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The Problematic of Identity and Language in David Hare's *Skylight* and *Pravda*

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Abstract: This article presents new outlooks toward gender transfiguration in David Hare's *Skylight* and *Pravda* in the light of Judith Butler's theory of Gender Performativity. It examines whether the linguistic performance of Hare's characters is an innate feature or a hallucinatory effect of their naturalized and gendered bodies. Butler asserts that performativity is a ritualized production and a constrained reiteration of cultural intelligibility under the prohibition pressed by power regimes. Surveying *Skylight* and *Pravda* elucidates that gender identity is an imitation, which leads Hare's characters to resignify and recontextualize the parodic gender reproductions. Moreover, the gendered subjects were subordinated to the language that interpellated them, so that each individual became a linguistically stylized occasion. Therefore, the ever-shifting identities of Hare's characters were established by the power of the injurious language that interpellated the subjects. Springing from the discussion about gender performativity of Hare's characters, the article concluded that identity is a phantasmatic construction, and what an individual performs is a non-intrinsic parody of the culturally constructed regulations. As a result, the culturally acquired gender is crafted based on the socially recognizable standards, which shape the directionality of the self-representation.

Keywords: Gender Reality; Identity; Intelligible Gender; Performativity.

1. Introduction

Emerging in the wake of Britain's postwar disillusionment, David Hare's drama reflects a persistent struggle between private conscience and public compromise. His works reveal how moral idealism collides with the structures of late capitalist society, and how individuals negotiate identity amid political and emotional exhaustion. Hare's theater—often described as both socially observant and deeply psychological—captures the lingering tensions between human intimacy and institutional corruption, between the search for meaning and the seductions of material comfort. Within this context, his plays not only mirror the crises of modern British life but also probe the limits of ethical responsibility in an age increasingly defined by disconnection and self-interest.

Throughout his career, Hare has continuously reimagined the moral and emotional geographies of contemporary Britain. *Skylight* (1995), which earned him the Olivier Award for Best New Play, dramatizes the fragile reunion of Kyra Hollis and Tom Sergeant, two lovers divided by class, privilege, and competing moral visions. Kyra's austere commitment to teaching in East London stands in stark contrast to Tom's insulated world of wealth and control—a conflict that exposes the ethical fissures beneath modern intimacy. In a similar vein, *Pravda* (1985), co-authored with Howard Brenton, turns its gaze toward the corrosive ethics of the British press. The South African tycoon Lambert Le Roux, who reshapes journalism into an engine of power and manipulation, embodies the same logic of domination that pervades Tom's personal life. Both plays articulate a shared anxiety about the commodification of truth and affection, and the way language itself becomes an instrument of control and self-justification.

The present study seeks to explore the interwoven dynamics of power, identity, and moral consciousness in Hare's drama, focusing particularly on how his characters construct and deconstruct their subjectivities through language and desire. By placing *Skylight* and *Pravda* in dialogue, this paper examines the ideological and psychological mechanisms that underlie their protagonists' moral collapse and emotional estrangement. While much critical attention has addressed Hare's political realism, less has been said about the subtle interplay between ethics and affect—how the personal becomes a battleground for ideological negotiation. This study thus aims to fill that gap, proposing that Hare's theater stages a form of modern tragedy: the drama of individuals striving to sustain love, truth, and integrity within systems that relentlessly commodify them.

2. Literature Review

Works of the prolific writer, David Hare, have been studied by many researchers and critics from different points of view, yet, none of them has underlain the tenets of this research. Diana Presada in her study "David Hare: Attacking the Humanist Tradition of Social Drama," traces the root of the view that theater is a slice of life. She presents that

Hare's plays are the practice of his belief that theater must reflect social reality. She considers the history plays of Hare from *Brassneck* to *Plenty* and the society where despair is constant and individual values are paid no attention. The criticism of 1960s labor government with a point to *Slag* (1970), and *The Great Exhibition* (1972) is another discussed point in her essay. *Knuckle* is another play, which is designated as the dramatist's use of modern forms for analytical purposes and the fact that capitalism is a malevolent force that has its voice in the society. *Teeth 'n' Smile* and *Fanshen* are two other social plays of Hare, which demonstrate the author's anti-establishment viewpoints of the community. Brechtian effect of distancing, as well as the theatrical separation of elements not as a reproduction of life, are two other points discussed by Preseda regarding Hare. The thematic focus of her article is different from the proposed research of Hare's plays on 'Gender Trouble,' which is the aim of this thesis.

Memories of England: British Identity and the Rhetoric of Decline in Postwar British Drama, 1956-1982 is the title of a dissertation by Adam Daniel Knowles. He examines some plays by David Hare along with Howard Brenton in chapter three of his article, considering the concept of people's war and the failure of the Left. This part is mostly about Hare and Brenton's collaborations and their non-identical viewpoints of politics. Knowel provides the reader with a complete explanation of Portable Theater, and the Fringe Theater of the late sixties and seventies as theatrical movements that grew out of anger of Left rebellions of the society. *Hare's Brassneck* and *Plenty* are discussed later, but they are different from the chosen plays of this study.

Adam Grossetti concerns in his dissertation *It Made You Feel What? Using Structure to Convey Theme,* the aesthetic challenges of contemporary political theater. He exemplifies David Hare as a playwright who approaches this problem and tries to solve it by inventing new techniques available to operating in the media sphere. *Stuff Happen* is a play by Hare, debated in the article mentioned above that uses actual dialogues in different scenes by creating an internal dialectic and exposing the war and pro-war arguments.

