoçya'yı yeniden şekillendirmek, keşfetmek ve onu çok katmanlı ve çok sesli çoğulcu bir ülkeye dönüştürmek için uyanışının önünü açmıştır. Özellikle 1999'da yapılan referandumla, ülke yenilenmiş ve bir bakıma yeniden doğmuştur. Bu yeniden yapılandırma, farklı İskoç kültürlerinin yaratılması için uygun olan yeni bir bağlam sunmuş ve İskoç edebiyatını kolonize eden bir imparatorluğun boyunduruğu altında ezilen tekil ve tek dilli bir edebiyata karşı olarak konumlandırmaya başlamıştır.

Tek bir dili öne çıkaran monolitik edebiyat yeniden tanımlanmış ve uzun süredir unutulan Kuzey İskoçlar, kadınlar ve susturulan diğer insanlar edebiyata dahil edilmeye başlanmıştır. Yeni Ulusal İskoç Tiyatrosu'nun (1999) açılması James Bridie'nin *The Anatomist* (1930)'inden Daniel Greig'in *The Speculator* (1999)'ına kadar değişen birçok eserin üretimini ve canlanmasını sağlamıştır. Bu yeni oyun yazarları ve sonradan gelecek olan çok daha fazlası, yeniden oluşturulan bir dünya görüşüne ulaşmaya ve yeni bir İskoçya'yı hem ulusal hem de bireysel seviyede yansıtmaya çalışmıştır. Dirilen İskoçya'yı betimlemeyi amaçlayan oyun yazarlarına ek olarak Joan Ure, Marcella Evarists, Sue Glover ve Liz Lochhead gibi bazı kadın yazarların ayak sesleri de duyulmaya başlanmıştır. Ulusal bağlamda eşikteki figürlerin sesi olmayı amaçlayan ulusalcılar gibi, kadın yazarlar da kadınların seslerini, hikayelerini ve benliklerini bastıran tarihsel alanın sunduğu yorumlamalardan kaçınıp feminen versiyonlar talep etmeye başlamışlardır. Liz Lochhead tarihsel alanın ve mitlerin doğal yaratıcısı olduğundan, bu devrimsel oyun yazarlarının arasında yer almaktadır, ve tarihi gösterebilmenin alternatif yollarını deneyip onları erkek etkilerin hegemonyasından kurtarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Lochhead'in farklı lehçeleri, ağızları ve üslupları eklektik bir şekilde eserlerinde kullanımı onun çalışmalarını çok katmanlı ve çok yönlü hale getirmiştir. Tanıdık bir konuyu ele alarak ve onu yavaş yavaş işleyerek Lochhead, okuyucularında ve

izleyicilerinde uzlaştırıcı bir etki yaratmayı başarmaktadır. Lochhead'in edebi başarısı, evrensel ve alışılmış olanı, yerel ve yeni olanla birleştirip okuyucuyu şaşırtmaktan geçmektedir. Lochhead; sıradan, yaygın ve alelade hikayeleri oyunlarına entegre ederek, ikili kategorileri çözümleyerek ve çoğul kimlikleri besleyerek oyunlarını zengin, özenli ve çoğulcu bir zemine oturtmaktadır. Zıtlıklar ve ikili karşıtlıklar- dişil/eril, İskoç/İngiliz, İskoç/Kelt, çalışan sınıf/orta sınıf, performans/metin- Lochhead'in eserlerinde sıklıkla görülmekte ve sorgulanmaktadır. İskoç geçmişiyle şekillenen Lochhead, dramasını, karakterlerini ve hatta kendi benliğini egemen ideolojilerin eşiğinden uzağa konumlandırmayı amaçlamaktadır ve bunu eserlerinde başarmaktadır. Bunda, dilde saklı olan ideolojilerin ve dilde üretilen her bir kelimenin altında yatan anlamların farkında olmasının payı büyüktür. Bu nedenle Lochhead'in oyunlarında marjinal pozisyonları takdir etmesi ve hem içerikte hem biçimde tiyatronun sınırlarını aşmaya çalışması onu Braidottian anlamda göçebe, oyunlarını da çok yönlü yapmaktadır.

Bu çalışmada, İskoç dramasını sunduktan sonra, mitlerin nasıl oluştuğunu ve tarihin söylemsel olarak nasıl yapılandırıldığını farklı teoriler üzerinde durarak tartıştım. Mitlerin kurgu olduğunu göstermek için, mitlerin varlığını dış bir sebebe bağlayan Max Müller, Sir James Frazer ve Branislow Malinowski tarafından temsil edilen harici teorileri açıkladım. Mitlerin değişik versiyonlarının ve yorumlamalarının bulunması, ve eleştirel yaklaşımların farklılığı mitlerin insanlar tarafından üretildiğini ve kurgulandığını göstermektedir. Harici teorilerin ilki doğa/mit teorisidir ve bu teorinin önemli destekçilerinden biri Max Müller'dir. Müller, mitlerin doğa mitleri olduğunu ve hepsinin meteorolojik ve kozmolojik olaylara atıfta bulunduğunu öne sürmektedir. Müller mitlerin yaz ve kış, yaşam ve ölüm, gün ve gece gibi insan deneyimini etkileyen fiziksel çevrenin etkileyici gücüne bir tepki olarak ortaya çıktığını iddia etmektedir. Müller gibi Sir James Frazer de, törensel mit teorisiyle mitlerin yorumlanmasına harici bir bakış açısı getirmiş ve ilkel kabileler ile klasik mitler arasında bir bağ kurmuştur. Frazer'e göre mitlerin oluşumunun arkasında yatan neden ritüellerin ve dini törenlerin özünü aydınlatma isteğidir. Harici teorilerdeki önemli bir diğer isim ise Bronislaw Malinowski'dir. Mitler ve sosyal kurumlar

arasında yakın bir bağlantı kurup mitleri kozmik ve gizemli bir şekilde değil de geleneklerin ve inançların uzantısı olarak açıklamaktadır.