Laurie Fyffe's *Political Theater Post 9/11: The Age of Verbatim, of Testimony, and of Learning from Fictional Worlds,* chapter one, examines the concept of verbatim play in Hare's *Stuff Happen,* which was based on real events and people along with other kinds of evidence. Also, it points out the construction of a tragic hero in the Aristotelian plot of this play. Therefore, it is a creation of an essential and significant historical narrative about the consequences of power when it is played out globally. This article is so close to the aforementioned, Grossetti's essay, both in the subject matter and the content.

Romina Peña Anllo published the article "David Hare's *Skylight*: When the Political Becomes Personal" in the *Journal of Artistic Creation & Literary Research*. She considers Hare's *Skylight* as an uncompromisingly objective commentary on the national state. Her approach is a socio-political one, which presents *Skylight* as a political play under the façade of an unfulfilled love story. To achieve the objective, Anllo considers the juxtaposition of the characters of Kyra in the play with the figure of Margaret Thatcher. Therefore, Anllo's socio-political viewpoint on *Skylight* differs from the Butlerian approach to it, which is the aim of this paper.

Stephen Coates in his thesis *Alien Nation: David Hare's History Plays* examines seven plays of Hare, among which *Pravda* exists. He considers the socio-historical background of Britain after the Second World War and capitalist-patriarchal system, which results in psychological damages mostly on the middle class. Coates challenges the political concepts of Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci, and Herbert Marcuse, relating them to the oppression of different social spheres. Regarding *Pravda*, which is one of the plays that is going to be studied in this thesis, Coates concentrates on the corruptive aspects of media in England and the characters who try to keep their self-respect by lowering their standards and the reality of their work in which they experience an inhumane competition. Coates studies the significant effects of media on the society as well as the tension that each member of the newspaper industry deals. The hypocrisy of the English press which propagates false news to the civilians is the main problem of Coates in his thesis.

In a doctoral dissertation titled as *From Violence to Resistance: Judith Butler's Critique of Norms* Sanna Karhu investigates how Butler theorizes the relationship between norms and violence based on her concept of critique and resistance. The primary targets of this dissertation are to explore how Butler conceptualizes the integration between standards, violence, and non-violence. Consequently, the ethical and political implications of Butlerian theorization of norms is another focal point. The writer elucidates Butler's feminist theoretical background and her conception of gender normalization in the thought of Monique Wittig. Finally, she challenges the general tendency to consider Butler as a critical humanist and foregrounds her account of grief regarding her critique of norms.

According to "How to Do Things with Butler, An Inquiry on the Origin, Citation and Application of Judith Butler's Theory of Performativity" by Sarah Claeys, the magnitude of the images of a normal man or woman through magazines, television, and social media

has subverted the meaning of what is called normal. The readers and viewers see the as representations of what a man or a woman should look like. The concern of the philosopher Judith Butler is also what qualifies and counts as normal. The primary focus of the dissertation is not only gender performativity and bodily acts, but also the exploration of how the heterosexual matrix supposes a dependency between sex and desire.

An exploration of Selected Concepts from Judith Butler: With Application to the Understanding of Gender Identity in Social Work Practice with Marginalized Female Adolescents is the title of a dissertation by Amie Marie Hough. It explores the fact that identity formation happens within the individual's interactions with his/her environment. The paper aims to analyze how social work incorporates new critical and post-structuralist theory while investigating excluded female adolescents by studying Butlerian feminist critique and gender identity.

Christina Brooks in *Recitations: The Critical Foundations of Judith Butler's Rhetoric* investigates the textures and styles in Butler's writing. Butler's rhetoric has accumulated journalistic and scholarly literature with the effort to counter and challenge the borders of social and cultural intelligibility. The focus of the dissertation is on how Butler articulates and revises the language of Hegel, Freud, Foucault, and Levinas. The writer also interprets ambivalent scenes of identification and disavowal of Butler's writing to elucidate the issues of modern critical subjectivity.

Leading at the Border: Gender, Sex and Sexuality in the Hypergendered Organization is the title of a dissertation by Michéle Bowring. It argues that leadership literature has paid little attention to the variations between women and men. The writer's conceptual framework is from Butler's theory of performativity of gender and heteronormative matrix. She interviews thirty-four leaders of different sexes, genders, and sexual orientations. Her most significant finding was that for those respondents, their body trumped both their gender and sexuality while progressing their leadership through hyper gendered systems.

In an article by Jemima Repo titled as "Herculine Barbin and the Omission of Biopolitics from Judith Butler's Gender Genealogy," the writer aims at examining theoretical formations remarking Butler's engagement with Foucault's Herculine Barbin. She proposes rather biopolitically reading of how the discourses of sex and sexuality capture the material body. Consequently, she poses primary questions which leads to a rather firmly Foucauldian genealogy of gender.

3. Theoretical Framework

This article focuses on an individual's "identity," and "language," and explores the concept of "gender performativity" in the mentioned plays. The existence of characters in Hare's plays that defy conventional gender roles prescribed by the preexisting social norms is conflicting. On the one hand, actions are taken by the subordinated characters that are mostly females who invade the boundaries of traditional gender roles while constituting their new identity through language. On the other hand, there are male characters whose racist discourse questions the socially accepted standards, resulting in the materiality of the body within the gender stylization. For instance, in *Skylight*, Tom, affected by the stereotypical cultures of the society, talks to his beloved, Kyra, from a higher stance, while deep down yearning her return to his life.

> KYRA. Is that what you think?
>
> TOM. You know what I'm saying is right. You simply walked out! You simply walked out on me! That is a fact.He points the finger at her as if she were a wayward employee.And what's more, you did not consult me. You made a decision, which I never approved. (2)

Hare depicts the conversation that Kyra and Tom carry on after years of separation. Tom returns to Kyra, seeking an explanation of why she left and asks her to come back to his prosperous life. During their interlocution, Tom keeps underestimating Kyra and treating her as an object through his discourse. Never taking her real love seriously, he establishes the grounds of their incompatibility. Kyra, now a mature woman, does not fall for Tom's infatuation. This part indicates how a normative understanding of a pattern of behavior by culture makes it seem natural to a man to look down on a woman who tries to regain her identity through working hard as a teacher in a remote part of the city. Kyra is a revolting character that tries to shape her desired identity regardless of the conventions of society.

Tom's bodily acts and his diction signify his attempts to acknowledge himself as a masculine authority. Kyra's interactions indicate that she does not tend to be incentivized by what Tom utters and performs. Butler in her most prominent book, Gender Trouble, points out feminism's mistake in asserting a binary view of gender relations, in which human beings are divided into two groups, women, and men. Subjects become agents through interactions with the world while resisting a chain of presupposed norms. Such presuppositions begin when a person is called a name of a girl or a boy (Loizidou 12). To Kyra as a female, the division that Tom made by attributing stubbornness to her seems weird because she has gained newly crafted modes of behavior throughout the years of living alone. Kyra outbursts when Tom interpellates her based on conventional feminine inferiority and dependability.

In *Pravda,* Hare depicts other social directionalities rather than just attacking British society by criticizing greed, cynicism, sloth, and moral gutlessness. Putting Lambert Le Roux, an African man at the focal point of the British political milieu, the play uncovers the hypocrisy and extremism endemic to the press and the entire subordinated minorities, especially women. Le Roux has internalized patriarchal masculinity by imitating a white male's self-identification. He practices his power by shifting the members of his editorial team, sacking half of his workforce, and uttering that: "I've decided to combine the two newsrooms. I'll cut both papers in half. Upmarket, down market, it's all the same stuff . . . Welcome to the foundry of lies (2.5)." He is aware of the falsity of his identity, which is projected in the falsity of the news he publishes in his office. Andrew who is a white male has given up his identity under the power of Le Roux's diction in the office. Andrew's wife is the voice of morality and mobilization inside the workplace and stands firmly against Le Roux's hypocrisy in the media. She is not a submitted and subordinated person to the ideologies of Le Roux. According to Butler, specific cultural configurations of gender are naturalized by the power/knowledge regimes to subjugate individuals. In this play, on the one hand, some women and men embrace new phantasmatic identities through the installation of the fear of authority. On the other hand, Le Roux's discourse towards the members of the press indicates his synchronic and a diachronic temporality by which subjects become intelligible not only to themselves but also to society.

In Hare's plays, some characters violate the conventionally established gender norms and shape their phantasmatic identity while they are interpellated by sovereign language. Such issues lead the researcher to examine not only the way the figures of the sovereign in *Skylight* and *Pravda* compensate for a lost sense of power through the performative language they utter, but also the way that the characters establish their phantasmatic identities through the condition of the performative language. Moreover, this study investigated how the sense of utterance as a stylized assertion reduces the injuries of racism to the injuries of language in *Pravda.*

Judith Butler, whose work is centralized on the issue of performativity, argues against the system of categorizing human beings by behavior. In Gender Trouble, she points out that the current definition of gender is outdated because it reflects an international compulsory treatment of women and men as a set of binary classifications from the moment of born and points out that gender is an improvised performance that individuals reiterate and repeat based on what has been inculcated in them by the regulatory frames of power regimes. Most of Hare's female characters are the means for

men to practice their power through language by threatening or injuring. These women violate male dominance by constituting a new identity for themselves. The male characters perceive women as mere sexual objects, while women resist male hypocrisy and manipulation by shaping their desired identity. They manage their own vital life decisions and threaten men's sense of masculinity by invading recognizable standards of heterosexual hegemony.

The chosen plays depict the world of men as a sign of patriarchy in which the language pattern of dominion is repeatedly practiced to subjugate others. The characters establish their identities while they deviate from the cultural domain of intelligibility. There are some characters whose bodily desires lead them to masquerade a naturalized self-representation affected by the discursive laws which form the directionality of their gender enactments. Butler argues that gender is not always constituted in historical contexts and intersects with modalities of discursively constituted identities such as racial, class, sexual, and regional. Moreover, gender cannot be separated from political and cultural intersections. The masculine/feminine binary constitutes the particular framework in which the specificity of the feminine is recognizable. This peculiarity is decontextualized and separated from the constitution of class, race, ethnicity, and other axes of power relations that constitute "identity" (Gender 5-6).

Gender must instate the apparatus of production whereby the sexes are constituted. "Sexed nature" is produced as "prediscursive," before culture, by gender, which is discursive or cultural. A "natural sex" is a politically neutral surface on which culture acts (10). Articulation of identity within existing cultural terms designates a definition that prevents the rise of new identity notions in and through politically engaged actions. The already constituted identities are communicated through agreed-upon dialogic structures, and they no longer establish the theme or subject of politics. The coalition affirms identities that are alternately constituted and relinquished based on the purposes at hand. "Persons" become intelligible only through becoming gendered in conformity with recognizable standards of gender intelligibility (21- 2). Gender formation and division constitute the identity and the self-identical status of the person. When the "incoherent" or "discontinuous" gendered beings that appear to be persons fail to conform to the gendered norms of cultural intelligibility, the very notion of "person" is called into question by the cultural emergence (23). Heterosexualization of desire institutes the production of separated and asymmetrical oppositions between "feminine" and "masculine" which is their expressive attributes. Certain kinds of "identities" cannot "exist" in the cultural matrix of intelligible gender identity when their practices of desire do not follow from sex and they fail to conform to the norms of the cultural domain of intelligibility (23-4).