Harici teorileri açıkladıktan sonra, mitlerin oluşumunda psişe'yi dahil eden Sigmund Freud ve Carl Jung tarafından temsil edilen dahili teorileri açıkladım. Freud rüyalarla mitler arasında paralellik kurar; Freud'a göre rüyalar baskılanmış isteklerin gerçekleşmesidir ve bu gerçekleşme bireyin kişisel dünyasına ve aklına dair önemli bilgiler vermektedir. Diğer önemli bir dahili teorisyen olan Jung ise mitleri toplu bilinçaltının yansıması olarak algılayıp, onların toplumun devam etmekte olan psişik eğilimlerini açığa çıkardığını öne sürmektedir. Jung, mitlerin rüyalar gibi evrensel görüntüleri ve arketipleri içerdiğini ve tarih boyunca farklı insan topluluklarında ve onların deneyimlerinde ortaya çıkan toplu rüyaların geleneksel dışa vurumu olduğunu önermektedir. Bütün bu teoriler, mitlerin kurgu olduğuna ve egemen söylemin merkezine erkekleri ve insan yapımı hikayeleri konumlandıran ve kadınları gözden çıkaran ikili çerçevenin içinde sıkışıp kaldığına işaret etmektedir. Bu çalışmada, tarihin kurgu olduğunu göstermek için Michel Foucault'un doğrusallığı eleştirisinden ve tarihteki süreksizlikleri kabul edişinden ve Hayden White'ın öykülendirmesinden bahsettim. Tarihin, genelde erkeklerin öznel ifadeleriyle çarpıtılıp değiştirilerek belli bir amaç uğruna özelleştirilebileceği ve kadınlara ve onların hikayesine yer vermekten kaçınılabileceği sonucuna ulaştım. Ancak Lochhead gibi feminist revizyonistler bu algıyı değiştirmeye, mitleri ve tarihi gözden geçirmeye ve erkekler tarafından yazılan kadınların yazgısını yeniden kurgulamaya çabalamaktadır.

Mitlerin çarpıtılması ve kaygan bir zeminde konumlandırılması, mitlerin özünü evrensel ve değişmez doğrular olarak gören ve onların tekil doğasını sorgulayan ve eleştiren feminist eleştirmenlerin eserlerinde karşılık bulmuştur. Feminist analizin ana amaçlarından biri kutsal ve dünyevi sanılan mitoloji anlatılarını tekrar incelemek ve özellikle arketiplere yapı söküm uygulamaktır. Bunları yapmalarındaki amaç, bu imgelerin kültürün üretildiği sembolik düzenin yansıması olduğunu ortaya çıkarmaktır. Ataerkil mitlerin varlığını ve çoğalmasını sürdüren sembolik düzenin

temelinin ve altında yatan mekanizmalarının çözümlenmesi, feministleri mitleri alternatif bir bakış açısıyla yeniden yazmaya itmektedir. Aynadaki ters yansıma gibi Batı'nın ataerkil düzeninde oluşturulan mitler, bazı grupların sesini kısmakta ve onları dışlamaktadır. Önem verilmeyen ve dezavantajlı bir pozisyona itilen kadınlar, kendi mitolojilerini yaratma, kendi hikayelerini anlatma hakkından men edilmiş ve kendi doğrularını dikte eden erkeklerin sözlerini tekrarlamışlardır. Kadın odaklı mitoloji yaratmak kadınlara kaybolan ve bastırılan seslerini iade edip onlara kendi hikayelerini egemen seslerden arındırarak yazma fırsatı verebilir.

Feminist mit revizyonlarının başka bir gündemi de mitleri yeniden yazarken, baskın kültür ve geleneğin en önemli taşıyıcılarından biri olan tarihi de yeniden kurgulamaktır. Tarih de mitler gibi kurgulanmıştır; ve her bir tarihi anlatı, insanlara sunulan geçmişin parçalarının söze dökülmesidir. Her bir anlatı, tarihi anlatan tarihçinin bakış açısıyla ve öznel değerlendirmesiyle şekillenmiştir. Bu değerlendirme genellikle tarihi yazan güçlerin kendilerini ön plana çıkarıp tarihi kendi çıkarları doğrultusunda kurgulamalarında kendini göstermiştir. Azınlık grupları, marjinal ve çoğulcu sesler genellikle dışlanarak aşağı bir pozisyona getirilmiş ve tarih kayıtlarından silinmiştir. Bu, egemen söylemin gerçekliklerinin ve hikayelerinin tarihin sayfasındaki yerlerini garanti etme iddiasını güçlendirmektedir.