Butler points out to Freud's assumption of disposition, which is constitutive facts of sexual life and are effects of a law that internalizes, produces, and regulates discrete gender identities and heterosexuality. Gender acquisition starts with the postulation of dispositions, trained by a prohibition that in the name of culture quells the disturbance created by an unrestrained homosexual cathexis. Therefore, heterosexuality is produced by the repressive law, which acts as both a negative or exclusionary code, and a rule of discourse distinguishing the legitimate from illegitimate (Gender 87-9). Gender identity would be inaugurated and constituted through a denial of loss that inscribes itself in the body, and characterizes the living versus the dead body. The localization and forbiddance of desires and pleasures in erotogenic parts of the body is precisely the kind of gender-differentiating melancholy that suffuses the body's surface (Gender 93).

Gender identity is a production which postures like an imitation. This continuous displacement produces a fluidity of identities, which offers accessibility to resignification and recontextualization. Parodic reproduction deprives hegemonic culture critics of the assertion to naturalized or essential gender identities. Parody is not subversive, yet certain kinds of parodic repetitions are disruptive and troubling.Butler in *Bodies that Matter* asserts that: "Identification is a phantasmatic trajectory and resolution of desire; an assumption of place; a territorializing of an object which enables identity through the temporary resolution of desire, but which remains a desire, if only in its repudiated form" (64). Moreover, identification can ward off specified acts or desires in the position of vehicles for desire. It might be crucial to ward off others to facilitate specified desires. Identification causes the prohibition and the production of desire to take place (64-5).

According to Butler in *Psychic Life of Power,* power seems to be external which is pressed upon the subordinated subject. "Subjection signifies the process of becoming subordinated by power as well as the process of becoming a subject. Whether by interpellation, in Althusser's sense, or by discursive productivity, in Foucault's, the subject is initiated through a primary submission to power"(3). In Gender Trouble regarding language Butler refers to Wittig who points out that to speak within the system is to be cut off the contingency of speech. Therefore, to speak in that context is a performative contrast, the linguistic claim of self that cannot "be" within the language that claims it. Wittig argues that the concepts, categories, and abstractions of language can affect physical and material violence against the bodies they assert to organize and interpret. Sciences and theories have to act materially and concretely upon our bodies and minds even if the discourse that manufactures it is abstract.

The construction of gender is performative, which is a kind of transitive referring which names and inaugurates altogether. So, the gender constitution is to be determined by the process of its creation. The medical interpellation shifts an infant from "it" to a "she" or a "he" and brings the infant into the frame of language and kinship of gender. The naming sets the boundaries and the repeated inculcations of the norms, which continue to the domain of discourse and power. In *Excitable Speech*, Butler points out that speech is always out of the control of the speaker. In the law, the utterances that are made under duress are called "excitable," since they are uttered without the utterer's balanced mental state. The disputable power of some injurious words marks a specific type of performativity that is never a distinct group of speech acts, instead, a ritual series of resignifications whose beginning and end are left unfixed (14- 5). The insult, however, assumes its specific proportion in time. To be called a name is one of the first forms of linguistic injury that one learns. But not all name-calling is injurious. Being called a name is also one of the conditions by which a subject is constituted in language; indeed, it is one of the examples Althusser supplies for an understanding of "interpellation." (Excitable Speech 2)

When one is called a name, he/she is also given a specific possibility to have a social existence, Therefore, the injurious address fixes or paralyzes the one it interpellates, when the address is injurious, it operates its force on the person it injures (2). "To claim that language injures or, to cite the phrase used by Richard Delgado and Mari Matsuda, that "words wound" is to combine linguistic and physical vocabularies. The use of a term such as "wound" suggests that language can act in ways that parallel the infliction of physical pain and injury (4)." Butler believes that such formulations lead to the fact that linguistic injury operates the same as the physical injury. The metaphorical relationship between a physical and linguistic vulnerability is necessary to the elaboration on the vulnerability of language. The body is sustained by being hailed within the terms of language so that it makes a specific existence of the body socially possible. One appears to "exist" by the primary and necessary dependency on being addressed by the Others (4-5).

According to Butler in *Bodies that Matter*, "Materiality" allocates a specified effect of power, in other words, it is power in its formative or constituting impacts. The self-conceit that empowers the threat, however, is that the speech act that is the threat will fully materialize that act threatened by the speech, such speech is, however, vulnerable to failure, and it is that vulnerability that must be exploited to counter the threat. For the threat to work, it requires certain kinds of circumstances, and it requires a venue of

power by which its performative effects might be materialized. (Excitable 11-2) The threat is not the act which it foretells, yet, it remains a speech act which prefigures the action to come and register a linguistic force that inaugurates and predicts another one. Butler points out that the relation between speech and body is scandalous. According to her, the speech act utters something that it never intends. The body is a sign of unknowingness since whatever it performs are never wholly consciously directed. What remains unconscious in a speech act is interpreted as the "instrument" by which the assertion takes place and speech act and body are not radically detachable, yet the notion of an intentional speech is subverted. The act that is the production of the speaking body ruins the dichotomy of the mental and physical domain, which means a metaphysical breakdown between body and spirit or matter and language (Excitable 9-12).

Hate speech creates the subject in the position of subordination. It draws the idea that a powerful voice hails the subject. Regarding hate speech, utterances from a position of power make the resubordinating effect on those who are addressed. Sometimes we stick to painful words, which give us some form of discursive and social existence. Thus, "injury" is performed by the act of interpellation. We prefer being derogated to not being interpellated at all. Hate speech is citational, but this does not mean that the person who utters it is not responsible. According to Butler, the one who uses hate speech is responsible for the repetition, invigoration, and establishment of such injury and hate (Excitable 26-7). The linguistic bearing is necessary for the being and existence of the subject, and its vulnerability is the form that the social relation takes. A certain subjectivation in the language is structured by the reversibility of the association between addressing and being addressed. Butler believes that racist speech operates within the invocation of a convention. It requires its subject for its speaking, but it never ends or begins with the speaking subject (Excitable 30-4).