Bu çalışma, teorik çerçeve olarak Lacancı epistemolojiyi kullandığı için Lacan'ın Baba'nın Kanunu (Law of the Father), babanın metaforu (paternal metaphor), arzu, *jouissance* ve sevgi gibi konseptleri bu çalışmanın amacını daha fazla geliştirmeye zemin hazırlamak için detaylı bir şekilde tartışılmıştır. Lacancı teorinin detaylı analizi oyunların tartışmasına daha iyi bir temel sağlamış ve post-Lacancı okumanın sağlanabileceği bir zemin oluşturmuştur. Kadın kategorisinin ve bu kategorinin erkek kategorisine ilişkin olarak ortaya çıkmasının incelenebilmesi için, fallus merkezci perspektif göz önünde tutularak önce Lacancı bir yol izlenip sonra temel araçlarına tersten ve ikincil/alternatif bir bakış açısıyla yaklaşılmıştır.

Lacan'ın kesişen üç alanı- öznellik, cinsellik ve dil- teorik çerçeve kısmında incelenmiştir. Ayna döneminde "ben" oluşumu Lacan'ın benliğin ortaya çıkışını nasıl algıladığını göstermek için tartışılmıştır. Lacan için benliğin oluşumu bir başkasıyla (the other) özdeşleşmeyle temellenmiştir. Lacan bebeğin aynada yansıyan ve bütün olarak algıladığı imgesiyle özdeşleştiğini öne sürmektedir. Bebeğin ayna imgesiyle ilk özdeşleşmesi "ben" oluşumunun temelini hazırlamaktadır. Ancak Lacan bu özdeşleşmeyi drama olarak nitelendirir. Bunun sebebi de bebeğin tam ve bütün olarak algıladığı aynadaki imgesinin gerçekte bir serap ve bir illüzyon olması ve aslında özdeşleşecek gerçek bir benliğin olmamasıdır. Benlik ve benlik hissi bu sebeple, bu ayna gibi özdeşleşme eylemiyle yaratılmaktadır fakat parçalanmış ve yabancılaştırılmıştır. Lacan'a göre benlik/ben içten bir eylemle oluşturulmadığı ve dışarıdan harici bir imgeyle özdeşleşme sonucunda oluştuğu için, "ben"'in birleşmemiş, parçalanmış, kurmaca ve aldatıcı anlayışı ikilikçi felsefeyi paramparça etmektedir. Bebeğin aynada yansıyan imgesiyle özdeşleşmesi tartışıldıktan sonra, Oedipus kompleks'inin üçüncü element olan dil'in araya girmesiyle çözülmesini konusu üzerinde durulmuştur. Bebek, anneyle birleşme ve bütünlük vaatleriyle oluşan narsistik özdeşleşmenin aldatıcı oedipal öncesi (pre-oedipal) alanından, Sembolik'in dünyasına giriş yapar ve bunun sonucunda arzu oluşur. Lacan arzu'nun her zaman başkasının arzusu olduğunu öne sürer ve bebek ve anne arasında olan bağın, dil ve babanın metaforu (paternal metaphor) aracılığıyla kopmasının gerekliliğinden ve öneminden bahseder. Bunlar başkasının arzusunu tarafsız kılar ve baba metaforunun annenin arzusunun yerini alması sağlanır. Bu anahtar araçları tartıştıktan sonra, Lacancı sevgiden bahsedip onu iki açıdan ele aldım: imgesel olarak sevgi ve simgesel olarak sevgi. Lacan, sevginin ne olduğunu göstermek ve İmgesel'in sevginin konumu olduğunu vurgulamak için Picasso'nun muhabbetkuşunun hikayesini anlatır. Picasso'nun giyinik hali imgesiyle özdeşleşen muhabbetkuşu gibi, seven kişi de bir başkasının imgesiyle özdeşleşir ve sevgi, aynılığın ve farklılığın önemli olduğu benlikler (ideal-ego/ego-ideal) arasındaki ilişkiye dayanan hayali ilişkiler aracılığıyla oluşur. Başkası tam ve bütün bir varlık olarak algılanır ve bu sebeple seven kişi onunla özdeşleşmek ister. Lacan ayrıca sevginin anlam kazanması

için Sembolik'in gerekli olduğundan bahseder. İmgesel özdeşleşmenin ideal ego'su, yerini sembolik özdeşleşmenin ego-ideal'ine bırakır.

Teorik çerçevenin açıklamasından sonra, Lochhead'in üç oyunu analiz edilmiştir. Post-Lacancı açıdan analiz edilen ilk oyun *Medea*'dır. Lochhead'in oyunu yeniden nasıl kurguladığını ve orijinal oyundan farklı olan yönlerinin neler olduğunu göstermek için öncelikle Euripides'in *Medea*'sı ve Lochhead'in *Medea*'sının karşılaştırmalı bir analizi yapılmıştır. Lochhead'in orijinal oyunu feminen bir bakış açısıyla tekrar yazması, koroyu feminenleştirmesi ve Medea'yı kadın arketipinin yerleşmiş geleneklerini hiçe sayan bir kadın olarak betimlemesi oyunun feminen bir yeniden yapılandırmasını sağlamıştır. Lochhead ayrıca oyuna İskoç söylemini entegre etmiş ve İngiliz dilinden aşağı görülen İskoç dilini öne çıkarmıştır. Lochhead'in *Medea*'sını orijinal oyunla karşılaştırdıktan sonra post-Lacancı analize geçtim ve oyunu sevgi, arzu ve *objet à*, fallik anne, *jouissance* ve narsisistik agrasyon açısından inceledim. Bu bölümde Lochhead'in *Medea*'da Lacancı teori bağlamında, ataerkilliğin gerekliliklerinden uzağa konumlandırdığı alternatif gerçeklik ve kendi dramatik stratejilerini yaratma isteğini analiz ettim. Lacan'ın en çok eleştirilen yönleri olan maskülen Sembolik ve kelimeler ve yasalar alanı üzerindeki vurgusundan kaynaklanan fallus merkezciliği, Medea'nın saldırgan ve geleneksel anlayışa karşı olan doğası tarafından hiçe sayılıp alt üst edilmiştir. Medea, ataerkil düzenin temsilcileri olan Jason ve Kreon'un emirlerini çürütüp onlara meydan okumakta, arzusunu ortaya koymaya ve izlemeye devam etmekte ve nihayetinde maruz kaldığı bütün etiketlerden ve mahkûm edildiği pozisyonlardan kendini koparmayı başarmaktadır. Medea, oyunun sonunda, toplumun kendisinden beklediği "anne" olarak değil ama "kadın" olarak var olabileceği alternatif bir alana/niş'e dönüşür.

Kendi evinde bir tanrıça olan Medea, sevdiği adam Jason'ın evinde büyücü, cadı, yabancı ve ataerkil kodlamanın etiketlediği imkânsız bir kadın olarak adlandırılmış ve bu şekilde varoluşu tanımlanmıştır. Varoluşu başka insanlar tarafından reddedilen Medea çocuklarını öldürme eylemiyle ortaya çıkan arzunun ve *jouissance*'ın yıkıcı

potansiyelini gözler önüne sermiş ve feminen eylemin bilinmeyen ve keşfedilmeyen dünyasına bir adım daha yaklaşmıştır. Normları ve kalıpları aşan çocuk katli eylemiyle Medea, Lacan'ın *Psikoanalizin Etiği (Ethics of Psychoanalysis)* (1986) adlı kitabının "Trajedi" ("Tragedy") bölümünde bahsedilen otantik eylem kavramına yaklaşmıştır. Lacan bu kitapta sıradan ve otantik eylemler arasında bir ayrım yapar. Lacan, otantik eylemin, sade bir şiddetten sembolik ağların yapısını yeniden yapılandırdığı ve böyle yaparak bireyi sonsuza kadar değiştirdiği için ayrıldığını iddia etmektedir. Medea'nın çocuklarını öldürmesi salt "öldürme" eylemini aşmakta ve imleyenlerin egemenliğini kıran yıkıcı bir girişim halini almaktadır. Medea kendisini, kendi kendini yok eden bir negatiflik ve öznellik içinde bulmuştur. Medea'nın önceden tahmin edilemeyen bu eylemi sembolik düzene müdahale etmiş, mümkün olan ve olmayan şeyin ne olduğunu yeniden kurguladığı için sembolik düzeni ve onun sembolik uzantılarının işlevselliğini engellemiş ve durdurmuştur.

Medea'nın otoriteye meydan okuması ve reddiyle birlikte bu otoritenin uzantısı ve temsilcisi olan "baba"yı zorlayışı Colchic günlerine uzanmaktadır. Medea egemen bağlamın dili tarafından kodlanmasına, dilin ve imgeleyenlerin dünyasına babasının topraklarında girmesine rağmen, başından beri babasının otoritesini tanımamaktadır. Duyular dünyasını mantık dünyasına tercih etmesiyle Medea, eli kulağında gerçekleşecek olan, geçici olarak var olduğu sembolik düzene ve üzerine atılan uysal kız rolüne meydan okuyuşunun sinyallerini vermektedir. Jason'ın gelişiyle Medea, onu Sembolik'e bağlayan ailevi ve sembolik bağları koparmayı tercih eder. Medea'nın aşk için kendi toprağını ve ailesini reddi Lacancı bağlamda yeni bir kültürel düzeni yeniden yapılandırmasını gerektirmektedir. Medea, var olmak için yaşamaya geldiği topluluğa uygun bir pozisyon kurgulamak, Corinth'in ataerkil düzenine entegre olmak, Jason ve Kreon tarafından temsil edilen egemen bağlamın boyunduruğuna boyun eğmek ve var olan fallosentrik sembolik düzene girmek zorundadır. Özne dilde ve dil tarafından biçimlendirildiği ve egemen söylemdeki yerini dil sayesinde kazandığı için, Medea yaşamak için geldiği yeni topraklarda zorluklar yaşamıştır. Corinthliler için ekstra-dilsel bir element olduğundan Medea başka bir sembolik düzende ikamet edenler tarafından marjinalleştirilmiş,

yabancılaştırılmış ve dışlanmıştır. Medea tehditkâr bir yabancıdır ve bu sebeple ona tanınırlık ve sembolik narsistik haz verilmemiştir. Medea geçmişiyle şimdiki zaman arasında bir orta yol bulmak, bu iki zaman arasındaki boşluğu kapatmak ve yeni evinde var olabilmek için kültürleşme sürecinin gerekliliklerine biat etmeyi kabul eder. Bu, Jason'a Altın Post'u çalmasına yardım etmesiyle ve bu sebeple Colchis'ten azledilmesiyle sonuçlanan süreçle başlamış ve farklılıklardan aynılıklar yaratmayı hedeflemiştir. Düzeni devam ettiren "aynı," Yunan ve eril olarak kurgulanmış ve ataerkil sembolik düzenin sorunsuz akışına karışmaması için Yunan olmayan ve dişil olana ihtiyaç duymuştur. Medea Altın Post'u Jason için çalarak ailesine ve vatanına sırtını dönmüş ve bir bakıma babasının sembolik güç kaynağını elinden almıştır. Aynı zamanda kardeşi Aysptus'u öldürerek hanedanın potansiyel varlığını ve egemen mekanizmalarının devamını engellemiştir. Medea aynı şeyi tekrar yapabilme potansiyeline sahip, yıkıcı bir güçtür ve aynı zamanda sembolik bağlamın aldatıcı, sınırlayıcı ve baskıcı otoritesine meydan okumaktan çekinmemektedir.