The cause of injury is on the speaking subject and the power in the power of speech. In the citing of the racial slur, one produces the linguistic occasion for an imagined connection to a historically conveyed community of racist. Therefore, the originator of racist speech is not the subject, although it requires the subject for its efficacy. Indeed, racist speech is a citation of itself, and since we already know its force from its prior instances, we are aware of its offensiveness. The vocalization and using the larynx, the lungs, the lips, and the mouth causes the body to constitute a precise presentation of itself. In this sense, it is not accurate to claim that language substitutes for the body. In Psychic Life of Matter, Butler asserts that an individual becomes a subject by becoming subjected. When the subject acts opposing subordination, he or she reiterates its subjection (11).

4. Analysis

Scrutinizing the identity and language of the characters in *Skylight* illustrates that Kyra tries to obtain independence in her life by constituting her self-determining identity. She left Tom Sergeant's prosperous life after his wife found out that she had an affair with Tom. The incident led to Kyra's decision to live alone. As a self-reliant feminine figure of the play, she endorses the formation of her own identity through the repudiation of Tom's verbal authority. The transfiguration of her identity happened while she subverted the compulsory frames of social hegemonies. Though confronting harsh inadequacy and financial difficulty, Kyra refuses to be dominated by Tom who used to subordinate her through his language. As a trainer of international students, Kyra overcomes any obstacle that she confronts in her workplace to manage her self-relying life.Tom keeps criticizing him and Kyra's separation. He had betrayed his wife, Alice, during the six-year affair with Kyra. To Tom, money-oriented values are a priority to the extent that through Alice's cancer-stricken years he did nothing but build a room with a skylight to let her see the sky. He uses his financial and verbal power to control everyone. By objectifying and humiliating people, Tom practices his authoritative self-presentation. Butler also asserts that one's own aggression comes toward them in the form of other's action, and one defends aggressively against that action. In fact, we assign our own action to another's name (The Force 61).

As a naturalized masculine figure, Tom treats Kyra like an object through injurious diction. He interpellates Kyra's feminine agency based on her gendered intelligibility, thus constituting her subversive identity. Tom's diction with Kyra is humiliating because the act of interpellation happens by a masculine figure who reiterates the heterosexual hegemony in which masculine superiority is naturalized. Kyra and Tom are polar opposites. Even Tom's eighteen-year-old son disapproves of his father's behavior, believing that people around his father, including his employees, respect him out of fear.

> EDWARD. ...I talked to some people at work. He commands respect, yes of course. People who have all that confidence do. But you scratch the surface, you talk to his employees, you find respect can be much more like fear [...] There is a woman, you know, I happened to talk to her, it was by chance, she's pretty high up, she's worked close to Dad for some time. She knows him well. And she said he is definitely sexist. (1.1)

Tom controls the people around him via installing fear. He treats everybody like his employees, which causes a clash of values between Tom and Kyra. The law produces the trembling body, which is prepared for its inscription and makes it with fear and the symbolic stamp of sex. To submit to the law is to craft an imaginary alliance with the sexual position. Therefore, the "identification" is repeatedly crafted insisting on the possible threat of its failure to be repeated (Bodies 65). The language has the power to paralyze the addressee and shape his/her identity based on heterosexual norms of the society. Tom's linguistic performativity equipped him with the power to subjugate others based on their gender enactments. Therefore, the fear that Tom causes to others constitutes their own identity through conforming to the established rules by Tom's power vector.

Trying to stick to the laws by which Tom governs his workers, establishes the frames of identification to them. In order to possess Kyra's being, Tom wants her to conform; yet Kyra is a deviant character who subverts Tom's sense of possession. The social gender hierarchy causes Tom to scale everything with his authority in business, even the death of his wife, Alice.

> KYRA. I heard about Alice.
> TOM. Did you? How?
> KYRA. I just heard.
> TOM. Yes. She died a year ago. It seems much longer. I mean, in a way it was fine. I'd already 'discounted' it. It's a term we use in business. Meaning...
> KYRA. I know what it means. You've already prepared yourself. So when it happens it isn't so awful. (1.2)The money-oriented values of Tom's life lead him to dominate the subjects around him with money.
> TOM. (turning around, determined again to confront his own unease) I don't know. I could see the room was beautiful. I mean, it was a beautiful room. And so it should be. I'm not being wholly facetious, but the fact is I had spent a great deal. I mean, I'm not kidding. I spent a great deal of money. All that glass, the sandalwood floor. The sky! The greenery! The light! I gave her everything. (1.2)

Tom assumes that spending money for his dying wife was enough to indicate his affection. Tom's gender identity has been crafted through the authoritative linguistic performativity that he has reiterated and repeated. According to Butler, gender identities are produced by language, meaning that no gender identity precedes language. Identity is a signifying practice, and culturally intelligible identities are the effects of discourses. Therefore, gender identity is performative, and one's gender is performatively established and predetermined by society, context, and economy within which a subject is situated

(Salih 64). When Tom visits Kyra, he leaves his driver down in the freezing weather because he believes that his driver is like an object, which is supposed to be at his service. The act of interpellation is a way of practicing power because observing the paralyzed addressee is the same as policing the subjugated individual. Kyra separates herself from the world that Tom has made for her. She even refused the share Tom has suggested because she was no longer able to conform to his diction.