Medea, Jason'la birleşir ve hayali sevgi bağlarıyla ona bağlanır. Lacan İmgesel'in sevginin lokusu olduğunu öne sürmektedir. Picasso'nun imgesiyle özdeşleşen muhabbet kuşu gibi, aşık kişi diğer kişinin imgesiyle özdeşleşir ve kendi yansımasının bu imgede aksetmesini görmeyi ve narsisistik bir karşılık almayı bekler. Özne sevgi arayışındadır. Sevgi onun egosunu onayladığı ve benliğindeki eksikliği doldurma umudu vadettiği için sevgi talep etmektedir. Bu şekilde öteki (the other) öznenin kendi benliğinde ve imgesinde eksikliğini hissettiği ideal ego'yu yansıtır. Medea ve Jason arasındaki sevgi ilişkisi, başarısızlık ve korku ikilemine dayanmaktadır. Medea Jason'ı ideal ego/imgesel öteki olarak alır ve kendi yansıyan imgesi olarak algıladığı Jason'la bir bütünlük elde etmeyi arzu eder. Medea Jason'u *objet à*, arzunun sebebi, olarak tanımlamıştır. Jason başlarda Medea'ya hayali sevgi bağlarıyla bağlanıp onun egosundaki boşluğu tamamlama umudu verdikten ve bir süre aldatıcı bir bütünlük sağladıktan sonra, Medea'nın imgesini geri yansıtmamaya, yani bir nevi onun egosunu doğrulamamaya ve benliğinde olan eksikliğin (lack) tekrar hissedilmesine neden olmuştur. Jason ideal ego rolünü devam ettirmeyi kendisini yeni bir aşk-güç ilişkisi içinde bulduğu için istemez. Narsisistik karşılık ve

hazdan mahrum edilen Medea, kendisine agresif ve yıkıcı yeni bir benlik oluşturmaya başlar. Sevgi/aşk engellenmiş ve durdurulmuştur. Medea'nın deneyimlediği bu eksik sevgi, parçalanmışlıklar ve boşluklarla doludur. Bu parçalanma hissi sevgiyi travma ve başarısızlığa dönüştürür. Medea fallik ve feminen *jouissance* arasında orta bir yol bulamaz. Jason'ın sevgisine sahipken fallik ve seksüel bir *jouissance* yaşayan Medea, Jason'ın bağlarını koparmasıyla, feminen *jouissance* alanına kayar ve yalnızca feminen *jouissance* deneyimlemeye başlar. Medea sevgiyi kaybeder ve öteki'yi (the other) saklayan ideal ego imgesinin dağılmasına neden olur. Narsisistik ve imgesel özdeşleşmesini ve hazzını, bir diğer deyişle benliğinin bir parçasını kaybeder. Bu durum onun yıkımını ve yapacağı korkutucu eylemi hızlandırır.

Medea, Jason'ın arzu nesnesi olabilmek için birçok şeyden vazgeçmiş ve ötekileşmeyi bile göze almıştır. Fakat, Jason Medea'yı terk etme kararıyla ona bahşettiği *objet à* olma nedenini ondan alır ve Medea, Jason'ın arzu nesnesi olabilme pozisyonunu kaybeder ve Sembolik düzenden kovulur. Medea ataerkil sembolik düzenin dışında, sembolik olmayan bir yerde kendini konumlandırmaya başlar. Bu da İmgesel ve Simgesel'in arasında sıkışmış bir boşlukta hapsolmasına neden olur. Medea'nın dönecek bir evi yoktur. Bu nedenle İmgesel'e döner ve bu geri dönüş Kreon'un onu ülkeden sürme kararıyla hızlanır. Fakat Medea, asla ataerkil düzene ve onun sınır koyan ve gizil baskılarına ve emirlerine boyun eğecek bir kadın değildir. Lochhead bu oyunda Medea'yı itaatkâr bir anne/kadın olarak değil, aksine her psişe'nin gizli korkusu ve derin bir arzu duyduğu fallik bir anne/kadın olarak betimlemekte ve onu kendine yeten bir kadın olarak kurgulayarak, Lacan'ın kadına atfettiği absans/yokluk anlayışına karşı gelmektedir. Jason'ın aşkı sayesinde feminenleştirilip "kadın"'a evrilen ve Jason'ın temsil ettiği ataerkil düzenin devamlılığı için çocuklar doğuran Medea ilk başta, yaşamaya geldiği söylemin emirlerine uymuştur. Ama Jason'ın müstakbel eşi tarafından bir kenara atılıp yeri doldurulunca ve baba'nın otoritesini çiğneyip köklerini kopardığı, önceden var olan düzende yaşama şansını kaydedince, Medea gelenekleri yok sayan ve ihlal eden kişinin ta kendisine dönüşür. Sembolik düzenin temsilcilerinin otoritesini ve gücünü paramparça eder, "kız evlat" ve "anne" kavramlarının içini boşaltır ve imleyenlerin

arasındaki bağı kopartıp, arzunun peşinden giderek onları işlevsiz hale getirir. Lacan'ın öznelliğin ve öznenin oluşumunu belli bir yapıya dayandırmasına ve böylelikle anneden ayrılmayı, babanın ve kuralların dünyasına zorunlu girişi öznenin dünyasında bir önkoşul olarak görmesine Medea'nın yıkıcı doğası karşı gelmektedir. Medea baba'nın otoritesine meydan okumakta ve Sembolik'te var olma gerekliliğine çocuklarını öldürerek ve kendisine atfedilen bütün etiketleri atarak karşı çıkmaktadır. Medea kendi benliğine, arzusuna ve kadınlığına sadık kalmayı; yani ataerkil toplumun emrettiği "anne" olmaktansa "kadın" olmayı tercih eder.

Bu çalışmada analiz edilen ikinci oyun *Thebans*'tır. Lochhead'in Sophocles'in *Thebans Plays* ve Euripides'in *Phoenician Women*'ını yeniden yazması ve kendi feminen mit versiyonunu oluşturması, ataerkil bakışı feminen olarak değiştirmeyi ve ataerkil düzenin temsilcisi olan Oedipus'u gizemli noktalarından arındırmayı başarmıştır. Lochhead'in Oedipus mitini yeniden kurgulamasını ve yeniden yazmasını detaylandırdıktan ve orijinal eserden ayrılan noktalarından bahsettikten sonra, oyunun iki ana figürü olan Antigone ve Oedipus'un trajedilerine odaklanarak oyunun post-Lacancı bir okumasına geçtim. Lacan'ın, Antigone'un eylem'ini/seçimini "saf arzu"'nun sonucu olarak tanımlayıp Antigone'u apolitize etmesi, Antigone'un ölümünü onu (yeniden) politize etmek amacıyla yorumlayan Irigaray, Butler ve Žižek gibi düşünürler tarafından sorgulanmıştır. Bu yazarların görüşlerine dayanarak, bu bölümde Lacan'ın Antigone'un arzusunu mantıksız ve tehlikeli bir dürtüye indirgemesi ve onu politik arenadan bertaraf etmesi gözler önüne serilmiştir. Ancak Lacan'ın bu görüşüne karşı çıkılmış, Antigone egemen söylemlerin temelini oluşturan dinamikleri bozan ve bu söylemlerin boşluklarını açığa çıkaran politik ve yıkıcı figür olarak yeniden kurgulamıştır. Daha sonra bu çalışma, Oedipus'un köken ve içindeki boşluğu dolduracak bir "şey" arayışının narsistik güç (narcissistic omnipotence) kaybına neden olduğunu, çöküşünü ve ölümünü hızlandırdığını göstermiştir.

Hegel, Antigone ile Creon arasındaki çatışmayı farklı etik formların uzantısı olarak algılar. Antigone politik öncesi olarak algılanıp yazısız evrensel hukukla

özdeşleşirken Creon hukuk kurumuna bağlı politik bir birey olarak düşünülür. Hegel, Antigone ve Creon'u ikili karşıtlıkların iki farklı ucunda konumlandırır: devlet/aile ve yasal düzen/etik vicdan. Hegel'e göre Antigone'un son eylemi- intiharı- etik sınıflamaların politik öncesi hukuku ile politik ve resmi uygulaması arasındaki uzlaşmayı göstermektedir. Lacan ise Hegelci ikili yorumlamadan kaçınmak için Antigone'u etik ve politik tartışmanın merkezine konumlandırmaya ve Hegel tarafından etik bilinç verilmeyen Antigone'u bu durumdan kurtarmaya çalışır. Etik bir bilinçten mahrum bırakılan Antigone'un politik alana girmesine ve orada bir varoluş alanı edinmesine şans tanınmamıştır. Bunu eleştirerek yola çıkan Lacan ise, Hegel'in bu anlayışından pek uzaklaşamamıştır. Lacan Antigone'un güzelliğine ve saf arzusuna odaklanmış ve Antigone'u politik alana katmayı ve ona etik bir bilinç vermeyi başaramamıştır.

Irigaray ise Antigone'un bu zor durumunu politik alandan dışlanan, silinen ve sürgün edilen ve domestik rollere hapsolan kadınların şimdiki durumuna bağlamıştır. Irigaray var olan Sembolik düzeni sorgulamakta ve kadınların sivil haklarını ve cinsel kimliklerini çekinmeden ortaya koyabildiği feminen bir sembolik düzenin oluşturulmasını öne sürmektedir. Irigaray, Hegel ve Lacan'ın Antigone'u politizmden yoksun bir kadın gibi yapılandırmasına karşın okuyucularını satır aralarını okumaya davet etmektedir. Antigone kendi değer sistemini oluşturmakta ve biriyle evlenip düzenin bir parçası olmaktansa bakire ölmeyi tercih etmektedir. Böylelikle Creon'a ve babanın yasalarına politik bir alternatif oluşturmaktadır. Judith Butler da Lacan'ın Sembolik düzeninin dokunulmazlığına ve bu düzenin seksüelliği, kültürü ve toplumu düzenleme fikrine karşı çıkmaktadır. Lacan sembolik düzeni tehdit eden herhangi bir potansiyel tehlikeyi İmgesel'de konumlandırır. İmgesel Simgesel'i rahatsız edebilir ama Sembolik su götürmez olduğu için onu değiştiremez. Butler bu fikre karşı çıkmakta ve İmgesel'in feministlerin direnç noktası olarak yeniden yapılandırılmasını önermektedir. Butler için Sembolik düzeni rahatsız edip onu değiştirmenin tek yolu ona içten meydan okumaktır. Antigone Creon'u yansıtan bir ayna olarak işlevini sürdürmektedir ve Creon'un kendi diliyle konuştuğu için parodik ve yıkıcı bir güce dönüşmektedir. Creon ile konuşurken Antigone