> TOM. No. It's the price I paid for floating the company. It made me millions, I can hardly complain. I offered you shares, remember? I never knew why you refused.Kyra flashes a look at him to suggest he knows perfectly well why he refused. (1.2)

Tom keeps humiliating the way Kyra lives and invites her to have a better life under his domination. Tom points out that the places where Kyra lives and works are dreadful. In such a male-dominated society Kyra is struggling with what she calls lack of a man; yet, due to her self-established identity, she keeps moving forward independently. A Gender is an act that requires a repeated performance in ritual and social dramas (Gender 190-1). Kyra confronts the punishments of not obeying the hierarchy of a male-dominated society. She is deprived of a convenient life that could be provided to her by Tom. The insufficiencies in her life never stop her from the reiteration of her newly established identity. What culture would inculcate to Kyra, as a female character is a dependency and subordination, though she is subversive towards such a repetition?

> KYRA. I had no alternative. I had to get out of Alice's way. I had to make a new life of my own. (1.2)
> KYRA. [...] She does it because of a lack in herself. She doesn't have a man. If she had a man, she wouldn't need to do it [...]. (2.1)

According to the ontology of substance, women can never "be" because they are the excluded and a "difference" that cannot be conceived as the simple negation or "other" of the always-already-masculine subject. "Central to each of these views, however, is the notion that sex appears within hegemonic language as a substance, as, metaphysically speaking, a self-identical being. This appearance is achieved through a performative twist of language and/or discourse that conceals the fact that "being" sex or gender is fundamentally impossible (Gender 26)."

Pravda is a black comedy based on the real events that happened in the newspaper industry during the Margaret Thatcher era of England. Hare directed this play in 1985, and Anthony Hopkins played the leading role, Lambert Le Roux. The play is a bitter satire, on the role of journalism in society. The researcher has used Butler to read this play by examining the injurious language that the main character uses to communicate

with his subordinated staff and the way they reform and reestablish their identities.Butler argues that subjects are attached to the power structures by which they are subordinated, thus embracing the terms that injure them. No social identity can be formed without subjection so that the subject is enthusiastically attached to the law or the authority that subjects and forms it (Slaih 119). She also asserts that subjects ease into compulsory heterosexual roles, slowly constituting under the gaze of power structures the way they occupy them. Subjects experience this process while discovering their identity. She believes that identity is a trap, a hardening into the rigid, binarized category of much more fluid and heterogeneous presumptions (Leitch 2486).

Language is a citational chain that precedes and exceeds speaking subjects who are installed by and in discourse in a retroactive way. Utterers are not held responsible for utterances of which they are not considered the sole originators. The discourse and ideology can interpellate speakers to have such utterances in a hateful way (Salih104). The power that is ascribed to hate speech is the absolute and efficacious power of agency, performativity, and transitivity (Excitable 77). According to Butler while nonviolence is related to radical equality, violence is a kind of intensified social inequality, which is produced by racism and war logics (The Force 100). At the beginning of the play, Rebecca wants her husband to hire her and makes him promise not to lie. Lying leads people from the truth, and all of this play is about lies and truths. Each male character of the play is to some extent trying to ditch others while female characters, such as Rebecca, attempts to improve such a verbal deviation of language.Rebecca looks across at him, not answering.

> ANDREW. Before the meeting, did he ask me to be an editor?
> REBECCA. He mentioned it, yes, and then he moved on. He's classy. It's a brilliant technique. Charm is so unfair.
> ANDREW. What are you saying? You don't want me to take it?
> REBECCA. No of course. Are you serious? You must. I'd like to come along too.
> ANDREW. What do you mean?
> REBECCA. Hire me. I'll join you. If you make me a promise. (1.4)

An individual becomes a subject by becoming subjected. The subject is a linguistic occasion by which an individual achieves and reproduces intelligibility and the linguistic condition for existence. Rebecca is subjected, and this happens willfully because this way she can accomplish her intelligibility in society. Le Roux is standing in the middle of the newsroom, shouting at the top of his voice. He tears the newspapers into shreds and points at one of the journalists. After counting how much money they have spent so far, Le Roux begins to interpellate each of the journalists by saying "you're fired." He is sacking the employees one by one, even the deputy editor. The reason for such melancholy is nothing but a practice of power in the form of verbal interpellation, which

is given the action. Butler mentions that interpellation is a citational utterance that depends on contexts and conversations to become effective. Therefore, interpellation is a citable, ex-citable utterance, which exceeds the interpellator that is not under the control of that utterance (Salih, 106). When the deputy editor approaches the newsroom, Le Roux asks his name and when he does not find the name familiar in the South African culture he answers:

> LE ROUX. In South Africa there are no men called Whicker-Baskett. The name is entirely unknown [...].(He turns to WHICKER-BASKETT, almost melancholy.) Whicker-Baskett, did I sack you?WHICKER-BASKETT. Oh. No.
> LE ROUX. What difference does it make? I'm sacking you now. (1.5)

The reason why he sacks this worker is simply because of his unfamiliar name. Butler describes this extent of the wired performativity of a racist person in power who uses the language to injure people this way: The "content" of specific kinds of speech can be perceived in the context of the action the speech performs. Racist epithets relay the racial inferiority, which is the verbal institutionalization of subordination. Thus, hate speech enacts an offensive idea and enacts what it communicates, so communication is a form of conduct (Excitable 72).