maskülenleşir ve Creon konuşulurken feminenleşir. Antigone Creon'un emirlerine karşı çıkıp kardeşini gömerek yasalara boyun eğmez. Lacan'ın önerdiği gibi Sembolik'i aşmaz; ona içeriden meydan okur. Bu çalışma Butler'ın, Antigone'nun akrabalığın sosyal yönünü açığa çıkardığı önermesine katılmakla beraber, Antigone'un Polyneikes'i yalnızca kardeşi olarak kurguladığı, ensest bir birleşme umuduyla kardeşini gömmediğini öne sürer. Antigone babası Oedipus'un çiğnediği yasayı bir nevi iade etmiştir. Antigone Sembolikte'dir, ama sosyal'de değildir. Antigone'un savunduğu akrabalığın Sembolik'te bir karşılığı yoktur ve bu sebeple bir seçim yapmaya zorlanır: ya Sembolik'te kalıp babaya ait söylemin emirlerine uyacak ve böylelikle sosyal'deki yerini de garantileyecek ya da Sembolik'te kalarak kardeşini gömecek ancak sosyal alandan sürülecektir. Antigone ikinci ve zor olan seçeneği seçer ve bağımsız bir şekilde hareket ederek kadınların politik alandan dışlanmasına karşı çıkar. Üzerine atılan politik sessizliği kabul etmez ve bu ölümüne neden olsa da sesini yükseltmekten çekinmez.

Thebans'tan sonra Lochhead'in son oyunu *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, yazarın tarihin kurgusallığını vurgulamasıyla, ulus ve toplumsal cinsiyet gibi kavramları sorgulamasına odaklanarak analiz edilmiştir. Lochhead, Mary ve Elizabeth'in politik ve kişisel yaşamlarının saklı kalmış yönlerini açığa çıkarmakta ve erkek egemen politik alanda kadın olmayı sorgulamaktadır. Lochhead'in tarihin kurgusallığı eleştirisini anlattıktan sonra, oyunun post-Lacancı bir okumasını yaptım. Oyunda, Mary Lacancı Sembolik'e/hegemonik söyleme/statüko'ya yönelik bir tehlike olarak algılanmakta ve Elizabeth de ulusunun maskülen/fallik bir annesi olarak görülmektedir. Feminen arzusunun peşinden giderek ve Sembolik içinde konumlandırılmayı reddederek ataerkil toplumun diktelerini ve emirlerine karşı koyan Mary, değişken ve çok biçimli doğasıyla Lacancı teoriyi sorgulamakta, boşluklarını açığa çıkarmakta ve bütünlüğünü hükümsüz kılmaktadır. Elizabeth ise tam tersine, maskülenliği icra edip feminenliği reddederek, cinsiyetinin ve toplumsal cinsiyet paradigmasının ötesine gitmekte, soylu saltanatta yer edinebilmek için kadınlığını baskılamayı tercih etmekte ve böylelikle Sembolik'in vücut bulmuş hali olan maskülen/fallik bir kraliçeye

dönüşmektedir. İzledikleri yollar farklı olmasına rağmen Mary ve Elizabeth politik çekişmenin güç ilişkileriyle kadınlara meydan okuyan ataerkil hükümlere karşı gelerek ve arzularından, amaçlarından vazgeçmeden, aksine onlara daha da sıkı tutunarak varlıklarının tadını çıkaracakları yeni bir alan, hayatta kalma niş'i ve dramatik söylem yaratmaktadırlar.

Lochhead'in Mary'nin hikayesini yeniden yazması onun önyargıyla bakılan hayat hikayesine bir alternatif yaratmayı ve üzerine atılan negatif ikili karşıtlıkları beslemeyi hedeflemektedir. İncelenen oyunda iffetli Elizabeth'in tam karşısına konumlandırılmış olan karanlık, şehvetli ve aşk dolu Mary, sınırsız, zamanın ötesinde ve değişken kimliğinin duygusal ve sembolik olasılıklarını kendinde barındırır. Lacan'ın düşünce sisteminde kadınlar var olamaz; yalnızca eril'in karşısında, onu negatif halleriyle yükselterek, bir alternatif olarak kurgulanabilirler. Eğer bir kadın Sembolik düzenin sınırlarının dışında bir eylem gerçekleştirirse, yıkıcı ve huzur bozucu olarak nitelendirilip egemen söylemlerin bütünlüğüne ve istikrarına bir tehlike olarak algılanır ve bunun sonucunda reddedilerek dışlanır. Mary'nin sürekli değişen seksüelitesi ve aşk dolu doğası, kadınların marjinal pozisyonlarının bir uzantısı olarak algılanıp, ataerkil ontolojinin üzerine kurulduğu konjektürlere meydan okuyarak onları istikrarsızlaştıran yıkıcı bir strateji olarak yorumlanabilir. Mary, dişil vücudunu, potansiyel değiş tokuşun ve onu maskülen algıya hapsetmeye çalışan eril ve ataerkil bakışın bir nesnesi haline getirmeye çalışmıştır. Ancak, Mary hem bir kadın hem de hüküm süren bir kraliçe olarak kendisinden beklenen rollere uymayı reddederek, eril bakışı yok saymayı ve teşhir etmeyi başarır. Mary'nin fallus yoksunluğu, ona eril bakış (gaze) uygulayanlarda kastrasyon anksiyetesine yol açar ve halihazırda etrafında bulunan erkeklerin anksiyetesini yoğunlaştırır. Knox, dişil hükümdarlığın üstünlüğünü ve otoritesini açıkça yok sayarak içinde yaşadığı Sembolik düzenin ve onun yasalarının hükümlerine sırtını dayar. Mary'nin doğasını aşağılamaya, otoritesini yok saymaya ve sesini kısmaya çalışır. Fakat, Mary'yi Sembolik düzene konumlandırma, onu egemen söyleme göre asimile etme ve şekillendirme çabaları, Mary'nin dinsel eğilimine ve seksüel feminen arzusuna bağlılığı tarafından ters yüz edilir. Mary feminen arzusunu yaşamayı ve kendi