Butler asserts that plurality of law creates sexed and gendered identities, which are introduced as inner, and natural. The law creates the inadmissible identities and desires that it represses to constitute and preserve the stability of sanctioned sex and gender identities (Salih 59). She also points out that identity is an ever-changing, fluid, impermanent construction of the different characteristics, which contradict the more stable gender division (Gerünberg 131). Therefore, through enacting the strict laws in his office, Le Roux constitutes the identity of those subordinated people. One of Le Roux's editors who won the Golden Finger prize is also fired because his wife, Rebecca, is left-wing and he is a right-wing proprietor. What Le Roux wanted his staff to do was to lie on the pages of the newspaper, and whenever a piece of truth was published against his taste, he would sack the doer unquestionably. One of his workers informs him that those who are sacked have meetings all over the country; he gets back to him this way:

> LE ROUX. 'Dispossessed', what do you mean? (Prowling, like a big cat.) They are the establishment! They think they have a right. They think they are England. They hate me because I am an outsider! No old boy and old chap. I've broken their toys and now there are tantrums. But none of them are manly, none of them have the courage to fight. (With swift, violent, martial arts movements.) Come on! Come out of the woodwork! Come out of your little holes! Fight me you bastards, fight me! (2.2)

He is a South African whose identity has been formed based on the African severeness, even in the workplace he has this spirituality of fighting and patronizing others. The theatricality of his power-play injures others verbally while constructing their identities. Le Roux hits his wife with a pole, another trait that declares subduing the power he has as a masculine figure. When his clerks are backbiting him, they all believe that Le Roux has is immoral and deplorable. They all have reasons for hating Le Roux. Each is forming their identities at work through the fear they feel of him. Le Roux kept threatening to fire them and now that they are all jobless, they prefer to stick to Le Roux's laws for income. Rebecca points out that she hates Le Roux and wants her husband, Andrew, to stop fighting with him because she believes that he will become just like him. Andrew answers:

> ANDREW. Just like him? How can you say that? We stand for something. And we need institutions. We must have the means and the courage to buy the means. And that's what we are doing. (2.3)

Rebecca feels that her husband is getting like Le Roux while he does not approve of him. He is threatening to Rebecca, while at the end of the play we find Andrew repeating the same words Le Roux used to utter. Le Roux already knows that the subordinated can only obey him. When Andrew is becoming just like him, it is the moment that he starts resisting while this does not take too long.

> ANDREW. I knew you'd seek me out. To get me stop publishing. I knew you'd offer me money.
> LE ROUX. Yes. How much do you want?
> ANDREW. (Shakes his head). No. Not this time. You can't buy me. I'm not for sale. Nothing you can give me will ever make me stop publishing.
> LE ROUX. I see, you seem very sure.
> ANDREW. I don't want to talk to you.
> LE ROUX. That is what people say. They all say that. 'I don't want to talk to him.' But they do. Why is that?
> ANDREW. I have no idea. (2.4)

Identification is not imitative acting rather the assimilating passion that makes an ego to emerge. The intelligible morphological possibilities are produced through the regulatory schemas, which are not timeless structures, but historically revisable criteria of intelligibility (Bodies xxii). In his conversation with Andrew, Le Roux describes one of the fired employees this way:

> LE ROUX. They are valueless. Quince is simply the urinal in which the British
> Establishment leaks.
> ANDREW. You talk like that because you know you are beaten.
> LE ROUX. Beaten?
> ANDREW. You are reduced calling us all names.
> LE ROUX. Not you, Andrew. (2.4)

The ritualistic repetition that occasions the congealed effect of sedimentation crafts the gender. Words both name a social subject and construct the subject in the naming (Excitable 49). Le Roux imitates the white male's performativity, yet due to the diction he applies to others, subordinated characters such as Andrew emulate him. Their identities are crafted based on the linguistic occasion in which they become intelligible. So, the subordinated characters are the parody of Le Roux who is himself a parody. Le Roux's injurious diction makes everybody hate him, while simultaneously imitating such a language because he is a power spot. This way people including Andrew reform their new identities. "No one has ever worked through an injury without repeating it: its repetition is both the continuation of the trauma and that which marks a self- distance within the very structure of trauma, its constitutive possibility of being otherwise. There is no possibility of not repeating (Excitable 102)." The trauma that Le Roux crates in others is, in fact, the new identity he gives to them.

> ANDREW. You always told me to fight. I am fighting. I've got you on the ropes.
> You can shout and bluster all you like. We've got stuff that will kill you stone
> dead in England, forever.Le Roux looks at him. Andrew is exultant.
> LE ROUX. You are all weak because you do not know what you believe. (2.4)

At the end of the play, after Andrew decides to work again for Le Roux's company, he is imitating the language of Le Roux, forming his identity through this reiteration. He shouts loudly in the office and interpellates all the workers as bastards commanding them to work hard. According to Butler, "free" subject is the consequence of a regulatory system of reiterations which guarantee the hegemonic predominance of the white "western" heterosexual man by excluding women, people of color, and the poor in the way that different phantasmatic ideals serve (Iveson, 22). In this play, the color of Le Roux, a white South African, determines his power in a white English society that enables him to practice his power as the most influential one.

Regarding *Skylight*, based on what Butler asserts, Tom's hate speech must subordinate the subject, yet this is never fulfilled because Kyra's desired identity is not through the intelligibility that society detects as a norm. According to Butler in *Psychic*

Life of Power, power seems to be external and has a psychic figure that establishes the subject's self-identity (3). According to Butler, "[...] gender parody reveals that the original identity after which gender fashions itself is an imitation without an origin (Gender 188)." The repetitions became naturalized as the means of cultural hegemony, so that during the feminist movements of the late 20th century, Kyra is in the process of independence based on the cultural hegemony of the time in England.

Pravda in which identity and language are two key terms includes characters whose identity is manufactured through the language of the sovereign. The production of the social subject happens through linguistic means (Psychic 5). Through the play, Le Roux injures subordinated people through with his diction. While doing so, each of those individuals crafts their floating identities following the masculine power of Le Roux.

It can be concluded from *Skylight* and *Pravda* that the characters compensated for their sense of authority through objectifying others by injurious language. In each play, the sovereign character hailed others through injurious language, making them establish their phantasmatic identity. By injurious addressing, Tom tried to get Kyra back by degrading her. Moreover, Le Roux paralyzed his employees to avoid being an excluded African in English society. According to Butler, each subject prefers to be derogated to not being hailed at all. So, individuals' identities are phantasmatically manufactured through the language that interpellates them based on their gender and internalizes itself in their bodies through performativity.

5. Discussion

Gender performativity is a practice, which reveals that the subjects are not culturally intelligible outside the categories of femininity and masculinity (Loizidou 1). Identity is a result of linguistic practices obliged by power/knowledge regimes, which is defined as compulsory heterosexuality and phallogocentrism. Therefore, identity is a socially and politically constructed regulation rather than any innate property of individuals or source of agency (Jagger 20). Butler's 'subject' is a linguistic structure that is in the endless process of formation. The idea of processing or becoming is vital to understand Butler's theories, which are based on the Hegelian notion of dialectic (Salih 2-3).

Springing from the discussion about the performativity of Hare's characters, it was demonstrated how the characters established their identity through their gender, how the language they spoke constructed the identity of others, and how the limits of gender could craft body and discourse. The researcher found out that how a powerful figure that is always a male, recompenses his authority through the language he uses towards others

and makes them establish their identity. Tom in *Skylight* and Le Roux in *Pravda* were two masculine powers that practiced their power through injurious language that they used to interpellate others, especially female characters. These two figures gave social existence to the subordinated subjects around them by the installation of fear through hate speech. According to Butler, one can be given the possibility to have a social existence and feasibility only through language. By being called a name, Le Roux not only practiced his sovereignty by performing injurious speech, but he also reduced the injury of his racism to the injury of language as a racist African.

It can be concluded from *Skyligh*t and *Pravda* that the characters compensated for their sense of authority through objectifying others by the injurious language of threat or humiliation. Based on what Butler asserts, language interpellates us through our gender. In each of the plays, the sovereign character hailed others through injurious language to make them establish their phantasmatic identity. Their identities were the resignification and recontextualization of the parodic reproduction of recognizable standards. According to Butler, a subject is a linguistic occasion whose bodily existence can be socially possible only through language. By injurious addressing, Tom tried to degrade Kyra in order to make her come back to her life again. Moreover, Le Roux paralyzed the ones he interpellated in his office so that he reduced the injury of being an excluded African in English society. According to Butler, each subject prefers to be derogated to not being hailed at all. So that, individuals' identities are phantasmatically manufactured through the language that interpellates them based on their gender and internalizes itself in their bodies through performativity.

This study set out with the aim of assessing the importance of Butler's ideas, which have been influential in many literary studies. Her ideas help interpret the fictional texts that represent the transfiguration of the subject's identity through language and the self-construction based on the bodily discourse. Butler is engaged with the destabilization of the categories of subjects and the formation of the stylization of the body based on cultural discourse. A critical outlook to the compulsory norms in which the identity of an individual is crafted exposes that they are unstable and contingent, so that, such norms are subject to be subverted and resignified. In the light of Butler's performativity, the researcher examined each of Hare's characters through their physical acts concerning identity, language, body, and discourse. In the current study, it is found that what we produce through our physical acts are not "internal." They are the hallucinatory effects of the naturalized body, which are the results of the reiteration and repetition of the compulsory frames of culturally naturalized hegemony. Therefore, nothing is internal in us because the compulsory gendered hegemony encompasses the cultural domain of intelligibility, which stylizes the theatricality of our socially intelligible performances.

6. Conclusion

This article intends to present new outlooks toward the trouble of gender in David Hare's *Skylight, Pravda.* The performativity of the subjects with different social status in variant situations is investigated to show how the ritualized production and a constrained reiteration led to the materialization of gender. According to Butler's theory, the process of a regulatory and constrained repetition of norms circumscribes performativity. Butler also describes a set of parodic methods based on the theory of performativity of gender acts. The performativity of gender is the way in which the anticipation of a gendered essence manufactures the outside of itself, and it is a repetition and a ritual but not a single act. It naturalizes itself in the context of the body to achieve its effect so that it is a culturally sustained temporal duration.

What we take to be an "internal" feature of us is what we anticipate and manufacture through specific physical acts. In Hare's plays, there have been characters whose naturalized identities and discursive social status have had subversion and deviation from the constrained regulatory norms. Such deviations confront them with newly established identities and bodily performativity. Gender is always a doing and cannot be the causal result of sex and not as fixed as that. No one is born with gender because it is always an acquisition thus the substantive effect of gender is performatively manufactured. Throughout Hare's plays characters have floating genders, which accords Butlerian concepts of ever-changing genders through performativity. Moreover, class, race, ethnicity, and the other axes of power relations constitute identity; therefore, the identities can come into being depending on the concrete practices that create them. In Hare's plays, gender identity is inaugurated and constituted through a denial of loss that inscribes itself in the body. The original identity after which gender fashions itself is an imitation without an origin, so that is the reason why Butler calls it parodic.

According to Butler, parody is not subversive, yet certain kinds of parodic repetitions are disruptive and troubling. Being called a name is also one of the conditions by which a subject is constituted in language. Some terms such as "wound" suggest that language can act in ways that parallel the infliction of physical pain and injury. Paralyzing the addressee with fear and the threating utterances may well be countered by a different kind of performative act. This article scrutinizes Hare's characters regarding their language, which investigates that hate speech is citational, but this does not mean that the person who utters it does not have the responsibility for the usage. It can be concluded that speaking is a bodily act; a stylized assertion of its presence and matter of

bodies is as the repeated circumscription of cultural intelligibility. Gender is the assumption of the sexed body of the cultural meanings, so bodies are apprehended to be the passive recipients of strict cultural laws. The sexed surface of the body appears as the essential sign of a naturalize identity and desire, so that body is "inscribed surface of events." Therefore, there is no feasibility for the agency out of the discursive practices, so the injunction of being a given gender occurs within the discursive routes.

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