doğasının gerektirdiği bir kadın ve anne olmayı tercih eder. Ataerkil toplumun gerekliliklerine ve onun seksüelitesini kısıtlayan ve değişkenliğini istikrarsızlaştırmaya çalışan statükonun emirlerine uymayı reddeder. Mary, Elizabeth rejimine bir tehlike oluşturur. Bu sebeple statükonun dinamikleri için sorun teşkil eden sembolik etkilerini azaltmak umuduyla fiziksel bir ölümle, sembolik ve metaforik bir kastrasyonla cezalandırılır.

Mary, ataerkil toplum için tehlike arz edip ölümüne neden olması pahasına feminen arzusunun peşinden giderken, Kraliçe Elizabeth maskülenliği uygulayıp kadınlığını ve feminenliğini bastırarak fallik gücün ve fallusun sahibi olur. Lochhead'in Elizabeth'i, Irigaray'ın kurmaya çalıştığı kadını/anneyi, oedipal öncesi arzunun diyarına götürme umudu taşıyan alternatif feminen bir söylem yaratma fikrine karşı çıkmaktadır. Anneliğe ait vücudu sembolik düzenden sonsuza kadar sürülmüş ve noksanlıklarla özdeşleştirilmiş bir kadın ve potansiyel bir anne olmasına rağmen, Elizabeth feminen arzusundan vazgeçerek ve maskülenliğe sıkı sıkıya tutunarak insanları için fallik bir imgeye ve sembolik bir anneye dönüşmeyi başarır.

İzledikleri yollar farklı olsa da Mary ve Elizabeth Lacancı epistemolojideki yapısalcı ve sınırlayıcı düşünce yapısını açığa çıkarıp Lacan'ın ötesine geçmeyi başarmışlardır. Mary, Lacan'ın fazlasıyla önem verdiği ve tek yol olarak gördüğü Sembolik düzende yer almayı ölümü pahasına reddedip feminen arzusunun peşinden gitmiştir. Elizabeth ise Lacan'ın kadınların Sembolik'te var olmalarını mümkün bulmamasına karşın ters bir strateji izleyerek feminenliğinden vazgeçip, maskülenliği kucaklayıp uygulayarak Sembolik düzende kendine bir yer edinmiş ve fallik gücün biricik sahibi ve temsilcisi olmayı başarmıştır.

Sonuç olarak, bu tezde Lochhead'in üç oyunu ters yüz edici Lacancı bakış açısıyla tartışılmıştır. Dilin; gerçeklik yaratmak, susturularak ezilen kadınların seslerini onlara geri vermek için politik ve ideolojik bir araç olarak kullanılabileceği ve özelleştirilebileceği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Lochhead yeni bir anlamlama ve öznellik alanı yaratmış, böylelikle ataerkil bağlamı değiştirmeyi amaçlamıştır. Lochhead

bağlamı değiştirerek, kadınların kendi doğrularını çekinmeden ifade edebildiği ve fallogosentrik bağlamda var olan egemen sesler yüzünden duyulmayan seslerini yükseltebilecekleri yeni bir varoluş alanı yaratmayı hedeflemiştir. Lochhead aynı zamanda oyunlarında doğruyu estetikleştirmiş ve bunu yaparken de "kadın" kategorisini yeni bir ontolojik ve epistemolojik zeminde okumuştur. Lochhead kadınların betimlenmesinin izini Batı edebiyatındaki son derece önemli metinlerde sürmüştür ve bu kategori hakkında daha fazla bilgi edinmeyi amaçlamıştır: düşündüğü bu kadın Batı'daki metinlerde yaşıyor mu? Bu kategori nedir ya da kimdir? Fallosentrik bakış açısından uzakta betimlenebilir mi? Lochhead'in çığır açıcı metinleri yeniden okuması ve böylelikle bağlamı yeniden şekillendirmesi ataerkil bağlama karşı alternatif bir feminen dünya ve versiyon yaratmanın yolunu açmaktadır. Lochhead oyunlarında farklı bir dünya yaratır ve marjinal ve sınırdaki figürlerin seslerini de içeren çok sesli bir dünya oluşturmanın olasılığını göstermeyi başarır. Daha önceki epistemolojik kategoriler Lochhead'in oyunlarında reddedilir, ters yüz edilir ve geleneksel ikili karşıtlıklar da ortadan kaldırılır. Lochhead, dramatik dilinin gücüyle, (post-) feministlerin çok uzun zamandan beri göstermeye çabaladığı şeyi yansıtmayı başarmıştır: ataerkil düzeninin boyunduruğunu ortadan kaldırmış, kadınlara yeni bir yaşam alanı sağlayarak ve alternatif bir gerçeklik yaratarak, izini sürdüğü "kadın"'ın sesine dönüşmeyi başarmıştır.

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